



DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS

**ASSURANCE OF LEARNING REPORT
MBA PROGRAM**

ACADEMIC YEAR 2014-2015

1. Introduction

This document describes the results from the assurance of learning exercises conducted for the MBA Program in 2014-2015. The complete assessment plans used by the Department of Business are described in five documents: *Assessment Plan for the Undergraduate Business Program*, *Accounting Major Assessment Plan*, *Marketing Major Assessment Plan*, *MIS Major Assessment Plan*, and the *Assessment Plan for the MBA Program*. Each plan identifies program level learning goals (PLLGs) that are periodically assessed. These plans also specify rubrics for the assessment, processes for performing the assessment, processes for taking action on the assessment results, and processes for updating the assessment procedures. The latest assessment plans for the business undergraduate, MIS major, and the MBA Program were originally discussed and approved through a series of department and advisory board meetings beginning in Spring 2006. The MBA plan was updated slightly in 2010 to reflect a change in PLLG 5. Assessment plans for the two new majors, Accounting and Marketing, were revised and finalized in Spring 2015. The assessment plans and the data generated are periodically reviewed for quality improvement.

A summary of the **MBA Program Level Learning Goals** follow. All of the MBA PLLGs were assessed in 2014-2015.

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 apply optimization techniques 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.

A summary of results follow for each MBA PLLG.

MBA PLLG 1: Ethics Assessed in MBA 752: Marketing Mgt.

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.

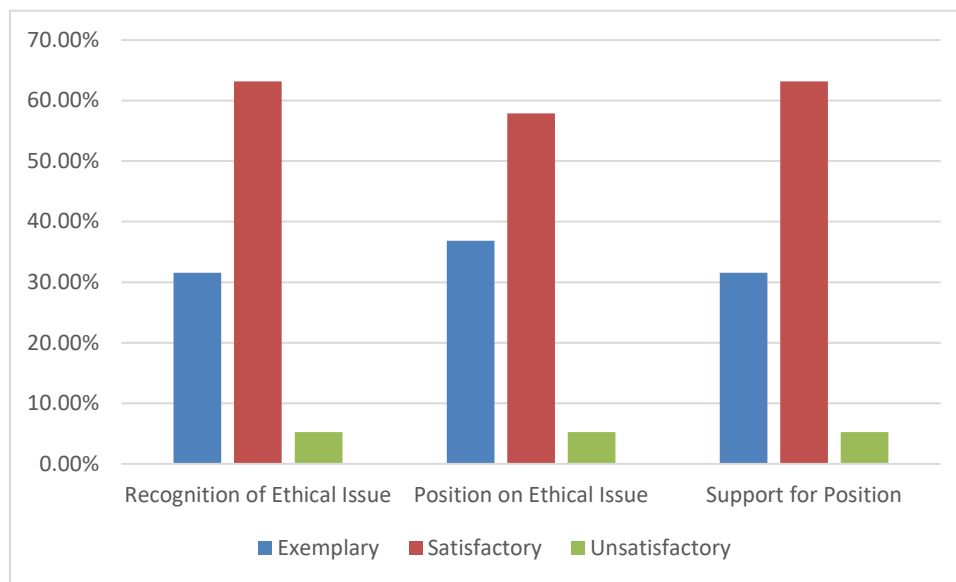
Course-Embedded Activities for Assurance: Students in the MBA 752: Marketing Management course will analyze cases that include ethical elements, and submit case reports. They will also explain their analysis in a presentation to the class.

	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 1 Assessed in MBA 752:
Marketing Management**

Fall 2014

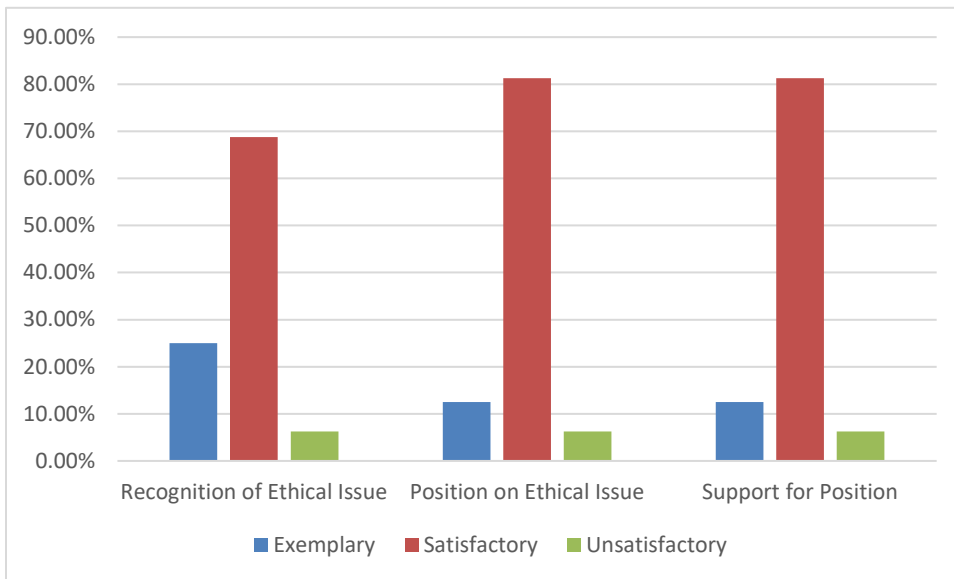
	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Recognition of Ethical Issue	6 <i>32%</i>	12 <i>63%</i>	1 <i>5%</i>	19
Position on Ethical Issue	7 <i>37%</i>	11 <i>58%</i>	1 <i>5%</i>	19
Support for Position	6 <i>32%</i>	12 <i>63%</i>	1 <i>5%</i>	19



**PLLG 1 Assessed in MBA 752:
Marketing Management**

Summer 2015

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Recognition of Ethical Issue	4 <i>25%</i>	11 <i>69%</i>	1 <i>6%</i>	16
Position on Ethical Issue	2 <i>13%</i>	13 <i>81%</i>	1 <i>6%</i>	16
Support for Position	2 <i>13%</i>	13 <i>81%</i>	1 <i>6%</i>	16



Comments Regarding MBA PLLG 1, MBA 752: Marketing Management

PLLG 1 Ethics significantly improved in 2014-15 when only 5% of the students were classified as unsatisfactory in each dimension for the largest group of students assessed that year (Fall Semester 2014). Additionally, by Summer Term 2015, only 6% of the students scored unsatisfactory in the three dimensions. This contrasts with results during the past five year period when in 2010, 24% of the students were scored unsatisfactory for PLLG1. The significant improvement was due to primarily to changes made on the basis of the professor’s analysis of the prior unsatisfactory results. For example, the professor noted that international students were having considerable difficulty with the assessment due to their writing skills and lack of familiarity with business case analysis. The professor, therefore, changed the course so that the assessment was moved to a later point in the semester, and also increased both the time devoted to case analysis instructions and the number of required, practice assignments prior to the assessment. Further, the College of Business, Economics, and Computing added a new course “Business Communications for International Students” that has been found to enhance international students’ proficiency in English, and subsequently their performance in various classes and assessments.

MBA PLLG 2: Writing Assessed in MBA 715: Advanced Operations Mgt.

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

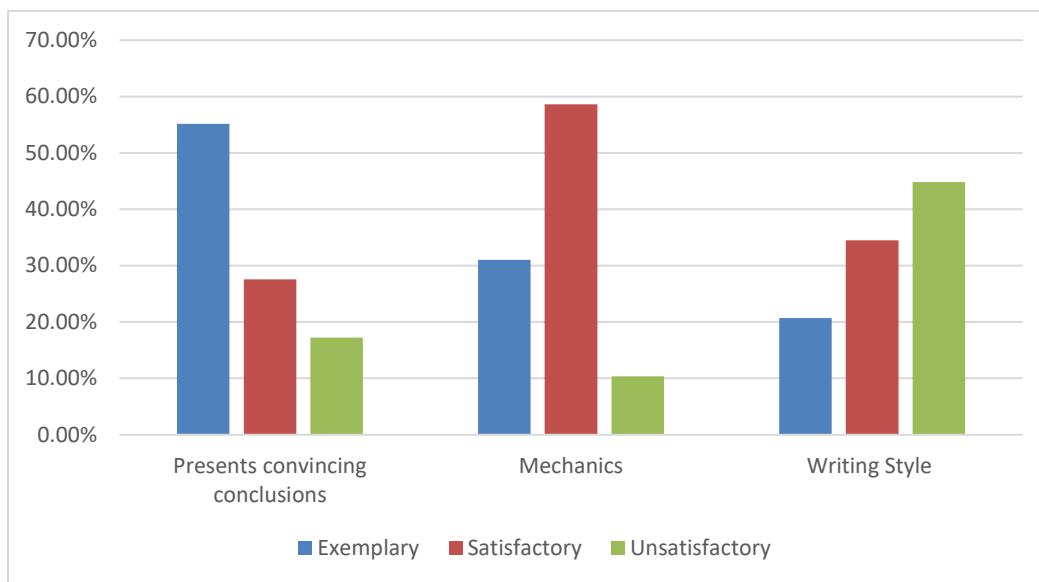
Course-Embedded Activities for Assurance: Students in the MBA 715: Operations Management course will analyze cases and submit case reports with their conclusions and recommendations.

MBA PLLG 2: Writing Rubric

	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

MBA PLLG 2: Writing Results in MBA 715
Advanced Operations Mgt.
Spring 2015

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Presents convincing conclusions	16 <i>55%</i>	8 <i>28%</i>	5 <i>17%</i>	29
Mechanics	9 <i>31%</i>	17 <i>59%</i>	3 <i>10%</i>	29
Writing Style	6 <i>21%</i>	10 <i>34%</i>	13 <i>45%</i>	29



Comments Regarding MBA PLLG 2, MBA 715: Operations Management

The *PLLG 2 Writing* percentages of unsatisfactory scores were of concern in two dimensions, Presenting Convincing Conclusions and Writing Style, in 2014-15. The operations management professor responsible for PLLG 2 assessments and the associate dean analyzed these results and determined a plan of action. This plan includes giving a grade for the assignment to be assessed; and providing a copy of the rubric in the syllabus so that students are aware of the criteria to be used in evaluating their performance. During the Fall Semester 2015, the plan will be implemented and subsequent assessment results will be contrasted with those obtained in the prior year to see whether the desired improvement in student performance is achieved.

MBA PLLG 3: Financial Analysis Assessed in MBA 732: Corporate Financial Mgt.

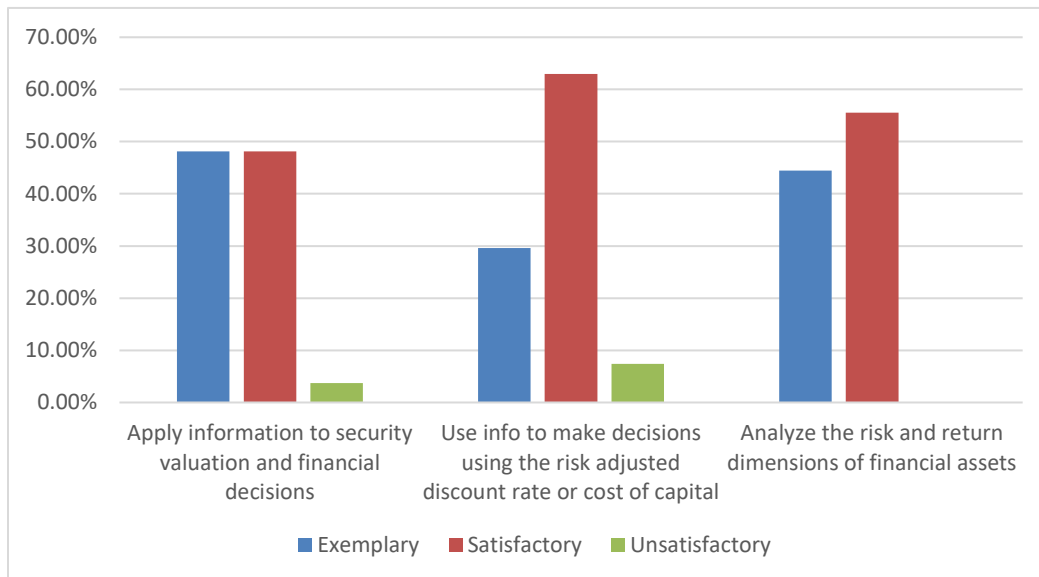
PLLG 3. Each student understands and is able to apply alternative security valuation models, compute the cost of capital, and analyze the risk and return dimensions of business investment proposals.

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 3 Assessments in MBA 732
Corporate Financial Management
Fall 2014**

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Apply information to security valuation and financial decisions	13 <i>48%</i>	13 <i>48%</i>	1 <i>4%</i>	27
Use info to make decisions using the risk adjusted discount rate or cost of capital	8 <i>30%</i>	17 <i>63%</i>	2 <i>7%</i>	27
Analyze the risk and return dimensions of financial assets	12 <i>44%</i>	15 <i>56%</i>	0 <i>0%</i>	27



Comments Regarding MBA PLLG 3, MBA 732: Corporate Financial Management

MBA *PLLG 3 Financial Analysis* displayed significant increase in the exemplary category and a very large decline in the unsatisfactory performance level for all three learning goal dimensions in 2014-15 compared with previous years. Several ongoing actions continued to be taken to improve performance in 2014-15 including having more students advised to take the foundation prerequisite course. Many students who had met the prerequisite waiver requirement needed a review of finance concepts before enrolling in the more advanced class. Also, international student admission requirements were reevaluated by the MBA curriculum and assessment committee, and continue to be implemented by UW-Parkside international recruiters.

MBA PLLG 4: Project Management Assessed in MBA 716: Project Mgt.

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.

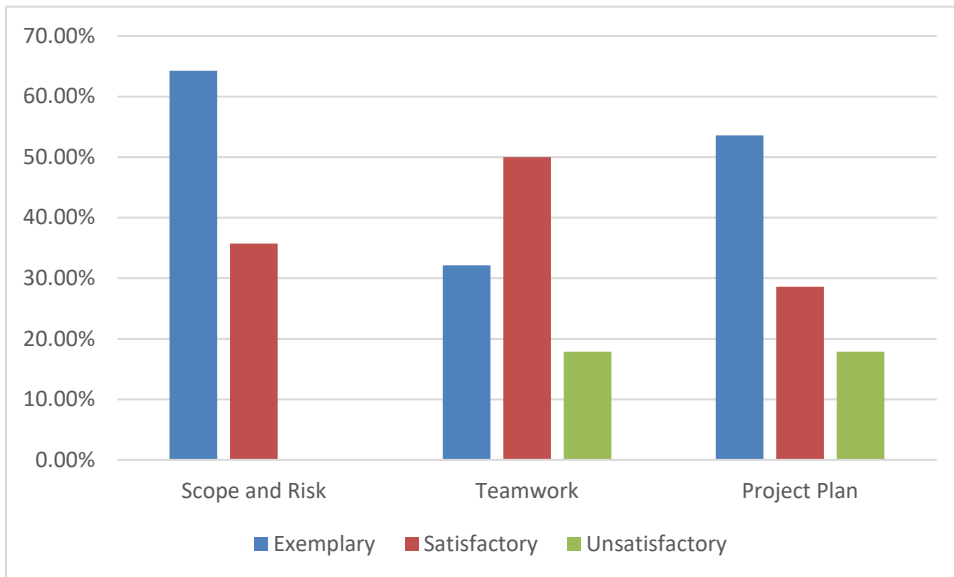
PLLG 4 Scoring Rubric:

	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 4 Assessments in MBA 716
Project Management**

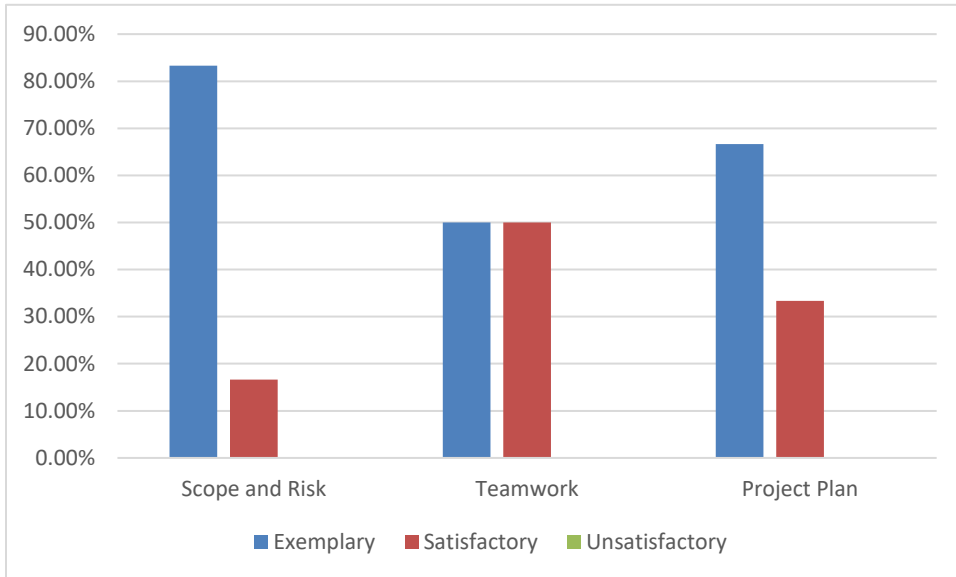
Fall 2014

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Scope and Risk	18 <i>64%</i>	10 <i>36%</i>	0 <i>0%</i>	28
Teamwork	9 <i>32%</i>	14 <i>50%</i>	5 <i>18%</i>	28
Project Plan	15 <i>54%</i>	8 <i>29%</i>	5 <i>18%</i>	28



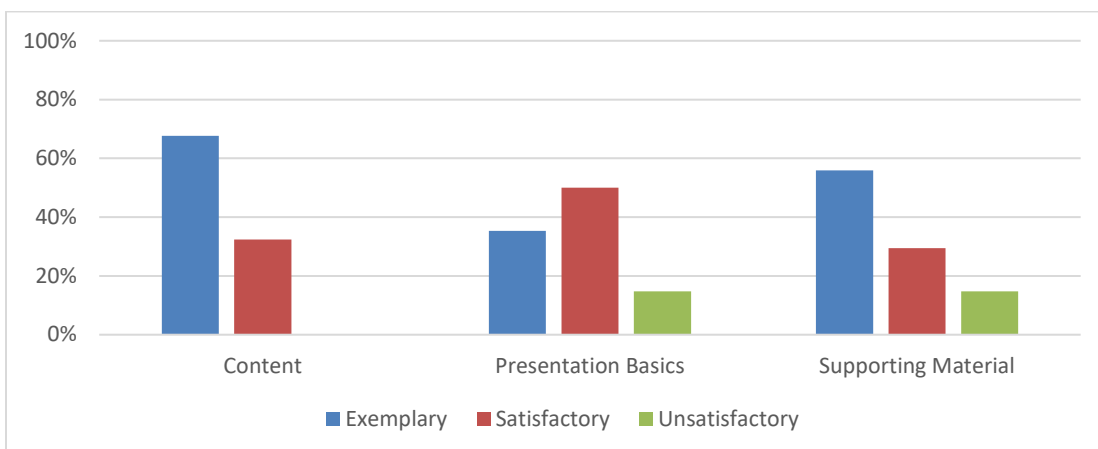
Spring 2015

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Scope and Risk	5 <i>83%</i>	1 <i>17%</i>	0 <i>0%</i>	6
Teamwork	3 <i>50%</i>	3 <i>50%</i>	0 <i>0%</i>	6
Project Plan	4 <i>67%</i>	2 <i>33%</i>	0 <i>0%</i>	6



PLLG 4 Total, Fall 2014 and Spring 2015

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Scope and Risk Management	23 68%	11 32%	0 0%	34
Teamwork	12 35%	17 50%	5 15%	34
Project Plan	19 56%	10 29%	5 15%	34



Comments Regarding MBA PLLG 4, MBA 716: Project Management

MBA PLLG 4 Project Management student performance greatly improved during academic year 2014-15. In Fall Semester 2014, only 5% of students were scored unsatisfactory in two of three dimensions (Teamwork and Project Plan) while all students were proficient or better in the scope and risk dimension. By summer 2015, in a much smaller section of the project management class, all students were assessed to be proficient or exemplary in each of the three dimensions. These results were achieved by taking several actions: a new case was used with a more appropriate level of difficulty, relevance, and appropriateness; the professor provided more guidance to the class; and a number of Chinese students admitted to the MBA Program were better prepared for graduate business classes.

MBA PLLG 5: Math Model Assessed in MBA 712: Quantitative Methods

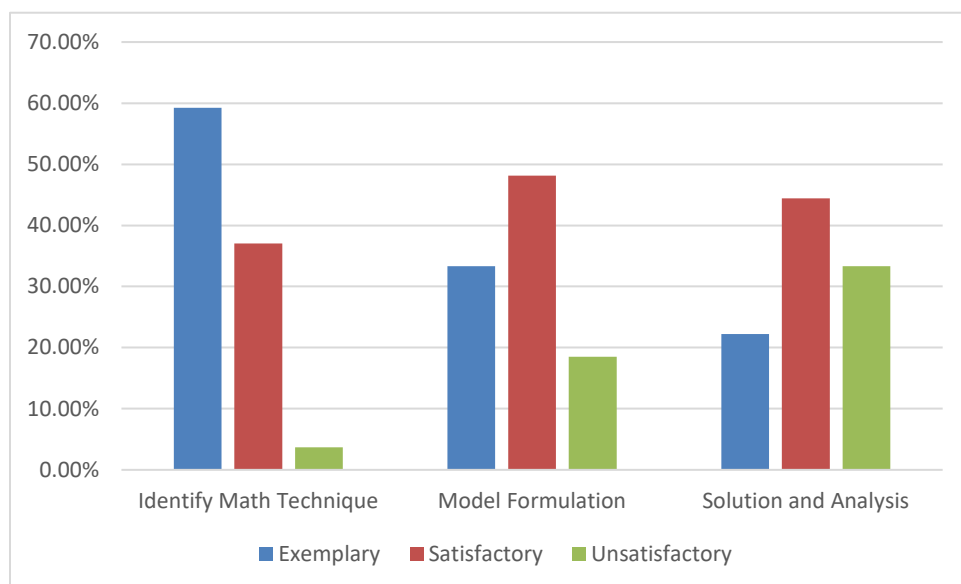
PLLG 5. The students will be able to formulate mathematical models of quantitative business problems and apply optimization techniques so as to be able to handle new and unfamiliar decision making situations.

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.

MBA PLLG 5 Assessment Results in MBA 712: Quantitative Methods, Fall 2014

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Identify Math Technique	16 59%	10 37%	1 4%	27
Model Formulation	9 33%	13 48%	5 19%	27
Solution and Analysis	6 22%	12 44%	9 33%	27



Comments Regarding MBA PLLG 5, MBA 712: Quantitative Methods

The largest majority of students performed exemplary (59%) or satisfactory (37%) in one PLLG 5 dimension: Identify the Math Technique. The dimension concerning Formulation is also above the desired 80% proficiency, yet can still be improved. A greater concern, however, is that one-third of the students scored unsatisfactory in the Solution and Analysis dimension in Fall Semester 2014.

In recent years, some students' performance improved in PLLG 5 assessments after the professor began providing a summary of basic concepts originally prepared by a former graduate student who performed at the exemplary level. The professor adopted the summary and made it available to all students to enhance their understanding of mathematical concepts, particularly since it had been a while since some students had the prerequisite courses. In addition, the professor spent more time at the beginning of the semester reviewing prerequisite math topics in class given the difficulties some students encountered in grasping higher level mathematical models. Unfortunately, performance in the solution and analysis dimension did not improve in Fall 2014. This situation may be partially explained by the shorter MBA sessions during the Spring and Fall semesters. Thus, in Spring 2015 a senior professor in quantitative

methods explored an alternative approach to teaching the MBA 712 Quantitative Methods course and is working on recommendations for redesigning the course. Initial feedback from Spring semester MBA students reflect a much higher level of satisfaction with the pedagogical methods and approach used that semester. The quantitative methods professors are meeting in the current (Fall) semester to further explore ways to improve student performance for PLLG 5.

MBA PLLG 6: Integrated Reasoning Assessed in MBA 796: Advanced Strategic Mgt.

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.

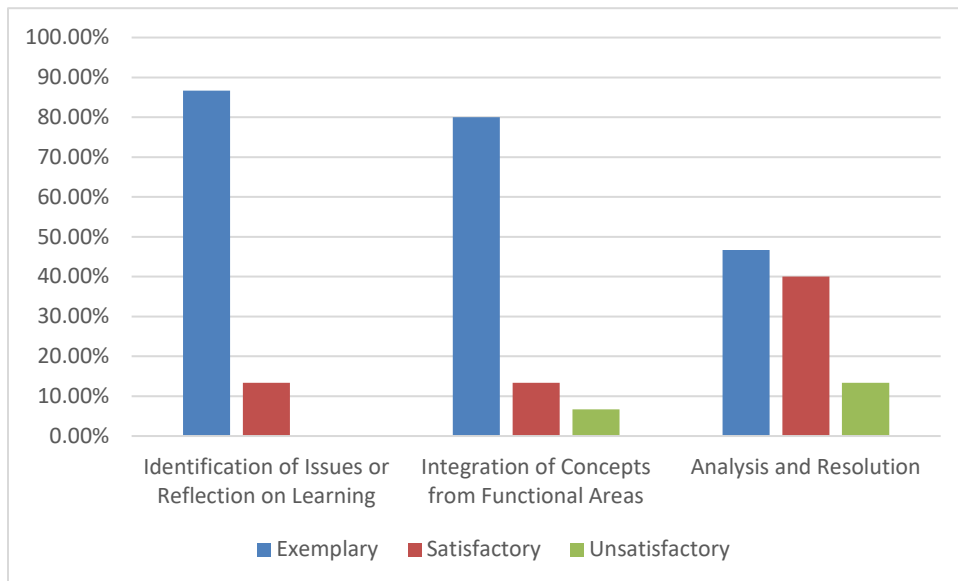
PLLG 6: Integration and Strategy Rubric (Strategic Decision Making)

	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	Student's assignment provides some evidence and analysis to support the recommendation on	Student's assignment does not provide 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.	the business issue. Arguments reflect the ability to apply tools of analysis somewhat in arriving at the position.	analysis to support the recommendation on the business issue. Arguments do not reflect the ability to apply analytical tools in arriving at the position.
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MBA PLLG 6: Integration and Strategy Assessment Results in Capstone MBA 796: Advanced Strategic Management, Spring 2015

	Exemplary	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Total
Identification of Issues or Reflection on Learning	13 <i>87%</i>	2 <i>13%</i>	0 <i>0%</i>	15
Integration of Concepts from Functional Areas	12 <i>80%</i>	2 <i>13%</i>	1 <i>7%</i>	15
Analysis and Resolution	7 <i>47%</i>	6 <i>40%</i>	2 <i>13%</i>	15



Comments Regarding MBA PLLG 6, MBA 796: Advanced Strategic Management

MBA *PLLG 6 Integration and strategy, strategic level of decision making* assessments in the capstone course remain consistently above 80% proficiency in all dimensions thereby demonstrating very good performance. The percentage of students in the exemplary performance category demonstrates ongoing excellent results for all three dimensions in academic year 2014-15. The students' exemplary performance is primarily attributed to the redesign of required assignments in the course to better and more appropriately reflect the students' skill level in strategic management. Other MBA classes that focus on strategic decision making, such as the elective Competitive Decision Making course, may have also contributed to improved performance for graduate students who completed these classes.

Revised 9/30/15 D