

Questions to Consider as you Create Your Curriculum Map

The curriculum map is an important tool for guiding the critical review of your program, from the perspective of the self-study as well the perspective of the external review. It helps identify the outcomes of the program and students' progression toward fulfilling those outcomes. As you prepare the curriculum map for your self-study report, the following questions may be useful to consider.

1. Are all of the Learning Outcomes fulfilled by the end of the program (not necessarily all in the last course or courses)? Do the outcomes accurately reflect the program and the department's goals for the program? Do the outcomes focus on what *students* should be able to know, do, and value by the end of the program?
2. Are there any gaps or redundancies in the map? Do they play an important role in the logic of the curriculum or do they point toward possible changes?
3. Is there a logical progression for students through the curriculum? Are key concepts introduced and reinforced to allow time for students to gain proficiency with the outcome?
4. Is there an appropriate level of choice for students (i.e., are they able to customize their learning experience where possible)? Is there a good balance between required courses and electives?
5. Related to progression, what happens when a program has very few electives or has many choices for the students? Consider ten graduating students - what happens when students take much different paths through the curriculum? If there are many electives (e.g., students must take 6 courses at the 300-level), how can you demonstrate that students will fulfill the outcomes regardless of the path they take?
6. What distinguishes the various degrees (e.g., co-op and regular, honours and general, differences between streams) within your department? Do you need separate maps for the various degrees? Is it useful to map an option? stream? minor?
7. How do you handle courses that are not taught by your department? How was information about any such courses incorporated into the map?
8. How are the Learning Outcomes assessed? By including assessment measures in your curriculum map, you can then reflect on whether those items are the best ways to assess that outcome.
9. Is a single course trying to do too much? If you look at a course and it addresses all of the Learning Outcomes, at what level are the outcomes being addressed? Is it realistic in a 12 week course to address all of those outcomes in a meaningful way? Do the course's assessments clarify the depth at which the outcome is being addressed?

Critiquing the Curriculum

The following set of questions are meant to encourage you to reflect critically on your curriculum map and provide relevant commentary in your self-study to assist the External Reviewers in their appraisal of your program curriculum.

- Are the Learning Outcomes (what students are able to do, know, and value by the end of the program) aligned with Program Goals (the department's overarching goals for the program)?
- Given admission requirements, university degree requirements and normal declaration of major timelines, are the Learning Outcomes achievable in the time allotted?
- How well do the stated assessments measure the Learning Outcomes? Where are Learning Outcomes explicitly reinforced and assessed?
- Is the relationship between core courses, electives, other learning experiences (e.g., co-op, service learning, etc.), non-departmental prerequisites, etc. clear?
- Are majors, minors, streams, and options sufficiently differentiated?
- Does the curriculum progress from an introductory level to proficiency? Are there clear linkages across year levels? Do students have the opportunity to develop knowledge, skills, and values? How do early courses introduce, how do senior courses cause graduate-ready learning?