

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Metropolitan School of Professional Studies - Graduate Programs
AY 2010-11**

Key Assessment Findings

Metropolitan School of Professional Studies (MSPS) students pursuing the Master of Arts in Human Resource Management (M.A. in HRM) or the Master of Science in Management (M.S.M.) must complete a required, one-semester capstone course. M.A. in HRM students complete MBU 673 *Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications*, and M.S.M. students complete MBU 674 *Master’s Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications*. Satisfactory performance (i.e., a grade of “B” or better) in these final courses serves to assess students’ ability to a) acquire an appreciation for, and gain experience in, applied research as a methodology, and b) apply research in the field of Human Resource Management or Management to a specific business/organizational situation.

The following tables detail the AY 2010-2011 pass rates for each of the graduate capstone courses in each semester. A total of 47 graduate students attempted and passed their respective capstone courses in AY 2010-2011.

Table 1: MBU 673 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - M.A. in HRM (AY 2010-2011 [Summer 2010])

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 673 Capstone	0	0.00%	3	100.00%	3

Table 2: MBU 673 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - M.A. in HRM (AY 2010-2011 [Fall 2010])

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 673 Capstone	0	0.00%	12	100.00%	12

Table 3: MBU 673 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - M.A. in HRM (AY 2010-2011 [Spring 2011])

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 673 Capstone	0	0.00%	11	100.00%	11

Table 4: MBU 674 Master’s Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications Pass Rates - M.S.M. (AY 2010-2011 [Summer 2010])

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 674 Capstone	0	0.00%	2	100.00%	2

Table 5: MBU 674 Master’s Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications Pass Rates - M.S.M. (AY 2010-2011 [Fall 2010])

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 674 Capstone	1	16.67%	5	83.33%	6

Table 6: MBU 674 Master’s Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications Pass Rates - M.S.M. (AY 2010-2011 [Spring 2011])

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 674 Capstone	1	6.67%	14	93.33%	15

MBU 673/MBU 674 Master’s Applied Research Capstone Project

MSPS assesses learning outcomes for the two graduate programs via a rubric for the Capstone Research and Applications Project as prepared in MBU 673/MBU 674 *Master’s Capstone Research, Synthesis/es, and Applications*. Given the value in examining learning outcomes by academic program, where possible, the following section reports findings by academic program.

In the summer 2009 semester, 3 students in the M.A. in HRM program completed MBU 673 *Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications* and the embedded Capstone Project. As indicated in Table 7, all students met or exceeded expectations with regard to topic development, structure and organization, and written presentation. However, most students fell below expectations with regard to critical thinking and reasoned analysis, knowledge synthesis and integration, and writing mechanics. Although the small N for these results indicates that they are not necessarily generalizable to the entire population of M.A. in HRM students, they should still be considered, albeit cautiously, for curricular changes. In particular, students would benefit from assistance with critical thinking skills and writing.

Table 7: MBU 673 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM (AY 2010-2011 [Summer 2010])

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	0	0%	4	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	0	0%	1	33%	2	67%	1.33	0.58
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	1	33%	0	0%	2	67%	1.67	1.15
4. Structure & Organization	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	0	0%	1	33%	2	67%	1.33	0.58
6. Written Presentation	0	0%	3	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00

7. Oral Presentation ¹	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.0
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Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 3²

In the fall 2010 semester, 12 students in the M.A. in HRM program completed MBU 673 *Master's Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications* and the embedded Capstone Project. As indicated in Table 8, all students met or exceeded all expectations. The strongest trait for this sample was critical thinking and reasoned analysis (mean of 2.92). The weakest of the traits was structure and organization (mean of 2.25), which indicates that even those students who are strong in other areas could use assistance in areas related to writing.

Table 8: MBU 673 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM (AY 2010-2011 [Fall 2010])

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	10	83%	2	17%	0	0%	2.83	0.39
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	11	92%	1	8%	0	0%	2.92	0.29
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	9	75%	3	25%	0	0%	2.75	0.45
4. Structure & Organization	3	25%	9	75%	0	0%	2.25	0.45
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	5	42%	7	58%	0	0%	2.42	0.51
6. Written Presentation	10	83%	2	17%	0	0%	2.83	0.39
7. Oral Presentation ³	8	89%	1	11%	0	0%	2.89	0.33

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 12

In the spring 2011 semester, 11 students in the M.A. in HRM program completed MBU 673 *Master's Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications* and the embedded Capstone Project. As indicated in Table 9, all students met or exceeded expectations for all traits. The strongest traits for this sample were a) topic selection, b) critical thinking and reasoned analysis, and c) synthesis and integration of knowledge (all with means of 3.0). The weakest traits for this sample were a) grammar, mechanics, and documentation and b) structure and organization. These results further indicate that the MSPS graduate students would benefit from additional assistance with writing skills.

¹ Oral Presentation N=2 instead of 3 given that 1 student did not make an oral presentation.

² Total Projects Completed N=3 instead of 4 given that 1 student withdrew from the course.

³ Oral Presentation N = 9 instead of 12 given that 3 students did not give an oral presentation.

Table 9: MBU 673 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM (AY 2010-2011 [Spring 2011])

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	11	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	11	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	11	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
4. Structure & Organization	5	45%	6	55%	0	0%	2.45	0.52
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	4	36%	7	64%	0	0%	2.36	0.50
6. Written Presentation	7	64%	4	36%	0	0%	2.64	0.50
7. Oral Presentation ⁴	9	90%	1	10%	0	0%	2.90	0.32

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 11

In the summer 2010 semester, 2 students in the M.S.M. program completed MBU 674 *Master's Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications* and the embedded Capstone Project. As indicated in Table 10, it seems as though one of the students performed much better than the other. However, it is not clear whether or not the mean scores of 2.0 for five of the seven traits can be attributed to the stronger performance of one person. Given the small N for this sample, the results are not generalizable to the larger population of M.S.M. students. These results are more helpful when considered with the results of other semesters (see Table 14).

Table 10: MBU 674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.S.M. (AY 2010-2011 [Summer 2010])

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	2.00	1.41
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	2.00	1.41
4. Structure & Organization	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	0	0%	1	50%	1	50%	1.50	0.71
6. Written Presentation	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00

⁴ Oral Presentation N=10 instead of 11 given that 1 student did not make an oral presentation.

7. Oral Presentation	0	0%	2	100%	0	0%	2.00	0.00
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Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 2

In the fall 2010 semester, 5 students in the M.S.M. program completed MBU 674 *Master's Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications* and the embedded Capstone Project. As indicated in Table 11, all students met or exceeded expectations for all traits. The strongest traits for this sample were a) topic selection, b) critical thinking and reasoned analysis, c) synthesis and integration of knowledge, and d) oral presentation (all with means of 3.0). The weakest trait for this sample was grammar, mechanics, and documentation. Although it is promising that the students performed well overall, the results indicate that the M.S.M. students would benefit from additional assistance with writing skills.

Table 11: MBU 674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.S.M. (AY 2010-2011[Fall 2010])

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
4. Structure & Organization	2	40%	3	60%	0	0%	2.40	0.55
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	1	20%	4	80%	0	0%	2.20	0.45
6. Written Presentation	4	80%	1	20%	0	0%	2.80	0.45
7. Oral Presentation	5	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 5⁵

In the spring 2011 semester, 14 students in the M.S.M. program completed MBU 674 *Master's Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications* and the embedded Capstone Project. As indicated in Table 12, all students met or exceeded expectations for all traits. Although these students performed very well, as evidenced by exceeding expectations (mean of 3.0) for all but two of the traits, there is still room for improvement. In particular, the weakest area for the students in this sample was in written presentations, indicating that these students could also benefit from writing assistance.

⁵ N=5 instead of 6 given that one student failed and was not assessed on the rubric.

Table 12: MBU 674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.S.M. (AY 2010-2011 [Spring 2011])

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	14	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	14	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	14	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
4. Structure & Organization	14	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	10	71%	4	29%	0	0%	2.71	0.47
6. Written Presentation	8	57%	6	43%	0	0%	2.57	0.51
7. Oral Presentation ⁶	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 14⁷

In the 2010-2011 academic year, 27 students in the M.A. in HRM program completed MBU 673 *Master's Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Application*, and the embedded Capstone Project. As indicated in Table 13, most students met or exceeded expectations for all traits. Students' performance was particularly strong in oral presentations, topic selection, and critical thinking (means of 2.81, 2.78, and 2.77, respectively). These results indicate that the M.A. in HRM program is preparing students well to understand and apply a critical lens in the field of Human Resource Management and to present the information well to their peers – a skill critical for future occupational success. However, the lowest mean scores of 2.31 for structure and organization and 2.27 for grammar, mechanics, and documentation, highlight a trend in the data for the MSPS graduate students. That is, students in the M.A. in HRM program would benefit from additional assistance to improve their writing skills.

Table 13: MBU 673 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM (AY 2010-2011)

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	21	78%	6	22%	0	0%	2.78	0.42
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis ⁸	22	85%	2	8%	2	8%	2.77	0.59
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	21	81%	3	12%	2	8%	2.73	0.60

⁶ Oral Presentation N=10 instead of 14 given that 4 student did not make oral presentations.

⁷ N=14 instead of 15 given that 1 student failed for not attending and was not assessed in the rubric.

⁸ Traits 2 through 6 N=26 given that one student withdrew from the course.

4. Structure & Organization	8	31%	18	69%	0	0%	2.31	0.47
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	9	35%	15	58%	2	8%	2.27	0.60
6. Written Presentation	17	65%	9	35%	0	0%	2.65	0.49
7. Oral Presentation ⁹	17	81%	4	19%	0	0%	2.81	0.40

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 27

In the 2010-2011 academic year, 17 students in the M.S.M. program completed MBU 674 *Master's Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications* and the embedded Capstone Project. As indicated in Table 14, students met or exceeded expectations for all but three traits, and for those three traits, only one student fell below expectations. The areas in which students show the strongest performance were a) topic, b) critical thinking and reasoned analysis, c) synthesis and integration of knowledge, and d) oral presentation. Similar to their peers in the M.A. in HRM program, the M.S.M. students have demonstrated an excellent grasp of the knowledge in the Management field, and are able to think critically about that knowledge and provide excellent presentations. Although these traits are very important for advancement in the Management field, the students would also benefit greatly from improvement in a) grammar, mechanics, and documentation and b) written presentations. For these two traits, the mean scores were 2.48 and 2.57, respectively.

Table 14: MBU 674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.S.M. (AY 2010-2011)

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	19	90%	2	10%	0	0%	2.90	0.30
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	20	95%	0	0%	1	5%	2.90	0.44
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	20	95%	0	0%	1	5%	2.90	0.44
4. Structure & Organization	16	76%	5	24%	0	0%	2.76	0.44
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	11	52%	9	43%	1	5%	2.48	0.60
6. Written Presentation	12	57%	9	43%	0	0%	2.57	0.51
7. Oral Presentation ¹⁰	15	88%	2	12%	0	0%	2.88	0.33

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 17¹¹

⁹ Trait 7 N=21 instead of 26 given that five students did not make oral presentations.

¹⁰ Oral Presentation N=17 instead of 21 because 4 students did not make oral presentations.

¹¹ N=21 instead of 23 given that two students failed and were not assessed on the rubric.

Curricular Improvements

While the assessment findings for MBU 673/674's Applied Research Capstone Project indicate that MSPS graduate students are performing at or above expectations for most traits, there is room for improvement in most areas. Of particular interest is the students' need for additional support in the development of writing skills – particularly those related to a) grammar, mechanics, and documentation, and b) written presentations. In order to address this need, curricular improvements for the graduate programs should address these concerns to allow students to demonstrate greater performance across all traits.

One substantial curricular improvement aimed at enhancing students' writing and research skills involves the MSPS Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program. Beginning in the fall 2009 semester, MSPS began including two critical gateway graduate courses in the WAC program. These two courses – MBU 501 *Communicating Effectively as a Manager* and MBU 530 *Management of Human Resources* – are required courses in the M.A. in HRM and M.S.M. programs. As part of the WAC initiative, faculty are asked to identify the assignments that would promote and foster excellent writing and research practice. Doing so enables the MSPS Assistant/Associate deans to ensure that writing maintains a central focus in the curriculum. Moving forward, efforts to improve the WAC initiative will include a) an increased emphasis on faculty grading not solely for content, but also for form, and b) a list provided to faculty of top writing issues identified by these assessments in order to promote more targeted writing intervention and assistance.

A second curricular improvement involves the MSPS student development programming model. MSPS will continue to offer special customized workshops, a central part of which involves working with campus partners who are the content experts in academic support. These partners include the CUA libraries, Writing Center, and Center for Academic Success. Such partnerships allow MSPS to connect graduate students with the campus resources that can be crucial in promoting individual student success. In future terms, these workshops will focus more on strengthening students' writing skills.

The curricular improvements described above will help ensure that MSPS graduate students complete their programs not just with a) an understanding of their fields of study and practice and b) an ability to think critically about that information. These improvements will also address c) the students' need to improve their writing skills, which will be instrumental to succeeding in their fields.