

Assessment Plan for the MBA Program

Department of Business

University of Wisconsin - Parkside

I. Determinants of Assessment Requirements

It is useful to be aware of the requisites this Assessment Plan must satisfy, because several internal and external requirements exist. First, there are two external bodies that set minimum assessment standards, namely, AACSB International and the Higher Learning Commission. Next, at the UW System level, periodic guidelines are sent to all UW campuses for assessing and reporting on verbal and quantitative skills of students, mostly in line with guidelines established by the Higher Learning Commission.

At the campus level, the General Education Committee determines the General Education competencies which apply to all students regardless of major. Recently, the learning goals stated for General Education were adapted as the university's undergraduate shared learning goals. Although these shared learning goals are for undergraduate students, the MBA program believes the learning goals are relevant for graduate education as well. The Academic Achievement Assessment Committee oversees the assessment efforts of all departments mostly for compliance with the guidelines of the Higher Learning Commission and the UW System. Another university-level expectation is the program review that every academic program is required to conduct once every five years. Additionally, the Committee on Academic Planning (CAP) ensures that a department's academic programs are in line with the departmental and university missions and that the department has a process for conducting ongoing assessment of student learning. Finally, at the departmental level, the department's mission and objectives, written in the context of overall environment, require assessment.

The figure below represents all of the above factors in a kind of Venn diagram. The overlap between any two factors represents, roughly, how much they have in common. The Assessment Plan, represented by the outer rectangle has to cover all of these areas.

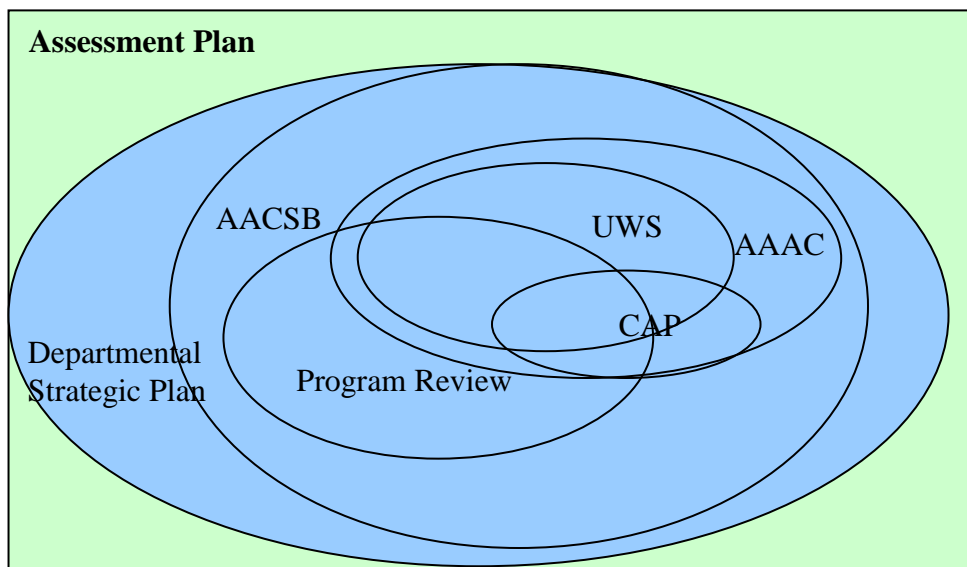


Figure 1. A Venn diagram representation of assessment requirements.

II. Committees involved in Assessment

Within the department, the MBA Curriculum and Assessment Committee (MBA-CAC) is responsible for planning and implementing all the assessment activities. This committee is made up of faculty members representing all the functional areas. In addition, the College of Business, Economics, and Computing Advisory Board (CBECAB) advises the school in curricular matters including assessment. The Students Advisory Board (SAB) and the Alumni Advisory Board (AAB) will also offer input to curriculum design and assessment. At least once in two years, representatives from the faculty, CBECAB, SAB, and AAB will meet at a retreat to discuss important matters relating to MBA curriculum design and assessment.

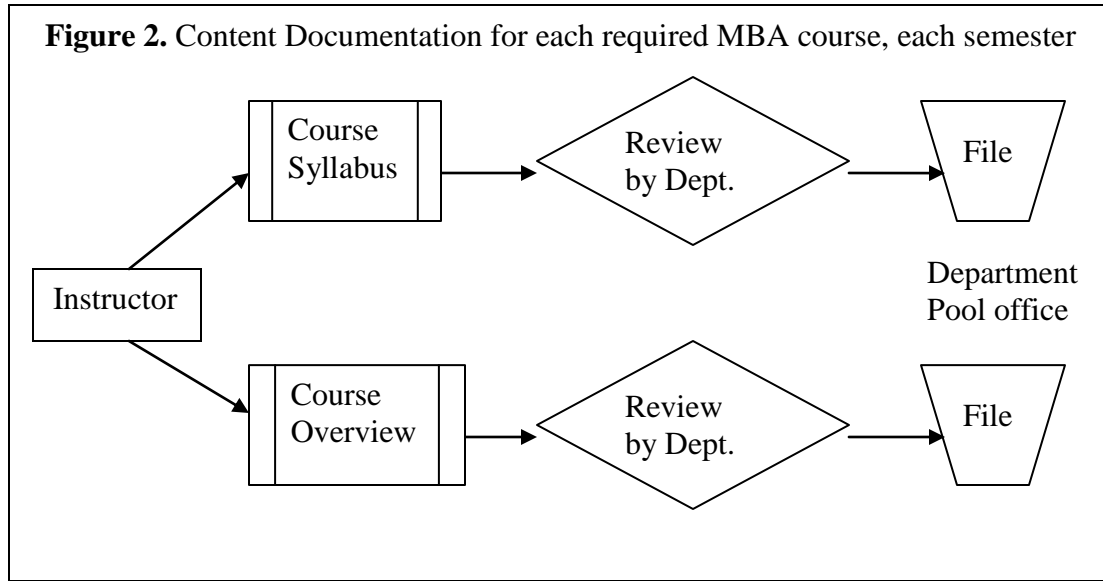
Our assessment plan is based on the following four fundamental steps (Martell and Calderon, 2005; Walvoord 2004).

1. Articulate goals for student learning.
2. Offer enough opportunities for students to achieve those goals.
3. Gather evidence on how well the students meet the learning goals using direct and indirect measures.
4. Use the evidence gathered for continuous improvement.

III. Assessment of Curriculum Content

A continual assessment of the MBA program will be done at two levels: (1) Curriculum Content (which includes course level learning goals), and (2) Program Level Learning Goals. The separation of the two levels is only to differentiate the level of assurance of learning; there can be some overlap between curriculum content and the program-level learning goals.

Before the beginning of a semester, for each of the *required* MBA courses, the instructor will turn in the course syllabus and a course overview document. The course syllabi will contain course-level learning goals, and mention how those goals are assessed within the course. For example, a learning goal may be assessed through a combination of homework, assignment, and exams.



The format of the Course Overview document is shown in the last page. As illustrated in figure 2, the course syllabus and course overview documents will be reviewed by the department chair to see if they are in line with the curricular and administrative policies of the department. If corrections are needed, they will be sent back to the instructor for revision. The documents will then be filed in the department pool office made available to committees involved in assessment.

The MBA CAC will examine the course syllabi and course overview forms periodically, at least once in two years, to ensure that the following topics are covered in the curriculum. These topics are arranged in two lists, AACSB Suggested Topics and Additional Management-Specific Topics.

AACSB suggested topics.

1. Ethical and legal responsibilities in organizations and society
2. Financial theories, analysis, reporting, and markets
3. Creation of value through the integrated production and distribution of goods, services, and information
4. Group and individual dynamics in organizations
5. Statistical data analysis and management science as they support decision-making processes throughout an organization
6. Information technologies as they influence the structure and processes of organizations and economics, and as they influence the roles and techniques of management
7. Domestic and global economic environments of organizations

Additional Management Specific Topics:

1. Core functions of Management, namely, plan, organize, lead and control
2. Inventory control and quality control
3. Managerial accounting
4. Marketing strategy concepts: target market delineation, product positioning, pricing, and marketing communications
5. Theory and application of primary and secondary marketing research

IV. Assessment of Program Level Learning Goals

The Department has finalized the following Program-Level Learning Goals (PLLG):

- **PLLG 1.** The students can recognize and analyze ethical problems that occur at the strategic level of business decision making. Based on the analysis, students can choose and defend a resolution.
- **PLLG 2.** The students can effectively write a report on a business case study, and provide practical solutions to the problems in the case.
- **PLLG 3.** Each student understands and is able to apply alternative security valuation models, compute the cost of capital, and analyze the risk and return dimensions of business investment proposals.
- **PLLG 4.** Each student is knowledgeable in project management principles and is able to apply these principles to a practical situation.
- **PLLG 5.** The students will be able to formulate mathematical models of quantitative business problems and interpret the results so as to be able to handle new and unfamiliar decision making situations.
- **PLLG 6.** The students will be able to integrate their knowledge of concepts from different functional areas of business while analyzing and resolving a strategic level decision making problem.

PLLG 1. The students can recognize and analyze ethical problems that occur at the strategic level of business decision making. Based on the analysis, students can choose and defend a resolution.

Course-Embedded Activities for Assurance: Students in the MBA 752 Marketing Management course will analyze cases that include ethical elements, and submit case reports. They will also explain their analysis in a presentation to the class.

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Recognition of the Ethical Issue	Student's assignment identifies the ethical issue clearly, concisely, and comprehensively.	Student's assignment identifies the ethical issue, but is not clear, concise and comprehensive.	Student's assignment does not identify the ethical issue(s) related to the assignment.
Position on the Ethical Issue	Student's assignment takes a clear, concise position on the ethical issue. The position reflects thorough consideration of both sides of the ethical issue.	Student's assignment takes a clear, concise position on the ethical issue. However, the position does not reflect a comprehensive deliberation of the issue.	Student's assignment does not take a clear, concise position on the ethical issue.
Support for Position on the Ethical Issue	Student's assignment provides three distinct arguments to support the position on the business issue. Arguments reflect the ability to apply an ethical model in arriving at the position. The arguments are clearly and effectively communicated. The application of the model is robustly illustrated.	Student's assignment provides three distinct arguments to support the position on the business issue. Arguments reflect the ability to apply an ethical model in arriving at the position. However, the arguments are not clearly and effectively communicated, or the application of the model is not robustly illustrated.	Student's assignment does not provide three distinct arguments to support the position on the business issue. Arguments do not reflect the ability to apply an ethical model in arriving at the position.

PLLG 2. The students can effectively write a report on a business case study, and provide practical solutions to the problems in the case.

Course-Embedded Activities for Assurance: Students in MBA 715 Operations Management course will analyze cases and submit case reports with their conclusions and recommendations.

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Presents convincing conclusions	Conclusions demonstrate insight into the problem and are based on a thorough critical analysis of the evidence.	Conclusions are presented and are supported by the evidence, but are primarily based on one or two sources.	The conclusions provide inadequate solutions to the case, or are not adequately explained and supported by the evidence.
Mechanics	Paragraphs are well organized and there are no grammatical or spelling errors. Flow of ideas is logical. Overall, the paper is well organized.	Some grammatical or spelling errors. Paragraph structure and paper organization are good.	Many grammatical or spelling errors are present, or the paper is not well organized. Five or more minor errors OR one or more major errors (such as incomplete sentences)
Writing Style	Writing style is appropriate for graduate level and enhances the desire to read the paper, e.g. the flow of ideas is logical, ideas are conveyed well with economic use of words, sentences and paragraphs are not overly long.	Writing style is appropriate at graduate level	Writing style is not formal enough for graduate level

PLLG 3. Each student understands and is able to apply alternative security valuation models, compute the cost of capital, and analyze the risk and return dimensions of business investment proposals.

Course-Embedded Activities for Assurance: Students in the course MBA 732 Corporate Financial Management will complete assignments, and answer exam questions that test their proficiency toward this learning goal.

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Application of available information to security valuation models and to financial decisions.	The student shows a clear understanding of all aspects of alternative security valuation model applications. The student can elaborate on the relationships between economic events and security valuation.	The student shows an understanding of alternative security valuation model applications. The student recognizes relationships between economic events and security valuation.	The student shows a weak understanding of alternative security valuation model applications. There is little recognition of the relationships between economic events and security valuation.
Use of available information to make decisions using the risk-adjusted discount rate or cost of capital.	The student shows a clear understanding of all aspects of the risk-adjusted discount rate or cost of capital and can fully respond to making decisions using these concepts.	The student shows an understanding of the cost of capital definitions, the risk-adjusted discount rate, and can generally apply the concepts.	The student shows a weak understanding of the basic aspects of the cost of capital or risk-adjusted discount rate. The student has difficulty computing and recognizing the various components of the cost of capital definitions and the risk-adjusted discount rate.
Ability to analyze the risk and return dimensions of financial assets.	The student can compute risk and return measures and apply them to complex financial data. The student can fully elaborate on the complexity of alternative financial asset risk and return tradeoffs in real settings.	The student can compute risk and return measures and apply them to complex financial data. The student shows recognition of the complexity of alternative financial asset risk and return tradeoffs in real settings.	There is evidence that the student cannot compute risk and return measures using financial data. The student shows little understanding of the complexity of alternative financial asset risk and return tradeoffs in real settings.

PLLG 4. Each student is knowledgeable in project management principles and is able to apply these principles to a practical situation.

Course Embedded Activity for Assessment: Students in MBA 716 Project Management will be given a case study exercise that will require them to discuss issues related to teamwork, scope management, and risk management. It will also ask the students to develop a project plan for the project.

Scoring Rubric:

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Scope and Risk Management	Student recognizes the scope of the project and the risks associated with the project correctly. Student also provides a detailed plan to manage the scope and the risks of the project.	Student recognizes the scope of the project and the risks associated with the project correctly. However, does not provide a thorough plan to manage the scope and the risks of the project.	Student does not recognize either the scope of the project, or the risks associated with the project.
Teamwork	Student recognizes the teamwork issues presented in the case. Student also provides a thorough plan to improve the teamwork along dimensions such as communication, motivation, productivity and morale.	Student recognizes the teamwork issues presented in the mini-case. However student does not identify concrete steps for improving the team's communication, motivation, productivity and morale.	Student does not recognize the positive and/or negative teamwork issues presented in the case.
Project Plan	Project plan correctly includes all the details in terms of tasks, deadlines, precedence constraints, persons assigned to the task and the estimated time for each task.	Project plan correctly includes more than 75% of the details in terms of tasks, deadlines, precedence constraints, persons assigned to the task and the estimated time for each task.	Project plan lacks 25% or more of the details in terms of tasks, deadlines, precedence constraints, persons assigned to the task and the estimated time for each task.

PLLG 5. The students will be able to formulate mathematical models of quantitative business problems and interpret the results so as to be able to handle new and unfamiliar decision making situations.

Course-Embedded Activity for Assessment: Students of the MBA 712 Quantitative Methods class will formulate and solve an optimization problem addressing an unfamiliar business decision-making situation.

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Identify the Math Technique or Formula	The student has identified the correct mathematical model/formula for the decision making situation and provided an adequate explanation.	The student identified the correct mathematical model/formula.	The student has the wrong mathematical model.
Formulate the model for a specific situation	The student has developed the math model given the data and constraints related to the business decision problem. In addition, the student was able to explain the model.	The student has made no mistakes or one minor mistake in the application of the correct method given the constraints for the decision problem.	The student incorrectly formulated the method for the decision problem or has made major mistake in the formulation.
Solution and analysis	The student has correctly solved the problem and has added a verbal explanation of the solution.	The student has the right solution, or there is at most one minor error.	The student has the wrong solution, or has more than one error in the solution.

PLLG 6. The students will be able to integrate their knowledge of concepts from different functional areas of business while analyzing and resolving a strategic level decision making problem.

Course-Embedded Activities for Assurance: Students in the capstone course, MBA 796 Advanced Strategic Management, will do assignments that require the integration of concepts from all the functional areas of business.

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Identification of issues or Reflection on Learning	Student's assignment identifies the business issue(s) clearly, concisely, and comprehensively.	Student's assignment identifies the issue(s), but is not clear, concise and comprehensive.	Student's assignment does not identify the issue(s) related to the assignment.
Integration of concepts from various functional areas	Student's assignment clearly integrates concepts from various functional areas. The recommendation reflects thorough consideration of many functional areas.	Student's assignment clearly integrates a few concepts from various functional areas. However, the position does not reflect thorough consideration of many functional areas.	Student's assignment does not clearly integrate concepts from various functional areas.
Analysis & Resolution of Strategic Level Decision Making Problem	Student's assignment provides clear evidence and analysis to support the recommendation on the business issue. Arguments reflect the ability to apply tools of analysis well in arriving at the position.	Student's assignment provides some evidence and analysis to support the recommendation on the business issue. Arguments reflect the ability to apply tools of analysis somewhat in arriving at the position.	Student's assignment does not provide evidence and analysis to support the recommendation on the business issue. Arguments do not reflect the ability to apply analytical tools in arriving at the position.

V. University Shared Learning Goals

Although the university's shared learning goals are primarily designed for undergraduate students, the MBA learning goals readily map into these goals. The expectations of graduate students are at higher level.

PLLG	University Shared Learning Goal
PLLG 1-Ethics	Reasoned judgment, Social and personal responsibility
PLLG 2-Writing on a business case	Communication, reasoned judgment, social and personal responsibility
PLLG 3-Financial Analysis	Reasoned judgment
PLLG 4-Project management	Reasoned judgment, social and personal responsibility, communication
PLLG 5-Math model	Reasoned judgment
PLLG 6-Integrated reasoning	Reasoned judgment, social and personal responsibility

VI. The Review Process

The following summarizes the review process that will be used for the MBA program:

1. Whenever MBA assessment data are compiled, the MBA CAC will review the results and if necessary make changes to the curriculum, or modifications to teaching methods, to achieve continuous improvement. This may take the form of:
 - a refinement of a PLLG definition, or the process of assurance
 - a revision of the syllabus of a course involved in a PLLG
 - propose changes to the MBA course offerings, admissions policies, prerequisites, and other program requirements
2. Periodically, the MBA CAC will review the curriculum content documentation and initiate actions, such as:
 - additions and deletions to the content leading to changes in a course overview
 - a revision of the syllabus of a required course
3. At least once in three years, the MBA CAC will involve the CBEC advisory in a review of curriculum content and PLLG documentation. MBA CAC will collect feedback from the advisory boards. The considerations are:
 - revision of a PLLG definition or the process of assurance
 - a revision of the syllabus of a course involved in a PLLG
 - additions and deletions to the content leading to changes in a course overview
 - a revision of the syllabus of a required course
 - a complete revision of the MBA curriculum

4. At least once in three years, the Department will conduct a survey to examine how well the MBA program is preparing the students for successful careers. The MBA CAC will review the survey results and consider:
 - revision of a PLLG definition or the process of assurance
 - a revision of the syllabus of a course involved in a PLLG
 - additions and deletions to the content leading to changes in a course overview
 - a revision of the syllabus of a required course
 - a complete revision of the MBA curriculum

VI. References

Barbara E. Walvoord. 2004. *Assessment Clear and Simple: A Practical Guide for Institutions, Departments, and General Education*. Jossey-Bass Higher and Adult Education.

Kathryn Martell and Thomas Calderon (Editors). 2005. *Assessment of Student learning in Business Schools: Best Practices Each Step of The Way*. Volume 1. Association for Institutional Research.

May 5, 2006

Updated July 20, 2010

Updated April 19, 2013