

# **Student Affairs Professionals' Commitment to & Competency in Assessment: Spotlighting an Often Untapped Partner in Evidencing Student Learning**

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# JMU



- ~23,000 students, primarily UG (some masters' and PhD)
- 5 areas of general education
- >100 academic degree programs
- 11 student affairs departments with many programs focused on student learning

<https://www.jmu.edu/assessment/>

<https://www.jmu.edu/assessment/sass>



# Intra-campus Assessment Collaboration

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**Faculty Members:** How many of you have engaged in assessment practice with a *student affairs practitioner*?

**Student Affairs Professionals:** How many of you have engaged in assessment practice with a *faculty member*?

**IR & Assessment Specialists:** How many of you have engaged in assessment practice with teams consisting of *both faculty and student affairs professionals*?

# Utility of Cross-Division Partnerships

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Given limited resources & time, we welcome contributions of others to support, guide, or sustain assessment-related work on our campus

Often professionals on academic “side of the house” are **unaware of assessment-related competencies** of professionals on student affairs “side of the house”

Student affairs professionals are guided by professional standards regarding development & assessment of **evidence-based programs that improve student learning & development**

- Striking **similarity** between student affairs standards & evidence-based decisions & practices endorsed by faculty
- Given mutual goal of learning improvement, a tremendous **efficiency** could be reaped if faculty partner with student affairs professionals to **create, evaluate, & improve programming**

# Student Affairs Assessment Standards

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To facilitate this potential partnership, we examine **assessment-related student affairs professional competencies/standards**

- CAS Standards
- ASK Standards
- ACPA & NASPA Professional Competencies

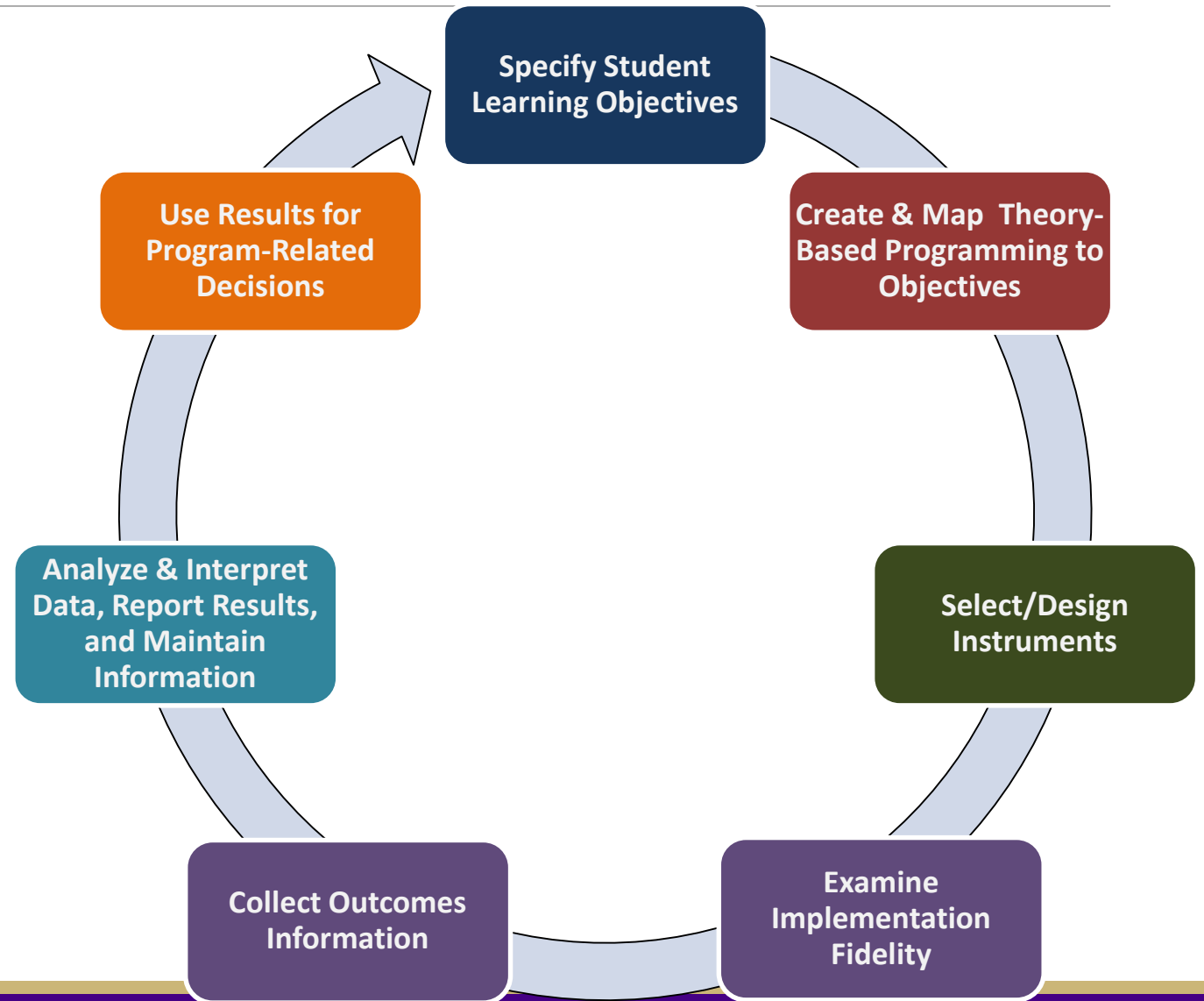
**Exposure** to standards may result in new appreciation for assessment-related skills & goals of student affairs practitioners

# Standards & Assessment Cycle Mapping

**Mapping** standards to typical assessment process showcases how both faculty & student affairs professionals are engaging in the *same processes* when empirically evaluating learning improvement

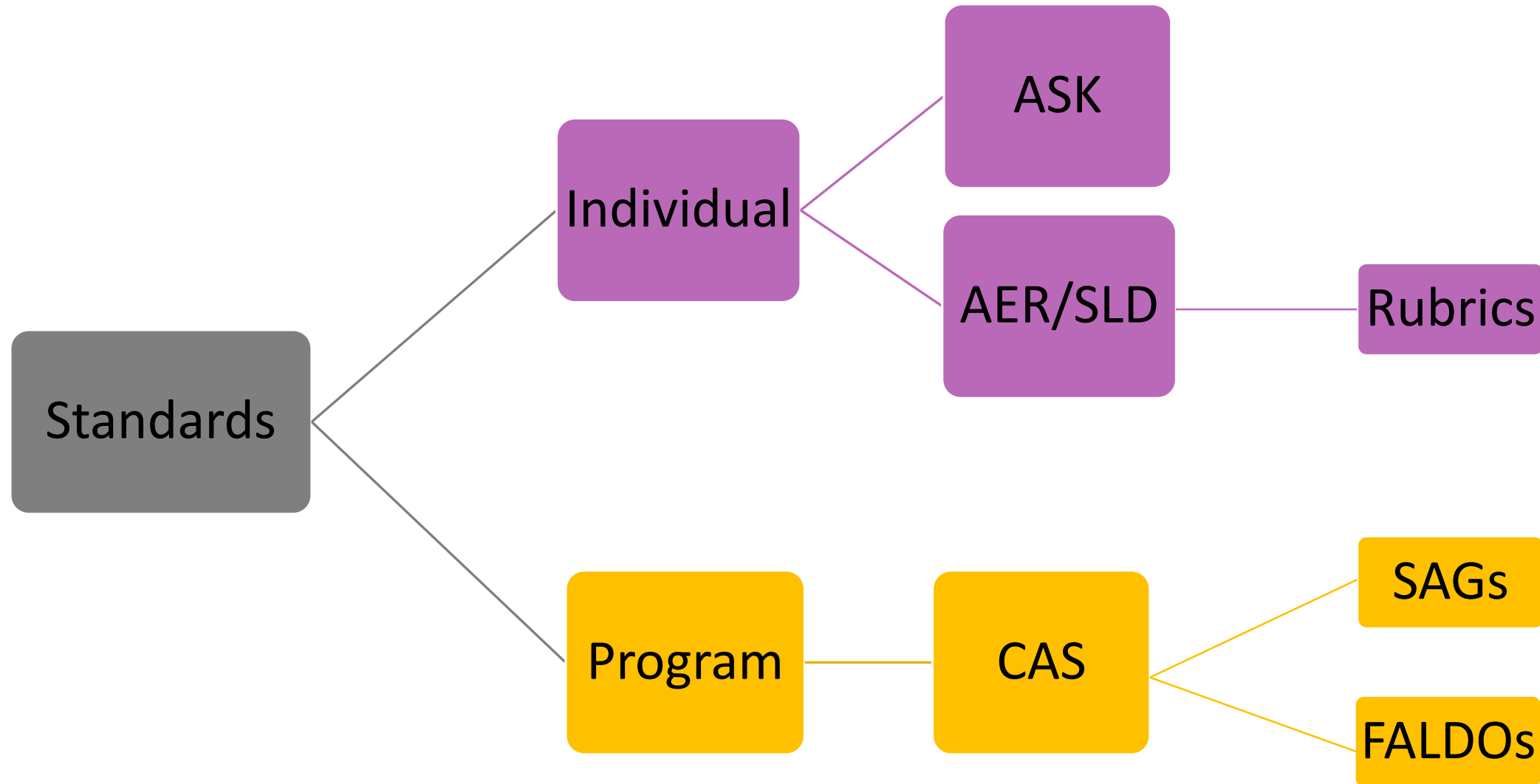
By **spotlighting commonalities**, emphasis can be placed on sharing assessment-related opportunities across divisions

- training
- collaboration



# Individual Standards/Competencies vs. Program Standards

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# Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Professional Standards

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## What is your level of experience with CAS standards?

1. I am learning about CAS for the first time
2. I have read or attended a presentation about CAS standards
3. I have used the CAS Standards to develop a program but not to evaluate a program
4. I have evaluated programming using CAS standards
5. I am a CAS expert & have used CAS materials extensively



# Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS)

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“Leading the way for **38 years**, the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) promotes *intra-campus* collaboration and reflects good practices agreed upon by the profession-at-large through the CAS Standards.”

- Founded in 1979
- Consortium of 42 member organizations
  - General Orgs: e.g., ACPA, NASPA
  - Areas Orgs: e.g., Association for Orientation (NODA), Association for Student Conduct Administration (ASCA)

# CAS Professional Standards

“The **purpose** of the standards and guidelines is to identify criteria and principles by which institutions may choose to **assess** and **enhance** various areas of their **academic, administrative, or student affairs programs and services.**”

“CAS standards fulfill a three-fold purpose:

-to foster and enhance **student learning and development**;

-to recognize and promote fundamental and indispensable standards of practice and the **assessment of related programmatic and student outcomes**;

-to provide a foundation to **develop, guide, assess, and improve programs and services.**”

## Used to:

Evaluate program effectiveness

- Respond to accountability demands
  - Enhance program reviews
  - Prepare for accreditation
- Engage in empirically-based program improvement

Develop learning & development outcomes

Design new programs & services

Prepare staff development materials

Guide strategic planning

<http://standards.cas.edu/getpdf.cfm?PDF=E868395C-F784-2293-129ED7842334B22A>

## CAS General Standards

- 1. Mission** – Programs must have mission statements that refer to **student learning & development**.
- 2. Program** – Programs must have **SLO's that align with 6 CAS domains** & dimensions; be **based on theory**; be **assessed to provide evidence of student learning** related to SLO's; **use assessment results for improvement**.
- 3. Organization & Leadership** – Programs must be **based upon SLO's & purposefully structured for effectiveness**; have ethical leadership; engage in strategic planning, management, **implementation**, & advancement of program; **use valid evidence to inform decisions for improvement**.
- 4. Human Resources** – Programs must have qualified staff who are provided adequate support, training, performance evaluations, & professional development **to keep current with research, theories & policies that affect programming**. **Personnel evaluations must inform assessment of programming**.
- 5. Ethics** – Programs must adhere to ethical standards, including considerations of confidentiality & students' rights related to **data collection & reporting**.
- 6. Law, Policy, & Governance** – Programs must be in compliance with laws, policies, & regulations, including **appropriate use of copyrighted materials (e.g., instruments)**.
- 7. Diversity, Equity, & Access** – Programs must promote inclusive, accessible, equitable & harassment-free environments.
- 8. Internal & External Relations** – Programs must consider all stakeholders when **planning & improving programs & disseminating information**.
- 9. Financial Resources** – Programs must be funded & **when prioritizing funding must assess impact on students**.
- 10. Technology** – Programs must consider accessibility of technology; have technology that supports delivery of programming, backs up **data**, & maintains security/confidentiality of **data**.
- 11. Facilities & Equipment** – Program facilities must be designed to promote learning; maintain **private & secure records**.
- 12. Assessment** – Programs **must have SLO's**; **use multiple measures**; employ **sustainable means for gathering data, reporting results & using results for improvement**; **provide evidence of improved programs**.

# CAS General & Functional Area Standards

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## CAS General Standards

1 set of 12 General Standards

Set of core standards that **apply across functional areas** & appear verbatim in every set of functional area standards

SLOs specified explicitly as part of 1 of 12 General Standard (i.e., Program Standard)

*Frameworks for Assessing Learning & Development Outcomes (FALDO's)* to create & assess SLOs

## CAS Functional Area Standards

45 specific standards for functional areas (e.g., advising, residence life, orientation)

General Standards included as part of Specific Standards

45 *Self-Assessment Guides (SAGs)* to assess program effectiveness

# CAS General Standards: SLOs

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6 SLO **Domains** are part of “Program” General Standard

1. Knowledge acquisition, construction, integration, & application
2. Cognitive Complexity
3. Intrapersonal Development
4. Interpersonal Competence
5. Humanitarianism & Civic Engagement
6. Practical Competence

Expectation of CAS General Standards:  
**ALL** functional area programs must identify & assess relevant student learning outcomes

“Following the publication of *Learning Reconsidered* (NASPA & ACPA, 2004), CAS integrated a revised set of student learning outcomes within the General Standards to enhance efforts for promoting student learning and development.

Each **domain** is further defined or clarified by several learning outcome **dimensions**, which allow for more focused program development and assessment.

The 2008 revision of the General Standards **required** programs and services to **include student learning and development** in mission statements, **identify** relevant and desirable learning from the six domains, **assess** relevant and desirable learning, and **articulate** the ways the programs and services contribute to student learning and development.

By recognizing the **centrality of student learning and development as well as requiring assessment of learning outcomes**, CAS affirms and reinforces expectations of leaders in higher education and accrediting associations.”

<http://standards.cas.edu/getpdf.cfm?PDF=E868395C-F784-2293-129ED7842334B22A>

# CAS Student Learning Domains vs. Dimensions

Domains	Dimensions
1) Knowledge acquisition, construction, integration, & application	understanding knowledge from a range of disciplines; connecting knowledge to other knowledge, ideas, & experiences; constructing knowledge; & relating knowledge to daily life
2) Cognitive Complexity	critical thinking; reflective thinking; effective reasoning; & creativity
3) Intrapersonal Development	realistic self-appraisal, self-understanding, & self-respect; identity development; commitment to ethics & integrity; and spiritual awareness
4) Interpersonal Competence	meaningful relationships; interdependence; collaboration; & leadership
5) Humanitarianism & Civic Engagement	understanding & appreciation of cultural & human differences; social responsibility; global perspective; & sense of civic responsibility
6) Practical Competence	pursuing goals; communicating effectively; technical competence; managing personal affairs; managing career development; demonstrating professionalism; maintaining health & wellness; and living a purposeful & satisfying life

# Frameworks for Assessing Learning & Development Outcomes (FALDOs)

1. Intellectual growth
2. Effective communication
3. Enhanced self-esteem
4. Realistic self-appraisal
5. Clarified values
6. Career choices
7. Leadership development
8. Healthy behavior
9. Meaningful interpersonal relationships
10. Independence
11. Collaboration
12. Social responsibility
13. Satisfying & productive lifestyles
14. Appreciating diversity
15. Spiritual awareness
16. Personal & education goals

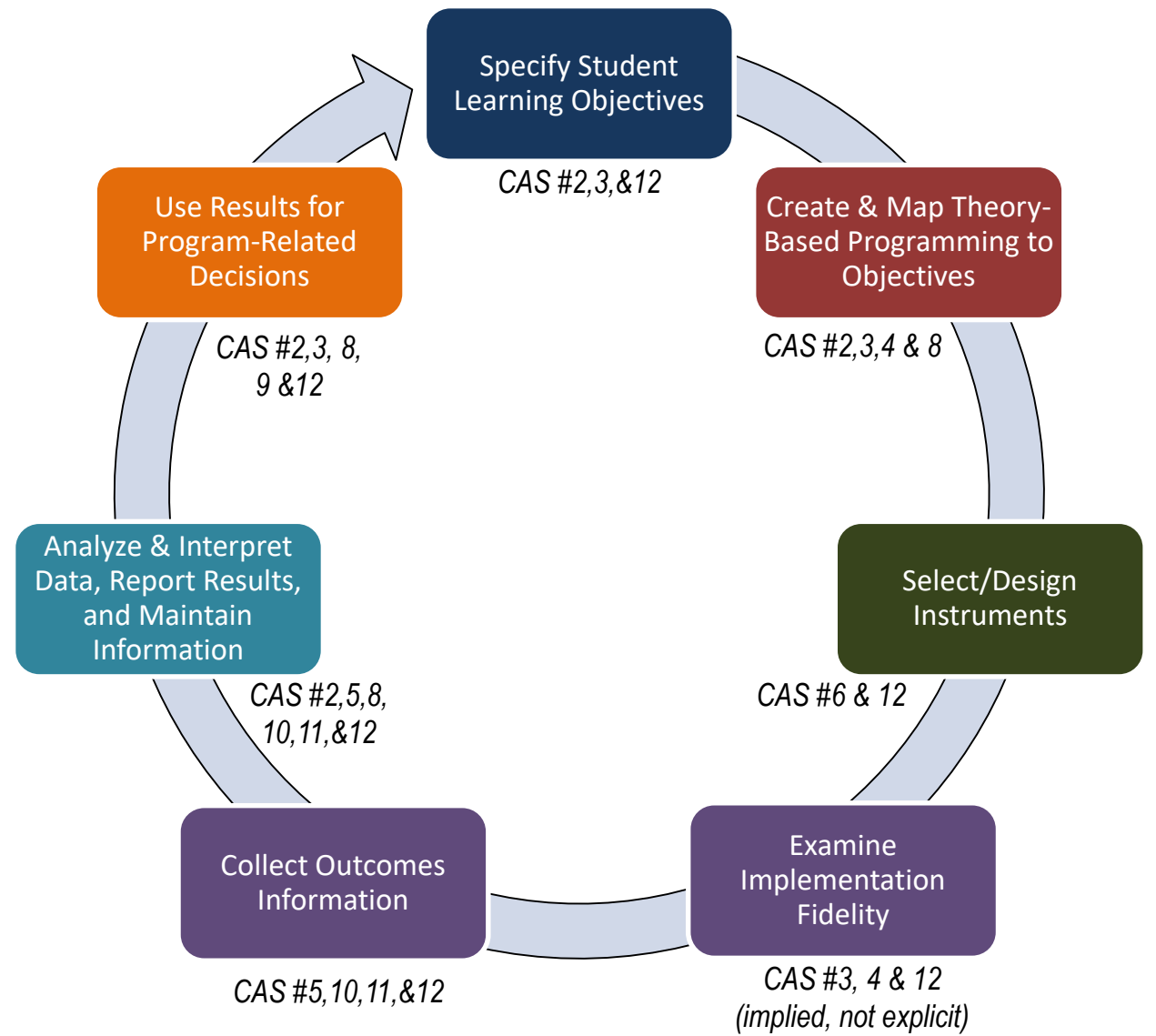
In 2006, CAS published *The Frameworks for Assessing Learning and Development Outcomes (FALDOs)*, which served as a **practice-focused companion to the 16 student learning outcomes**

**FALDOs provide a resource enabling practitioners to conduct assessment focused on learning & development, rather than previous practices of simply reporting satisfaction with program services**

In 2008 CAS revision, 16 student learning & development domains were reframed as 6 domains (knowledge acquisition, construction integration, & application; cognitive complexity; intrapersonal development; interpersonal competence; humanitarianism & civic engagement; & practical competence)

**CAS General Standards;** Below are the standards that apply to all student affairs programs.

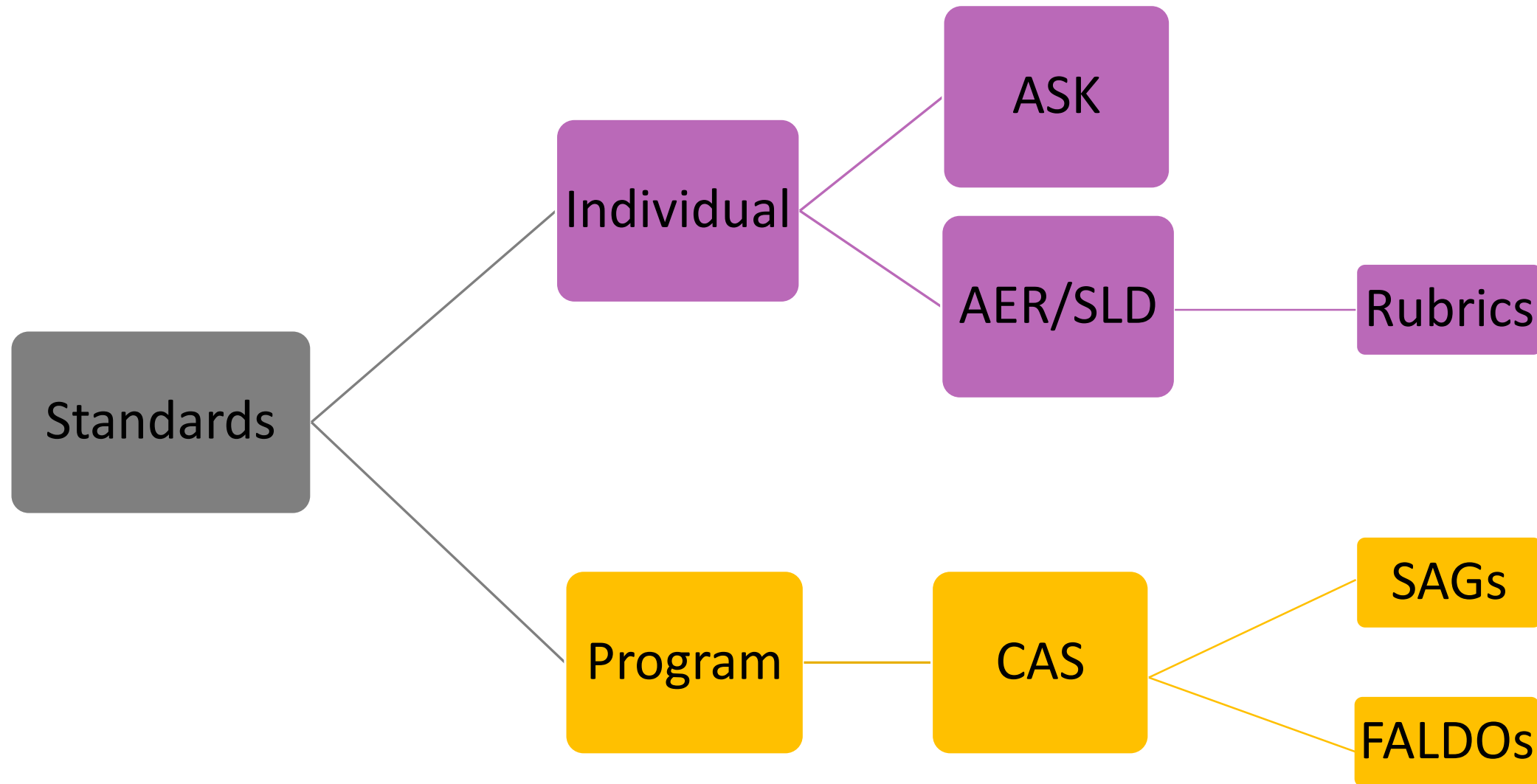
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<p><b>12. Assessment</b> – Programs must have SLO's, use multiple measures; employ sustainable means for gathering data, reporting results &amp; using results for improvement; provide evidence of improved programs.</p>





# Individual Standards/Competencies vs. Program Standards

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# Assessment Skills & Knowledge (ASK) Standards

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## What is your level of experience with the ASK standards?

1. I am learning about ASK for the first time
2. I have read or attended a presentation about ASK standards
3. I have used ASK Standards to guide my or others' assessment training but have not evaluated my or others' skills
4. I have evaluated my or others' assessment skills using ASK standards
5. I am an ASK expert & have used ASK materials extensively (e.g., to build training materials)

# ASK Standards

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## ***Assessment Skill and Knowledge (ASK) Standards*** (ACPA, 2006)

1<sup>st</sup> set of standards to articulate knowledge, skills, & dispositions necessary for student affairs professionals to measure student learning & development outcomes

- Detail what *all* student affairs professionals should know & be able to do related to outcomes assessment  
*regardless of functional area*
- Development illustrates student affairs' *commitment to the value of assessment skills*
- Endorsed by accrediting bodies & AAC&U

# ASK Standards

<https://sa.uncg.edu/assessment/wp-content/uploads/ACPA-ASK-Brochure.pdf>

## Standards are divided into 13 areas

1. Assessment design
2. Articulating learning & development outcomes
3. Selection of data collection & management method
4. Assessment instruments
5. Surveys used for assessment purposes
6. Interviews & focus groups
7. Analysis
8. Benchmarking
9. Program review & evaluation
10. Assessment ethics
11. Effective reporting & use of results
12. Politics of assessment
13. Assessment education

### *Example*

#### *Effective Reporting & Use of Results (2 out of 4 statements)*

***Student affairs professionals should have  
the ability to...***

**“ability to apply results to improve programs  
and services”**

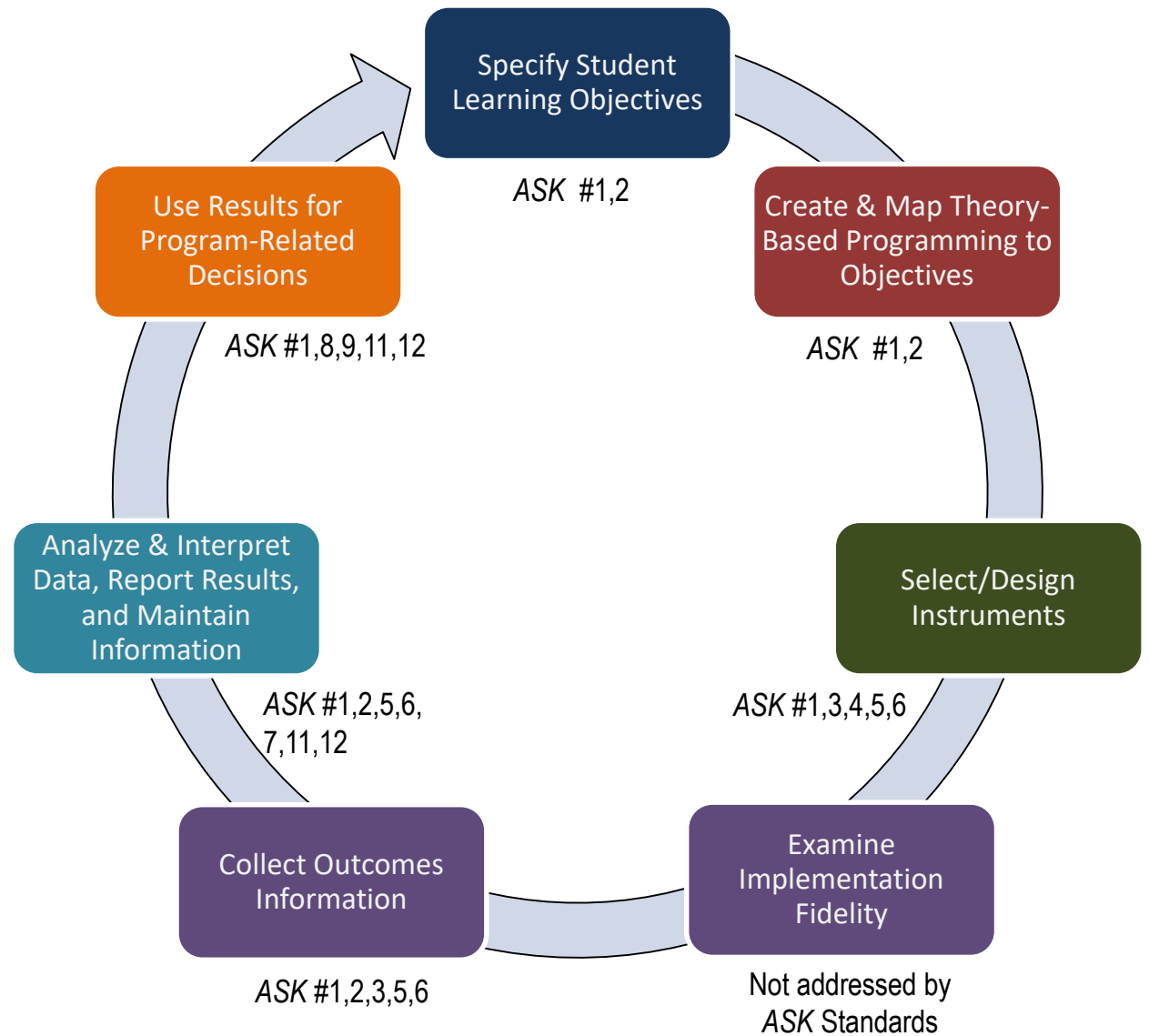
**“ability to affect change with assessment  
results” (ACPA, 2006)**

Each area has 2 to 9 statements describing *competencies* that professionals should possess to meet the content standard

## ASK Content Standards

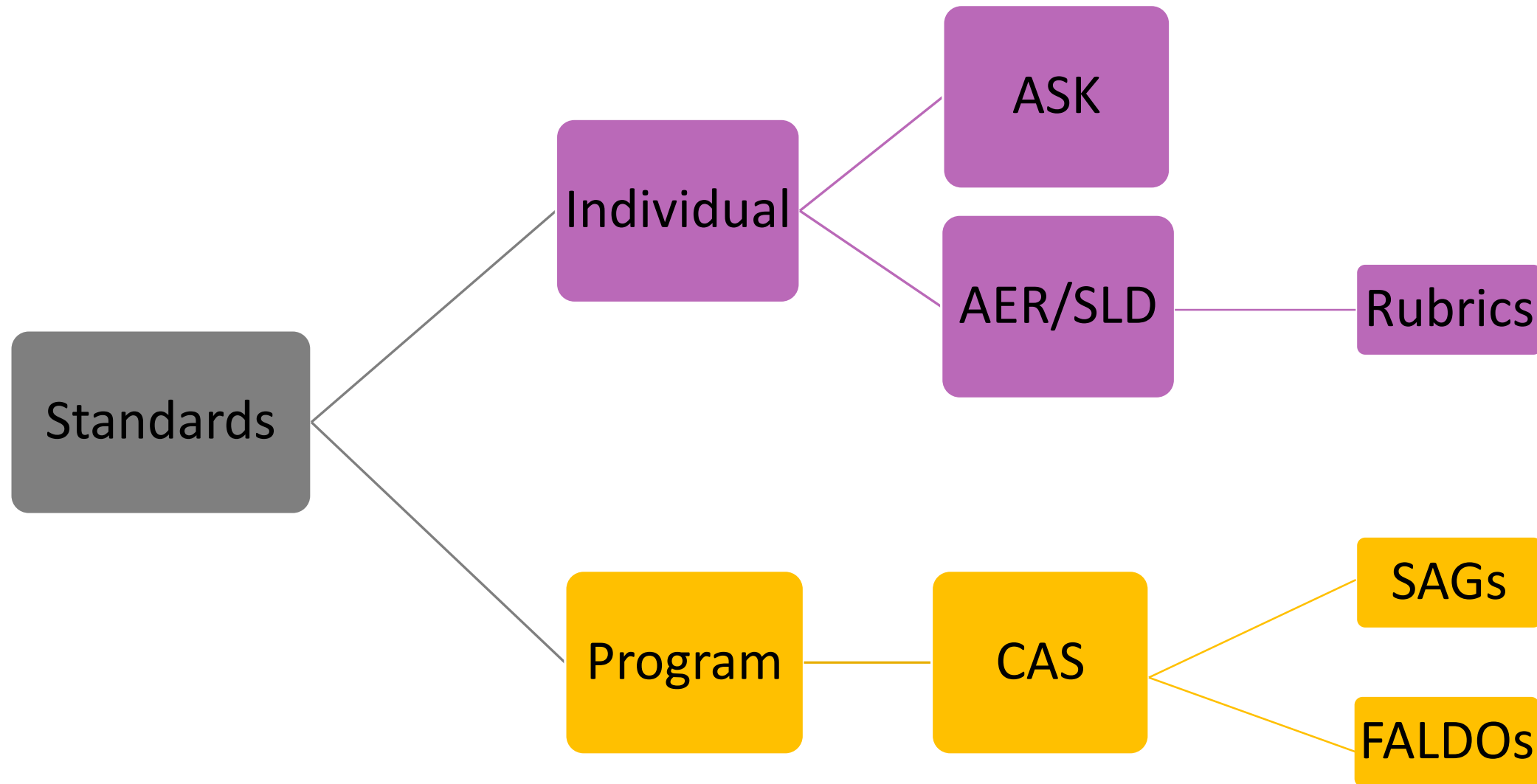
Below are the assessment standards that all student affairs professionals should be able to know, think, or do, regardless of their office.

1. <b>Assessment design</b> – ability to articulate and design & execute all phases of an assessment plan, including consideration of stakeholders and audience
2. <b>Articulating learning and development outcomes</b> – ability to develop theory-based outcomes, design theory-based programs, & gather evidence of learning
3. <b>Selection of data collection and management methods</b> – ability to identify type & amount of data needed; conduct all phases of data collection, manipulation & management
4. <b>Assessment instruments</b> – ability to select or develop instruments (including rubrics), identify strengths & weaknesses, & review for inclusiveness
5. <b>Surveys used for assessment purposes</b> – ability to develop, review, administer surveys, design sampling plans, appropriately analyze survey data
6. <b>Interviews &amp; focus groups</b> – ability to determine when interviews/focus groups are necessary; identify appropriate participants; develop & conduct interviews/focus groups; analyze data from interviews/focus groups
7. <b>Analysis</b> – ability to conduct & interpret quantitative & qualitative analysis
8. <b>Benchmarking</b> – ability to create, use, & evaluate benchmarking programs
9. <b>Program review and evaluation</b> – ability to conduct a program review that includes related standards, such as CAS or disciplinary standards, & improve programming
10. <b>Assessment ethics</b> – ability to implement IRB & FERPA guidelines
11. <b>Effective reporting &amp; use of results</b> – ability to communicate & use results for improvement, considering needs of audience & stakeholders
12. <b>Politics of assessment</b> – ability to consider institutional context & politics when reporting & using assessment results for improvement
13. <b>Assessment education</b> – ability to work with & educate others on assessment



# Individual Standards/Competencies vs. Program Standards

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# ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies

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## What is your level of experience with the Competencies?

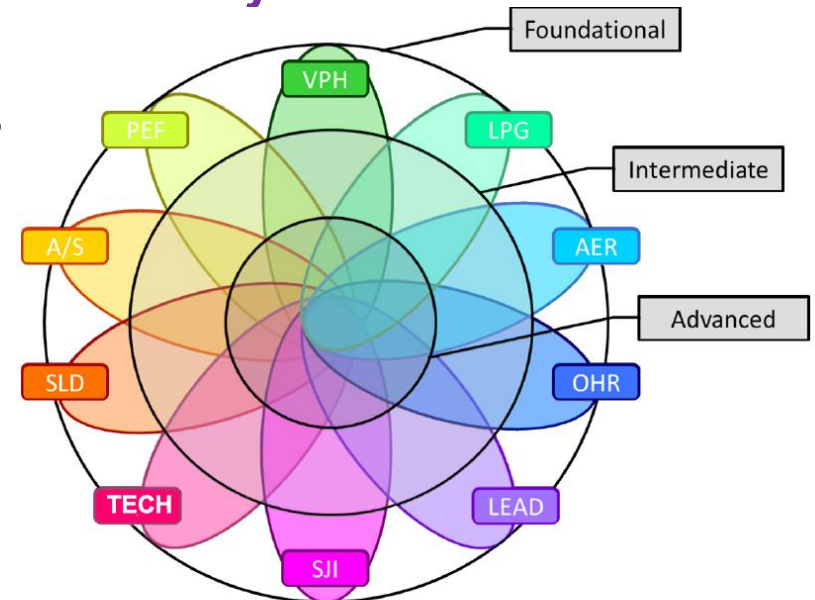
1. I am learning about them for the first time
2. I have read or attended a presentation about them
3. I have used them to guide my or others' assessment training but have not evaluated my or others' skills
4. I have evaluated my assessment skills using them
5. I am an expert & have used the materials extensively (e.g., to build training materials)

# ACPA/NASPA Professional Competencies

In 2010, ACPA & NASPA collaborated to create a common set of *Professional Competency Areas* for student affairs educators

Competencies were revised in 2015 & consist of 10 areas

1. Personal and Ethical Foundations (PEF)
2. Values, Philosophy, and History (VPH)
3. **Assessment, Evaluation, and Research (AER)**
4. Law, Policy, and Governance (LPG)
5. Organizational and Human Resources (OHR)
6. Leadership (LEAD)
7. Social Justice and Inclusion (SJI)
8. **Student Learning and Development (SLD)**
9. Technology (TECH)
10. Advising and Supporting (A/S)



Intersect with 3 points of emphasis, one of which is collaboration with faculty

10 competency areas specify *knowledge, skills, & dispositions* expected of *all* professionals, regardless of functional area or specialization within the field

**Used for:** position descriptions, professional development, graduate preparation programs, content for conferences, & communicating student affairs professional work to others



# AER & SLD Competency Areas

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**AER:** “Focuses on the ability to design, conduct, critique, and use various AER [**assessment**] methodologies and the results obtained from them, to utilize AER processes and their results to inform practice, and to shape the political and ethical climate surrounding AER processes and uses in higher education.”

**SLD:** “Addresses the concepts and principles of student development and learning theory. This includes the **ability to apply theory to improve and inform student affairs and teaching practices.**”

[https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/ACPA\\_NASPA\\_Professional\\_Competencies\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/ACPA_NASPA_Professional_Competencies_FINAL.pdf)

# Evaluating AER Competency via Rubrics

Three column developmental scale

		Foundational	Intermediate	Advanced
Definition	<b>Terms and Concepts</b> <i>Know and be able to describe terms, concepts, and strategies, associated with assessment, program review, evaluation, planning and research. Disposition to view AER as an essential element for improvement at the unit, division, institutional, and professional levels.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Be able to differentiate between assessment, program review, evaluation, planning, and research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use AER terminology consistently when participating with colleagues in assessment, program review, evaluation, planning, and research.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead and teach others assessment, program review, evaluation, planning, and research.</li> </ul>
	<b>Values/Ethics/Politics</b> <i>Know the value of assessment and the ethical principles associated with data collection, management, analysis, and reporting. Ability to use results towards continuous improvement; to follow institutional policies and procedures. Dispositions to navigate institutional politics effectively; to adhere to standards; and to sustain a culture of assessment.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explain institutional and divisional AER procedures and policies with regard to ethical assessment, evaluation and other research activities.</li> <li>Identify political and educational sensitivity of raw and partially processed data and AER results.</li> <li>Handle data with appropriate confidentiality and deference to organizational hierarchies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribute actively to the development of a culture of evidence at the department level by providing AER training, advocating for funding, and incorporating AER in practice.</li> <li>Manage and/or adhere to the implementation of institutional and professional standards for ethical AER activities.</li> <li>Use culturally relevant and appropriate terms and methods to conduct and report AER findings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a culture of evidence in which AER is central to practice and that training happens across the organization.</li> <li>Ensure institutional, divisional, or unit compliance with professional ethical standards concerning AER activities.</li> <li>Anticipate and respond to challenges related to individual and institutional politics, competing constituencies and interests, and divergent values.</li> </ul>

Multiple Dimensions (competencies)

# Evaluating AER Competency via Rubrics

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## Assessment, Evaluation, and Research

	Foundational	Intermediate	Advanced
<p><b>AER Design</b></p> <p><i>Know theoretical frameworks that align with organizational outcomes, goals, and values. Ability to create learner-centered outcomes that align with divisional and institutional priorities; to design and lead a process-oriented strategy to address the assessment's purpose or research questions. Disposition to think critically and systematically about questions and problems of practice.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design program and learning outcomes that are clear, specific, and measurable; informed by theoretical frameworks and aligned with organizational outcomes, goals, and values.</li> <li>• Utilize theoretical frameworks and organizational outcomes, goals, and values to design program and learning outcomes.</li> <li>• Explain to students and colleagues the relationship of AER processes to learning outcomes and goals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize program and learning outcomes with organization's goals and values.</li> <li>• Utilize student learning and development theories and scholarly research to inform content and design of learning outcomes and assessment tools.</li> <li>• Educate stakeholders about the relationship of departmental AER processes to learning outcomes and goals at the student, department, division, and institutional level.</li> <li>• Discern appropriate design(s) based on critical questions, available data, and intended audience(s).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the conceptualization and design of ongoing, systematic, high-quality, data-based strategies at the institutional, divisional, and/or unit-wide level to evaluate and assess learning, programs, services, and personnel.</li> <li>• Use assessment and evaluation results in determining institutional, divisional or unit accomplishments toward mission/goals, re-allocation of resources, and advocacy for more resources.</li> <li>• Lead a comprehensive communication process to inform campus stakeholders about the relationship of AER processes to learning outcomes, and goals at the student, department, division, and institution level.</li> </ul>

# Evaluating AER Competency via Rubrics

## Assessment, Evaluation, and Research

page 3 of 4

	Foundational	Intermediate	Advanced
<p><b>Methodology, Data Collection, and Data Analysis</b></p> <p><i>Know strengths and limits of research methodologies. Ability to match methodology with purpose of assessment and guiding questions; to collect and analyze data. Dispositions to take a critical stance in collection and analysis of data; rigorous attention to detail; creative thinking.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiate among methods for assessment, program review, evaluation, planning, and research.</li> <li>• Facilitate data collection for system/department-wide assessment and evaluation efforts using current technology and methods.</li> <li>• Assess trustworthiness, and/or validity of studies of various methods and methodological designs.</li> <li>• Consider strengths and limitations of methodological approaches when applying findings to practice in diverse institutional settings and with diverse student populations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design data collection efforts that are ongoing, sustainable, rigorous, unobtrusive, and technologically current.</li> <li>• Demonstrate working knowledge of alternative methodological AER approaches and strategies for ensuring quality results.</li> <li>• Participate in the design of qualitative and quantitative AER projects, determining appropriate methods and analyses for each.</li> <li>• Articulate the limitations of findings imposed by differences in how quantitative and qualitative data are sampled, analyzed, and verified through validity, reliability, and/or trustworthiness techniques.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design and integrate ongoing and periodic data collection efforts such that they are sustainable, rigorous, as unobtrusive as possible, and technologically current.</li> <li>• Lead, supervise, and/or collaborate with others to design and analyze assessment, program review, evaluation, and research activities that span multiple methodological approaches.</li> </ul>

# Evaluating AER Competency via Rubrics

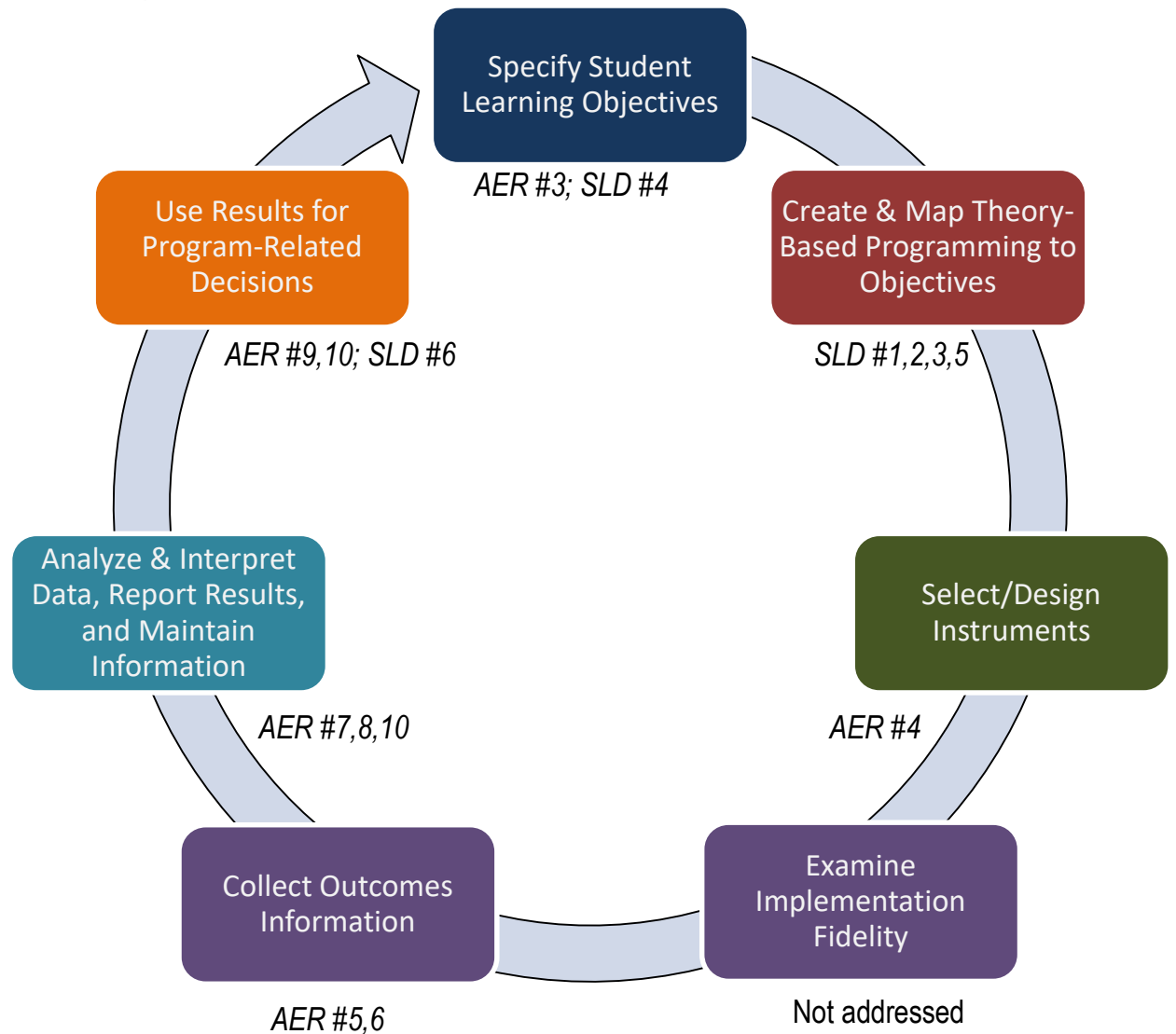
	Foundational	Intermediate	Advanced
<p><b>Interpreting, Reporting, and Using Results</b></p> <p><i>Know how to interpret data in practical terms that are relevant to the institutional context. Ability to present results concisely in reports that are useful to a variety of audiences; to use findings to make informed decisions and to align resources.</i></p> <p><i>Dispositions to collaborate; to represent findings accurately and fairly; to share interpretations with stakeholders, including students.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate, interpret, and apply results of AER reports and studies, including professional literature.</li> <li>• Ensure all communications of AER results are accurate, responsible, and effective.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively manage, align, and guide the utilization of AER reports and studies.</li> <li>• Communicate and display data in a manner that is accurate, transparent about the strengths, limitations, and context of the data; and sensitive to political coalitions and realities associated with data as a scarce resource.</li> <li>• Effectively use assessment and evaluation results in determining the institution's, the division's, or the unit's accomplishment of its missions/goals, re-allocation of resources, and advocacy for more resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead the design and writing of varied and diverse communications of assessment, program review, evaluation, and other research activities that include translation of data analyses into goals and action.</li> <li>• Write and disseminate results in a manner that critically considers the strengths and limitations of implications for practice, policy, theory, and/or future study in a sophisticated way.</li> <li>• Integrate the strategic use and prioritization of budgetary and personnel resources to support high-quality program evaluation, assessment efforts, research, and planning.</li> <li>• Facilitate the prioritization of decisions and resources to implement those decisions that are informed by AER activities.</li> </ul>

# ACPA/NASPA Professional Competency Areas

Below are AER & SLD competencies expected of all student affairs professionals, regardless of their specialization.

<b>AER Professional Competency</b>
<b>1. AER definition</b> – Differentiates among AER
<b>2. Utility of AER</b> – Explains relationship between SLO's & AER; promotes a culture of evidence
<b>3. SLO's</b> – Creates & links clear, measurable, theory-based SLO's to institutional goals & values
<b>4. Instrumentation/Protocols</b> – Selects or creates high quality theory-based data collection tools (e.g., interview protocols, measures)
<b>5. Design</b> – Employs appropriate quantitative & qualitative assessment designs; evaluates legitimacy & limitations of various designs
<b>6. Data collection</b> – Collects assessment data using appropriate, sustainable approach; uses technology effectively
<b>7. Analysis</b> – Conducts data analysis
<b>8. Reporting</b> – Writes actionable, accurate reports that consider audience
<b>9. Use of results</b> – Interprets & uses results for program change
<b>10. Data sensitivity</b> – Manages & reports data with sensitivity to confidentiality & the needs of stakeholders
<b>11. Ethics</b> – Complies with institutional & professional ethical standards

<b>SLD Professional Competency</b>
<b>1. Theory knowledge &amp; critique</b> – Articulates, analyzes, & critiques existing formal student learning & development theories & models
<b>2. Formal &amp; informal theories</b> -- Explains that formal theories enhance informal theories & work with students
<b>3. Benefits of theory</b> – Justifies the use of theory to create programming
<b>4. SLO's</b> – Constructs theory-based learning outcomes
<b>5. Theory to practice</b> – Applies theory to create programming
<b>6. Use assessment results for improvement</b> – Assesses SLO's; uses results with theory to improve practice



In closing, if you combine all the standards, look what you see...



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**Feel free to contact us!**

<https://www.jmu.edu/assessment/sass>