Program mapping entails the systematic review and alignment of individual course learning, activities and assessments with the relevant program learning goals, graduate capabilities and disciplinary standards.

Faculties or Schools start this process by translating Faculty attributes and discipline standards into a set of program learning goals. They map individual courses, collate the results, and map the program goals, attributes and disciplinary standards across all courses in the entire program to reveal gaps and areas of over-concentration.

What is a program map used for?

By analysing a program map, you can see whether the program currently integrates all its specified attributes and, if so, how effectively it does this. Subsequently, you might revise course and program outlines to include clear statements of the graduate attributes they develop.

Program mapping shows teaching staff and students how the learning strategies embodied in individual courses work together to produce student learning outcomes, and how courses work together to build learning outcomes for an entire program.

A complete program map clearly shows gaps or overlaps in the development, practice and assessment of the broader capabilities, attributes and discipline requirements.

How do I start program mapping?

Many curriculum mapping software products have been developed. A course and program mapping tool is currently under development at UNSW.

You can create a simple mapping matrix table for yourself in Excel or Word, in which the program outcomes are listed in the first row and the list of courses in the first column. For each program outcome, detail the extent to which each course learning outcome contributes to the program outcome.

Sample program mapping project

You usually map program outcomes usually during a program review, in response to certain aims or objectives. For example, the aims in the COFA Curriculum Mapping Project were to:
• assist program authorities and course coordinators to understand the overall pattern of learning in each program, the contribution of each course and the adequacy of the curriculum to university-wide and program goals.

• identify gaps, overlaps in program curriculum

• understand and support the learning process in the courses that engages graduate attribute outcomes

• allow a program-wide view of the teaching process

• assist staff expanding their teaching repertoires in the light of an understanding of student outcomes.

**The stages followed in the process were:**

• **Collect and review course outlines.**
  These now ask for information on course aims, articulation with other courses and teaching strategies, which assist the mapping process.

• **Develop mapping tool.**
  This could be an Excel spreadsheet that uses student activities as the key focus for each course, and then correlates student learning outcomes, assessment tasks and graduate attributes.

• **Preliminary mapping.**
  Selected core courses in each undergraduate program are mapped into the Excel tool.

• **Meeting of small groups of academic staff,**
  to discuss the adequacy of preliminary maps, and the correlation of Handbook entries, course outlines and the maps.

• **Whole program mapping.**
  Correlating course student activities and outcome maps across whole programs.

• **Review program maps**
  in the light of COFA graduate attributes and key UNSW learning and teaching goals.

• **Meetings with staff**
  to assess process and implications for course structures and teaching strategies.

**Further information**

• [Program-Level Learning Outcomes](https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/mapping-program-learning-outcomes)

• [Guidelines on Learning that inform teaching at UNSW](https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/mapping-program-learning-outcomes)

• [UNSW: COFA Learning and Teaching](https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/mapping-program-learning-outcomes)