

SECTION 6: LEARNING AND TEACHING

In general, high quality teaching is expected and is a required condition of reappointment of all tenure track, non-tenure track, and adjunct faculty. Full-time faculty review includes annual reviews of one's teaching materials/portfolio by reappointment, tenure and promotion committees, department chairs and the Dean. Acceptable performance in teaching is expected for participation in merit raise pools. These expectations exist within the context that CBA faculty have some of the highest teaching loads at The University of Akron. Typically, scholarly academic qualified faculty carry a 3-3 teaching load with average class sizes of 33 for undergraduate courses and 15 for graduate courses.

At the department level, various practices occur to support and develop high-quality teaching in the face of heavy teaching loads:

- Course syllabi are monitored by chairs to ensure that learning goals, course content, and the course plan are specified
- Faculty receive support to learn and use the university's learning management system and the design principles implicit in the system. Faculty are encouraged to adopt course specific Technology-Enabled Engaged Pedagogy. Seventy-five percent of the tenure-track finance faculty have completed the University of Akron's online course design and development class – which focuses on pedagogy as a foundation for online course design. Moreover, the adoption of technology in the classroom is facilitated through flexible scheduling in the form of hybrid and online course options.
- Some courses have coordinators to ensure consistency across multiple sections of a course
- Each semester the school organizes a faculty workshop on effective teaching and learning
- Faculty are encouraged to attend and make presentations at teaching conferences and workshops and to conduct scholarly research on pedagogy
- Efforts are made to limit the number of different course preps per semester and new preps per academic year for individual faculty members
- Best practices in teaching and testing are frequently agenda items at department meetings

6c. CBA Assurance of Learning

What will students learn? How will they learn? How will we know if they have learned? What will we do to increase learning? These are the questions examined by the UA CBA assurance of learning function.

Assurance of learning (AOL) within the CBA is a moderately mature function. A somewhat elaborate AOL structure was put in place in 2013. The AOL officer, Associate Dean, and Assistant Dean are responsible for AOL operations. An AOL graduate assistant supports the operations. The AOL officer and the Associate Dean oversee the AOL steering committee which facilitates the AOL subcommittees which are formed around each CBA Integrated Core learning goal. Approximately 37 full-time faculty members are assigned to an AOL subcommittee and a faculty member chairs each committee. The AOL officer oversees administration of each group's assessments, data compilation, and disseminating data to the committees and other faculty. Faculty members assess the data and make recommendations for actions in response to their assessment of the data. The AOL officer maintains AOL records for the college via an electronic repository on Sharepoint. At least one CBA faculty meeting per academic year is focused on reports from the AOL sub-committees.

Across all CBA programs, changes have occurred that indicate an authentic increased focus on improving student learning outcomes. In a very organic manner, beginning at the department level in 2014, nearly 20 faculty members have voluntarily participated in demanding and time intensive formal UA training in course design and development. An outcome of this training is increased understanding and

SECTION 6: LEARNING AND TEACHING

internalization of assurance of learning ideals and improved competencies in methods leading to continuous improvement of student learning outcomes.

Participation of CBA faculty in “Quality Matters” and “Design and Development” training has created an assessment and improvement oriented culture within the CBA. This culture extends to undergraduate Academic Advising. In 2015 an assurance of learning process was created for academic advising which includes a mission statement, values statement, learning outcomes, metrics, and a plan for implementation of the process. A final indication of the integration of assurance of learning into the culture of the CBA is our practice of including relevant professional staff (internship coordinator, leadership institute director, etc.) in AOL subcommittees as a means of maintaining a strong linkage of professional development programming with CBA Core learning goals.

During the review period significant effort was expended on the formal documentation of direct measurement of learning outcomes and closing the loop actions. Opportunities to simplify and re-energize CBA AOL initiatives with an emphasis on setting achievement goals will be examined in 2017.

6d. Learning Goals

Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Learning Goals (common to all business majors)

In fall 2013 CBA faculty held a day long workshop to review the BBA learning goals. The outcome of the review was characterized as “refreshing” the goals. The number of goals was reduced from 11 to 7 and rewording occurred. **BBA students will be able to:**

1. Demonstrate integrated business knowledge and apply core business fundamentals
2. Demonstrate a global perspective and cross-cultural awareness
3. Use writing skills and oral communication skills to persuade and mobilize action
4. Be informed decision-makers
5. Analyze data using quantitative techniques
6. Recognize ethical dilemmas and understand how to address them
7. Develop leadership and collaboration competencies

Master of Business Administration Learning Goals (latest Revision Fall 2015)

Global Perspective:

1. Gain an understanding of doing business in different countries
2. Better understand cultural differences within countries and across regions
3. Understand the role of American business in global environment

Critical Thinking/Problem Solving:

1. Ability to use multiple approaches/perspectives to analyze situation
2. Ability to interpret the results
3. Ability to present actionable finding

Effective Communications:

1. Ability to effectively communicate verbally
2. Ability to demonstrate effective written communications

Ethical Behavior:

1. Ability to differentiate between ethical and unethical behaviors
2. Ability to understand the potential business consequences of unethical behavior
3. Ability to understand the potential personal consequences of unethical behavior

Teamwork:

1. Ability to understand leadership principles
2. Ability to apply leadership principles in diverse settings

SECTION 6: LEARNING AND TEACHING

MSM Learning Goals

Analytical Problem Solving Skills:

1. Visualize and analyze business data
2. Demonstrate analytical skills in terms of effective decision-making and problem solving

Communication Skills Utilizing Data:

1. Write business documents clearly, concisely, analytically, and persuasively
2. Speak in groups and in public clearly, concisely, analytically, and persuasively, with appropriate use of visual aids

Employer Satisfaction:

1. Employers that hire our students will be satisfied with the knowledge and skills that our graduates possess

Graduate Satisfaction:

1. Students that graduate from our IS program will feel that they have gained significant value from the instruction and experiences they received

Specific IS Knowledge and Skills:

1. Use the contemporary systems modeling methodology and an advanced CASE tool to model business processes and gather business requirements
2. Students will have the ability to develop databases and the queries to generate information appropriate for management decisions
3. Demonstrate an understanding of work breakdown structures and networks for planning, scheduling, and controlling projects
4. Understand emerging technologies and how to be appropriately use them to support business strategy

6e. Assessment Tools and Results

For the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree program, the core learning goals and methods of assessment are summarized below:

- Integrated business knowledge: ETS Major Field Test administered to graduating students in the Strategic Management core course
- Be informed decision makers: Rubric used to score written case assignments in the strategic management course; ETS Major Field Test
- Analyze data using quantitative techniques: Quiz on key statistical topics is administered at the start of the business analytics course; ETS Major Field Test
- Develop leadership and collaboration competencies: Survey of employers of internship students; Team Contracts in business statistics course
- Use writing and oral communication skills to persuade and mobilize action: Rubrics used to score individual oral presentations in the strategic management and the international business courses
- Demonstrate a global perspective and cross-cultural awareness: ETS major field exam.
- Recognize and understand how to address ethical concerns: Survey of employers of internship students; Scenario based questions added to the ETS Major Field Test
- All the CBA BBA learning goals are assessed by the EBI/Skyfactor benchmarking survey of graduating students
- See Appendix 12 for a table of objectives, alignments, assessment for each goal, rubrics, additional detail on the data and results presented below, and detail regarding MBA and MSM assessment.

SECTION 6: LEARNING AND TEACHING

EBI/Skyfactor

Since 2008 the CBA has participated in EBI/Skyfactor (named changed in 2016) benchmarking surveys. The responses of our students are compared to all institutions participating in the survey. The overall performance goal is a mean score of 5.5 on a 7 point scale on each scale. Graduating students are surveyed every year alternating between undergraduate and graduate students.

The most global measure on the survey is the Overall Satisfaction factor. In 2008 the CBA score was 66.7% and in 2016 it was 76.8% (goal is 75% or higher) with all institutions averaging 81% on this factor. The CBA 2016 overall learning score was 75% compared to the average of all institutions of 78.3%. During this review period there was a significant increase in scores between 2012 and 2014 and not much change between 2014 and 2016. The CBA is at or close to the benchmarking goals on most factors, and consistently equal to other institutions on curriculum/instructional related factors. The largest gap observed between the CBA and other institutions is on the facilities factor with CBA receiving a score of 71.2% (all institutions averaged 76%) in 2016. (See Appendix 12b 2016 EBI Results Summary.)

The response rate for the 2016 undergraduate survey was 84% (all schools average response rate = 57%). A summary of the survey results is prepared by the Associate Dean and disseminated to department chairs who then share and discuss the results with their faculty at faculty meetings. The faculty formulate action steps in response to their interpretations of the survey results. The Finance faculty incorporated this data into the decision to replace the Financial Services major with a more focused Risk Management and Insurance major. All three finance major capstone courses will be case-based or project-based and involve disciplinary writing. They are also in the process of redesigning the investment course to improve student learning and critical thinking. The Marketing faculty action steps were to make changes in three undergraduate marketing courses and one graduate course. Changes are being made to Marketing Principles and Buyer Behavior to improve student writing and problem solving by incorporating additional assignments and restructuring others. In Brand Management students now write two individual essays and ten group essays in order to improve writing through critical assessment and solution identification. Changes in the graduate Strategic Marketing course are the creation of six individual writing assignments consisting of 1-2 page summaries of assigned cases in response to the need to improve writing skills.

Integrated Business Knowledge. On average CBA students score at or above the national mean on 56 items on the ETS exam and below the national average on 57 items. The results of the ETS exam are disseminated to the faculty via the Integrated Business Knowledge AOL sub-committee. Faculty in each discipline then review the results and take action. For example, finance and law faculty reviewed ETS data in 2016 for the content area of legal and social environment. The average score of CBA students on the 11 items in this content area was 53% compared to a national mean of 59%. CBA students scored below the national average on eight of ten items. Faculty identified several general factors that impact the scores. The factors include: (1) high variation in teaching across the adjuncts assigned to teach the course, (2) variation in test administration and no incentives to students to perform well on the entire ETS exam in general, and (3) the Legal and Social Environment course is an Ohio TAG course which means students are more likely to take this course at another Ohio school. Faculty agreed to take steps that would increase student outcomes. Two assignments that stressed practical application of theoretical content about arbitration and secured transactions and a take home quiz on this content were added. Pre-tests before lectures were also added to provide students with a minimal amount of familiarity with topics before the lecture which may improve class engagement. In-class quizzes were also added in which students work together on the quizzes to come up with correct answers. In this way students can help each other to understand difficult material. Also, faculty dropped use of Cengage online assignments because there were too many technical problems which led to student frustration

SECTION 6: LEARNING AND TEACHING

which spilled over to students' overall attitudes towards the entire course. See Appendix 12 for more details about ETS Major Field Exam results.

Decision Makers. The subcommittee devised and recommended a rubric for the evaluation of quality of decision making evidenced in written cases submitted by individual students. At the spring 2017 Summit faculty members tested the rubric by evaluating cases. When problems with the rubric arose, discussion focused on needed modifications. The rubric did not allow for equally easy application to simple as well as complex cases. The rubric did not exist when the cases were assigned and completed so reviewers found that the criteria were not well followed.

Quantitative Techniques. CBA faculty have made significant progress in assessment of, and student achievement in, this learning outcome. Measurements used since 2013 include (1) An internally developed "Key Statistical Topics Quiz," (2) ETS major field exam items, and (3) EBI survey items. Faculty who teach in the three data analytics courses in the CBA Integrated Core worked together over this review period and successfully completed multiple rounds of closing the loop. One of the methods they use is to administer the Key Statistical Topics Quiz at the beginning of the Business Analytics course. They review the most missed items on this quiz and then make adjustments in the Spreadsheet Modeling and Decision Analysis course, the Business Statistics course, and the Business Analytics course. Eight specific actions have been taken in response to the data collected since 2013. For example, a frequently missed quiz item was on hypothesis testing/stating the null and alternative hypotheses. The action taken was to provide more examples in class and more practice homework in both the Business Statistics course and the Business Analytics course. Another frequently missed item pertained to assumptions in linear regression. The action taken to address this was to stress the topic more in the Business Statistics course and reinforce it in the Business Analytics course by incorporating a common case assignment in both courses. The results are that scores on the Key Statistical Topics Quiz have increased from 49.2% to 56.8%. The most improvement is in the areas of linear regression and Chi-Square distributions. The most frequently missed items continue to be in the area of hypothesis testing, specifically in setting up null and alternative hypotheses. Another problem identified from quiz data was that performance on the quiz was a function of the length of time between taking the Business Statistics and Business Analytics courses. The action taken in response to this finding is faculty and academic advisors emphasizing that students should take the two courses in back to back semesters. As a result, more students take the Business Analytics course in the semester immediately following completion of the Business Statistics course. As an example, 133 of 170 students taking Analytics in spring 2015 took Statistics the previous semester. While there is much improvement to be made, this is an area in which faculty are especially satisfied with the impact of their assurance of learning process on student learning.

Leadership and Collaboration. During the review period, the AOL Professional Development Subcommittee refined the objectives for this learning goal deciding to focus on the objective of working cooperatively with others in a team setting. The measurement of this objective occurred via a survey of employers' perceptions of internship students' teamwork skills. Overall, employers rated students' teamwork skills as average. Team process skills were rated the highest and skills related to considering multiple perspectives/knowledge of different stakeholders were the lowest. Another measurement of this objective was the score student teams received on their use of team contracts in the Business Analytics and the Business Statistics courses. Student teams that received a contract grade of 3 (scale of 0 to 3) performed better than teams receiving scores of 0, 1 or 2. Based upon these assessments the committee recommended incorporating more dialectical pedagogical techniques (case discussion and debates) in undergraduate core courses to expose students to more variety of perspectives. Finally, 5 scenario based questions were developed by this committee and added to the ETS for the first time in

SECTION 6: LEARNING AND TEACHING

2016. More than half of students did not respond to the questions and only 25% answered the questions correctly. Changes will be made in the administration of these questions in the future. Overall, assessment data indicates that improvement is needed on this learning outcome.

Writing and Oral Communication. The business communication skills of CBA students are improving and students report that their business education has enhanced their communication skills. However, in 2012 EBI data indicated that the business program was not enhancing students' communication skills to the degree desired by faculty. The problem identified was that the CBA lacked specific curricular and/or co-curricular resources for enhancing business communication skills. One action taken in 2013 was to hire a full-time Business Communication Practitioner. This professional staff member worked with CBA faculty to create business writing and presentation rubrics and to drive adoption of the rubrics across the CBA. Other actions taken were to embed instruction by the Business Communication Practitioner in two Core courses and for students in these courses to receive individual and team coaching on their oral presentations; to create a Springboard site containing business communication resources and instructional materials for faculty and students; non-credit business communication workshops are provided each semester as part of our professional development training, and a 3 credit Business Communications course was developed and approved by CBA faculty working with CBA Advancement Council members and will be offered in spring 2018 with plans for it to become a required CBA Core Course in the future.

Since 2013 data collected to assess oral communication included rubric scores (N = 950) and EBI survey items. Results of oral presentation rubric scoring identified specific problem areas (average scores less than 2.4 on 4 point scale) such as thin conclusions, missing transitions, weak introductions, poor time management, and lack of effective eye contact. The actions taken in response to this data included providing the rubrics to students before their presentations, video-taping presentations and reviewing them with students after their presentations, and developing more fine-tuned assignments such as directing students to approach a case study presentation as a persuasive presentation instead of as an informative speech. Also, the Business Communication Practitioner spends more time in the core courses talking about presentation expectations and providing instruction on the specific aspects of the presentations that were identified as the weakest by the rubric scores. By spring 2017 a 10% improvement in content, structure and eye contact ratings was observed; a 15% improvement was observed in how students considered audience needs. Lower scores were observed for vocal volume and introductions.

Students' writing has been measured using multiple methods. Traditional rubric scoring has been used in Principles of Accounting (6400:201) and International Business (6800:305), scored by trained graduate assistants, to give early feedback to students. Writing samples from seniors were scored in Strategic Management by an outside reviewer. Action steps taken to improve writing include: (1) Individual coaching by the Business Communication Practitioner, (2) all students in CBA courses are given access to online tools via a "Communication Resources" link in Springboard, and (3) Non-credit writing workshops and a CBA writing contest.

Global Perspective. The ETS Major Field Test contains nine items that measure knowledge of domain specific international content and cross cultural management. Across five administrations of the exam from 2013 -2016, CBA students scored equal to or above the national average on six of the nine items. To enhance the assessment of this learning goal, the global perspective sub-committee created questions specific to our learning objectives as a stand-alone assessment and pre-tested the HEIghten test of Intercultural Competence and Diversity in spring 2017. While CBA students are scoring at the national average on this learning goal, improvement is still needed since national averages on these

SECTION 6: LEARNING AND TEACHING

items range from 20% to 69% correct. Review of global perspective content in the CBA core curriculum will be a focus of the 2017-18 CBA curriculum review initiative.

Ethical Concerns. The AOL Professional Development Sub-committee refined the objectives for this learning goal deciding to focus on the objectives of recognizing ethical issues in business and considering the consequences of business decisions on all stakeholders. The measurement of this objective occurred via a survey of employers' perceptions of internship students' understanding of ethical issues. Overall, employers rated students' understanding of ethics as average. The highest rated aspect of understanding ethics was students' knowledge of danger signs related to unethical behavior. The lowest rated aspect was the students' consideration of multiple perspectives when facing an ethical dilemma. Based upon these assessments the committee recommended incorporating more dialectical pedagogical techniques (case discussion and debates) in undergraduate core courses to expose students to more variety of perspectives. Finally, five scenario based questions were developed by this committee and added to the ETS for the first time in 2016. More than half of students did not respond to the questions and only 15% answered the questions correctly. Changes will be made in the administration of these questions. Assessment data indicates that improvement is needed on this learning outcome.

Graduate Example. The CBA has separate AOL processes for each graduate program. Details of the MBA and the MSM assessment programs are provided in Appendix 12. The following is one example of assessment that occurs in the MBA program. MBA students are expected to demonstrate understanding of doing business in different countries, cultural differences within countries and across regions, and the role of American business in the global environment. This learning goal is assessed by EBI survey scores, exit interviews, and embedded writing assignments in the required MBA course 6800:605 International Business Environments. Assessment of learning measures are obtained by applying a three part rubric to a sampling of these papers using a 1-3 rating scale. The assessment of the Global Perspective learning goal generated the following mean scores per the objectives:

Understanding doing business in different countries	Mean = 2.14
Understanding cultural differences within countries and across regions	Mean = 1.57
Understanding the role of American business in global environment	Mean = 2.29

While both understanding doing business in different countries and understanding the role of American business in the global environment were in the acceptable range, there is room for continuous improvement. Students' understanding of cultural differences within countries and across regions unquestionably needs improvement. The average UA performance score on the EBI global perspective factor was 79% in 2014 compared to a national average of 77%. Exit interview data in 2013 -2014 indicated concern by graduating domestic students about the lack of opportunities to gain a global perspective within the MBA program. Graduating international students indicated concerns about the lack of opportunities they had to experience American culture and business.

The continuous improvement steps for this learning goal will include bringing the rubric to the attention of students. Professors teaching this course will increase the amount of course content devoted to the objectives measured, and the both the learning goal and the rubric will be reviewed to confirm they are appropriate. Other improvement actions taken include: more class discussions in all MBA courses to increase interaction between international and domestic students; a study abroad trip was added to the MBA program in 2016; the Cross Cultural Association was formed; and the American Experience initiative was created in 2015. Increases occurred in the EBI global perspective learning goal scores from 2014 (UA =79%; national = 77%) and 2016 (UA= 81%; national = 76%) and in 2016 exit interviews students report that the gains in global perspective they achieved is a highlight of the MBA program.