

Quick Guide to Curriculum Maps

This quick guide was prepared by the WSU Office of Assessment for Curricular Effectiveness (ACE) and is intended to help WSU programs and faculty consider good practices for developing and updating curriculum maps. ACE is also available to collaborate with WSU undergraduate degree programs to develop or update their curriculum map. Contact us at ace.office@wsu.edu for more information.

Introduction

A curriculum map is a matrix aligning program-level student learning outcomes (SLOs) with the courses for an program. Curriculum maps may vary in complexity and structure, to best meet the needs of a program. Curriculum maps of three variations, with different descriptions, depending on what each type of map generally aims to show.

Basic Curriculum Map

A basic curriculum map (Figures 1 and 2) can be used to:

- **Identify which core courses support which program SLOs.** How do core courses fit together?
- **Reveal any gaps.** In Figure 1, program

Program SLO Development Map

A curriculum map focused on skill development (Figure 3) can:

- **Help determine how the curriculum systematically builds skills and knowledge.** Do lower-level courses help prepare students for upper-level courses?
- **Show any gaps in the progression of learning opportunities.** Are all program SLOs being introduced? Are students given enough opportunity to develop and master program SLOs over time? In Figure 3, it appears as if students are not being given adequate opportunity to practice using skills and knowledge before “Mastery” level learning is expected for program SLO #1.
- **Identify courses where assessment measures of the program SLOs could be applied.** In Figure 3, the senior project in Course 5 is an assignment in which students must apply and integrate all of the program’s SLOs and this program assesses all program SLOs using this project.

Figure 3: A program SLO development map where there is a gap in opportunities for students to develop for a program SLO

Program SLO Emphasis Map

A curriculum map focused on skill development (Figure 3) can:

Value of Curriculum Maps

A curriculum map can give program leadership, faculty, students, and advisors a shared understanding of what the curriculum seeks to accomplish. Curriculum maps should be shared regularly with all faculty who teach, discussed periodically, and updated as needed. They can be provided to new faculty as part of orientation to the department and can be shared with others, such as advisors, TAs, and students. In this context, a curriculum map can:

- Help each faculty member understand how their course is situated in the curriculum, and the essential contributions their course makes toward advancing program-level SLOs

Help faculty make decisions during the semester if something must be changed/dropped/added

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