

Instructions for a Curriculum Map Workshop¹

What is a Curriculum Map? A curriculum map shows which courses in a degree program provide instruction to students in the learning outcomes of the program. Specifically, it shows which course(s) introduce students to the learning outcome, which course(s) allow students to develop skills or knowledge of that outcome, and which course(s) allow students to demonstrate the expected achievement level (mastery) of the outcome.

Why do this? To bring a multi-course curriculum into coherence to support student learning that lasts. A curriculum map allows you to understand what is taught and at what level, to reveal gaps in curricular coherence or student learning opportunities, and to aid plans to assess and understand student learning.

What do faculty get out of it? Improved communication about teaching and learning expectations, improved curriculum coherence, increased likelihood that students achieve outcomes.

How is the map created? Get the PLOs for the degree program and the list of **required** courses in the degree. Put this information in the template. At a meeting with faculty, discuss how each course maps to the different PLOs and at what level the course supports the PLO. Evaluate the curriculum map to ensure that:

- Each PLO is introduced, developed and mastered
- Each course contributes to at least one PLO
- Sufficient attention is provided for each PLO across the curriculum to ensure expected levels of student achievement.

¹ Assessment 101: Meaningful Assessment for Student Learning, WASC Educational Programs, October 2017.

The Curriculum Map Template: The curriculum map has the basic form below. Fill in the degree program name, the year you are doing the map, the PLOs for the degree program and the courses in the template.

Degree Program:

Year of Map:

PLO 1:

PLO 2:

PLO 3:

PLO 4:

PLO 5:

Curriculum Map	PLO 1	PLO 2	PLO 3	PLO 4	PLO 5
Course 1					
Course 2					
Course 3					
Course 4					

To complete the map, discuss with your colleagues how each course supports the different PLOs and the level of support provided by the course. At the intersection of courses with PLOs, indicate if the course introduces the PLO, if students develop their skills in the PLO or if students will demonstrate the expected level of mastery of the PLO. The curriculum map should show how learning of PLOs is scaffolded over the curriculum and how student skills are developed.

What about elective courses or courses outside the major that students are required to take?

Elective courses can be included, but the first goal should be to ensure that student learning for each outcome is appropriately scaffolded over the courses that you know will be taken by every student. Additionally, because the department may not have control over the content or outcomes of courses required outside the major, it is best to ensure that the required courses offered by the department suitably support the PLOs. For this reason, a curriculum map tends to include only those courses that are required for every student and only those courses offered by the department.

The electives or courses outside the major should provide additional opportunities for learning, but should not be the only place where that learning is expected to happen.

If you have clusters of courses that students choose between, it can be really helpful to list those courses together in the map and compare the role of each course in a cluster. Think about the various paths to their degree that a student might take based on choices they can make and determine if there are any potential gaps in student learning caused by choice of electives that should be addressed.

Preparing for the map meeting:

1. Discuss the level of learning used in curriculum maps.
 - Typically, three levels of learning are communicated in maps: introduced (I), developed (D) and mastered (M). If you wish, you can add an A for assess for the courses which will be used to assess the PLO.
 - There will likely be discussions needed about what it means to introduce, develop or master a learning outcome, to ensure that everyone is thinking about the level of student learning associated with each description in the same way. It might help to focus this discussion by describing the level of student work expected at each level. For example, at the introductory level, students might be expected to define, identify, classify, or organize fundamental concepts. At the mastery level, students might be expected to analyze, evaluate, or apply those concepts in a more complex setting.
 - For the courses they teach regularly, faculty should expect to decide which PLO(s) the course **significantly supports** and the level of support (I, D, M) provided by the course.
 - Significant support: Does the course provide significant direct attention to the learning outcome, with progression of student learning of that outcome in the course? If so, then the course contributes to that PLO.
 - A course can provide more than one level of support, for example, I and D or D and M.
 - Faculty may want to bring their syllabus, examples of lectures, assignments or exams to help them identify the level at which their course addresses a given PLO.
2. Decide how you want to share the curriculum map to gather information:
 - Share as a google doc or an excel online doc within box in advance. Invite faculty to fill in the grid with I, D, or M for the course(s) they teach regularly.
 - Project the curriculum map at a department meeting and edit at the meeting.
 - Project the curriculum map on a whiteboard and ask faculty to fill in the grid with markers.
 - Create a curriculum map on a big piece of paper and provide faculty with sticky notes that they can write I, D or M on and place on the grid.
 - Plan to capture the final curriculum map after editing and discussion is completed.

At the map meeting (60 – 90 minutes depending on if the map is being filled in ahead of time or not):

1. *Fill in the map.* For the courses they teach only, invite all faculty and lecturers to indicate on the map the PLO their course **significantly supports** and the level of support (I, D, M, for example) provided.
 - Significant support: Does the course provide significant direct attention to the learning outcome, with progression of student learning of that outcome in the course? If so, then the course contributes to that PLO.
 - A course can provide more than one level of support, for example, I and D or D and M.
2. *Analyze the map* for alignment of the courses and the PLOs.

- Are the courses matching to expected PLOs? If not, some discussion about the content of the courses associated with a PLO, or a discussion about what the PLO means might be needed to ensure that courses and PLOs are being matched appropriately.
- Is everyone applying the same definitions of what I, D and M mean in classifying the level of support provided by their course?
- Modify the map as the group feels is needed after everyone has come to some sort of consensus about what the PLOs mean or what I, D and M mean or after the content of courses has been discussed. Once every course as currently offered is properly assigned, then evaluate the map as a whole.

3. *Discuss the map* collectively to address the following questions:

- Does each course contribute to the PLOs? If not, what's the recommendation? *Every course should contribute to at least one PLO.*
- Does any course try to do too much? If yes, what's the recommendation? *A single course should typically contribute to 1 – 3 PLOs with the exception of a capstone or culminating experience course.*
- Is there too much emphasis across the curriculum on some PLOs and not enough for others? What's the recommendation for either case? *The amount of support needed for any one PLO depends on the expectations. Achievement of higher level skills would require more opportunity to practice over the curriculum than lower level skills. If faculty feel that students are not meeting expectations in an area, then perhaps more exposure to that outcome needs to be built into the curriculum.*
- Is the assignment of I, D and M appropriate for the level of the course (lower division vs upper division)? What's the recommendation if not? *If one PLO has "I" for lower division and upper division courses, is this an opportunity for the upper division course to be able to go into more depth or expand content to more advanced topics? If there are no "I"s at the lower division level, should there be a course that introduces the material?*
- Are all PLOs supported by **required** courses in the curriculum? *Required courses are the only place you can guarantee the learning outcomes for students. If students have a lot of elective choices, those electives should be grouped carefully to ensure that no matter what a student takes, they will get adequate exposure to all PLOs.*
- If the program allows students to select courses from a group (i.e., choose 2 of 4 courses), is it possible for a student to make a selection that results in insufficient exposure to an outcome? If yes, what's the recommendation?
- Where might student work be collected to assess each program learning outcome? Does the course have assignments or work would be appropriate to use for the assessment of the outcome? Do you want to assess student learning over the curriculum by comparing outcomes in an earlier course and a later course?

4. *Identify actions to take.* Based on the discussion, are there changes to courses or to PLOs needed to better align the curriculum to the learning outcomes? Prioritize the recommendations and decide how to proceed.

- Revisions to courses such as prerequisite changes, changes to the number of units, title changes, course number changes can be done via links provided on <http://ueap.sfsu.edu/content/curriculum-development>.

- There is no deadline, but it is a good practice to have the revisions submitted before the class schedule deadlines (October for the spring semester, February for the summer semester and March for the fall semester).
 - Courses submitted for inclusion in GE or SF Studies are only reviewed in the Fall semester and go into effect the following Fall semester at the earliest.
- New courses or new topics for variable topics courses can be proposed via links provided on <http://ueap.sfsu.edu/content/curriculum-development>. Deadlines for new courses and new topics for variable topics courses:
 - To offer the course in Spring, submit new course or topics in SEPTEMBER.
 - To offer the course in Fall, submit new course or topics in MARCH.
 - Courses are reviewed for approval by the Course Review Committee.
 - Colleges may have their own deadlines.
- Revisions to the degree program can be done via links provided on <http://ueap.sfsu.edu/content/curriculum-development>.
 - All program revisions are screened by the Chair of the Curriculum Review and Approval Committee and Academic Planning to determine the level of campus review needed.
 - Changes to degree programs go into effect in the Fall semester of the next academic year at the earliest.
 - All revisions to degree programs must be submitted before March 1 to provide enough time for the full campus review process if needed.
 - Please consult the University Curriculum Coordinator if there is interest in proposing new certificates, minor or majors.