

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements  
Metropolitan School of Professional Studies - Graduate Programs  
AY 2011-12**

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**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 2011-2012 pass rates for each of the graduate capstone courses in each semester. A total of 70 graduate students attempted and passed their respective capstone courses in AY 2011-2012.

**Table 1: MBU 673 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - M.A. in HRM (AY 2011-2012 [Summer 2011])**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 673 Capstone	0	0.00%	4	100.00%	4

**Table 2: MBU 673 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - M.A. in HRM (AY 2011-2012 [Fall 2011])**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 673 Capstone	0	0.00%	7	100.00%	7

**Table 3: MBU 673 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - M.A. in HRM (AY 2011-2012 [Spring 2012])**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 673 Capstone	0	0.00%	10	100.00%	10

**Table 4: MBU 674 Master’s Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications Pass Rates - M.S.M. (AY 2011-2012 [Summer 2011])**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 674 Capstone	0	0.00%	9	100.00%	9

**Table 5: MBU 674 Master’s Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications Pass Rates - M.S.M. (AY 2011-2012 [Fall 2011])**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 674 Capstone	0	0.00%	21	100.00%	21

**Table 6: MBU 674 Master’s Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications Pass Rates - M.S.M. (AY 2011-2012 [Spring 2012])**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 674 Capstone	0	0.00%	19	100.00%	19

**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 2011 semester, 4 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 exceeded expectations with regard to a) topic development, b) critical thinking and reasoned analysis, and c) synthesis and integration of knowledge. Students both met and exceeded expectations (with 50% in each category) for a) structure and organization, b) grammar, mechanics, and documentation, and c) written presentation. Although the results are good, the N is small and cannot necessarily be generalized to the rest of the population.

**Table 7: MBU 673 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM (AY 2011-2012 [Summer 2011])**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
4. Structure & Organization	2	50%	2	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.58
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	2	50%	2	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.58
6. Written Presentation	2	50%	2	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.58
7. Oral Presentation	4	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.0

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 4

In the fall 2011 semester, 7 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, the strongest trait for this group was grammar, mechanics and documentation (mean of 2.71) and the weakest traits were a) topic development, b) structure and organization, and c) written presentation (all with means of 2.57). This indicates that the students could use assistance with their writing skills from the point of topic development through the written presentation.

**Table 8: MBU 673 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM (AY 2011-2012 [Fall 2011])**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	4	57%	3	43%	0	0%	2.57	0.53
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	7	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	7	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
4. Structure & Organization	4	57%	3	43%	0	0%	2.57	0.53
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	5	71%	2	29%	0	0%	2.71	0.49
6. Written Presentation	4	57%	3	43%	0	0%	2.57	0.53
7. Oral Presentation	7	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 7

In the spring 2012 semester, 10 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, student performance was strongest in a) grammar, mechanics, and documentation, b) written presentation, and c) oral presentation, where all students exceeded expectations for each of the traits. The areas with room for greatest improvement were a) synthesis and integration of knowledge and b) structure and organization. These results indicate that although this cohort presented itself well overall in written and oral presentation and mastered the mechanics of their writing, they could improve in their critical thinking and in structuring and organizing their work.

**Table 9: MBU 673 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM (AY 2011-2012 [Spring 2012])**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	7	70%	3	30%	0	0%	2.70	0.48
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	7	70%	3	30%	0	0%	2.70	0.48
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	5	50%	5	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.53
4. Structure & Organization	5	50%	5	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.53
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
6. Written Presentation	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
7. Oral Presentation	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 10

In the summer 2011 semester, 9 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, the students performed very well overall. The lowest mean score of 2.67 was found in two of the traits: topic development and structure and organization. The performance of these students is similar to the performance of their peers assessed in the other rubrics. And like the other results, these highlight a need to improve the writing of the MSPS graduate students.

**Table 10: MBU 674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.S.M. (AY 2011-2012 [Summer 2011])**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	6	67%	3	33%	0	0%	2.67	0.50
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	9	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	7	78%	2	22%	0	0%	2.78	0.44
4. Structure & Organization	6	67%	3	33%	0	0%	2.67	0.50
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	8	89%	1	11%	0	0%	2.89	0.33
6. Written Presentation	7	78%	2	22%	0	0%	2.78	0.44
7. Oral Presentation	7	78%	2	22%	0	0%	2.78	0.44

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 9

In the fall 2011 semester, 21 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, students performed best in a) critical thinking and reasoned analysis, b) synthesis and integration of knowledge, and c) oral presentation, with all students exceeding expectations for each trait. Their performance was not as strong in a) grammar, mechanics, and documentation, and b) written presentation, with a mean score of 2.33 for each trait, or seven students exceeding expectations and fourteen only meeting expectations for each trait. As with the students in the summer, the writing skills of these students show room for improvement.

**Table 11: MBU 674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.S.M. (AY 2011-2012[Fall 2011])**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	17	81%	4	19%	0	0%	2.81	0.40
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	21	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	21	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
4. Structure & Organization	15	71%	6	29%	0	0%	2.71	0.46
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	7	33%	14	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.48
6. Written Presentation	7	33%	14	67%	0	0%	2.33	0.48
7. Oral Presentation	21	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 21

In the spring 2012 semester, 10 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, the students performed very well overall. All students exceeded expectations in a) grammar, mechanics, and documentation, b) written presentation, and c) oral presentation, and all students either met or exceeded expectations for all other traits. They showed room for the greatest improvement with regard to a) synthesis and integration of knowledge and b) structure and organization, which each had means of 2.50. These results indicate that the performance of this group of students was similar to the other groups and that the MSPS graduate students would benefit from targeted assistance with thinking critically about their topics and then better structuring and organizing the material for their presentations.

**Table 12: MBU 674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.S.M. (AY 2011-2012 [Spring 2012])**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	7	70%	3	30%	0	0%	2.70	0.48
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	7	70%	3	30%	0	0%	2.70	0.48
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	5	50%	5	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.53
4. Structure & Organization	5	50%	5	50%	0	0%	2.50	0.53
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
6. Written Presentation	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00
7. Oral Presentation	10	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 10

In the 2011-2012 academic year, a total of 21 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, all students met or exceeded expectations for all traits. The students in this degree performed at or above their expected level of ability. Students showed the best performance in their oral presentation. This is of particular importance as this is a skill that is critical to the success of human resource managers. They showed room for the greatest improvement as it related to structure and organization of their presentations, as the individual semester assessments also highlighted.

**Table 13: MBU 673 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM (AY 2011-2012)**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	15	71%	6	29%	0	0%	2.71	0.46
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	18	86%	3	14%	0	0%	2.86	0.36
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	16	76%	5	24%	0	0%	2.76	0.44
4. Structure & Organization	11	52%	10	48%	0	0%	2.52	0.51
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	17	81%	4	19%	0	0%	2.76	0.44
6. Written Presentation	16	76%	5	24%	0	0%	2.76	0.44
7. Oral Presentation	21	100%	0	0%	0	0%	3.00	0.00

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 21

In the 2011-2012 academic year, a total of 49 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, all students met or exceeded expectations for all traits. In fact, the majority of students exceeded expectations for all traits. Compared to last year's cohort, the performance of this group showed improvement. These results are promising, as students demonstrate that they not only grasp the content they are learning in the Management field, but they are also excelling in evaluating the content critically and presenting it well in written and oral form.

**Table 14: MBU 674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.S.M. (AY 2011-2012)**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	38	78%	11	22%	0	0%	2.78	0.42
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	46	94%	3	6%	0	0%	2.94	0.24
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	47	96%	2	4%	0	0%	2.96	0.20
4. Structure & Organization	37	76%	12	24%	0	0%	2.76	0.43
5. Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation	34	69%	15	31%	0	0%	2.69	0.47
6. Written Presentation	32	65%	17	35%	0	0%	2.65	0.48
7. Oral Presentation	46	94%	3	6%	0	0%	2.94	0.24

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 49

### Curricular Improvements

The assessment findings for the MBU 673/674 Applied Research Capstone Project for the 2011-2012 academic year indicate that the MSPS graduate students are performing well. In fact, in most categories, across all three terms, students either met or exceeded expectations. There were no students falling below expectations. Furthermore, all students who attempted the capstone course also passed the course. With that being said, the traits that came up consistently throughout the academic year that could stand to improve were those related to the synthesis of course content and the organized presentation of the material. Curricular improvements should be made for the graduate programs that address these specific concerns.

Moving forward, MSPS will continue to provide students with writing support via the Writing Across the Curriculum program<sup>1</sup>. Students will also continue to receive opportunities to develop

<sup>1</sup>The Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program, which began in spring 2009, was created to coordinate efforts for a focus on writing across the MSPS courses. Faculty identify assignments that 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.

their skills through the academic support programming aimed at addressing their specific needs. This has long been a part of MSPS's student development program and involves working with campus partners who are content experts in academic support to provide students with targeted assistance.

Starting in fall 2012, students are also receiving additional assistance from the CUA Writing Center. In this model, the professor for the capstone courses requires students to submit their writing to the Associate Director of the Writing Center, who then evaluates the work and provides a presentation to each class that is targeted toward their specific writing needs. The hope is that doing so will provide opportunities for students to directly address their writing deficiencies and strengthen their skills.

Although performance has improved, students could still grow in areas as they relate to their thinking critically about the course content and then presenting it in an organized way. The curricular improvements described above, coupled with the strong program already in place, will help ensure that the students completing the MSPS Master's programs are content experts who are poised to translate their knowledge and abilities into excellent practice in their fields.