

**FCBE Assurance of Learning “Closing the Loop” Committee Report
Master of Science in Accountancy**

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 have 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.

Degree Program: MS Accounting

Goal 1: The student will be knowledgeable in accounting and its functional support of organizations.

Objective 1.1: The graduate will be able to demonstrate an understanding of accounting and its functional support of different organizations.

Mean: 6.84

Rubric: 51% Exemplary

Findings: Of the students assessed, fifty-one percent were found to have an “exemplary” (level 7-9) ability to demonstrate an understanding of accounting and its functional support of different organizations. The remaining students assessed at the highest level (6) of the “good” category.

Objective 1.2: The graduate will demonstrate an understanding of accounting and its functional support of different business line areas.

Mean: 7.64

Rubric: 91% Exemplary

Findings: Ninety-one percent of the students assessed were found to have an “exemplary” ability to demonstrate an understanding of accounting and its functional support of different business line areas. The remaining students assessed were in the highest level of the “good” category.

Objective 1.3: The graduate will be able to understand and communicate the information processes and outputs needed by various organizations using appropriate documentation.

Mean: 8.08

Rubric: 97% Exemplary

Findings: This objective was achieved with ninety-seven percent of the students demonstrating an “exemplary” ability to understand and communicate the information processes and outputs needed by various organizations using appropriate documentation. The balance of the students assessed was in the highest level of the “good” category.

Objective 1.4: The graduate will be able to demonstrate an acceptable level of competence in the graduate's area of concentration.

Mean: 6.89 (Spring) 6.40 (Fall)

Rubric: 83% Exemplary (Spring)

Findings: The majority of the students assessed (83%) were found to have an "exemplary" ability to demonstrate an acceptable level of competence in the graduate's area of concentration. The balance of the students assessed was in the "good" (14%) and "fair" (3%) categories.

Conclusions: The faculty believes this program goal is met to a large extent, but opportunities for improvement are indicated.

Recommendations: The faculty feels this goal could be better assessed by consolidating the four objectives used with the following three objectives in round 2 of the assessment process:

Objective 1: The graduate will be able to understand and process the information and outputs needed by various organizations using appropriate documentation.

Objective 2: The graduate will be able to demonstrate an acceptable level of competence in the graduate's area of concentration.

Objective 3: The graduate will be able to demonstrate an acceptable level of competence in financial accounting.

We recommend adding two CPA Review elective courses for credit to enhance students' knowledge of professional accounting skills.

Goal 2: **The student will be an effective communicator and team member.**

Objective 2.1: Deliver an organized and persuasive oral presentation that demonstrates focus, time management, and effective visuals.

Mean: **7.68**

Rubric: **94% Exemplary**

Findings: All of the students assessed at the highest range of “good” (level 6) or were “exemplary” (7-9) on this measure. The implication is that students are able to deliver organized, persuasive, oral presentations.

Objective 2.2: Create a clear, well-organized paper using quantitative tools and documentation when appropriate.

Mean: **8.40**

Rubric: **100% Exemplary**

Findings: All of the students scored “exemplary” on this measure, with over half receiving the highest possible score. The indication is that students are better capable to prepare a written proposal as compared to an oral presentation. This objective has been met.

Objective 2.3: Create a written research proposal while serving as a team member.

Mean: **7.00**

Rubric: **77% Exemplary**

Findings: Over three-fourths of the students scored “exemplary” while the remaining scored “good”. An implication of this and the previous objective assessment is that students perform better when working alone as compared to writing research proposals in a group.

Objective 2.4: Collaborate effectively in a team environment on a course project.

Mean: **5.97**

Rubric: **59% Exemplary**

Findings: These results confirm the finding that students are less adept at working in groups as compared to working individually. An implication is that there is room for improvement in the students' ability to work in teams.

Conclusions: Overall, students are effective communicators both orally and in writing. However; improvement is needed when working in a team environment.

Recommendations: In the MS-Accountancy program, students are expected to work effectively in teams. For a significant number of students, these team skills have not been developed. It is recommended an increase in the emphasis on team projects throughout the MS program. Similarly, it is recommended that there should be more team projects in the undergraduate accounting program since a majority of MS students are graduates of the undergraduate program. This goal could be better assessed in round 2 of the assessment process by eliminating the third objective since the remaining objectives more clearly relate to the goal.

Goal 3: **The student will be a critical thinker and a problem solver.**

Objective 3.1: **The graduate will be able to identify and frame problems involving accounting issues.**

Mean: **6.62**

Rubric: **53% Exemplary**

Findings: Less than half of the students evaluated demonstrated a “good” ability to identify and frame problems involving accounting issues; the remaining students demonstrated an “exemplary” ability. An implication is that improvement is needed.

Objective 3.2: **The graduate will be able to formulate an effective strategy for solving problems.**

Mean: **5.66**

Rubric: **51% Exemplary**

Findings: About half of the students demonstrated an “exemplary” ability to *formulate* an effective strategy for solving problems. Of the remaining half, results indicate a wide range of ability from fair to good. Room for improvement is indicated by these findings.

Objective 3.3: **The graduate will be able to implement an effective strategy for solving problems.**

Mean: **6.55**

Rubric: **65% Exemplary**

Findings: About two-thirds of the students evaluated demonstrated an “exemplary” ability to *implement* an effective strategy for solving problems; the remaining students a “good” ability. The indication is that students are better able to implement a strategy once the strategy is identified than identifying that strategy.

Objective 3.4: **The graduate will be able to defend an appropriate decision.**

Mean: **7.41**

Rubric: **74% Exemplary**

Findings: Results indicate that students are proficient while defending their decisions, more so than in arriving at those decisions.

Conclusions: Overall, the students evaluated demonstrated a greater ability to defend their chosen positions than formulating those positions. In general, the faculty feels this goal is met, but recommends activities be increased related to multiple critical thinking and problem-solving settings. It is recommended that more emphasis is placed on identifying and framing problems involving accounting issues.

Recommendations: In Round 2 of assessment, this goal should be evaluated in a debate setting, a class presentation setting, and in a term project. Also, in evaluating the findings of the Round 1 assessment, the faculty felt that Objective 3 was superfluous and that Objectives 2 and 4 could be tested as one revised Objective 2. Thus, the four objectives for this goal should be combined into two more meaningful objectives:

Objective 1: The graduate will be able to identify and frame problems involving accounting issues.

Objective 2: The graduate will be able to formulate and defend an effective strategy for solving problems.

Goal 4: The student will be aware of ethical ramifications and global business implications of decisions.

Objective 4.1: The graduate will understand the basic accounting ethical rules.

Mean: 8.36

Rubric: 100% Exemplary

Findings: All of the students scored “exemplary” on this measure. Of the three levels of exemplary, 47 percent scored in the highest level, 46 percent in the second highest level and 7 percent in the lowest exemplary level. These results clearly demonstrate a very high level of understanding of the basic accounting ethical rules among MS students.

Objective 4.2: The graduate will recognize the ethical ramifications of various accounting decisions in a written assignment. Mean: Spring: 5.00; Summer: 8.64

Mean 5.00 (Spring) 8.64 (Sum)

Rubric: 100% Exemplary (Summer 2008)

Findings: All of the students scored either good or higher. Of the students outcomes that were rated exemplary, 97 percent were in highest two levels of exemplary. While some of the students rated “good” on this objective and have room for improvement, all the scores were acceptable and indicate this objective was met.

Objective 4.3: The graduate will understand differences in global accounting practices as demonstrated in a case study.

Mean: 4.45

Rubric: 49% Exemplary

Findings: Almost half, 49 percent, of the students were rated at the highest level of exemplary on this objective. Another 30 percent were rated good and 21 percent were rated fair. These results indicate that additional focus is warranted to achieve this objective.

Objective 4.4: The graduate will be able to identify relevant global factors other than accounting practices as demonstrated in a case study (i.e. economics, cultural, legal, demographics).

Mean: 4.45

Rubric: 49% Exemplary

Findings: Less than half of the students assessed scored at the highest level of exemplary. As with objective 3, however, many of the students demonstrated a need to improve their understanding on this objective.

Conclusions: Taken as a whole the assessment results for Goal 4 and the related objectives indicate that students have a grasp of accounting ethics and the implications of ethics in business decision making.

Recommendations: Assessments for objectives 3 and 4 indicate that a small percentage of MS students have a limited understanding of global accounting practices as well as factors other than accounting practices that impact business decisions. Some consideration should be given to how these lower scores can be improved. It is recommended that a new international course in the UG program be created, as a majority of the MS students are graduates of the UG program. It is recommended that the 7120 course focus on IFRS. In addition, it is recommended that the third and fourth objectives be combined into one more meaningful objective in Round 2 of assessment:

Objective 4.3: The graduate will understand differences in global accounting practices.

Goal 5: The student will be technologically competent

Objective 1: The graduate will be proficient in the use of business and accounting application software packages.

Mean: 6.28

Rubric: 77% Exemplary

Findings: Seventy-seven percent of the students assessed were found to have an “exemplary” proficiency in the use of business and accounting application software packages. There were 17% of the students rated in the “good” category

and 6% considered to be in the “fair” category. The implication is that this objective is met.

Objective 2: The graduate will be proficient in using the Internet to accomplish accounting research tasks.

Mean: 5.75

Rubric: 32% Exemplary

Findings: Of the students assessed, thirty-two percent were found to have an “exemplary” proficiency in using the Internet to accomplish accounting research tasks. The remaining 68% were rated in the “good” category. This indicates there is room for improvement in this area.

Objective 3: The graduate will be able to select appropriate technology and information processing techniques to solve problems relating to accounting applications.

Mean: 5.57

Rubric: 36% Exemplary

Findings: With only thirty-six percent of the students receiving an “Exemplary score,” it is clear that there are a limited number of students that are capable of selecting appropriate technology and information processing techniques to solve problems relating to accounting applications. The remaining 64% were rated in the “good” category. Room for improvement is indicated.

Objective 4: The graduate will be able to utilize computers and/or networks to effectively analyze and solve problems.

Mean: 5.57

Rubric: 36% Exemplary

Findings: Over one-third (36%) of the students assessed were found to be able to utilize computers and/or networks to effectively analyze and solve problems. The remaining 64% were rated in the “good” category. Improvement is needed.

Conclusions: The MS students show only a moderate competence in regard to technology. Only about one-third are rated exemplary in three of the four objectives.

Recommendations: The graduate curriculum needs to be reviewed in regard to integrating more uses of technology into classes. Specific activities need to be coordinated among courses. This goal could be better assessed by consolidating the four objectives used with the following two objectives in round 2 of the assessment process:

Objective 1: The graduate will be proficient in the use of computer-based problem-solving aids to solve problems relating to accounting applications.

Objective 2: The graduate will be proficient in using online resources to solve problems relating to accounting applications.