

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements  
Metropolitan School of Professional Studies - Graduate Programs  
AY 2013-14**

---

**Key Assessment Findings**

Metropolitan School of Professional Studies (MSPS) students pursuing the Master of Arts in Human Resource Management (MAHRM) or the Master of Science in Management (MSM.) must complete a required, one-semester capstone course. Students in the MAHRM Program 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 2013-2014 pass rates for each of the graduate capstone courses in each semester. A total of 82 graduate students attempted and passed their respective capstone courses in AY 2013-2014.

**MBU 673/674 Capstone Pass Rates by Semester and ALL semesters**

**Table 1: MBU 673/674 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - Summer 2013**

**MBU 673 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - M.A. in HRM**

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

**MBU 674 Master’s Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications Pass Rates - M.S.M.**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 674 Capstone	0	0.00%	10	100.00%	10

**Fall 2013**

**MBU 673 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - M.A. in HRM**

	Fail	Pass	TOTAL
--	------	------	-------

	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 673 Capstone	0	0.00%	6	100.00%	6

**MBU 674 Master's Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications Pass Rates - M.S.M.**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 674 Capstone	0	0.00%	27	100.00%	27

**Spring 2014**

**MBU 673 Master's Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - M.A. in HRM**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 673 Capstone	0	0.00%	8	100.00%	8

**MBU 674 Master's Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications Pass Rates - M.S.M.**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 674 Capstone	0	0.00%	27	100.00%	27

**ALL**

**MBU 673 Master's Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates - M.A. in HRM**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 673 Capstone	0	0.00%	18	100.00%	18

**MBU 674 Master's Capstone (M.S.M.): Research, Syntheses, and Applications Pass Rates - M.S.M.**

	Fail		Pass		TOTAL
	N	%	N	%	
Graduate Program MBU 674 Capstone	0	0.00%	64	100.00%	64

**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.

**Table 9: MBU 673 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM (AY 2013-2014)**

Trait	Level						Mean	SD	Total N
	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
<b>1) Topic</b>	16	89%	2	11%	0	0%	2.89	0.32	18
<b>2) Critical Thinking &amp; Reasoned Analysis</b>	14	78%	4	22%	0	0%	2.78	0.43	18
<b>3) Synthesis &amp; Integration of Knowledge</b>	9	50%	8	44%	1	6%	2.44	0.62	18
<b>4) Structure &amp; Organization</b>	10	56%	8	44%	0	0%	2.56	0.51	18
<b>5) Grammar, Mechanics, &amp; Documentation</b>	8	44%	9	50%	1	6%	2.39	0.61	18
<b>6) Written Presentation</b>	7	39%	11	61%	0	0%	2.39	0.50	18
<b>7) Oral Presentation</b>	16	89%	2	11%	0	0%	2.89	0.32	18

In the 2013-2014 academic year, 18 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, on only two instances did students not meet or exceed all expectations. The strongest traits for this sample were topic and oral presentation (both mean of 2.89). The weakest of the traits were grammar, mechanics, & documentation and written presentation (mean of 2.39), which indicates that even those students who are strong in other areas could use assistance in areas related to writing.

**Table 10: MBU 674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.S.M. (AY 2013-2014)**

Trait	Level	Mean	SD	Total
-------	-------	------	----	-------

	Exceeding Expectations (3pts)		Meeting Expectations (2pts)		Below Expectations (1pt)				N
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
<b>1) Topic</b>	53	85%	9	15%	0	0%	2.85	0.36	62
<b>2) Critical Thinking &amp; Reasoned Analysis</b>	46	74%	16	26%	0	0%	2.74	0.44	62
<b>3) Synthesis &amp; Integration of Knowledge</b>	42	68%	19	31%	1	2%	2.66	0.51	62
<b>4) Structure &amp; Organization</b>	38	61%	22	35%	2	3%	2.58	0.56	62
<b>5) Grammar, Mechanics, &amp; Documentation</b>	31	50%	28	45%	3	5%	2.45	0.59	62
<b>6) Written Presentation</b>	30	48%	32	52%	0	0%	2.48	0.50	62
<b>7) Oral Presentation</b>	58	94%	4	6%	0	0%	2.94	0.25	62

Total Projects Completed (i.e., N): 62

In the fall 2013-2014 academic year , 62 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, all students met or exceeded expectations for all traits except synthesis & integration of knowledge, structure & organization, and grammar, mechanics, & documentation. The strongest traits for this sample were a) topic and b) oral presentation, with means of 2.85 and 2.94 respectively. The weakest trait for this sample was grammar, mechanics, & documentation (mean 2.45). Another weak trait was written presentation (mean 2.48). Despite having zero students fail to meet expectations for that trait, less than half of the students exceeded expectations, the only trait having such a sample. 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.

### 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. Overall, trait means are slightly

lower for areas of weakness for MBU 673 students than MBU 674 students. It would seem appropriate to address writing more closely in HR courses.

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.