

University of Northern Iowa
College of Business Administration
Master of Business Administration
Learning Assurance Program
Last updated April 2009

1. Assessment Philosophy and Program Goals

The MBA program's Learning Assurance (LA) Program is designed to gather data that can be used toward the continuous improvement of the program curriculum and its management. The MBA Program is composed of 9-3 hr core courses, 3 hours of electives, and a one-credit-hour Business Capstone Experience course for 31 hours in total. In 2008 the MBA LA Program was redesigned to support the mission and student learning objectives that were refined and revised in 2007.

Mission:

The MBA program facilitates the professional development of middle-level managers and those aspiring to managerial positions. The program seeks to improve their dynamic capabilities to discern, describe, and solve business problems and manage resources for value creation.

We challenge our students with a curriculum grounded in core concepts, simple and complex tools, as well as analytical and theoretical frameworks for understanding business, its environment, and the requirements for achievement of successful outcomes. This is done through high-impact learning, an applied approach involving cases, simulations, problems, interactions with executives, and other interactive approaches.

2. MBA Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

Student Learning Objectives are subdivided into specific competencies and skills that the MBA Program strives to deliver.

Student Learning Objective 1:

Graduates will demonstrate knowledge of current business practice and management techniques necessary to be effective in managing the day-to-day operations of the organization, as well as scanning the business environment for opportunities and threats and strategically planning for the future.

Competency 1.1. Understands fundamentals of accounting and finance

Competency 1.2. Understands fundamentals for managing business operations

Competency 1.3. Understands fundamentals of marketing management and markets

Competency 1.4. Understands fundamentals of managing human resources

Competency 1.5. Understands fundamentals of data management and analysis for the organization

Competency 1.6. Displays understanding of strategic planning for the organization

Student Learning Objective 2:

Graduates will demonstrate the critical and creative thinking skills to address complex business issues, gather information, identify and evaluate a range of options, and make ethical, thoughtful choices among the alternatives.

Competency 2.1. Problem Identification—Identifies, summarizes (and appropriately reformulates) the key issues/ problem(s)/ work assignment

Competency 2.2. Comprehensive Approach - Integrates comprehensive and unbiased issue analysis using different perspectives, including multiple stakeholder perspectives and positions

Competency 2.3. Identifies and considers appropriate data, contexts, and assumptions relevant to the situation

Competency 2.4. Assesses and analyzes appropriate data/evidence using a set of appropriate of tools and methods

Competency 2.5. Identifies, assesses and evaluates alternate options

Competency 2.6. Identifies and assesses conclusions, implications, and consequences

Student Learning Objective 3:

Graduates will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate quantitative and qualitative tools and concepts throughout the problem solving process showing an appreciation for the interrelationships among the various business functions.

Competency 3.1. Identifies relevant business functional perspectives

Competency 3.2. Selects and applies appropriate tools

Competency 3.3. Interprets output

Competency 3.4. Recognizes limitations of tools used in analysis

Student Learning Objective 4:

Graduates will demonstrate the ability to effectively participate as a team member, facilitate group processes, and manage team projects.

Individual Behavior:

Competency 4.1. Communication skills and task-related behaviors that support team participation

Competency 4.2. Facilitates group processes

Overall Team Behavior:

Competency 4.3. Efficiency in Team Project Management

Student Learning Objective 5:

Graduates will demonstrate the professional written and oral communication skills necessary for effective management.

Written communication:

- Competency 5.A.1. Focus of Work
- Competency 5.A.2. Organization of work
- Competency 5.A.3. Content Development
- Competency 5.A.4. Language Style and Tone
- Competency 5.A.5. Document design
- Competency 5.A.6. Written language mechanics

Oral Communication:

- Competency 5.B.1. Verbal and non-verbal delivery
- Competency 5.B.2. Responsiveness to audience
- Competency 5.B.3. Professional attire
- Competency 5.B.4. Organization of the presentation
- Competency 5.B.5. Use of presentation software and handouts.

3. Frequency of Assessment

In collaboration with the faculty, the MBA Policy Committee has developed a five-year assessment cycle ensuring that each Student Learning Objective is assessed at least twice within each five year cycle. (See Tables A and B.) The analysis of the accumulated data associated for a given Student Learning Objective is performed once during the five year cycle. Continuous improvement actions are suggested and, upon approval of the faculty, implemented in the classroom or in the curriculum as appropriate.

4. Assessment Methods

A. Standardized Assessment Rubrics

Standardized Assessment Rubrics are the primary method of directly assessing student learning. The rubrics are developed for each Student Learning Objective and, according to the five-year assessment cycle, are applied to assess each objective at least twice over a five-year period. The rubrics can be also be used optionally by the MBA faculty to evaluate student learning in their respective classes. The artifacts against which the rubrics are used are collected in a combination of courses throughout the program. These artifacts include case analyses, research projects, presentations, course projects, and other individual and group assignments.

B. Business Capstone Experience Assessments

In the Business Capstone Experience, groups of MBA students work as business consultants for local businesses and non-profit organizations. This is the final required course in the program. Students enroll into the Business Capstone course only after completing the MBA core and elective courses. Through this Capstone course students are expected to apply the knowledge and skills acquired from MBA courses in a non-simulated business situation. This makes the Business Capstone Experience a unique source of information on student learning. A number of instruments are used to both directly and indirectly evaluate student performance. Evaluators include CBA faculty, administrators, peers, and business executives.

Each of the Business Capstone assessments described below is performed annually.

1) Business Capstone Preliminary Proposal Presentation Assessment

This assessment is used at the initial stage of the Business Capstone Experience and addresses the issues of problem definition, strategic analysis and implications, defining project goals, scope and limitations, as well as project planning and management issues.

2) Business Capstone Project Presentation Assessment

At the final stage of the Business Capstone Experience evaluators review the projects. Open ended questions seek to collect data concerning the consulting capability of graduates, presentation capability of graduates, MBA curriculum content and coverage, program structure or instructional focus. The result is information that helps determine the general strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum.

3) 360 Degrees Business Capstone Experience Assessment / Business Capstone Experience Assessment of Individual and Project Performance Assessment

While working on Business Capstone Projects, students apply cross-curricular knowledge and skills and perform multiple roles in project management and implementation. At the end of the project all student participants are required to evaluate project success, team member performance and their own performance. The rubrics used seek to assess each team member's contribution to the project as well as student mastery of the competencies expected to be gained through the MBA program.

C. MBA Program Evaluation Survey

At the end of the MBA Program graduating students evaluate the program with respect to; rigor and relevance of MBA curricular disciplines; overall program quality and academic standards; delivery of professional education, global perspective and innovative approach; and development of analytical, problem-solving and communication skills. Respondents are also asked to comment on strengths and weaknesses of the MBA program in providing graduate-level managerial education.

D. MBA Alumni Assessment

MBA Alumni are surveyed every 5-7 years using a standardized survey administered by Education Benchmarking Inc. (EBI), an independent agency. This self-assessment survey covers the quality of skills and knowledge provided by the MBA program and their role in MBA alumni career success, the contribution of MBA curricular disciplines to career success, and the role of UNI MBA degree in promoting careers. Information contributes to Student Learning Outcomes assessment.

5. Methods of Evaluating and Interpreting Results and Implementing Recommendations.

Through the MBA Learning Assurance Program we strive to acquire the most accurate and unbiased information about the MBA Program concerning the delivery of the competencies defined through the Student Learning Objectives. We collect data through multiple activities at different levels from all participants and main stakeholders of the educational process, including faculty, students, graduates, alumni, and business executives involved in Business Capstone Experience.

Data collected internally is summarized at the MBA Office. We work with two outside agencies, Educational Benchmarking Inc. (EBI) and EduMetry, as appropriate to generate data on Student Learning Outcomes. EBI administers the MBA Alumni self-assessment. Starting with 2009, EduMetry collects, scores, and summarizes data on student learning from actual student learning artifacts provided by the MBA faculty.

Internal and external data analysis reports are submitted to the MBA Policy Committee, a collegiate body of MBA faculty and administrators, which meets at least four times per semester. The MBA Policy Committee, following the five-year assessment cycle discusses the reported results from all of the assessment methods and makes recommendations on changes to the MBA curriculum, MBA Learning Assurance Program and assessment methods.

The MBA Policy Committee reports the assessment results and recommendations to the Dean and MBA faculty. Discipline-level actions are developed in collaboration with faculty.

MBA Learning Assurance Program

TABLE A: Five-Year Assessment Cycle

	Cycle				
	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014 (2008-2009)
SLO1	Rubric's data Other data	Analysis Recommendations Other data	Action Other data	Other data	Rubric's data Other data
SLO 2	Other data	Rubric's data Other data	Rubric's data Other data	Analysis Recommendations Other data	Action Other data
SLO 3	Action Other data	Other data	Rubric's data Other data	Rubric's data Other data	Analysis Recommendations Other data
SLO 4	Rubric's data Other data	Rubric's data Other data	Analysis Recommendations Other data	Action Other data	Other data
SLO 5	Analysis Recommendations Other data	Action Other data	Other data	Rubric's data Other data	Rubric's data Other data

The table above indicates

- 1) the years in which data is collected against a particular student learning objective,
- 2) two primary approaches to data collection– standardized rubrics (**Rubric's data**) or **Other Data** representing other direct and indirect measurement assessment tools such as the MBA Program Evaluation Survey or MBA Alumni Assessment,
- 3) the year in which analysis of the collected data is performed and recommendations for program improvements are made and
- 4) the year in which recommendations are implemented as actions

The table that follows provides more details with respect to the competencies for each student learning objective and the plans for where data is collected within the curriculum.

TABLE B: Five-Year Assessment Cycle Details

	Can be measured in classes	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<p>SLO 1 Knowledge of Current Business Practices and Management Techniques</p> <p><u>Competency 1.1.</u> Understands fundamentals of accounting and finance</p> <p><u>Competency 1.2.</u> Understands fundamentals for managing business operations</p> <p><u>Competency 1.3.</u> Understands fundamentals of marketing management and markets</p> <p><u>Competency 1.4.</u> Understands fundamentals of managing human resources</p> <p><u>Competency 1.5.</u> Understands fundamentals of data management and analysis for the organization</p> <p><u>Competency 1.6.</u> Displays understanding of strategic planning for the organization</p>	<p>120:262 MA 130:263 MM 150:249 MIS 150:250 SP 150:262 HR 150:272 CFO 150:274 RD 150:276 BC 160:266FM 920:260 ME</p>	<p>Other data in • 150:276 BC</p> <p>MBA Alumni Assessment</p> <p>MBA Program Evaluation</p>	<p>Analysis</p> <p>Other data in • 150:276 BC</p> <p>MBA Program Evaluation</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Other data in 150:276 BC</p> <p>MBA Program Evaluation</p>	<p>Other data in • 150:276 BC</p> <p>MBA Program Evaluation</p>	<p>Other data in • 150:276 BC</p> <p>MBA Program Evaluation</p>
<p>SLO 2 Critical and Creative Thinking</p> <p><u>Competency 2.1.</u> Problem Identification—Identifies, summarizes (and appropriately reformulates) the key issues/ problem(s)/ work assignment</p> <p><u>Competency 2.2.</u> Comprehensive Approach - Integrates comprehensive and unbiased issue analysis using different perspectives, including multiple stakeholder perspectives and positions</p> <p><u>Competency 2.3.</u> Identifies and considers appropriate data, contexts, and assumptions relevant to the situation</p> <p><u>Competency 2.4.</u> Assesses and analyzes appropriate data/evidence using a set of appropriate of tools and methods</p> <p><u>Competency 2.5.</u> Identifies, assesses and evaluates alternate options</p> <p><u>Competency 2.6.</u> Identifies and assesses conclusions, implications, and consequences</p>	<p>120:262 MA (2.4) 150:250 SP 150: 262 HR 160:266 FM 920:260 ME (2.1., 2.2.)</p>	<p>Other data in • 150:276 BC</p> <p>MBA Alumni Assessment</p> <p>MBA Program Evaluation</p>	<p>Rubrics data in</p> <p>• 120:262 MA • 150:250 SP • 920:260 ME</p> <p>Other data in • 150:276 BC</p> <p>MBA Program Evaluation</p>	<p>Rubrics data in</p> <p>• 150:249 MIS • 160:266 FM • 150: 262 HR</p> <p>Other data in • 150:276 BC</p> <p>MBA Program Evaluation</p>	<p>Analysis</p> <p>Other data in • 150:276 BC</p> <p>MBA Program Evaluation</p>	<p>Action</p> <p>Other data in • 150:276 BC</p> <p>MBA Program Evaluation</p>

SLO 3 Problem Solving Skills <u>Competency 3.1.</u> Identifies relevant business functional perspectives <u>Competency 3.2.</u> Selects and applies appropriate tools <u>Competency 3.3.</u> Interprets output <u>Competency 3.4.</u> Recognizes limitations of tools used in analysis	120:262 MA (3.2, 3.3.) 130:263 MM 150:250 SP 160:266 FM	Action MBA Alumni Assessment MBA Program Evaluation	Other data in • 150:276 BC MBA Program Evaluation	Rubrics data in • 120:262 MA • 160:266 FM Other data in • 150:276 BC MBA Program Evaluation	Rubrics data in • 920:260 ME • 130:263 MM • 150:250 SP Other data in • 150:276 BC MBA Program Evaluation	Analysis Other data in 150:276 BC MBA Program Evaluation
SLO 4 Teamwork Competencies <i>Individual Behavior:</i> <u>Competency 4.1.</u> Communication skills and task-related behaviors that support team participation <u>Competency 4.2.</u> Facilitates group processes <i>Overall Team Behavior:</i> <u>Competency 4.3.</u> Efficiency in Team Project Management	130:263 MM 150:250 SP 150:274 RD 150:276 BC 160:266 FM	Rubrics data in • 150:274 RD 150:276 BC • 160:266 FM MBA Alumni Assessment	Rubrics data in • 150:274 RD • 150:276 BC 130:263 MM	Analysis Rubrics data in • 150:274 RD 150:276 BC	Action Rubrics data in • 150:274 RD 150:276 BC	Rubrics data in • 150:274 RD 150:276 BC
SLO 5a Written Communication <u>Competency 5.A.1.</u> Focus of Work <u>Competency 5.A.2.</u> Organization of work <u>Competency 5.A.3.</u> Content Development <u>Competency 5.A.4.</u> Language Style and Tone <u>Competency 5.A.5.</u> Document design <u>Competency 5.A.6.</u> Written language mechanics	150:249 MIS 150:262 HR 150:276 BC 160:266 FM	Analysis MBA Alumni Assessment	Action		Rubrics data in • 150:249 MIS • 150: 262 HR • 150:276 BC	Rubrics data in • 150: 262 HR • 160:266 FM
SLO 5b Oral Presentation <u>Competency 5.B.1.</u> Verbal and non-verbal delivery <u>Competency 5.B.2.</u> Responsiveness to audience <u>Competency 5.B.3.</u> Professional attire <u>Competency 5.B.4.</u> Organization of the presentation <u>Competency 5.B.5.</u> Use of presentation software and handouts.	130:263 MM 150:249 MIS 150:250 SP 150:262 HR 150:274 RD 150:276 BC 160:266 FM	Analysis Other data in • 150:276 BC MBA Alumni Assessment	Action Other data in • 150:276 BC	Other data in • 150:276 BC	Rubrics data in • 150:249 MIS • 150:250 FM • 150: 276 BC Other data in • 150:276 BC	Rubrics data in • 150: 262 HR • 160:266 FM 150:250 SP Other data in • 150:276 BC

Legend for MBA Course Abbreviations:

BC	150:276 Business Capstone Experience	CFO	150:272 Cross-Functional Operations
FM	160:266 Financial Management and Markets	HR	150:262 Strategic Management of Human Resources
MA	120:262 Managerial Accounting	ME	920:260 Managerial Economics
MIS	150:249 Management Information Systems	MM	130:263 Marketing Management
RD	150:274 Research and Analysis for Management Decisions	SP	150:250 Strategic Planning and Organizational Analysis