Academic Degree Programs Assessment Plan

College of Business

Department of Accountancy

Master of Science in Accountancy Program

Master of Science in Accountancy Degree

September 2019

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1. Introduction

Program learning goals and objectives, and related assessment plans, have been part of our strategic operations for many years and are continually reviewed and updated. The Department of Accountancy has continued to refine its assurance of learning (AOL) processes during the past five years to maintain a comprehensive, program-specific AOL plan. Historically, all assessment activities were the responsibility of the Curriculum Committee. The Department revised its structure document in 2012 to create a separate AOL Committee to improve the efficiency and analysis of AOL data and more formally link curricular improvements to AOL analyses.

The primary role of the new AOL Committee was to review and approve assessment of learning plans, assessment assignments, and compile and analyze assessment data. It then recommended curricular changes for review by the department's Curriculum Committee. It was thought that the AOL Committee would focus on assessment processes and data, while the Curriculum Committee would focus on assessment outcomes and curricular design. The outcome of the AOL committee's review would be to propose an actionable plan linking a specific AOL outcome to a specific curricular improvement. The Curriculum Committee would then accept or reject that proposal. Ultimately, the goal was to remove some AOL processes and data review from the Curriculum Committee so that committee could utilize its time more efficiently. Unfortunately, operationalizing these disparate functions proved problematic. Assessment data was discussed in both committees and the AOL Committee was limited to recommending curricular improvement, instead of enacting it. The desired efficiencies did not materialize.

As a result, in the fall of 2017, the department moved AOL responsibility back to the Curriculum Committee. An assistant chair was designated as the department's primary AOL coordinator. This person coordinates faculty AOL assignments, receives AOL data and prepares preliminary reports for the Curriculum Committee. The assistant chair also provides specific AOL data to Curriculum Committee members as needed and informs both the Curriculum Committee chair and its members about the AOL process. This process has helped the Curriculum Committee focus more on AOL data trends and macro analysis.

The learning goals and objectives of the Master of Accounting Science (MAS) program were revised and affirmed in October 2015 by the accountancy faculty and the College of Business curriculum committee. The goals and objectives are flexible as they allow students to pursue three different areas of emphasis; financial reporting and assurance, data analytics, or taxation. The MAS program has focused significantly on providing professional skills that are required for success in the business world. As a result, its learning goals and objectives seek to balance multiple competencies, from technical knowledge to communications and ethics, so that its graduates are positioned to take advantage of a host of possible job opportunities in the short and long run.

The MAS program provides students the opportunity to develop both technical accounting skills and leadership and professional competencies that are critical for a career in accountancy. Most courses in the MAS include team projects that help students prepare for a career as a professional accountant. Students in ACCY 675 complete a project requiring them to write code in R and to critically analyze the results. For example, in the spring 2018 semester, groups of three to five

students completed an E&Y case study requiring them to create variables to compute Return on Equity using the DuPont formula. The groups also were required to create visualizations of the resulting data by industry. The groups compared the visualizations of the industry data and made inferences about the industries and their performance from those visualizations. In ACCY 690, Financial Statement Analysis and Business Valuation, student teams develop a valuation for a publicly traded company. Each team works with a coach from the profession, engages in team feedback sessions, and presents their valuation to a group of external judges. These projects improve students' communication skills, teamwork, and critical thinking capabilities through engaged learning.

In addition, all students in the MAS program participate in the MAS Launch and an active learning event at Second City, an improvisational comedy club in Chicago. During the MAS Launch, students participate in several activities to work on communication skills and teamwork. The Second City event focuses on communication skills. Students learn to think on their feet and how to promote communication among teams.

Finally, students have many opportunities to engage with professionals. Professionals are frequent guest speakers in courses. In ACCY 670, Research in Accountancy, professionals develop cases with the professor and present their solutions to the course. Students are invited to the speaker series, discussed above, and can engage with professionals via student groups.

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Northern Illinois University
Department of Accountancy
Learning Goals and Objectives – Master of Accounting Science Program (MAS)

Graduates from the NIU Department of Accountancy Master of Accounting Science (Leadership) Program will fulfill the following learning goals and objectives:

LEARNING GOALS	LEARNING OBJECTIVES
I. **Apply accounting concepts and technology to solve problems.**	Learning Objective 1: Demonstrate appropriate knowledge of technical accounting concepts. Learning Objective 2: Develop critical thinking skills necessary to solve problems. Learning Objective 3: Support conclusions using appropriate research and authoritative pronouncements. Learning Objective 4: Analyze problems with appropriate technology.
II. **Demonstrate leadership and professional skills.**	Learning Objective 5: Communicate accounting and business information clearly and persuasively. Learning Objective 6: Develop skills to receive and provide feedback.
III. **Assess decision alternatives of ethical choices.**	Learning Objective 7: Evaluate the ethical implications of increasingly complex and uncertain problems.
Assurance of Learning	The NIU Department of Accountancy engages in assessment efforts to determine the degree to which we are achieving our learning objectives in support of our learning goals. To this end, we collect both direct and indirect measures of student learning. Direct assessment data is collected from faculty members who use a variety of course-embedded measures (e.g., project reports, exam questions, in-class presentations, etc.) and from employers who evaluate our students while on internship. Indirect assessment data (e.g., survey responses) are collected to complement our direct assessment observations. Each year, the Assistant Department Chair compiles the assessment data and presents it to the Curriculum Committee for its review. The Curriculum Committee chair then forwards the results of that review to the full faculty to foster continuous improvement and facilitate effective delivery of our curriculum.

3. Curriculum Map

Course Number	Course Description Required (R) or Elective (E)	1. Demonstrate Appropriate Knowledge of Technical Accounting Concepts	2. Develop Critical Thinking Skills Necessary to Solve Problems	3. Support Conclusions Using Appropriate Research and Authoritative Pronouncements	4. Analyze Problems with Appropriate Technology	5. Communicate Accounting and Business Information Clearly and Persuasively	6. Develop Skills to Receive and Provide Feedback	7. Evaluate the Ethical Implications of Increasingly Complex and Uncertain Problems
		Program Student Learning Outcomes						
ACCY 510	Accounting Information Systems (R)*	B	B		B			
ACCY 520	Intermediate Cost Management (R)*	B	B		B			
ACCY 531	Financial Reporting I (R)*	B	B					B
ACCY 532	Financial Reporting II (R)*	B	B					B
ACCY 535	SEC Reporting and Corporate Governance (E)	D						
ACCY 550	Principles of Taxation (R)*	B						
ACCY 560	Assurance Services (R)*	B						
ACCY 562	Internal Auditing (E)	D	D					D
ACCY 565	Forensic Accounting/Fraud Investigation (E)	D	D					
ACCY 580	Governmental and Not-For-Profit Accounting (E)	D						
ACCY 604	Independent Study in Accounting (E)	P***	P***	P***	P***	P***	P***	P***
ACCY 633	Advanced Financial Reporting (E)	P	P					P
ACCY 645	Professional Tax Research (R)**	D	D	D	D	D		D
ACCY 647	Corporate Taxation (E)	D	D		D	D		D
ACCY 649	Taxation of Flow-Through Entities (E)	D	D		D	D		D

Course Number	Course Description Required (R) or Elective (E)	Program Student Learning Outcomes						
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ACCY 650	Advanced Issues in Taxation (E)	D	D		D			D
ACCY 656	Tax Concepts and Property Transactions (E)	D	D	D	D			D
ACCY 664	Financial Statement Auditing (E)	D	D			D		D
ACCY 667	Information Systems Auditing (E)	D	D		D			
ACCY 670	Accounting Research (R)**	D	D	D	D	D		D
ACCY 672	Professional Development Skills in Accounting (R)		P			D	D	
ACCY 673	Internship in Accountancy (E)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P
ACCY 675	Data Analytics in Decision Making in Accounting (R)	P	P		P	P	P	P
ACCY 679	Seminar in Accounting (E)	P***	P***	P***	P***	P***	P***	P***
ACCY 682	International Accounting (E)	D	D					
ACCY 690	Accountancy Capstone/Financial Statement Analysis and Business Valuation (R)	P	P		P	P	P	P
	Note. Course supports the outcome at the B=beginning, D=developing, or P=proficient level. * - Denotes a course that is a Phase I, or levelling course, for students with non-ACCY baccalaureate degrees or deficiencies. ** - One of these two research courses are required for the degree. *** - An independent study or seminar course should support multiple student learning outcomes, depending upon the nature of the project or class, at the Proficient level.							

4. Assessment Methods

Assessment Method	Explanation					SLOs
	Description	Student-Level Achievement [a]	Program-Level Target [b]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	
Faculty Assessment of Learning Objectives	Faculty directly assess student achievement of an assigned learning objective through a class assignment (project, exam problem) that is evaluated using a rubric developed by the faculty member for the assignment. Faculty communicate the outcome of their direct assessment exercise using a common form. The form prompts the faculty member to describe the assessment activity and why it was chosen, evaluate its similarity to previous assessment activities, reflect upon the assessment activity, and respond objectively (through a Likert scale) to the assessment activity and process.	Students exceeding expectations receive a score of three (3), meeting expectations (2), and not meeting expectations (1). The student-level target is a 2.0 or greater.	85% of all students will meet or exceed the student-level target of 2.0.	A sample of courses is chosen at the beginning of each Fall and Spring semester. Samples are chosen in both a cross-sectional and longitudinal design to identify trends over time and to provide point estimates of achievement for specific semesters[1].	The Assistant Chair responsible for assurance of learning identifies courses, collects data and provides a preliminary report to the Curriculum Committee with the assistance of the Department Chair's staff. The Curriculum Committee reviews the report and the underlying data (as needed) and recommends curricular improvements to the faculty.	1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

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[1] A sample memorandum to faculty detailing AOL assignments is included in the appendix.

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement [a]	Program-Level Target [b]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
University Alumni Surveys	Accountancy graduates are asked questions about their perceptions of the level of preparedness the program provided for their individual careers.	Alumni rate their perception of the program from "very well prepared (5)" to "not well prepared (1)". The target is a score of 4.0 or greater for each question.	90% of alumni graduating one-year prior to the administration of the survey will rate their perception of preparedness at a 4.0 or higher.	The survey is administered each year.	The university administers the survey. The Curriculum Committee reviews alumni responses.	1,2,3,4 and 5
Periodic Faculty Review of MST program and courses	Faculty evaluate courses and the MAS program periodically to ensure that course content is current and complete, and that the curriculum meets the needs of students and the profession.		General measure of all goals.	At least once every three years	Curriculum Committee and ACCY faculty.	1,2,3,4 and 5
Accounting Executive Advisory Board Guidance	Alumni and supporters of NIU Accountancy who work in the profession and hire recent graduates meet to provide guidance to our leadership and program.		General measure of all goals.	Semi-Annually	Department Chair	1,2,3,4 and 5
Exit Surveys	MAS candidates are asked questions about their perception of the program and the role their educational experience will play in their future careers.	Students rate their perception of the program from "very well prepared (5)" to "not well prepared (1)". The target is a score of 4.0 or greater for each question.	90% of graduating students will rate their perception of preparedness at a 4.0 or higher.	Semi-Annually	Assistant to the Chair	1,2,3,4 and 5

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement [a]	Program-Level Target [b]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
AACSB Accreditation Process	Feedback from the AACSB visitation team that applies international standards to our program.		General measure of all goals.	Report filed annually; visitation every five years.	Department Chair, Assistant to the Chair	1,2,3,4 and 5

Note. [a] Student-level target is the score or performance an individual student must demonstrate to say the student met the student learning outcome.
[b] Program-level target is the percent of all students that must demonstrate they meet the student learning outcome.

ASSESSMENT METHODS-BY-OUTCOMES MATRIX

Assessment Method	Program Student Learning Outcome						
	Demonstrate Appropriate Knowledge of Technical Accounting Concepts	Develop Critical Thinking Skills Necessary to Solve Problems	Support Conclusions Using Appropriate Research and Authoritative Pronouncements	Analyze Problems with Appropriate Technology	Communicate Accounting and Business Information Clearly and Persuasively	Develop Skills to Receive and Provide Feedback	Evaluate the Ethical Implications of Increasingly Complex and Uncertain Problems
Faculty Assessment of Learning Objectives	S*, D	S*, D	S*, D	S*, D	S*, D	S*, D	S*, D
University Alumni Surveys	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
Periodic Faculty Review of MST Program and Courses	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
Accounting Executive Advisory Board Guidance	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
Exit Surveys	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I
AACSB Accreditation Process	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I	S, I

Assessment Method	Program Student Learning Outcome						
	Demonstrate Appropriate Knowledge of Technical Accounting Concepts	Develop Critical Thinking Skills Necessary to Solve Problems	Support Conclusions Using Appropriate Research and Authoritative Pronouncements	Analyze Problems with Appropriate Technology	Communicate Accounting and Business Information Clearly and Persuasively	Develop Skills to Receive and Provide Feedback	Evaluate the Ethical Implications of Increasingly Complex and Uncertain Problems

Note. F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment.

* - Faculty assessment of learning objectives has both a formative and a summative component. Courses are assessed by the instructor of record and are used by that instructor to improve course design, delivery and student outcomes. The curriculum committee generally uses a summative approach in assessing whether the curriculum is meeting the department's learning objectives, and when needed, uses a formative approach to evaluate particular courses or related course sequences.