

Northern Illinois University

College of Business

**Department:** Inter-Departmental

**Program:** Master of Business Administration

**CIP Code:** 52.0201

Assessment Plan

## **1. Introduction**

In support of the missions of Northern Illinois University and the College of Business, the M.B.A. program strives to provide innovative active learning and personal experiences through graduate business education, meeting the needs of our fully-employed place bound students but also to reach out to students around the globe to make a difference in the world.

The NIU Master of Business Administration program provides opportunities for lifelong learning by offering six delivery formats for students to complete their M.B.A. degree: the Evening M.B.A. offers a part-time flexible format; the Executive M.B.A. offers a Saturday, cohort, lock-step format; the One-Year M.B.A. and Chicago M.B.A. offer evening cohort, lock-step formats; and the Global M.B.A. double-degree, cohort format (previously known as the Fast-Trak format). To expand our international presence, the Prime/International M.B.A. was added to the program format offerings and is currently delivered with our partner school in Bogota, Colombia. Each has the same required curriculum but differs in admission entry, program delivery, and course scheduling.

Distinct from most traditional master's programs that are departmentally-based, the Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.) program is a college-based, interdisciplinary program that incorporates the functional areas of business including accounting, finance, management, marketing, operations management, and management of information system. Common themes integrated throughout the program curriculum are a global perspective of business, leadership, ethics and social responsibility, and communications.

The M.B.A. program values the relationship between the program and the supporting academic units within the College of Business, as faculty are the most critical resource required for continued success of the M.B.A. program. AACSB faculty qualifications and accreditation, continued program improvement and curriculum innovation, and program offerings and strategic growth initiatives such as on-line program development are dependent upon faculty availability.

Each department in the College of Business is responsible for faculty personnel and teaching qualifications are determined by the respective department personnel committee. Faculty who teach in the program are selected through a collaborative process among department chairs and M.B.A. program staff. Faculty are selected who can deliver the appropriate educational experience in M.B.A. classes and meet AACSB accreditation requirements regarding terminal degrees, publication record, and faculty development activities. Other secondary factors considered include demands for faculty in other programs, providing adequate access to required courses and courses that fulfill certificate requirements at appropriate locations.

The Evening M.B.A. offers evening classes at two off-campus sites, NIU Hoffman Estates and NIU Naperville. Admission is available during the fall, spring, and summer terms, and progress is self-paced with electives chosen by the students. Short-term study abroad electives are available to all evening students. The Executive M.B.A., One-Year M.B.A., and Chicago M.B.A. are accelerated, lock-step formats. The eighteen month Executive M.B.A. classes meet on Saturdays only at Hoffman Estates, with a study abroad requirement during the first year of the program. Admission is during the fall term only and work experience is given greater weight as part of the admission decision process in the Executive M.B.A. than in the Evening M.B.A. All One-Year M.B.A. program classes meet on Monday and Thursday evenings with admission in the spring term only and all students are required to participate in a short-term study abroad program component. Chicago M.B.A. classes meet on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at NIU's downtown center and a short-term study abroad experience is also included in the program.

In contrast to the formats delivered to working professionals, the Global M.B.A. is an accelerated, one-year cohort program designed to be a fifth year post-baccalaureate degree program with the majority of students entering the program with little or no professional work experience.

The Prime/International M.B.A. format is currently delivered entirely at our partner location in Bogota, Colombia. Student enrolled in this program must satisfied the same course requirements of other NIU M.B.A. students and NIU's College of Business faculty are responsible for delivery of a majority of the courses.

## **Design of the Program to Achieve the Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

The conceptual design of the NIU M.B.A. program is similar to that of most other M.B.A. programs within the state of Illinois, as well as across the United States. The program is composed of two major phases:

**Phase One:** The Phase One foundation or deficiency courses are delivered as accelerated eight week courses and are designed for the students who are lacking an undergraduate background in business administration, allowing them to quickly obtain the needed theories, concepts, and skills prerequisite to successfully comprehend the Phase Two work. This design is especially appropriate when entering students have degrees in engineering, the liberal arts, or other areas outside business and economics and are lacking foundation courses in accounting, business law, economics, finance, information systems, management, marketing, operations, and statistics. Instead of forcing these students to return to a four-year undergraduate program, the M.B.A. program accepts these students as graduate students and examines each student's transcript and work record to determine if the student needs from zero up to nine Phase One courses. A typical student with an undergraduate degree in business will be exempt from taking Phase One courses with successful completion of a corresponding undergraduate equivalent.

M.B.A. program design varies by school with many requiring foundation course similar to the NIU M.B.A. Phase One foundation courses and some schools or formats will require content equivalent courses be completed prior to admission. Offering the Phase One courses as part of the NIU M.B.A. program at the graduate level is viewed by students as a convenience and in most cases, the cost is included in their employer tuition reimbursement plans or financial aid award. This is also viewed as important in student retention efforts because the student can complete the course at NIU rather than seeking a different institution to satisfy the requirement (s).

**Phase Two:** *The seven Phase Two required courses are the focus of all MBA assessment activities.* All NIU M.B.A. students complete the academically challenging Phase Two curriculum, a common core that emphasizes a mix of theory and application providing opportunity for students to demonstrate their mastery of business knowledge, to better understand complexities of the business organization, to facilitate applied learning focusing on decision making and problem solving, to make use of information systems technology, and to develop an awareness of global and cultural diversity and ethical issues in decision making. Communication skills in writing and speaking are integrated throughout the curriculum. This interdepartmental core (21 hours) includes ACCY 630, *Managerial Accounting Concepts*; FINA 607, *Financial Analysis*; MGMT 635, *Managing Individuals, Teams, and Organizations*; MGMT 672, *Strategic*

*Management and Policy* (capstone course); MKTG 654, *Marketing Management*; OMIS 627; *Operations Analysis*; and OMIS 640; *Management of Information Systems Technology*. In addition to the core courses, students take nine additional semester hours (three courses) of electives courses.

Phase One instructors work with Phase Two faculty to make sure the content is appropriate to prepare the student for more advanced course

## Context for Assessment

To deliver a quality AACSB-accredited program that meets the academic and career preparation needs and expectations of students and employers, the NIU M.B.A. program is continuously reviewing the required curriculum and the delivery formats.

- 1) **Core competencies identified:** With valuable input from faculty and alumni as well as benchmarking comparisons with other AACSB accredited M.B.A. programs, core competencies have been identified and prioritized in the NIU M.B.A. student Learning Goals and Objectives.
- 2) **Review of Learning Goals and Objectives:** Based on core competencies, with consideration of relevancy to students, employers and following AACSB guidelines, the College of Business Graduate Faculty Council was formed in Fall 2015 to review the program mission, the M.B.A. learning goals and objectives, and required M.B.A. curriculum, and assessment tools and activities for the M.B.A. program. The council consisted of faculty representatives from the College of Business academic department responsibility for the course delivery and include Accountancy, Finance, Management, Marketing, and Operations Management Information Systems.
- 3) **Curriculum Consistency:** Through the curriculum review process and with faculty representation from all department delivering M.B.A. courses, the Graduate Faculty Council expects Phase Two course requirements consistent across all M.B.A. formats. Faculty across delivery formats may collaborate and develop a single assessment to be used in all section or each may assess using different assessment tools. However, the same assessment rubric to score student work must be used.
- 4) **AACSB Accreditation Guidelines:** The M.B.A. program considers its affiliation with The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) International a premier best practice. AACSB accreditation represents the highest standard of achievement for business schools worldwide. Less than 5% of the world's business programs have earned AACSB Accreditation. Institutions that earn accreditation confirm their commitment to quality and continuous improvement through a rigorous and comprehensive peer review. AACSB International accreditation is the hallmark of excellence in management education.

To maintain AACSB-accreditation, the M.B.A. program is required to deliver curriculum content appropriate for the degree program and learning goals:

- a. Curriculum management to include accepted sets of learning experience to prepare graduate for business and management careers.
- b. General curriculum includes

- General skills include written and oral communications, ethical understanding and reasoning, analytical thinking, information technology, interpersonal relations and teamwork, diverse and multicultural work environments, reflective thinking, and application of knowledge.
- General business and management areas: economics, political, regulatory and legal, and technological and social context of organizations; social responsibility and sustainability; financial concepts; systems and processes in organizations; group and individual behaviors in organizations and society; information technology, statistics, and data management.
- Additionally, general business master's degree program should include the following learning experiences: leading in organizational situations, managing in a global context, thinking creatively, making sound decisions and exercising good judgement under uncertainty, and integrating knowledge across fields.

For the M.B.A. program to achieve its strategic goals, the graduating students expect to:

- Have opportunities to advance in their careers.
- Perceive their M.B.A. degrees as adding value to their careers and organizations.
- Make timely progress toward degree completion.

Graduating students are expected to possess specific skills and knowledge outcomes as articulated in the M.B.A. program's Learning Goals and Objectives.

## **2. Student Learning Outcomes**

The Graduate Faculty Council (GFC) was organized in 2015 to review the program mission, the MBA learning goals and objectives, required M.B.A. curriculum, and assessment tools and activities for the M.B.A. program. Faculty representatives from the College of Business academic departments responsible for course delivery met throughout the 2015-2016 academic year to review the M.B.A. Learning Goals and Objectives, M.B.A. curriculum, and assessment activities. All M.B.A. Phase Two MBA instructors were included in the process, providing survey responses and feedback to proposed changes. The core competencies were identified by the GFC and are articulated as the M.B.A. Learning Goals and Objectives.

Based on review of M.B.A. Learning Goals and Objectives, recommendations from previous AASCB-reaccreditation reports and guidelines for future M.B.A. program assessment, the Graduate Faculty Council identified 4 learning goals with 8 learning objectives:

### **1. Demonstrate business acumen and analytical skills**

- a. NIU MBA graduates will solve business problems through integration of core business knowledge; including accounting, finance, marketing, management, information technology, and operations management.
- b. NIU MBA graduates will think critically to identify and analyze business problems, and prioritize reasonable alternatives.

## **2. Communicate with impact**

- a. NIU MBA graduates will effectively convey their ideas, decisions, and recommendations through oral dialogue, the written word, and the visual medium.
- b. NIU MBA graduates will effectively persuade their audience through a combination of analytical reasoning, empathy, and persuasive language.

## **3. Be effective leaders**

- a. NIU MBA graduates will demonstrate skills that value diverse perspectives and work as a team player to accomplish organizational goals.
- b. NIU MBA graduates will demonstrate the analytical skills required to support organizational change and innovation that can be observed in a team context.
- c. NIU MBA graduates will anticipate and adapt to global market changes and industry dynamics.

## **4. Identify ethical issues and the implications on business, society, and individuals**

NIU MBA graduates will identify situations when ethical leadership is required and demonstrate personal responsibility regarding the impact of ethical behavior on business, society, and individuals.

## **3. Curriculum Map:**

With the learning goals and objectives articulated, the next step forth by the GFC was determining where the objectives are covered in the current M.B.A. curriculum. The following actions were taken as a result of the new learning goals and objectives:

- A. All required course instructors evaluated the course content to determine where the learning objectives are covered in the M.B.A. curriculum. For each objective, faculty were asked to evaluate the course syllabus using the following criteria:

(E) Explicitly	The spirit of the MBA learning objectives is included in one of the course objectives
(I) Implicit	The spirit of the MBA learning objective is included in a component of the syllabus (assignment, schedule, lecture topic, etc.)
(N) Not Stated	The spirit of the MBA learning objective is not included anywhere on the syllabus.

- B. The level of instruction for each learning objective was reviewed by all required course instructors, rating each using the following criteria. A topic related learning objective is covered in some depth. Simply mentioning the topic is not sufficient.

(B) Beginning	Students first learn about key ideas, concepts and skills related to the outcome. This usually happens at a general or very basic level, such as learning one idea or concept related to the broader outcome.
(D) Developing	Students gain additional information related to the outcome. They may start to synthesize key ideas or skills and are expected to demonstrate their knowledge or ability at increasingly proficient levels.
(P) Proficient	Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to perform the outcome with a reasonably high level of independence and sophistication.

- C. Faculty also reviewed each learning objective to determine the level of (I) Individual Student Feedback/Assessment for assignments.

A summary of the review using the criteria described above is provided showing the learning objective, the courses meeting the criteria for assessment and the course identified (highlighted) for the assessment activity. Each identified course matched the criteria for (E) Explicitly included in the course objectives, (P) Proficient demonstration of ability to perform the outcome, and (I) Individual Feedback or Assessment as provided by the course instructor.

	<b>M.B.A. Learning Objective</b>	<b>Courses Identified:</b> <b>(E) Explicitly,</b> <b>(P) Proficient, and</b> <b>(I) Individual Feedback/Assessment</b>
<b>Demonstrate business acumen and analytical skills</b>		
1a	Solve business problems through integration of core business knowledge	MKTG 654, <b>FINA 607</b> , ACCY 630, MGMT 672
1b	Think critically to identify & analyze business problems	MKTG 654, FINA 607, ACCY 630, MGMT 672, <b>OMIS 627</b>
<b>Communicate with Impact</b>		
2a	Effectively convey ideas, decisions, recommendations through oral, written, & visual	OMIS 640, <b>MGMT 672</b>
2b	Effectively persuade through analytical reasoning & persuasive language	OMIS 640, <b>MKTG 654</b>
<b>Be effective leaders</b>		
3a	Demonstrate skills that value diverse perspectives, work as a team player	<b>MGMT 635</b> , MGMT 672
3b	Demonstrate skills required to lead organizational change	<b>MGMT 672</b> , MGMT 635
3c	Anticipate & adapt to global market changes	<b>OMIS 640</b> Globalization is indicated as a component in this course, per Department communication
<b>Identify ethical issues and the implications on business, society, and individuals</b>		
4	Identify situations when ethical leadership is required; demonstrate impact of ethical behavior on business, society, & individuals	<b>ACCY 630</b>

#### **4. Explanation of Curriculum Assessment Methods**

The College of Business Graduate Faculty Council's course mapping exercise identified specific M.B.A. Phase Two required courses for learning goals and objectives assessment activities. Faculty teaching these courses are encouraged to collaborate with colleagues across the delivery formats to develop a similar single assessment activity to be used in all sections of the course.

Based on the faculty discretion and appropriateness within the overall course instruction, assessment may include activities such as homework assignments/problems, oral presentation, in-class discussion, written case analysis, and embedded exam problems, cases, or questions.

Faculty may use differing assessment activities however the assignment must be completed individually and faculty are required to use the assessment rubric developed by the GFC to score student work. Each rubric identifies two to four unique factors associated with the learning objective being assessed in the course. The same rubric is used in all formats and the levels of student competency or achievement are rated by the faculty:

1 = Does not meet expectations

2 = Meets Expectations

3 = Exceed Expectations

MBA Assessment Plan – Summary of Activities						
Assessment Method	Brief Description of Assessment Activity	Student Score Level	Program Level Target	When Data Collected	Person (s) Responsible	Outcome Addressed
	<b>Direct Assessment Methods</b>					
Direct Assessment in MBA course  <b>FINA 607</b> <i>Financial Analysis</i>	Students respond to embedded exam problems to 1) identify impact on the relevant areas of business presented, 2) use cross-functional approach to develop plan and utilize resources 3) interpret and present plausible solution.	A student will receive a minimum score of 2 = Meets Expectations on each of the rubric performance criteria.	85% of students at each location for each program format and overall students will meet the student-level target.	<b>Fall:</b> Evening; One-Year, HEC <b>Spring:</b> Evening; Executive; Global <b>Summer:</b> One-Year, Chicago	Evaluation of student performance completed by FINA 607 faculty  Rubric with 3 assessment indicators	Learning Outcome: 1a
Direct Assessment in MBA course  <b>OMIS 627</b> <i>Operations Analysis</i>	Students respond to embedded exam case analysis to 1) identify problem solving framework, 2) evaluate and analyze information, 3) generate solution, and 4) develop action plan	A student will receive a minimum score of 2 = Meets Expectations on each of the rubric performance criteria.	85% of students at each location for each program format and overall students will meet the student-level target.	<b>Fall:</b> Evening; One-Year, Chicago; Executive <b>Spring:</b> Evening; One-Year, HEC; Global	Evaluation of student performance completed by OMIS 627 faculty  Rubric with 5 assessment indicators	Learning Outcome: 1b
Direct Assessment in MBA course  <b>MGMT 672</b> <i>Strategic Management and Policy</i>	Students prepare and deliver case analysis presentation to 1) make a structured professional presentation; 2) write in an effective manner to convey ideas, and 3) create appealing visual artifact.	A student will receive a minimum score of 2 = Meets Expectations on each of the rubric performance criteria.	85% of students at each location for each program format and overall, students will meet the student-level target.	<b>Fall:</b> Evening; One-Year, HEC <b>Spring:</b> Evening; Executive <b>Summer:</b> Global; One-Year, Chicago	Evaluation of student performance completed by MGMT 672 faculty  Rubric with 3 assessment indicators	Learning Outcome: 2a

Direct Assessment in MBA course <b>MKTG 654</b> <i>Marketing Management</i>	Students prepare persuasive presentation based on their analysis of case to 1) use data to support logic, reasoning, and arguments, and 2) utilize holistic and compelling arguments to support position and connect with audience.	A student will receive a minimum score of 2 = Meets Expectations on each of the rubric performance criteria.	85% of students at each location for each program format and overall student will meet the student-level target.	<b>Fall:</b> Evening; Executive; One-Year, Chicago <b>Spring:</b> Evening; Executive; One-Year, HEC; Global	Evaluation of student performance completed by MKTG 654 faculty Rubric with 2 assessment indicators	Learning Outcome: 2b
Direct Assessment in MBA course <b>MGMT 635</b> <i>Managing Individuals, Teams, and Organizations</i>	Students are assigned to teams throughout the semester and rated by peers based on their ability to 1) appreciate individual differences related to values, personality, ethnicity, race, etc. and 2) demonstrate effective team behaviors to achieve common goals, utilize roles, and interpersonal skills.	A student will receive a minimum score of 2 = Meets Expectations on each of the rubric performance criteria.	85% of students at each location for each program format and overall students will meet the student-level target.	<b>Fall:</b> Evening; Executive <b>Spring:</b> Evening; One-Year, HEC; One-Year, Chicago; Global	Evaluation of student performance completed by MGMT 635 faculty and student peers Rubric utilized for peer evaluation using 2 assessment indicators	Learning Outcome: 3a
Direct Assessment in MBA course <b>MGMT 672</b> <i>Strategic Management and Policy</i>	Student respond to an essay questions embedded in the final exam to demonstrate 1) their ability level to diagnose internal and external organizational environments, 2) develop and recommend original and distinctive solutions, and 3) take intelligent risks utilizing resources to achieve and exceed objectives.	A student will receive a minimum score of 2 = Meets Expectations on each of the rubric performance criteria.	85% of students at each location for each program format and overall students will meet the student-level target.	<b>Fall:</b> Evening; One-Year, HEC <b>Spring:</b> Evening; Executive <b>Summer:</b> Global; One-Year, Chicago	Evaluation of student performance completed by MGMT 672 faculty Rubric with 3 assessment indicators	Learning Outcome: 3b
Direct Assessment in MBA course <b>OMIS 640</b> <i>Management of Information Systems Technology</i>	Students prepare a case analysis to demonstrate 1) ability to identify relevant global factors, 2) understanding of global business diversity, and 3) ability to apply global business analysis to management decision making situations.	A student will receive a minimum score of 2 = Meets Expectations on each of the rubric performance criteria.	85% of students at each location for each program format and overall student will meet the student-level target.	<b>Fall:</b> Evening; <b>Spring:</b> Evening; Executive; Global <b>Summer:</b> One-Year, HEC Not planned for One-Year, Chicago	Evaluation of student performance completed by OMIS 640 Faculty Rubric used has 3 assessment indicators	Learning Outcome: 3c

Direct Assessment in MBA course  <b>ACCY 630 Managerial Accounting Concepts or ACCY 640 Financial Statement Analysis</b>	Students submit analysis of a case to 1) identify key ethical dilemma, 2) identify potential impact on all stakeholders, 3) develop a plan for implementing a proposed solution, and 4) demonstrate an understanding of leadership's role in resolving the dilemma.	A student will receive a minimum score of 2 = Meets Expectations on each of the rubric performance criteria.	85% of students at each location for each program format and overall students will meet the student-level target.	<b>Fall:</b> Evening; One-Year, Chicago <b>Spring:</b> Evening; One-Year, HEC; Executive, Global	Evaluation of student performance completed by ACCY 630/640 faculty  Rubric uses 4 assessment indicators	Learning Outcome: 4
<b>Indirect Assessment Methods</b>						
MBA Alumni Survey -3 years after graduation	MBA alumni respond to survey questions 3- years following degree completion to 1) determine level of degree satisfaction with regard to learning outcomes and specific courses, 2) relevance to career development, and 3) determine level of employment	Level of satisfaction on key indicators not determined at this time	To be determined	Plan for on-line survey in May 2018 (December 2014, May 2015, and August 2015 graduates of the MBA program)	MBA program staff are responsible for administering and analyzing the survey results.	Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4
NIU Alumni Survey	Survey of M.B.A. alumni regarding their perceptions of 1) the overall educational experience, 2) convenience and time to completion, and 3) preparation for career.	A minimum score of slightly agree, adequately, or somewhat positive.	90% of respondents meet the target level for each survey question.	Annual survey administered by the University	MBA program staff responsible for analyzing data	Alumni Satisfaction: Quality and satisfaction of educational experience, career impact, and overall program expectations.
Benchmark:  GMAC Research and Industry Reports	Evaluation of program satisfaction by external independent provider providing benchmarking with participating schools: Alumni Perspectives Survey Report and GMAC Application Trends Survey Report			Annual Reports	Program Directors Submit data for surveys and analyze data for comparison/benchmarking.	Industry admission trends; employment data; alumni satisfaction standards and expectations.
Benchmark:  MBA Roundtable Survey	No school specific data, collective data for members programs useful for trends analysis as well as benchmarking			Annual Reports	Program Director	Focus on M.B.A. program curriculum and delivery trends, learning outcomes.

Benchmark: MBA Research Reports	Monitor AACSB-accredited schools websites for updates in curriculum, delivery formats, learning goals, etc.			Annual review of school websites in June and July to check for program changes at beginning of new AY year.	Program Director	Focus on M.B.A. program curriculum and delivery trends, learning outcomes
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## MBA Curriculum Review Process

### Process/Steps

