

CURRICULAR MATRIX TO DIRECTOR OF ASSESSMENT BY DECEMBER 2009

The Curricular Matrix template is completed to visually depict the extent to which required courses in an academic program are aligned with student learning outcomes for the program. Required courses are listed in the rows on the left, and for each student learning outcome for the program (numbered SLO1, SLO2, etc. in the columns), an “I,” “P,” or “D” is entered to indicate whether the knowledge, skill, ability, or value is "Introduced=I" "Practiced=P," or "Demonstrated=D" during the course.

Completing the Curricular Matrix often results in the discovery of “gaps” in the curriculum where required courses do not collectively address all program learning outcomes at the needed level. Completing the Curricular Matrix can draw attention to situations where a course taught by multiple instructors varies too greatly with respect to addressing program learning outcomes. If in trying to evaluate whether a learning outcome is Introduced, Practiced, or Demonstrated in a required course, those completing the Curricular Matrix find themselves thinking, “it depends on who is teaching the class,” this suggests action should be taken to make the course more consistent across instructors.

Completing the Curricular Matrix often results in discussion about how the core curriculum might be improved, whether learning outcomes for the program need revision, and how courses taught by multiple instructors can be made more consistent. This is exactly the kind of dialogue this exercise is intended to stimulate. At the end of the Curricular Matrix template there is a space for documenting results.

In *Program Learning Outcomes: Rubric for Assessing the Quality of Academic Program Learning Outcomes*, WASC outlines criteria for being at the “Developed” stage with respect to curricular alignment. To be at the Developed stage, “the curriculum is designed to provide opportunities for students to... develop increasing sophistication with respect to each learning outcome.”

When returning your completed Curricular Matrix to [Director of Assessment] at [email address] feel free to return the entire document.

II. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES x COURSES

Student learning outcomes for the program (labeled as “SLOs” below) should be achievable through the completion of required coursework. Presumably, when the ideal student completes the required courses for a degree, he or she will then have the knowledge, skills, abilities, and values the program is intended to imbue. In the cells shown below, place an “I,” “P,” and/or “D” to indicate whether the knowledge, skill, ability, or value is "Introduced=I" "Practiced=P," or “Demonstrated=D” during the course. It is possible a course introduces a type of knowledge or skill, requires the student to practice application of that knowledge or skill, and requires the student to demonstrate their level of proficiency. In this case, the cell would contain an “I,” “P” and “D.” It is possible a capstone course does not introduce a type of knowledge or skill, and does not require a student to practice it, but instead requires students to demonstrate their full proficiency. In this case, a “D” would be placed in the cell.

I = INTRODUCED. The material is presented during lecture or in reading materials, etc.

P = PRACTICED. The knowledge is applied or the skill is practiced. Students complete exercises in class, participate in discussions, engage in relevant reading or research, but do not actually produce work or engage in behavior that demonstrates their proficiency.

D = DEMONSTRATED. The knowledge or skill is clearly demonstrated in the form of student work products that are evaluated to determine student proficiency. Students may submit an assignment or a report, make an oral presentation, take an examination, etc. that demonstrates their level of knowledge and skills.

Required Courses	SLO1	SLO2	SLO3	SLO4	SLO5	SLO6	SLO7	SLO8	SLO9	SLO10

Required Courses	SLO1	SLO2	SLO3	SLO4	SLO5	SLO6	SLO7	SLO8	SLO9	SLO10

III. CONCLUSIONS DRAWN ABOUT CURRICULAR ALIGNMENT

In this section, please describe general impressions about the extent to which learning outcomes for the program are addressed in required coursework for the degree. When viewed collectively, do required courses satisfactorily address learning outcomes? Should some courses emphasize certain skills or knowledge more than they do currently? Should courses be removed from or added to the core curricula? Do courses taught by more than one instructor need to be made more consistent with respect to how they address program learning outcomes? (If in evaluating the extent to which knowledge or skill is developed in a course, it becomes obvious that this depends on who is teaching the class, this suggests the course needs to be more consistent across instructors.) In accord with WASC guidance, to what extent does the curriculum “provide opportunities for students to learn and to develop increasing sophistication with respect to each learning outcome”? Based on what the Curricular Matrix shows, and any other relevant information concerning alignment of learning outcomes and required courses, will changes be made to the curriculum? If so, how will decisions be made—will faculty convene to discuss the changes?