

Institutional Effectiveness

2021-2022

Program: Masters of Business Administration

College and Department: College of Business - MBA

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Mission: The MBA Program is designed to allow students to pursue an on-campus program, a 100% online program or a combination of both. Our program has over a decade of online learning experience. Whether students take class on-ground or online, courses and professors are all the same and there is no difference between earning a degree online, or on campus.

Full-time and part-time programs are available for students to earn their degree at their own pace. Students can finish the 30-hour program in as little as one year. The purpose of the M.B.A degree is to offer a professional program preparing graduate students from diverse backgrounds for rewarding careers in organizations. The core area of business studies is broad in scope for the purpose of developing general managerial competence through extensive use of various pedagogies such as case methods, simulations, and research projects. Electives are used to develop special competencies of interest to the student. In the degree, the College seeks to:

- Provide a high level of confidence that will allow the student to cope with uncertainty, communicate effectively, and to make decisions in an increasingly complex and global business environment.
- Provide an awareness and appreciation of the legal, ethical, social, political, and economic environments of business.
- Provide essential competence in administration, as well as an understanding of the administrative process.
- Develop a high level of skill in problem analysis and decision making.
- Provide sufficient competence for making positive contributions to one of the functional areas of a business firm through changing technology within the business context.

The MBA program is fully accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International). AACSB Accreditation represents the highest standard of achievement for business schools worldwide.

The MBA program at Tennessee Tech consists of ten, 3-hour courses for a total of 30 hours:

- Eight 3-hour core courses (24 hours)
- Two 3-hour electives (6 hours)

As many as 9 semester hours may be transferred in from other AACSB accredited schools. Credit will not be allowed for courses taken more than five years prior to application to Tennessee Tech.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1: Students will demonstrate ability to integrate knowledge of core business disciplines.

SLO 2: Students will demonstrate awareness of ethical implications of business decisions.

SLO 3: Students will possess the necessary knowledge and skills to perform in a professional environment.

3.1 Students will demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communication skills.

3.2 Students will be able to make appropriate choices regarding communication strategy, medium, and design.

SLO 4: Students will demonstrate the ability to think critically in addressing business problems.

4.1 Students will demonstrate ability for problem solving and decision making.

4.2 Students will demonstrate ability to think critically about business issues for making impactful business decisions.

SLO 5: Students will demonstrate an understanding of leadership skills and the ability to influence others.

5.1 Students will be able to identify effective leadership skills required in diverse situations.

5.2 Students will be able to demonstrate leadership skills required in diverse situations.

5.3 Students will demonstrate teamwork skills that enhance individual and team processes.

A departmentally developed curriculum map can be found in Appendix 1 that shows the connections between courses and student learning outcomes.

Assessment Methods:

SLOs 1-5:

1. COMP-XM exam: Students will complete the CAPSIM Business Simulation and the accompanying COMP-XM exam. The simulation measures overall integrative knowledge through a balanced scorecard approach. The COMP-XM exam uses questions tailored to student decisions during the simulation. Assessment Point: BMGT 6950 - Business Strategy. For each SLO, at least 75% of our students will attain a COMP-XM score of at least 70%.
2. Exit Survey: The exit survey provides an indirect measure of graduate student progress. Using a 7-point scale (Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree), the average score on each item will be above 5.0.
3. Change Management Simulation published by Harvard Business: Percentage of students who reached "critical mass" in a Change Management simulation by gaining adopters for a new organizational initiative. The overall benchmark, across four change management scenarios, is 61%.
 - a. Assessment Point: BMGT 6200 (Organizational Leadership)

Results:*SLO 1: Ability to integrate knowledge of core business disciplines*

COMP-XM Functional Knowledge for Integrative knowledge of business disciplines

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Mean	83.59%	86.31%	82.92%	80.76%	78.63%
N	102	34	97	92	99
% above 70%	95.10%	100.00%	93.81%	86.96%	84.85%

Exit Survey

Please rate your strength in the following competencies, upon completing the MBA program:

Item	2020-21		2021-22	
	Mean	Count	Mean	Count
Ability to analyze complex case material	5.2	5	6	2
Understanding of the management function in business	5.6	5	6.5	2

Summary: Students met the benchmarks for the ability to integrate knowledge across core business disciplines. Nearly 85 percent of students scored 70 or higher on the COMP-XM question set that measures knowledge integration of diverse business functions. In addition, the means on the exit interview questions related to knowledge integration increased to 6.0 or above.

SLO 2: Awareness of ethical implications of business decisions

COMP-XM Ethical, Legal, and Social Responsibility

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Mean	78.52%	83.32%	65.42%	67.04%	66.44%
N	102	34	97	92	99
% above 70%	71.57%	82.35%	54.64%	48.91%	50.51%

Exit Survey

Please rate your level of agreement to the following statements, upon completing the MBA program.

Year 2021 <i>I believe:</i>	Mean	Min	Max	Count
I can handle complex ethical issues in business.	5.2	4	6	5
I am sensitive to legal, social, and political environments in which business operates.	5.0	4	6	5
Year 2022 <i>I believe:</i>				
I can handle complex ethical issues in business.	5.5	5	6	2
I am sensitive to legal, social, and political environments in which business operates.	5.5	5	6	2

Summary: Although students self-assessed as being able to handle complex ethical issues in exit polling, they failed to meet the COMP-XM benchmark that measures tested ethical awareness for the third consecutive academic year. Approximately half of students in the academic terms spanning 2020-22

achieved results at the desired 70 percent or above. Suggested modifications for improvement are addressed later in this report.

SLO 3: Knowledge and skills to perform in a professional environment

COMP-XM Business Communication score

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Mean	84.08%	91.86%	74.87%	66.96%	66.97%
N	102	34	97	92	99
% above 70%	83.33%	91.18%	62.89%	59.78%	63.64%

Exit Survey

Please rate your strength in the following competencies, upon completing the MBA program:

Communication Skills

Year	Mean	Min	Max	Count
2021	5.2	4	6	5
2022	5	5	5	2

Written Communication Assessment

Students in ECON 6050 (Fall 2021) and DS 6220 (Spring 2022) were required to write formal reports incorporating data analysis results and recommendations. Student papers were assessed by an independent grader, a faculty member from Business Communications, using a 5-point rating scale (1 = Poor; 5 = Excellent) on five dimensions: (1) Purpose/Focus; (2) Tone and Word Choice; (3) Organization and Logic; (4) Knowledge of Conventions – Grammar; and (5) Knowledge of Conventions – Format. A threshold of at least 50 percent and a benchmark of at least 75 percent of students to achieve a score of 4 or 5 on each dimension were set. The following results emerged:

2021-22 Written Communication Assessment: Percentage of Students scoring 4 or 5

Term/Dimension	Purpose	Tone	Organization	Grammar	Format
Fall 2021 ECON 6050 N = 30	93.3	90	80	83.3	86.6
Spring 2022 DS 6220 N = 20	65	75	55	50	50
Weighted Average	81.9	84	70	70	71.9

Summary: Students self-assessed as feeling competent in their communication skills at the benchmark level or above. In addition, students performed at or near the benchmark on all the various dimensions of written communication. For the third consecutive year, students failed to meet the benchmark on the COMP-XM Business Communication score. This score is a measure of students' ability to make appropriate choices on communication strategy, medium, and design.

Think critically in addressing business problems

COMP-XM Analytical and Quantitative score

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Mean	82.05%	85.06%	80.64%	78.61%	77.02%
N	102	34	97	92	99
% above 70%	91.18%	100.00%	90.72%	79.35%	83.84%

COMP-XM Critical-Thinking and Decision-Making score

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Mean	79.57%	80.60%	78.48%	75.77%	71.87%
N	102	34	97	92	99
% above 70%	86.27%	97.06%	84.54%	72.83%	65.66%

Exit Survey

Please rate your strength in the following, upon completing the MBA program:

Ability to make decisions after proper analysis

Year	Mean	Min	Max	Count
2021	5.6	4	7	5
2022	6	5	7	2

Summary: The critical-thinking learning goal is assessed across two objectives: one relating to analytical and quantitative reasoning and another related to critical thinking and decision making. While the COMP-XM benchmark is consistently met for the analytical and quantitative objective, students failed to perform at the benchmark level on the critical-thinking and decision-making objective in each of the last two academic years. In 2022, the percentage of students scoring 70 or better on the critical-thinking and decision-making subset of the COMP-XM exam sunk to a 5-year low.

SLO 4: Leadership skills and the ability to influence others

COMP-XM Teamwork and Leadership score

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Mean	86.13%	88.79%	85.67%	81.11%	72.76%
N	102	34	97	92	99
% above 70%	96.08%	100.00%	98.97%	94.57%	62.63%

Change Management Simulation: Percentage of students who reached "critical mass"

Scenario	Spr 21	Sum 21	Benchmark	Fall 21	Spr 22	Sum 22
1. Low-Urgency – Low Power	98%	81%	41%	74%	69%	67%
2. Low Urgency – High Power	90%	88%	57%	67%	59%	54%
3. High Urgency – Lower Power	95%	86%	70%	82%	72%	89%
4. High Urgency – High Power	98%	81%	76%	76%	78%	83%
Average	95%	84%	61%	75%	70%	73%

Summary - While the percentage of MBA students scoring 70 or better on the teamwork and leadership assessment has historically been well above the benchmark, the percentage dropped to 62.63 in the 2021-22 academic year. This is about 12 points below the benchmark of 75 percent. At the same time, the benchmarks for all scenarios (1-4) of the change management simulation were easily surpassed. It might be noted, however, that the percentage of students reaching critical mass in each scenario has declined from an average of 89.5% in 2021 to 72.67% in 2022.

Modifications for Improvement:

SLO 2: Ethical dimensions of decision making

For three consecutive years, student have failed to meet the COMP-XM benchmark in tested awareness of ethical dimensions and implications. The Graduate Committee, responsible for Assurance of Learning results in the MBA program, is considering requiring all MBA students to complete ethical leadership certification with the National Center for Public Trust. The Ethical Leadership Certification Program (ELCP) is an online tool that helps college students identify ethical issues, learn how to respond to ethical dilemmas, and enhance their ethical decision-making abilities. The certification program has six modules and a final exam and would be delivered through a self-paced iLearn course that must be completed as a requirement for graduation. The \$49.99 cost to become certified in ethical leadership would be covered by the College of Business from the business course fee.

SLO 3: Knowledge and skills to perform in a professional environment

For three consecutive years, students have failed to meet the COMP-XM benchmark in Business Communication. To improve communication skills, all MBA students have been given access to Grammarly Premium. In addition, a “writing across the curriculum” initiative that requires writing assignments in core MBA courses has been implemented. Web-based resources, developed in-house and centered on how to improve business writing, are made available. An additional point of assessment, bringing the total to two—one in the fall term and one in the spring term, has been added for grading students’ written work on five dimensions including tone, organization, grammar, and format. Although average scores on the dimensions are near the benchmark, editing-- a major way to improve writing—has been targeted as an area of focus. The differences between proofreading and editing will be emphasized. In addition, collaborating with iCube to design more GrammORNot modules that teach concise writing practices is currently being explored as well as adding an “editing for concise writing” section to the EAGLE Online Writing Tutorial. Specific tips for editing papers would help students better understand editing and know where to begin.

Due to only 63% of students reaching the assigned threshold on the COMP-XM Business Communication score of at least 70%, the MBA program will increase the number of activities that provide students with practice and feedback related to written communication as part of our Writing Across the Curriculum initiative. Every core MBA course will include a graded writing assignment. To help students improve their writing skills, all MBA students have access to Grammarly Premium, which provides great feedback on weaknesses in their writing skills. This was piloted in Fall 2020 and fully implemented starting in Spring 2021. The impact will take a few semesters to assess properly.

DS 6220 is used as a new assessment point of the quality of student writing. It is based on the case assignment listed below. The case write-ups of the students are then assessed based on a rubric.

Case Assignment 3

You are to read the article called USA Swimming: The Data Integration Project and provide your responses to the following questions.

1. A nice way to think about such a huge project would be to decompose it into the following components: enterprise/local architectures, enterprise database, web portal, member services, national team services, athlete services, swim meet services, and local club services. Assess each of these components in terms of their anticipated outcome specification uncertainty. Briefly justify your assessment of each component.
2. Table 4 from the case describes the project team. Instead of this structure, it would be far better to have a project team comprised of both USAS and Statera personnel and a project steering committee. Who should be on the project steering committee (you can if you wish to identify roles not mentioned in the case)? Be sure to identify your project steering committee members, justifying the selection of each member. Who should be the project manager (you may decide on a single project manager or co-project manager)? Justify your selection.
3. This project is far too complex to implement as a single, large project. The first question decomposed the project into a more manageable set of subprojects. Recommend a project plan that indicates the sequence in which these subprojects are to be undertaken. Allow for the possibility of subprojects occurring in parallel and to account for dependencies between subprojects; e.g., subproject C should not begin before subproject A has been completed. Your plan should strive to accomplish the overall project in a reasonable time and at a reasonable cost while meeting the needs of all stakeholders. Explain and justify your plan.

Appendices

1. Curriculum Map

Appendix 1: Curriculum Map

MBA Curriculum Map – Fall 2016 to Fall 2020

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3		Goal 4		Goal 5		
Learning Objectives	1.1 Core Business Knowledge	2.1 Ethics	3.1 Written and Oral Communications	3.2 Communication approach	4.1 Problem solving	4.2 Critical Thinking	5.1 Identify effective leadership	5.2 Demonstrate leadership skills	5.3 Teamwork skills
ACCT 6010	Accounting		X			X			X
FIN 6020	Finance					X			
ECON 6050	Analytical Decision Making					X			
MKT 6100	Marketing			X		X			
BMGT 6200	Organizational Leadership	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
DS 6220	Information Technology		X						
BMGT 6950	Business Strategy	X		X		X	X	X	X