

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements  
Metropolitan School of Professional Studies - Graduate Programs  
AY 2014-2015**

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**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 table details the AY 2014-2015 pass rates for each of the graduate capstone courses in each semester. A total of 90 graduate students attempted and passed their respective capstone courses in AY 2014-2015.

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

**Tables 1-8: MBU 673/674 Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications Pass Rates**

**Summer 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%	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%	13	100.00%	13

**Fall 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%	15	100.00%	15

**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%	23	100.00%	23

**Spring 2015**

**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%	11	100.00%	11

**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%	24	100.00%	24

**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%		100.00%	

**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%		100.00%	

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

Unfortunately, the rubric that MSPS uses to assess the learning outcomes for the two graduate programs in MBU 673/MBU 674 *Master’s Capstone Research, Synthesis/es, and Applications* was not completed by the instructor. Given the value in examining learning outcomes by academic program, where possible, the following section reports findings by academic program.

**Table 9: MBU 673/674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM And M.S. in Management (AY 2014-2015)**

	Level						Mean	Total N
	Exceeds Expectations (3 pts)		Meets Expectations (2 pts)		Below Expectations (1 pt)			
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
1. Topic	85	97.70%	2	2.30%	0	0.00%	2.98	87
2. Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis	73	83.91%	14	16.09%	0	0.00%	2.84	87
3. Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge	67	77.01%	19	21.84%	1	1.15%	2.76	87
4. Structure & Organization	37	42.53%	47	54.02%	3	3.45%	2.39	87
5. Grammar, Mechanics, and Documentation	51	58.62%	36	41.38%	0	0.00%	2.59	87
6. Written Presentation	46	52.87%	41	47.13%	0	0.00%	2.53	87
7. Oral Presentation*	55	98.21%	1	1.79%	0	0.00%	2.98	56

\* Because these numbers include students in our online curriculum, 31 students were not required to complete an oral presentation in their capstone courses.

In the 2014-2015 academic year, 87 students in the M.A. in HRM program completed MBU 673/4 *Master’s Capstone: Research, Synthesis, and Applications* and the embedded Capstone Project. As indicated in Table 9, in only four instances did students not meet or exceed all expectations. The strongest traits for this sample were topic and oral presentation (both mean of 2.98). The weakest of the traits were grammar, mechanics, & documentation (mean of 2.59), and written presentation (mean of 2.53), and Structure & Organization (mean of 2.39) which indicates that even those students who are strong in other areas could use assistance in areas related to writing.

### 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, b) written presentations, and c) structure. 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. Already, MSPS has begun offering workshops for the duration of a week rather than a single night, and this change has resulted in more involvement from the students.

Third, MSPS will encourage the Capstone faculty to incorporate the University's Writing Center and the MSPS Writing Tutor to greater effect. Following the model of other schools on campus, the Capstone course should require all students, regardless of initial ability, to make regular appointments with the writing services available on campus, so that all students improve their writing skills and abilities throughout their finals semester at CUA.

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.