

**FCBE Assurance of Learning “Closing the Loop” Committee Report
International Master of Business Administration**

Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

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This report consists of a summary of the experiences gained, lessons learned, and recommendations for future improvement. In addition, this report details specific findings, conclusions, recommendations, and comments. All data used by this committee can be found on the FCBE Assessment website: <http://www.fcbeassessment.net>. The committee was given a general charge as well as additional charges as follows:

General Charge to FCBE “Close the Loop” Committees

1. Review the assessment rubrics carefully for the degree program to assure a thorough knowledge of the goals and objectives established by faculty for the degree program.
2. Review data analysis and graphic representation for each objective to determine the degree that reasonable expectations were met. State the reason for your finding. If not met, what is needed to increase the likelihood that the objective will be met during a subsequent assessment—delete the objective, revise the objective wording, add specific assignments in courses, change in prerequisites, suggest a support activity, and so forth?
3. Include an appropriate statement for each objective to reflect findings that support your review comments so that a third reader can understand your reasoning and intentions.
4. Include specific review recommendations and/or comments for each learning goal for the rubric.
5. After all assessment data for the degree program has been reviewed. The committee should develop a team report in narrative form to summarize findings and conclusions. Be specific and relate conclusions and recommendations to specific findings.
6. Discuss the entire process with appropriate faculty in the college to assure input and that your recommendations represent faculty in the college.

Specific Charge to the IMBA Committee

1. Determine where additional measurement of objectives might be accomplished.
2. Consider where the Professional MBA Objectives will suffice for IMBA objectives due to overlap.

General Recommendations:

Core courses in the IMBA program is being merged with the CDMBA program in that the IMBA students will be taking many of their core courses with the CDMB students. Assessment of the present configuration of the program will have relevance to what will be done in the future, but will be considerably influenced by what the MBA Assessment Committee decides to do with the CDMBA program. It is therefore suggested that in the future the IMBA Assessment be merged with - or work closely in conjunction with – the MBA Assessment Committee to determine where there should be joint objectives for the various programs, and where the IMBA program should work independently.

The general findings of the committee were that the IMBA program, based on the analysis, is largely successful in accomplishing its goals and objectives. Students demonstrated effectiveness in the areas assessed, generally at the exemplary level.

Specific Recommendations:

1. Students should be provided with more opportunities to write and communicate research proposals.
2. Students should be provided more opportunities to work collaboratively to present research findings.
3. Objective 1.1 should be written in a more general form to relate to reports in general and not just research proposals, since that activity will not likely be demonstrated in their work lives as much as general report writing.

4. Students' abilities to work in a second language needs to be measured in foreign language classes as well as in Mgmt 7125. Only the international students are utilizing a second language in that class. Specific goals and objectives need to be developed for those classes as long as students will be required to function in a foreign language.
5. Students need more practice in utilizing multi-media technology in developing team presentations. It is suggested that a short program be offered as an addition to their regularly scheduled courses, specifically related to using multi-media. This program might be optional since there is variability among all of the IMBA students. .
6. Team Building training needs to be incorporated into the IMBA student orientation program to facilitate their skills in working collectively to develop presentations.
7. Students did an exemplary job in understanding and evaluating theory and models. Because they were less competent in the application of theories, it is suggested that more cases be utilized to facilitate students' involvement in concept application.
8. Students oriented towards a PhD program should be encouraged to concentrate on theory and model development.
9. IMBA students need an exemplary understanding of the global business environment. Assessment found them to be only good. It is recommended that the head of the IMBA program continue to seek additional training opportunities for the students as relates to international and global business functioning outside the context of the normal classes.
10. Critical thinkers and analytical problem solving should be part of the general CDMBA/IMBA core curriculum and measured in the future with joint goals and objectives across the two programs.
11. Students were not as strong at taking concepts and theories and using them to solve practical business problems. They should develop that skill in their internships. It is suggested that some measure of that skill be assessed during the internship part of the program.
12. Likewise, sensitivity to social and political exigencies is something that can be developed in their internships and should be measured during that time.
13. More exercises, videos, guest speakers and travel opportunities can enhance the development of the cross cultural and global sensitivities. The IMBA program should

develop an even stronger and more up-to-date library of such resources and students should be given assignments that require the use of such resources.

14. The committee felt that due to the overlap in the objectives areas, Goal 5 could likely be reduced to 2 or 3 objectives in the future.
15. Because of the considerable variability in the use of computer software tools and applications, it is recommended that students be evaluated on the use of the major software packages, and then be encouraged to take special tutorials or audit undergraduate classes to address deficiencies.

Conclusions:

The Committee benefited considerably from involvement in the assessment process. It is clear that most of the students are developing the required skills to be successful graduates of the IMBA program. It is also clear that there is room for improvement going forward. It is hoped that the recommendations above will benefit the program and that the integration of MBA and IMBA programs will further enhance the development of student skills.

Degree Program: IMBA

Goal 1: Graduates will function as effective team members and managers in an international environment.

Objective 1: Create a written research proposal while serving as a team member (MKTG 7213).

Mean: 5.76

Rubric: 37% Exemplary

Findings: The average assessment score for this objective was 5.76, which is considered “good” on 9-point scale. Sixty-three percent (63%) of the class performed at 4-6 range, while 37% of the group was evaluated at 7-8 range. There is a good deal of room for improvement in terms of putting together a presentable and well-written management research proposal. These results point to the need for increasing opportunities for students to develop research proposals in other courses besides MKTG 7213.

Objective 2: Analyze, explain and draw conclusions based on a review of data while serving as a team member (ECON 7101).

Mean: 7.80

Rubric: 90% Exemplary

Findings: Graduates have the necessary analytical and technical skills to analyze, interpret and draw conclusions from data. This objective was achieved to a great extent as the average assessment score (7.80) indicates. The entire group was assessed at the range of 7-9, which is “exemplary”.

Objective 3: Conclude a specific project in an international teamwork environment without close supervision (MGMT 7125).

Mean: 7.67

Rubric: 91% Exemplary

Findings: This objective was achieved to a great extent as indicated by the average assessment score (7.67), and a large majority of the group (91%) scoring “exemplary.” Graduates grow fast as part of the intense daily work and team assignments. While the majority of graduates reach a mature stage toward the end of the program, a few seem to remain in need of improvement in terms of teamwork and results-oriented work without close supervision. The implication is

that there is a need to provide students with more opportunities for independent work.

Objective 4: Demonstrate team leadership to assess and recommend action in a business situation (FIR 7728).

Mean: 8.08

Rubric: 94% Exemplary

Findings: This objective has been achieved at the highest level as 94% of the graduating class was placed in the “exemplary” category (7-9). The average assessment score for this objective is 8.08. Most graduates can provide team leadership while assessing and recommending action in a business situation. The same level of preparation and instruction should be continued to sustain this level of competence.

Objective 5: Integrate and apply knowledge while working with team members from various functional areas in an international organization (MGMT 7125).

Mean: 7.47

Rubric: 86% Exemplary

Findings: The graduating class can integrate and apply knowledge while working with team members from different functional areas. The average assessment score for this objective is 7.47. The overwhelming majority falls into the “exemplary” category of assessment. More attention to the composition of teams may be needed in terms of functional strengths of team members for further improvement in this area.

Conclusions: Four out of five objectives under Goal 1 have been achieved to a great extent. While graduates are strong technically, their primary need for improvement is in the area of developing and presenting research and/or project proposals. They tend to analyze data well and integrate data and apply knowledge as a team well. Their team leadership skills appear to be strong overall. The problem may be that these skills are not uniformly held across all students. Providing opportunities for more exposure to team analysis activities and especially in the sub-area of research proposal development should prove helpful. Another improvement opportunity is in the area of graduates being able to carry out projects without close supervision or instruction. Perhaps, more opportunities for independent project work should be required for even more improvements in this area.

Recommendations: The measures collectively indicate that students have achieved Goal 1 to a great **extent**. One area that needs attention is writing an effective research proposal. In order to achieve this objective (Objective 1) at a higher level, an increase in opportunities for students to develop management research proposals is needed. Also, because the other team research and analysis skills are not widely distributed within the students, Objective 1 should not be limited to “written research proposals.” It should be more general and restated as follows: **Create and present a written management report while serving as a team member.** This will allow additional direct assessment opportunities in addition to assessments made in MKTG 7213. It is further recommended that one-half day seminar be provided that is focused on writing management research proposals and reports as well as making effective presentations. Finally, it is recommended that students be given more independent assignments in an effort to improve their ability to make decisions and to take ownership of project without close supervision. Additional Comments: This goal should be reviewed in light of the goals emerging from the newly designed MBA program.

Goal 2: **Graduates will be effective communicators and functional in a second language.**

Objective 1: **Analyze a case study relating to an international topic and then present major finding in a second language. (MGMT 7125)**

Mean: **8.00 (Spring) 7.50 (Fall)**

Rubric: **100% Exemplary**

Finding: The average assessment score for this objective was 8.00 in the spring term and 7.50 in the fall semester. There were 32% of the students who received a 9 rating in the Spring class, with 43% rated an 8 and 25% rated as a 7. In the fall semester, 53% received an 8 rating and 47% received a rating of 7. Both scores are very high on the 9-point scale and reflect that this is an area of strength for the overall assessment. Students demonstrated considerable ability to analyze cases on an international topic and present their findings in a second language. The second language aspect of this findings apply only to international students whose second language is English, since the MGMT 7125 is conducted in English.

Objective 2: **Create a clear, well-organized paper on an international related topic while using documentation and quantitative tools, when appropriate**

Mean: **7.58**

Rubric: **85% Exemplary**

Finding: The average score on this objective was 7.58, again reflecting a very high score for this objective, although the dispersion of ratings was much greater. There were 31% of the students who were rated as 9 in this category; 44% as 8; 10% as 7 (these three comprising the exemplary range); 13% as 6 (which is in the good range) and 2% in the 3 (fair range). It would appear that the students in the program have learned and are learning how to prepare and present research findings.

Objective 3: Create a clear, well-organized verbal presentation relating to a multi cultural topic.

Mean: 7.13

Rubric: 80% Exemplary

Finding: The rating for this objective was lower (7.13) than other objectives indicating that the students are somewhat better in their written presentations than they are in their verbal presentations. There was also considerable variability in the ratings with 20% being rated as either 5 or 6 (good range) and only 47% rated in the top two categories. Continued practice and possibly some additional training may be needed in the area of verbal presentations. This is a skill that can be enhanced within the classroom setting or through specialized training classes relative to making presentations.

Objective 4: Collaborate effectively in a team environment on a project relating to an international topic.

Mean: 8.31

Rubric: 95% Exemplary

Finding: The high rating of 8.31 on this objective indicates that students are well prepared in working collaboratively to study an international topic. There were 95% of the students who received a rating in the exemplary range. They engage in numerous team projects within the program and in prior educational settings, and this practice seems to have paid off with considerable skill development in this area.

Objective 5: Summarize thoughts and ideas into a well organized sequence while making a presentation.

Mean: 5.58

Rubric: 27% Exemplary

Finding: The much lower average student rating in this objective (5.58) as compared to previous ratings indicates that there may be a developmental opportunity here for the students. Students work on written projects well collectively, but when it comes time to prepare a verbal presentation, they may falter in how they organize their material. Possibly more training is required in developing collaborative verbal presentations in an integrative manner. This is a skill that can be taught, and must be emphasized when the professor makes the assignment.

Objective 6: Design technology media to effectively communicate with others

Mean: 5.97

Rubric: 36% Exemplary

Finding: Students appear relatively weaker in this area with a rating of 5.97. 64% of the students scored in the good range, while 36% were rated as a 7 or 8. Apparently, there is inconsistency in the skill levels of students with respect to the development of media presentations. Training may be needed for to bring weaker students up to the levels of the stronger ones. The weaker students could be presented with tutorials on presentation media or be tutored by their better prepared students and/or the professor or outside experts.

Conclusions: In general the students appear to be fairly effective communicators. They are weaker in their verbal presentation and preparation areas, especially when collaborative project development is required.

Recommendations: Skill practice and additional training appears warranted in the areas of team presentation development and use of multi-media presentations to enhance presentation effectiveness. Tutoring of weaker students by those more advanced and teambuilding training to learn how to work better together to utilize the diverse skills of the team members may also seem warranted.

Goal 3: Knowledge of Functional Areas and Integration

Objective 1: Explain theories and major concepts in the areas of accounting, economics, finance, and management. (FIR 7728, ECON 7101)

Mean: 6.95

Rubric: 87% Exemplary

Finding: The average rating of students on this objective was 6.95. Students have demonstrated very good understanding of theoretical concepts at 6.95 on a 9 point

scale. This performance adequately fulfills the need for IMBA students as their jobs mostly call for exemplary application and performance. However, students aiming for higher education such as a Ph.D. degree should be advised to excel in theory.

Objective 2: Apply theories and major concepts of accounting, economics, finance management and marketing to solve problems in those core disciplines. (MGMT 7125)

Mean: 6.95

Rubric: 87% Exemplary

Finding: The average for this objective was 6.95 which is at the top end of the good range and just below exemplary. Perfection in applying theories to solve problems is an essential skill for IMBA graduates. Although the average performance is very good at 6.95 on a 9 point scale, students must excel in applications. Perhaps, more practice with cases and problems will be useful.

Objective 3: Synthesize theories and major concepts of the core disciplines to solve complex multi-discipline business problems. (ECON 7172)

Mean: 7.58

Rubric: 91% Exemplary

Finding: The average student rating in this category is 7.58. Students thus displayed exemplary synthesizing skills in order to solve complex multi-discipline business problems with 7.58 on a 9 point scale. A recent inter-university competition reinforced this finding where the University of Memphis IMBA team's equity research written report was rated best. However, other teams were much more competitive relative to presentation and communication skills.

Objective 4: Analyze how integration of input from various functional areas of business act to influence the formulation of strategy at the organizational level. (FIR 7728)

Mean: 6.79

Rubric: 89% Exemplary

Finding: The average rating for this objective is 6.79. Multiple factors interact and affect the performance of any business organization. Analyzing and integrating the input is an important skill as students progress in their careers towards top management positions. Performance is at the top end of the good range at 6.79 on a 9 point scale. However, students specializing in equity analyst positions need to apply these skills immediately and must develop this skill through elective courses.

Objective 5: Analyze major business functional area trends and issues in a global business environment. (ECON 7172)

Mean: 7.63

Rubric: 91% Exemplary

Finding: Students' performance on this objective is exemplary at 7.63 on a 9 point scale. This finding reflects the specialization of IMBA students as global managers.

Objective 6: Formulate the pros and cons of globalization, free trade, and institutional intervention in global commerce. (ECON 7101)

Mean: 6.89

Rubric: 87% Exemplary

Finding: Performance at 6.89 on a 9 point scale is good. However, excellent understanding of global business environment is a key selling point for every IMBA student. Measures must be taken to ensure that every student achieves exemplary skills in this area.

Conclusions: Most students' (higher than 95%) performance on IMBA Goal 3 ranges from good to exemplary. The detailed charts show that only a small minority of students (less than 3% for each objective) are falling into the fair (1 to 3) performance categories. Students have shown exemplary synthesizing skills to solve complex multi-discipline business problems and analytical skills while understanding major business functional area trends in a global context.

Recommendations: Students considering higher education opportunities such as a Ph.D. degree should be advised to excel in theory. Perfection while applying theories to solve problems is an essential skill for IMBA graduates. Perhaps, more practice with cases and problems will be useful. Presentation and communication skills affect every goal and should be emphasized. Students specializing in equity analyst positions need to apply these skills immediately and must develop this skill through elective courses. Excellent understanding of the global business environment is a key selling point for every IMBA student. Measures must be taken to ensure that every student achieves exemplary skills in this area.

Goal 4: Graduates will be critical thinkers and analytical problem solvers.

Objective 1: Explain theories and facts in functional areas.

Mean: 7.00

Rubric: 100% Exemplary

Findings: All of the students accomplished this objective in a barely ‘exemplary’ fashion, with 100% rated in the 7 category and thus with an average rating of 7.0. This is the very low end of the exemplary range, implying that students are competent in explaining theories and facts in functional areas, but also indicates some room for improvement.

Objective 2: Apply theories and facts to solve problems.

Mean: 6.00

Rubric: 0% Exemplary

Findings: All of the students scored the highest score in the “good” category, which is a 6 and thus results in an average of 6 for this objective. The implication is that students are not as competent while applying theories and facts as they are while explaining them. They need more practice in the application process.

Objective 3: Synthesizing knowledge in functional areas to solve problems.

Mean: 5.23

Rubric: 30% Exemplary

Findings: There is a wide range of student performance on this measure from the top “exemplary” to “fair”. With 62% being rated in the good range (4-6), almost one-half of students were in the middle of the “good” range or below. The implication is that while many students do very well while achieving this objective, a significant number need improvement. Improvement in this area could result from greater emphasis in teaching and testing components of the class to force students to integrate information in such a way as to facilitate problem solving. Overall, additional instruction in critical thinking in the class and tutoring might be helpful.

Objective 4: Critically evaluate arguments, theories, and recommendations.

Mean: 8.00

Rubric: 94% Exemplary

Findings: Overall, students are achieving this objective in an “exemplary” manner. There were 94% rated as 7-9 on this objective, thus indicating that students were competent in this area.

Conclusions: Overall, students are excellent in explaining and critically evaluating theories and arguments. Students need work in applying these theories to solving problems.

Recommendations: Students need more exposure to theories and arguments and using them to solve problems. The internship experience should give the student excellent opportunities to work on these skills. Currently, objectives are measured for this goal before the student undertakes the internship. As a follow-up, the students should be evaluated on these measures a second time after completing the internship experience.

Goal 5: **Graduates will be sensitive to social, ethical, and multi-cultural issues in international business environment.**

Objective 1: **Compare and contrast selected social and ethical theories in two contexts (MGMT 7125)**

Mean: 7.14

Rubric: 90% Exemplary

Findings: The average assessment score for this objective was 7.14, which suggests that most of the students (90%) were able to achieve this objective at the lower end of the exemplary scale (7-9). While highly satisfactory, these students could still be further challenged to sharpen their focus on social and ethical dilemmas in the contexts of two or more different countries.

Objective 2: **Interpret business issue(s) in social, ethical, and multicultural contexts (BA7950)**

Mean: 7.18

Rubric: 72% Exemplary

Findings: The average assessment score for this objective was 7.18, which suggests that this objective was met at the lower end of the exemplary scale (7-9). A great majority of the students (72%) achieved this objective in an exemplary manner (7-9), while 28% of the students met this objective in the good category (4-6). However, 25% (out of these 28%) scored 6, which is at the higher end of the good category. Therefore, this objective was met in more than satisfactory manner. Because of their overseas experiences, graduates are able to identify and interpret issues in social, ethical, and multicultural contexts.

Objective 3: Analyze and apply new insights into business practices in different cultures (BA7950)

Mean: 7.06

Rubric: 67% Exemplary

Findings: The average assessment score for this objective was 7.06, which indicates that students are able to analyze and apply new insights into business practices in different countries. Again, this objective was achieved at the lower end of exemplary scale (7-9). There were 67% of students who achieved this objective in a highly satisfactory manner; while 33% were ranked in the good category (4-6). All the 33% scored either in the middle or higher scale of good category (5-6). Students are able to learn about business practices in different cultures while they study and/or do their internships abroad; however, this happens through their experiences.

Objective 4: Examine cultural differences between and among IMBA track countries (BA7902)

Mean: 6.17

Rubric: 73% Exemplary

Findings: The average assessment score for this objective was 6.17. There were 73% of the students who scored in the exemplary category (7 or 8); while 24% scored in the good category of 4 or 5. Only 3% of the students scored in the good category of 4. Therefore, this objective was met in more than a satisfactory manner, although there is room for improvement in this area. Of course, the students are generally more focused on their own country tracks; however, they are also interested in cultural differences in other countries. It is suggested that more cross cultural examination be required to enhance cross cultural understanding of the track countries. This is something that might be facilitated with cross cultural exercises during the orientation session in the beginning of the IMBA program.

Objective 5: Demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in multi-cultural environment (BA 7902)

Mean: 6.78

Rubric: 68% Exemplary

Findings: The average score for this objective was 6.78. There were 68% of the students who scored 7 or 8, which is in exemplary category; while 30% of the students scored 6, which is in the high middle category. Only 3% of the students scored in the

higher end of the fair category (3). While the 3% students who scored in the fair category could perhaps be helped further, demonstration of flexibility and adaptability is also related to personal and personality characteristics.

Conclusions: Three of the five objectives of goal 5 were achieved in highly a satisfactory manner. Graduates are sensitive to social, ethical, and multi-cultural issues in the international business environment. They can compare and contrast, interpret business issues, analyze and apply new insights, examine cultural differences, and demonstrate flexibility and adaptability in different social, political, and cultural environments. At least 66% of the students met all the five objectives in an exemplary manner. The remaining students met them in the good category. Yet, some improvements can be made among these 33% of the students by exposing them to more cases, simulations, short videos, exercises and so forth in order to make the students more aware of this objective.

Recommendations: Collectively, the measures indicate that goal 5 has been achieved to a great extent. One important recommendation is to examine the possibility of measuring the goal 5 by 2 or 3 objectives rather than 5 objectives. This is because there is considerable overlap among the 5 objectives of this goal. Another recommendation is to utilize more cases, simulations, short videos, exercises and so forth in order to sharpen the focus of students with respect to this goal. The new MBA program will provide an opportunity to do so.

Goal 6: Graduates will be users of technology to solve problems.

Objective 1: Display proficiency while using the internet to help accomplish common business research tasks. (MIS 7650)

Mean: 8.21

Rubric: 97% Exemplary

Findings: The average student rating in this category was 8.21, with 97% of the students in the exemplary range (7-9) and two thirds being in the highest category. Clearly this is an area of strength for students. They seem well tuned in to the internet and knowledgeable about how to use it to accomplish business related tasks. No additional improvement seems necessary in this area.

Objective 2: Assess data communications systems for effectiveness in emerging and newly industrialized economies.

Mean: 8.50

Rubric: 95% Exemplary

Findings: The average student rating for this objective was 8.50, with 87% being rated as 9 and 8% being rated as 8 – a combined 95% in the top two exemplary categories. Students obviously need little extra training or skill development in this particular area.

Objective 3: Use computer software tools such as Excel, SPSS, and Access to organize data for analysis to solve business problems.

Mean: 6.52

Rubric: 65% Exemplary

Findings: The average student rating of 6.52 and the considerable variability of ratings (8 = 19%; 7 = 46%; 6 = 28%; 5 = 2%; 4=5%) indicate that this could be an area of improvement for the students. Although students are likely to be exposed to these software tools in their undergraduate programs, they apparently do not learn them sufficiently well enough to apply them to advanced business problems. More advanced training for some students and even remedial training for a few would seem appropriate. Online courses in the IT Academy should be provided for students needing additional training in decision support and spreadsheet applications.

Objective 4: Design data query applications to select and use appropriate data sets to support analysis of data and display of information. (MIS 7650)

Mean: 8.36

Rubric: 97% Exemplary

Findings: The average rating for this objective (8.36) as well as the fact that 93% of the students were rated in the very top category indicates that this is an area of considerable effectiveness for the students. They appear to be able to effectively design applications for, utilize, and display information. No additional improvement would appear to be necessary in this area.

Objective 5: Select appropriate technology and information processing techniques to solve problems relating to business applications.

Mean: 7.00

Rubric: 96% Exemplary

Findings: This is an area where many of the students are very high in their skill levels (14% scored a 9; 72% scored 8; and 10% scored a 7, for 96% exemplary). No additional training is needed.

Objective 6: Prepare and utilize electronic equipment, computers, and/or networks to effectively analyze and solve problems.

Mean: 8.05

Rubric: 97% Exemplary

Findings: The average rating of students in this category was 8.05, indicating a high degree of expertise in this learning category. There were 97% of the students who were rated in the exemplary categories (7-9), with only the occasional student needing any kind of remedial training in this area.

Conclusions: Overall students appear to have a fairly high degree of expertise in using technology to solve business problems. System-wide additional training would not seem called for, although a sufficient number of students could use additional training in some of the more advanced software skills, such as use of SPSS, Access, and Excel.

Recommendations: Since classes are available at the undergraduate level, it would seem easiest to require students to acquire technological skills in the decision support area by completing online courses such as the ones provided via the IT Academy provided by the Department of Management Information Systems.