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# Tips and Strategies for Engaging in the CPR Process

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A GUIDEBOOK FOR 2021-22



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## Introduction

This handbook offers tips and strategies for engaging in the Queen’s University Quality Assurance Process (QUQAPs) Cyclical Program Review (CPR). This resource accompanies the 2020 revised Template for Cyclical Program Review. Tips focus in on identified aspects of the self-study template that commonly raise questions, cause confusion, or pose challenges to units as they complete the self-study.

This is a ‘living document’ that will be occasionally updated and revised. Please note the revision date in the header.

## Section 1: Context for current Cyclical Program Review

### Tip 1: Focusing on Quality Assurance as an Ongoing Effort of Continuous Improvement



The program review and self-study are one part of an ongoing cycle of curriculum development. Section 1 helps your reviewers appreciate the past – such as what recommendations from previous self-studies have informed recent priorities (section 1.1); present – what areas of improvement are currently a priority for the program (section 1.2); and future - how the program would like to develop into the future (sections 1.3, 1.4). Responses to Section 1 questions can be framed in context of previous self-studies, current realities, and future aspirations for the program.

## Section 2: Development of Self-Study

The following two tips apply to Section 2 as a whole:

### Tip 1: Plan for a collaborative approach from the start

An important best practice for creating an effective self-study involves authorship “from a participatory self-critical process and documents involvement in its preparation of all faculty in the program, and of students” (OUCQA, 2020). At the outset of your self-study planning, select approaches that foster a faculty-driven, student-focused process such as faculty workshops, retreats, and consultations, student involvement, data collection that seeks feedback from all stakeholders, and collaborative authorship.

### Tip 2: Be descriptive of the approach taken within the self-study

Did the faculty engage in a retreat or used departmental meetings to discuss? Did meetings happen face-to-face or online? Were students directly involved in the process or did they participate through data collection approaches such as surveys? Did you have a drafting team produce the written report and if so, what was the team’s composition? Was the self-study report delegated to a principal writer? These example questions highlight the targeted level of detail when describing the self-study approach taken.

## Section 3: Program alignment with University priorities

### Tip 1: Tap into key resources related to university priorities

Responding to the prompts in Section 3 in general and Section 3.1 more specifically requires consultation and reference to a variety of strategic documents and resources. These materials are curated here for quick access:

- [Queen's Strategic Framework](#)
- [Comprehensive International Plan](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy Statement](#)
- [Diversity and Equity Assessment and Planning \(DEAP\) Tool](#)
- [Yakwanastahentéha Aankenjigemi Extending the Rafters: Truth and Reconciliation Commission Task Force Final Report](#)
- [Queen's Accessibility Hub](#)

### Tip 2: Frame conversations on clarified key definitions

In general, section 3 requires collective clarity and differentiation between key concepts such as Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI); decolonization and Indigenization; anti-racism; accessibility and accommodation; and Internationalization. To assist faculty, staff, and students in effectively discussing these important concepts, a variety of resources are available:

[What is Decolonization? What is Indigenization?](#) by the Centre for Teaching and Learning

[Online Modules](#) hosted by the Human Rights and Equity Office

[University Council on Anti-Racism and Equity \(UCARE\)](#)

### Tip 3: Recognize the iterative and ongoing work of aligning to priorities

The priorities we value at Queen's are aspirational and challenging. It's the type of work that takes time and benefits from incremental and sustained attention. As you prepare Section 3 of the self-study, it's valuable to recognize the nature of this work as iterative and ongoing. Reflect on the past, present, and future. For example, you might report on the last 18 months; the current academic year, and the next 2-5 years. Articulate the progress made in openly discussing, recognizing, planning for, and acting on various aspects of the priorities identified.

## Section 4: Program Academic Alignments

This section includes a discussion of the central components of the self-study and of the entire CPR. Quality Assurance is, as stated before, a program review anchored by learning outcomes which state how the student will benefit from the academic experience of university. Learning outcomes offer a way of orienting the learning process, but they should not be seen as limiting, constraining, or restricting (Cedefop p. 56). There are many documents on learning outcomes, and the following tips only cover the essential components relevant to the Self-Study.

## Writing and Revising Learning Outcomes

The following tips related to writing and revising learning outcomes are directly applicable to Sections 4.1 - 4.2

**Tip 1:** Start all learning outcomes with the phrase, "By the end of this program, successful students will be able to ..."

Learning outcomes are **Student-focused**. They should describe learning from a student perspective in terms of what learners will be able to know, do, or value by the end of their program. Additionally, outcomes **describe the end-state** of learning, that is statements describe the terminal or end result of the learning process. They describe what students will be able to do by the end of their program.

Overall, there are four key elements to a learning outcome statement:

|             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| The Learner | Learning outcomes start with a stem that focuses in the learner  | "By the end of this lesson/ course/program, students will be able to..." |
| The Action  | An action verb indicates the target performance and depth of learning  | describe   |
| The Object  | The statement elaborates on what is being learned - the concept, idea, or scope of learning                                      | the political, religious, economic and social uses of art                |
| The Context | The statement clarifies the disciplinary, social, professional context, and/or method through which the learning is demonstrated | in the Italian Renaissance.  |

**Tip 2:** Use carefully selected action verbs to precisely describe students' expected performance

The verb used in a learning outcomes statement carries a lot of weight. In a single word we can communicate specific domains of learning and the depth of learning expected of student performance. The following table demonstrates the wide range of verbs available in describing cognitive tasks a continuum of surface to deep levels of engagement (Bloom et al., 1956):

| Skill         | Description  | Verbs  |
|---------------|--|--|
| Creating      | combine elements to develop new models/ideas   | assemble, build, create, construct, design, develop, formulate, generate, hypothesize, invent, modify  |
| Evaluating    | assess effectiveness, coherence, rationale and make strategic judgments                                      | appraise, assess, choose, compare, conclude, critique, defend, explain, justify, review, recommend, support                                  |
| Analyzing     | identify assumptions, key components, & internal relationships; infer main principles; structure information | break down, catalogue, compare, contrast, correlate, deconstruct, differentiate, dissect, extrapolate, infer, investigate, outline, separate |
| Applying      | apply or relate information to new contexts  | change, construct, demonstrate, discover, execute, extrapolate, implement, manipulate, show, relate  |
| Understanding | know meaning of, and interpret or translate, information   | critique, convert, describe, discuss, estimate, explain, interpret, infer, paraphrase, summarize, translate,                                 |
| Remembering   | recognize or recall facts, details, and information  | define, identify, label, list, match, recall, recite, recognize, state   |

Deeper Learning



Surface Learning

**Tip 3: Review and revise outcomes to address ambiguity**

Learning outcomes get revised and refined over time. Looking back at previously drafted outcomes, one common critique is how general or vague the statement is. Reviewing and revising outcomes on a regular basis allows writers note and address issues of ambiguity.

| Broad or Ambiguous Program Learning Outcome   | Critique and Recommended Edit  | Revised program outcome   |
|---|--|---|
| Students will become familiar with theories of marketing in business and social media | Level of achievement is unclear. Select an action verb that clarifies on 'becoming familiar' | By the end of the program, students will be able to: <b>describe</b> theories of marketing in business and social media |
| Students will critique works of art   | Additional context is required. Add context that elaborates on the what and how              | Critique <b>contemporary</b> works of art <b>through oral and written analyses</b>                                      |

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Students will be taught various qualitative and quantitative methodologies for educational research | Instructor-centred rather than student-oriented. Reframe the outcome as what students will be able to demonstrate. | <b>Select and apply</b> appropriate qualitative and quantitative methodologies for educational research |
| Students will appreciate the ethical responsibilities of social scientists                          | Broad, unclear performance. Select an action verb that elaborates on 'appreciation'.                               | <b>Assess</b> the ethical implications of research in the social sciences                               |

One key strategy to reviewing statements for ambiguity is to look at the action verb – watch out for these vague verbs and consider recommended alternatives:

| Ambiguous                 | Recommended Alternatives:                                       |
|---------------------------|---|
| Know                      | identify, interpret, explain                                    |
| Understand                | differentiate, distinguish, practice, calculate                 |
| Comprehend                | describe, recall, recognize, define, predict                    |
| Appreciate                | discuss, question, critique, justify, defend                    |
| Demonstrate               | investigate, model, practice, manipulate, perform, model, solve |
| Enjoy                     | advocate, create, envision, express, defend                     |
| Grasp the significance of | explain, appraise, compare/contrast, interpret, differentiate   |
| Be aware of               | identify, locate, describe, apply, appraise                     |

#### Tip 4: Articulate the difference between plans

What is the difference between the various plans your program offers? When you consider a graduate of one plan versus another, how are those graduates different in terms of the knowledge, skills, values, and depth of learning they've gained as a result of their learning?

Each plan will have its own unique set of intended learning outcomes. When writing program level learning outcomes, attention must be given to articulating the difference between those plans. Often plans share a similar set of intended learning outcomes that might differ in terms of the depth of learning (e.g. the action verb used) and unique knowledge and skill set around areas of specialization (e.g. the context provided in the statement). Consider drafting an initial set of learning outcomes then editing them to reflect the differences between each plan.

| General Draft Outcome in Biological Sciences:<br>Apply contemporary research methods and techniques                                    |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Adapted for the minor:<br><i>Identify</i> contemporary research methods and techniques <i>commonly utilized in Biological Sciences</i> | Adapted for the major:<br><i>Evaluate</i> contemporary research methods and techniques <i>commonly utilized in Biological Sciences</i> | Adapted for the specialization:<br><i>Apply</i> contemporary research methods and techniques <i>to conduct a scientific inquiry in Biodiversity</i> |

## Curriculum Mapping

Section 4.1.2 indicates programs are to describe their curriculum mapping activities. “Curriculum mapping is a versatile process tool that can help faculty discern whether different curriculum components align; and if not, what adjustments can be made. Through this process faculty create a graphic portrayal of the program outcomes, the courses that comprise the program, and their relationship to the program’s purpose” (Kopera-Frye et al., 2008).

Many different approaches can be undertaken in support of curriculum mapping activities. This section offers recommended strategies for navigating those decisions. Additionally, Educational Developers in the Centre for Teaching and Learning can offer resources, consultation, and support on curriculum mapping activities. (Contact: Lauren Anstey, Educational Developer, l.anstey@queensu.ca).

**Tip 1:** Select an approach to curriculum mapping based on the self-study’s focus, available time, and desired depth

Curriculum mapping is a form of data collection. Different approaches can therefore be taken depending on the context: the investigative focus of the self-study, the amount of time/resources available, and the desired depth of analysis a unit wishes to employ. Four approaches are detailed below. These are not prescriptive but intended as adaptive to unit needs.

The Centre for Teaching & Learning offers additional resources, templates, and facilitator support on curriculum mapping.

### *Significant Milestones*

This map provides a high-level overview of the significant achievements – initial benchmarks, mid-point milestones, and final capstone performances – that highlight how students demonstrate progress on each program-level learning outcome from program entry to graduation.

| Program Learning Outcomes | Benchmark | Milestone | Milestone | Capstone |
|---------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Outcome 1                 |           |           |           |          |
| ...                       |           |           |           |          |

**Investigative focus:** Key or exemplary indicators of student learning across a program.

**Time & Resources:** In focusing on a high-level overview, this map focuses on collecting exemplary indicators of student progress. While this may save time, the map is limited in its scope and limits deeper analysis of a program’s curriculum. Instructor input is ideal to adequately document the various benchmarks, milestones, and capstones across the program. This approach collects a range of examples that must be carefully selected, organized, and summarized into the self-study report.

### *Progression of Learning - Course Alignment to Program Level Outcomes*

This map provides a detailed record of where program-level learning outcomes are first introduced, where they are reinforced, and where they are mastered across the courses that students take.

|              | Program Learning Outcomes |            |     |
|--------------|---------------------------|------------|-----|
| Core Courses | Outcome 1                 | Outcome 2  | ... |
| Course 101   | Introduced                |            |     |
| Course 102   | Reinforced                | Introduced |     |



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**Investigative focus:** how program outcomes are introduced, reinforced, and mastered across the curriculum.

**Time & Resources:** Instructor input is necessary to adequately document the course curriculum. This approach produces raw data that requires analysis, conversation, and summary for informing the self-study report.

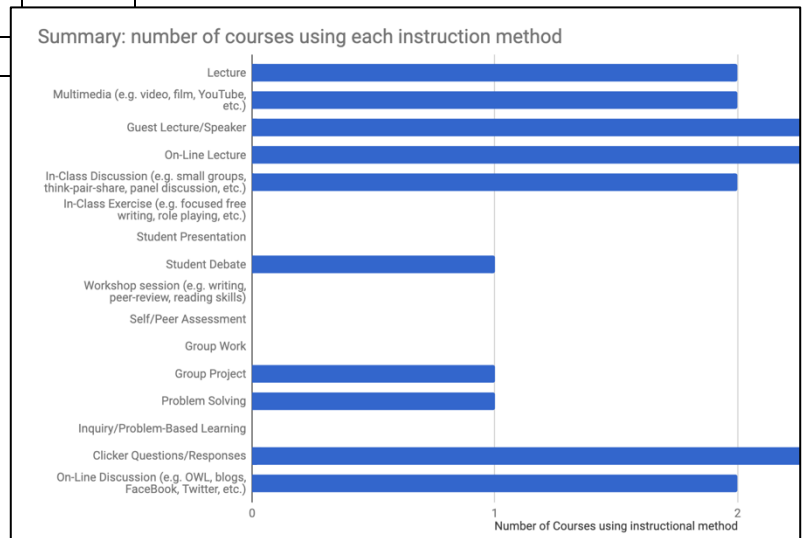
### *Methods of Teaching and Assessment Across the Curriculum*

This map tracks the methods of teaching and/or assessment being utilized at the course level in addressing program-level outcomes. Reports can then be generated showing the frequency of courses using each method, the predominant forms of teaching/assessment utilized across courses and across levels of study, and the forms of teaching/assessment typically used in addressing program outcomes.

| Core Courses | Methods of Teaching/Assessment |           |     |
|--------------|--------------------------------|-----------|-----|
|              | Outcome 1                      | Outcome 2 | ... |
| Course 101   | 1, 2                           | 2, 4      |     |
| Course 102   | 1, 3                           | 3         |     |

**Investigative focus:** methods of instruction and/or assessment across courses and across program learning outcomes

**Time & Resources:** Instructor input is necessary to adequately document the course curriculum. This approach produces raw data that requires analysis, conversation, and summary for informing the self-study report.



### Tip 2: Get everyone involved

As highlighted in the above section, instructor input in the curriculum mapping process is ideal if not essential. Those who teach the course are the people who hold sufficient knowledge of the course curriculum as planned and taught. Additionally, curriculum mapping produces data, which drives conversation about your program – a conversation that involves everyone. Instructor involvement can be garnered through surveys or facilitated retreats. The Centre for Teaching and Learning provides support and recommendations.

### Tip 3: Map the core curriculum of each plan

A common question that arises during curriculum mapping is how to approach electives, options, and the inevitable variation in students' course selection that arises. Here are some possible strategies:

- Include only the core courses in your curriculum map and elaborate on electives/options through other means within your self-study

- Map core courses, then bundle similar electives and options to include in the curriculum map as groupings. Consider each grouping for the intended learning experience offered to the student. For example, if a student is to select between one of three courses that each differ in the special topic covered, the course level learning outcomes may differ in context but share similar intentions in terms of performance and depth (such as application of knowledge, development of research skills, etc.)

## Alignment of program-level learning outcomes with course-based teaching and learning activities

Teaching and learning activities are the tasks that instructors facilitate, and students engage in, that support learning. These activities are often course-based, for example lectures, small and large group discussions, lab work, and tutorials; but they can also be co-curricular, referring to the activities and experiences that students' engage in outside of their courses but nevertheless contribute to their progression of program learning outcomes, for example, journal clubs, departmental presentations, competitions, etc.

Section 4.1.2 of the self-study prompts programs to consider the alignment between program learning outcomes and teaching and learning activities. The key question is: **What specific learning activities help students achieve the learning outcomes of the program?** "Aligning learning outcomes to teaching and learning is about connecting the abstract idea of a learning outcome to what teachers actually do to help students learn, and about the things that students do to learn" (Cedefop, 2017, p. 54).

Addressing this aspect of the self-study has a direct connection with the form(s) of curriculum mapping engaged. For example, if documenting significant milestones, the program might focus on documenting exemplary instances of teaching or learning activities that serve as milestones of student progress:

| Program Outcome   | Milestone Activity  | Capstone Activity   |
|---|---|---|
| <i>Apply contemporary research methods and techniques to conduct a scientific inquiry in Biodiversity</i> | BIO 201: tutorial groups critique research studies; write thesis statements | BIO 490: students rehearse a prepared presentation of their scientific inquiry with peers |

If a more comprehensive form of data collection is being engaged, programs might document all forms of teaching and learning activities related to the outcome and present a summary of their analysis within the self-study.

## Alignment of program-level learning outcomes with course-based methods of assessment

Assessments include the various activities, assignments, or tasks that measure student's progress on learning, whether that's within a course or across a student's program of study. For example, assessments might be exams, research projects, presentations, essays, lab reports, field work, reflection tasks – anything a student engages in, completes, and (often) submits for evaluation. Assessments can be:

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- **Formative:** assessment activities that promote and monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning, or;
- **Summative:** evaluations of student learning that occur at the end of an instructional unit, e.g. mid-term and final assessments, assessments of capstone projects (Harlen & James, 1997).

Section 4.1.2 of the self-study template prompts programs to consider the alignment between program learning outcomes and assessments that demonstrate progression on or achievement of those outcomes. The key question is: **What specific assessments demonstrate that students are progressing towards or have achieved the learning outcomes of the program?**

Similar to above, the methods employed for addressing this question within the self-study has a direct connection with the form(s) of curriculum mapping that are engaged.

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