

1. Assurance of learning and assessing graduate attributes

A Comparison of Tools to Support Faculty-Wide Approaches to Assurance of Learning - Avoiding reinventing the wheel!

In the new landscape of Australian higher education (Nicoll, 2012), universities are increasingly expected to provide evidence of the achievement of graduate outcomes. While often driven by accountability imperatives, there is a concerted effort developing among the teaching and learning community to use the process of assurance of learning for pedagogical purposes to encourage continuous improvement of the processes and outcomes of education (Lawson et al., 2012). Given the need for an efficiency and effectiveness in a streamlined process that does not negatively impact on workload, while cognitively engaging staff and students, the tools that offer support to the process, need to be examined (Freeman, 2010). This paper showcases a range of tools available for curriculum mapping and data collection in assurance of learning and asks if there is an off the shelf solution for all contexts or is there a need for further in-house tool development to suit individual institutional needs?

An effective faculty-wide approach to assurance of learning may require the support of a fit for purpose tool solution. While developed commercial products exist, many universities are engaged in developing in-house software that addresses their needs. This OLT Strategic Priority Project reviewed a number of available tools, examining technical features and functionality while investigating how they fit into a faculty-wide approach for enhancing student learning and engaging teaching staff. The presentation will emphasise the connection between tools and the organisational processes that make effective assurance of learning possible.