

## CURRICULUM MAPPING

**What is curriculum mapping and why do we do it?** Curriculum mapping is a “process” more than a “product,” although we will end up with a final report. Curriculum mapping lets faculty make and evaluate connections between the program’s Learning Outcomes and the courses being taught in the program. We do curriculum mapping to: (1) assess program learning outcomes, (2) identify gaps, overlaps, and redundancies in the curriculum, (3) identify courses that are classified as general electives, but that may actually meet the standards for seminars or experiential learning courses, and (4) measure compliance with ABA standards. From there, the faculty can make evidence-based decisions about the program curriculum, rather than relying on “best guesses” of necessary changes or additions to the curriculum.

**How does curriculum mapping fit into the ABA Standards and our answers to the recent SEQs applicable to our site visit?** The faculty adopted Learning Outcomes in 2021-2022. The Outcomes Assessment Committee has developed and implemented a plan for assessing these learning outcomes over the next five years. Curriculum mapping is the next logical step in the process for making sure that we are meeting the program learning outcomes and the ABA Standards relating to the program of legal education. For example, curriculum mapping is one tool available to help meet Standard 315, which requires “the dean and the faculty ... [to] conduct ongoing evaluation of the law school’s program of legal education, learning outcomes, and assessment methods; and shall use the results of this evaluation to determine the degree of student attainment of competency in the learning outcomes and to make appropriate changes to improve the curriculum.”

**How will we go about the process of curriculum mapping?** The “Curriculum Mapping Working Subcommittee” (i.e., those members of either the Curriculum Committee or the Outcomes & Assessments Committee who volunteered: Dawn, Jeremy, Laura, Shelly, and Keith) developed criteria for each Learning Outcome, to provide a concrete method of measuring when an Outcome is being met. The Subcommittee then developed a Questionnaire to be completed by the instructor for each course which asks specific questions as to whether certain topics, subjects, skills, and activities (the “criteria”) are incorporated into each course. The instructor will also designate the level or degree to which each criterion is incorporated into the course. If a criterion is incorporated into the course, is it “Introduced” in that course, or does the course require the student to become “Proficient” in that criterion?

**What do I need to do for this process?** You will want to have access to your Syllabi for all the courses you teach, your “teaching notes,” and whatever else you may need in order to answer questions about your courses. (Most full-time faculty members spent around 20-30 minutes completing their first questionnaire; after the first one, it went a little faster.)

**Can you give me an example of what will be asked?** Yes. ASL’s Program Learning Outcome #5 is “demonstrate, develop, and embrace a sense of civic responsibility and leadership by working to address community needs and problems.” One of the Criteria for examining LO5 is “engaging in critical analysis and discussion of the civic responsibilities of lawyers.” For each course you teach, you would answer a question of whether your course incorporates “engaging in critical analysis and discussion of the civic responsibilities of lawyers. If the answer is “yes,” you would designate whether you believe

your course “Introduces” that criterion or requires students to become “Proficient” in that criterion. If the answer is no, you would answer “N/A.”

**What if I am answering “N/A” to most of the questions? If that going to reflect poorly on my performance as a faculty member?** No. Of course, not all courses will cover all criteria, or even all Learning Outcomes. The vast majority of elective courses will likely be meeting only a few criteria. But answering each question based on the most recent time you taught that course will allow us to get a sense of how we are meeting our Learning Outcomes overall and provide us with evidence for decision-making on our curriculum. After compiling the data from these questionnaires, we can develop the fact-based evidence required in order for the faculty to make decisions about revising and enhancing the curriculum from a “best practices” perspective. This will be particularly important as we move towards the NextGen Bar Exam and ensuring that our students are successfully prepared for different topics and skills, and different methods of assessing their performance.

**What will our end product look like?** Here’s a simplified example of our “goal product.”

COURSE	LO1-C1	LO1-C2	LO2-C2	LO2-C3	
Civil Procedure	P	P	N/A	I	

**LO1 = Learning Outcome #1 “Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of substantive and procedural law.”**

LO1-C1 = LO1 Criterion #1 “Demonstrating through verbal and/or written expression, the ability to recall, articulate, and explain core concepts, doctrines, principles, and rules in the subject matter.” By answering “P” to this question, as the instructor I am saying that I believe this course requires “Proficiency” in this criterion for this particular subject matter (i.e., CivPro).

LO1-C2 = LO1 Criterion #2 “Demonstrating, through verbal and/or written expression, the ability to solve fact-based problems and situations by application of substantive and procedural law.” Again, “P” represents that the course requires “Proficiency” in this criterion for this subject in my opinion as the instructor.

**LO2 = Learning Outcome #2 “Demonstrate legal analysis, legal reasoning, legal research, problem-solving, and communication skills.”**

LO2-C2 = LO2 Criterion #2 “Demonstrating mastery of the ability to select and employ legal research tools and strategies to identify relevant legal authority.” By answering “N/A,” as the instructor I am saying that I don’t believe this course meets that criteria; we don’t really engage in independent legal research in the course.

LO2-C3 = LO2 Criterion #3 “Demonstrating mastery of written communication skills through drafting of legal documents and essay examination, including objective and persuasive analyses of legal issues that are clear, concise, well-reasoned, and organized. Such written communication should demonstrate mastery of grammatical, spelling, and citation skills.” By answering “I” to this question, as the instructor I am saying that I believe this course incorporates this criterion to the level of “Introducing” the topic (but not requiring “Proficiency” in the criterion).