

MSA Assurance of Learning Summary



AACSB Fifth Year Continuous Improvement Review AY2015-2020

MSA AoL Summary

Since 2015 the MSA has focused on curricular and co-curricular changes with the aim to emphasize technology, increase flexibility, and enhance the career readiness and ethics professional development of the students. The program introduced a new course on software application in accounting (BUS220R) in Fall 2015 and on data analytics (BUS 220Z) in Spring 2018. The course IT Audit & Controls (BUS 220U) was also significantly updated to include topics like blockchain, use of drones and machine learning for inventory audits. Furthermore, the course BUS 220J was redesigned in Fall 2015 to focus student writing and oral communications on leadership and ethics. A writing consultant was hired by the LGSB to provide detailed feedback on assignments and offer one-on-one coaching sessions for students. The program's curriculum was revised to introduce more flexibility in the choice of core courses and elective courses. Students can now choose elective courses in the other graduate programs like MBA and MST. Furthermore, the program opened for the first time an admission cycle in spring to allow year-round admission. Finally, the program expanded the co-curricular activities enhancing the career readiness of the students by creating a meet-the-firms event and a mock-interview workshop where MSA alumni connect and mentor with the current students.

Accounting Concepts: The PLO was assessed in the course BUS 220H - Auditing: Concepts/Practice. The students exceeded the target performance in both measurements. To assess the student competence with accounting, auditing, and tax principles faculty incorporated an assignment requiring a search, identification, and extraction of audit opinions from SEC/Edgar databases. For the first two areas student outcomes were consistently acceptable or excellent, but tax knowledge fell short of program goals. Because many students enter the program with prior understanding of individual taxation but no exposure to corporate taxes, the MSA now requires individual taxation as a program prerequisite and incorporated corporate taxation as a restricted program elective. This course change could not be assessed in the current cycle, but will be in the next cycle.

Technology and Internal Controls: To assess students' ability to evaluate information technology and internal control processes in financial and managerial reporting, students received an assignment on segregation of duties paired with exam questions. Students met target expectations in the first measurement and nearly met the target in the second measurement. A new course was introduced in the curriculum (BUS 220Z – Analytics for Accounting). Students now use Tableau in visualizing audit irregularities, SAP and SQL in obtaining and analyzing accounting data, and Excel in modeling financial effects of accounting decisions. Finally, an updated IT Audit and Controls course now introduces blockchain technologies and the use of drones and machine learning for inventory counts.

Conceptual and Analytical Analysis: The assessment tool relied on a financial analysis project, students met expectations on a first round. Following curricular changes to better understand the rubric related to risk assessment, outcomes further improved.

Oral Communication: For the oral communication assessment, students presented an ethical dilemma using visuals; they met expectations in both rounds. To further strengthen oral communication skills, the MSA will integrate in the curriculum the use of the Quantified Communications' artificial intelligence platform.

Written Communication: To assess written communication skills, students must address accounting irregularities, summarize the practice, explain relevant GAAP, and recommend correct procedures.

While students met targets, the college also hired a writing instructor to provide general writing assistance. In the subsequent cycle, faculty plan to incorporate writing more widely throughout the curriculum.

Ethical Implications of Accounting Practices: The assessment tool used underwent some changes. While first-round assessment used a more general ethics case, to better tailor the tool, second and third round measures used a short accounting-specific case. Students were encouraged to consider how to respond to the situation and write a one-page memo including: a summary of the dilemma, alternative actions and constraints, a recommendation. Students met target expectations, but the instructor also extended coverage of Giving Voice to Values. These changes, paired with the new Accounting Ethics course offering, aim to prioritize ethical considerations both within the curriculum and for professional practice

Table A below illustrates the assessment target, performance and tools employed in the MSA program.

Table A - MSA AoL Summary Table - Target and Result data refers to the % of expected or actual students who scored in the acceptable and exceptional category

MSA PLO	Target	1 st Measurement		2 nd Measurement		Assessment Tool	Enhancements
		Semester	Result	Semester	Result		
1 - Accounting Concepts	80%	FA17	95%	FA18	100%	Assignment requiring identification of audit report	Curricular micro- insertion of sample audit reports. Change in tax prerequisites.
2 – Technology and Internal Controls	80%	SP18	100%	SP20	77%	Questions on mid-term and final exam	Updated BUS 220 U (IT Audit & Internal Controls) curriculum to include blockchain introduction, use of drones for inventory audits, use of machine learning applied to inventory counts. Train faculty in new IT impacting risk, control, and audit. New courses BUS 220Z – Data Analytics for Accounting.
3 – Conceptual and Analytical Skills	80%	FA18	90%	SP20	87%	Course project – Financial Statements Analysis	Presentation and discussion of rubric. Revision of assessment tool to allow students to select a firm of interest.
4.a – Oral Communication	80%	FA17	100%	FA18	96%	Presentation of ethics case with visuals	Pilot adoption of Quantified Communications software in FA20.
4.b - Written Communication	80%	FA17	80%	FA18	86%	Report based on WorldCom accounting irregularities	Writing consultant embedded in course providing feedback and one-on-one coaching sessions.
5 – Ethical Implications of Accounting Practice*	80%	FA17	88%	FA19	86%	Short case on ethical dilemma and creation of one-page memo	Introduction of new Ethics course BUS 200J. Curricular micro-insertion of Giving Voice to Values ethics short cases.