

**Annual Key Assessment Findings and Curricular Improvements
Metropolitan School of Professional Studies - Graduate Programs
AY 2015-2016**

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 2015-2016 pass rates for each of the graduate capstone courses in each semester. A total of 104 graduate students attempted and passed their respective capstone courses in AY 2015-2016.

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 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% | 7 | 100.00% | 7 |

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% | 5 | 100.00% | 5 |

Fall 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% | 40 | 100.00% | 40 |

Spring 2016

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% | 10 | 100.00% | 9 |

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 | 1 | 3.13% | 31 | 96.88% | 32 |

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% | 28 | 100.00% | 28 |

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 | 1 | 1.30% | 76 | 98.70% | 77 |

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

In AY 2015-2016, roughly 100 students successfully completed MBU 673/674 *Master’s Capstone* and the required Applied Research Capstone Project. As indicated in Table 9 below, students showed the greatest proficiency in a) thesis/topic, b) oral presentation, and c) critical thinking & reasoned analysis (means of 2.99, 2.98, and 2.93, respectively). Conversely, the traits that warrant the greatest improvement are a) structure and organization, b) grammar, mechanics and documentation, support and use of evidence, and c) structure and organization (means of 2.21, 2.46, and 2.54, respectively). These areas are all centered on basic writing skills, and thus, most students could use support and assistance in the area of academic writing. Fortunately, no students fell below expectations and only one student failed the master’s capstone course.

Table 9: MBU 673/674 Applied Research Capstone Project Rubric Data – M.A. in HRM And M.S. in Management (AY 2015-2016)

| Trait | Level | | | | | | Mean | SD | Total N |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|-----------------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|------|------|---------|
| | Exceeding Expectations (3pts) | | Meeting Expectations (2pts) | | Below Expectations (1pt) | | | | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | | | |
| 1) Thesis/Topic | 99 | 99% | 1 | 1% | 0 | 0% | 2.99 | 0.10 | 100 |
| 2) Critical Thinking & Reasoned Analysis | 93 | 93% | 7 | 7% | 0 | 0% | 2.93 | 0.26 | 100 |
| 3) Synthesis & Integration of Knowledge | 80 | 80% | 20 | 20% | 0 | 0% | 2.80 | 0.40 | 100 |
| 4) Structure & Organization | 33 | 33% | 67 | 67% | 0 | 0% | 2.33 | 0.47 | 100 |
| 5) Grammar, Mechanics, & Documentation | 47 | 47% | 52 | 53% | 0 | 0% | 2.47 | 0.50 | 99 |
| 6) Written Presentation | 50 | 51% | 49 | 49% | 0 | 0% | 2.51 | 0.50 | 99 |
| 7) Oral Presentation* | 53 | 98% | 1 | 2% | 0 | 0% | 2.98 | 0.14 | 54 |

* Because these numbers include students in our online curriculum which has no oral component, 46 students were not required to complete an oral presentation in their capstone courses.

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 all 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) structure and organization, b) grammar, mechanics and documentation, support and use of evidence, and c) structure and

organization. In order to address these needs, 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.

Finally, MSPS administrators will recommend that all students enrolled in MBU673/674 be required to attend at least one session in the Writing Center.

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.