

# National Institute for Learning Outcomes Assessment

Making Learning Outcomes Usable & Transparent

## Guidelines for Unfacilitated Charrettes

Assignment-design charrettes run by NILOA have employed trained facilitators who do not share an assignment of their own but rather provide guidance for the process; guidelines for this role can be found elsewhere in this toolkit ([Guidelines for Assignment-Design Charrette Facilitators](#)). But for a variety of reasons, some campuses have run successful charrettes without facilitators. They may, for instance, have too many charrette groups to make it feasible to provide trained facilitators for each, or they may simply wish to give faculty participants in the charrette more control. In any event here are some suggestions for running unfacilitated charrettes.

- 1) Though each small group (or charrette, typically consisting of 4-5 people) will operate without a facilitator, the event needs a leader. Before the small groups begin their discussion of assignments, this person should set the stage for sharing and discussion assignments by explaining the purpose of the process and providing an overview of how it will unfold, including-- importantly--timing. PowerPoint slides that may be helpful in this regard are provided [here](#).
- 2) In addition to providing an overview of what participants will be doing with their time, the leader should either encourage participants to watch the [webinar](#) on assignment design prior to attending, or use the slides as an opening framing to the conversation. Establishing a shared understanding and conversation space is crucial to success of the group discussions
- 3) Each charrette participant should have a copy of the “[charrette process](#)” handout, (modified as needed to fit local circumstance). This handout provides step-by-step directions to the groups.
- 4) Either the leader of the event can announce when it is time to move to different discussion points (introduce assignment, discuss assignment, provide written feedback) or each small group may appoint someone within the group to watch the time; perhaps this role can be rotated around the group.
- 5) Depending on the focus of the event, groups benefit from having a list of focal questions to guide their discussion. Following the list allows for the group to remain on topic without a facilitator. Options are included in NILOA’s list of [questions](#) for discussion and review, but note that too many pre-set questions can get in the way of authentic exchange. Thus, another alternative is to use the short list of questions on [NILOA feedback form](#), which can be tailored to suit the purpose of the occasion. For instance, if the event is intended to explore assignments that require integrative thinking, the feedback form could include a question that highlights that purpose.