

Department of Business Administration & Accounting
2014-15 Assessment Report

A. Progress Report for Action Items from 2013-2014 Department Assessment:

1. **Action Item #1:** ACCT 212 (Computer-based Accounting) was restructured into ACCT 412 (Accounting Information Systems) to allow for the inclusion of additional content on current information systems used in the profession.

It is too early to assess the full impact of this change as students who have taken the revised course are only now entering the workplace and beginning to prepare for the CPA exam. We will continue to assess the impact of this change through our internship assessments and feedback from graduates, in particular those who sit for the CPA exam. In addition, we are modifying the internship evaluation form to ask for specific feedback on computer skills and have modified the curriculum to add additional information systems and computer-related skills.

2. **Action Item #2:** Beginning in academic year 2012-13 the department raised the required grade for entrance into ACCT 213 (Intermediate Accounting I) from a C- to a B- in ACCT 123 (Principles of Accounting II).

This change has been extremely successful. The percentage of students scoring below a 70% (the required grade to progress to Intermediate Accounting II) was 7% in 2014 and 6% in 2013 (the two years subsequent to the change) versus 22% in 2012 and 18% in 2011 (the two years prior to the change). This has also resulted in fewer students withdrawing from the class and changing their majors and has improved the overall class quality in Intermediate II and the other upper level accounting classes.

3. **Action Item #3:** In order to more closely align assessment methodologies with learning objectives the department began using a revised assessment plan in 2014-15.

The department created this revised assessment plan by first reviewing our learning objectives and the methodologies we would use to assess them. This process resulted in some modifications to the objectives to make them more clear, measurable, and consistent across the majors. The revised assessment plan is as follows:

Business Administration, International Business and Business Communication

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| 1) Understand the basic business management functions. | internship feedback |
| 2) Develop competency in data analysis techniques including the use of spreadsheets and databases. | internship feedback |
| 3) Gain an understanding of the ethical dilemmas faced by business managers. | Business Ethics paper |
| 4) Develop interpersonal skills and learn to be a valuable member of a team. | internship feedback |
| 5) Be prepared for entry-level employment in the field of business. | internship feedback |

Accounting and Forensic Accounting

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| 1) Demonstrate a basic understanding of the following: | |
| a) generally accepted accounting principles and the preparation of accurate and informative financial statements | internship feedback, auditing paper |
| b) generally accepted auditing standards and the importance and function of an independent audit | internship feedback, auditing paper |
| c) the Internal Revenue Code and the impact of taxes on business decisions. | internship feedback |
| 2) Develop competency in data analysis techniques including the use of spreadsheets and databases. | internship feedback |
| 3) Gain an understanding of the ethical dilemmas faced by accountants and auditors. | auditing paper |
| 4) Develop interpersonal skills and learn to be a valuable member of a team. | internship feedback |
| 5) Be prepared for entry-level employment in the field of accounting. | internship feedback |

Additional assessment feedback will be provided by direct contact with graduates and professional exam results, in particular the CPA exam.

B. 2014-2015 Department Assessment Summary:

We used the plan detailed in Action Item #3 above to perform our 2014-15 assessment analyzing the employer evaluation forms from internships and evaluating writing assignments given in Business Ethics (BADM 364) and Auditing (ACCT 423). A detailed discussion of each follows.

Internships – The department considers feedback from the employers of our interns to be the most compelling assessment evidence we have available. The vast majority of our students go directly into the work place so this independent third-party feedback is invaluable. At the end of each credit-bearing internship, the student’s supervisor completes an evaluation form and returns it to the College’s Career Development Office. This evaluation is then forwarded to the department and is included as part of the student’s final grade. The evaluation form requires the employer to rank the student on a five-tiered scale from excellent/outstanding to unsatisfactory/poor in the following categories: relations with others, judgment, ability to learn, attitude towards work, dependability, quality of work, and overall performance. The form also asks for feedback on attendance, allows for written comments, and asks if the company would hire the student if they had a position available.

We analyzed 100% of the internship feedback forms we received for 2104-15, assigning a numerical value to each of the 28 responses then tallying and grouping the responses by category. The numerical values were assigned as follows:

1. Excellent/outstanding
2. Above average
3. Average
4. Below average
5. Unsatisfactory/poor

The analysis indicates very strong performance by our students on their internships. The vast majority of students were rated either a #1 or a #2 in all categories with no student being rated a #4 or #5 in any category. In addition employers said that they would offer a job if available to 11 of 12 accounting majors and 15 of 16 business majors. We followed up with the evaluators who gave the two responses of “no” on this question and in both cases their unwillingness to hire was based on personality or chemistry issues, not on the technical ability of the student.

A summary of the internship evaluation follows with the detailed report included in Appendix A.

	%	%	%
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Above Ave</u>	<u>Average</u>
<u>Accounting internships</u>			
Relations with others	58	42	
Judgment	50	50	
Ability to learn	92	8	
Attitude towards work	34	58	8
Dependability	67	33	
Quality of work	67	33	
Overall performance	67	33	
 <u>Business internships</u>			
Relations with others	56	44	
Judgment	25	69	6
Ability to learn	63	37	
Attitude towards work	50	44	6
Dependability	69	25	6
Quality of work	56	38	6
Overall performance	63	37	

Note: no student was rated below average or unsatisfactory/poor in any category.

We believe these results provide compelling evidence that our students are learning the skills required to be successful in their careers. Preparing this analysis has led us to consider making modifications to the evaluation form which are discussed in more detail in Action Item #3 below.

Business Ethics Paper

Business Ethics (BADM 364) is an upper-level class open only to juniors and seniors. A significant assignment in the course is for students to research an actual case where a business fraud or alleged fraud occurred and write a paper on the ethical elements of the case. We selected for review 100% of the papers written for this course in the spring, 2015 semester and evaluated them against the following rubric:

The student demonstrated a basic understanding of the ethical dilemmas faced by business managers:

Exceeded Expectations	5	16%
Met Expectations	20	65%
Failed to Meet Expectations	<u>6</u>	<u>19%</u>
Total	<u>31</u>	<u>100%</u>

As a department we have set a goal that no more than 15% of students should fail to meet expectations for a learning objective. That goal was not met for this learning objective. We reflected on this situation and came to the conclusion that the results may be influenced by the wording of the assignment versus the methodology of the individual who performed the grading against the rubric. In addition, the instructor for the course indicated that there was a small contingent of students in the class who consistently took a contrarian point of view and expressed very broad views as to what they considered to be ethical. Because these individuals failed to state explicitly in the paper that the actions of the companies or people in the case were wrong or unethical in nature, they were evaluated as “failed to meet expectations”.

After reflecting on these results, the course instructor is going to revisit the wording in the assignment to see if students are being given too much leeway in how they present the ethical considerations in the paper. He will also consider whether additional class time will be allocated to reinforce this topic.

Auditing Paper

Auditing (ACCT 423) is an upper-level class open only to seniors. A significant assignment in the course is for students to research an actual case where financial statement fraud and/or an audit failure occurred and write a paper identifying the misapplications of generally accepted accounting principles and violations of generally accepted auditing standards in the case. They also must propose solutions to these deficiencies and identify ethical issues on the part of the company and the auditors. We selected for review 100% of the papers written for this course in the fall, 2014 semester and evaluated them against the following rubric:

The student demonstrated a basic understanding of the following:

- Ability to identify the misapplication of generally accepted accounting principles

Exceeded Expectations	3	18%
Met Expectations	10	59%
Failed to Meet Expectations	<u>4</u>	<u>23%</u>
Total	<u>17</u>	<u>100%</u>

- Ability to identify the misapplication of generally accepted auditing standards

Exceeded Expectations	3	18%
Met Expectations	11	64%
Failed to Meet Expectations	<u>3</u>	<u>18%</u>
Total	<u>17</u>	<u>100%</u>

- An understanding of the ethical dilemmas faced by accountants and auditors

Exceeded Expectations	3	18%
Met Expectations	13	76%
Failed to Meet Expectations	<u>1</u>	<u>6%</u>
Total	<u>17</u>	<u>100%</u>

As a department we have set a goal that no more than 15% of students should fail to meet expectations for any of these learning objectives. That goal was not met for either the generally accepted accounting principles or generally accepted auditing standards objectives. We reflected on this situation and came to the conclusion that the results are likely influenced by two factors. First, this is the last class that fell under the old rule of only needing a C- in Principles of Accounting II to get into Intermediate Accounting I. As such, it contained a few students who consistently struggle in the upper level accounting classes. In fact, three students had final grades in the course in the 60-69% range. Second, although the instructions for the paper clearly speak to the identification of misapplications of accounting principles, the students tend to focus more intently on the auditing standards since this is an auditing class.

After reflecting on these results, the course instructor is going to revisit the wording in the assignment to be clearer about the requirements. He will also allocate additional class time to this subject.

C. Action Items from 2014-2015 Department Assessment:

- 1. Action Item #1:** We will solicit feedback from recent graduates to assess how the content of this ACCT412 has prepared them for systems related aspects of their jobs and for the CPA exam.
- 2. Action Item #2:** In order to continue to strengthen the computer and information systems skills of our students we will add as a requirement for all majors the course Fundamentals of Information Systems (CIS 129). Working with the Dept. of Mathematics and Computer Science we are adding a course in advanced Excel and would like to have the ability to offer Microsoft certification to our students. This will require an instructor who is Microsoft certified.
- 3. Action Item #3:** Working in conjunction with the Office of Career Development we will make modifications to the internship evaluation form adding feedback categories for ethical decision making, communication and computer skills, and skill-based professional preparedness.

- 4. Action Item #4:** The course instructor for Business Ethics is going to revisit the wording for the ethics paper to see if students are being given too much leeway in how they evaluate and present the ethical considerations in the paper. He will also consider whether additional class time will be allocated to reinforce this topic.
- 5. Action Item #5:** The course instructor for Auditing is going to revisit the wording in the assignment to be clearer about the requirements. He will also allocate additional class time to preparing students for identifying misapplications of accounting principles and the deficiencies in following auditing standards.