

Texas State University-San Marcos
Academic Program Student Learning Outcomes Assessment

Year 2009-2010
College/Division Business
Department/Unit Accounting
Program Name/Department Accounting (MAcy)
Program Code 555G MAcy
Contact Dr. Rosie Morris, Chair

Mission Statement

The mission of the MAcy program is to facilitate students' preparation for and passage of the CPA exam as well as preparation for successful careers in the accounting profession. The MAcy program emphasizes oral and written communication and technical and research skills needed for a career in public or private accounting.

Evidence of Improvement

Based on a comparison of the 2007-2008, 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 results, improvements in student learning are evident in all outcomes and stronger results are desired in some areas. Assessment continues to be refined in all graduate accounting courses; common rubrics tweaked and communicated, and discussion of results on curriculum has ensued. The assessments show that the students are meeting or exceeding expectations at a level appropriate for the course and material. The exit exam continues to prepare graduates for the CPA exam and other professional exams by requiring students to do a comprehensive review at the end of the program. There has been a steady upward trend on the CPA pass rate of Texas State alums; particularly those who take the exam within two years of graduation. External reviews of students in internships provide evidence that the students and the program are meeting expectations.

Outcome Number 1

Accounting students will demonstrate applying accounting knowledge in new and unfamiliar circumstances in different accounting areas such as financial accounting, cost, accounting information systems, taxation, and audit. To fulfill this outcome, the student will correctly analyze the problem, develop and explain findings, and justify a conclusion or recommendation in different areas of accounting.

Method 1

Assessment of MAcy students' ability to apply accounting knowledge in new and unfamiliar circumstances will be accomplished in the following ways.

In ACC 5315 (Selected Topics in Financial Accounting) research or term papers will be used. It is expected that 70% of the students will score the 75% level, based on an established rubric.

In ACC 5320 (Auditing) a pretest and posttest will be given. The pretest will be used to determine a student's beginning competencies on the outcome and the posttest will determine ending competencies. The change in the two tests will reflect the improvement in comprehension of the outcome. Instructors of ACC 5320 expect that 80% of students will score 80% on posttest.

In ACC 5366 (Advanced Taxation) embedded exam and final exam questions will be used to assess accounting knowledge in the area of taxation. It is expected that 75% of students will score 75% or better on embedded test questions.

In ACC 5371 (Accounting Information Systems) embedded exam and final exam questions will be used to assess accounting knowledge in the accounting information systems area. It is expected that 75% of the students will score 75% or better on the embedded test questions.

Result 1

In 1 section in the fall and 1 section in the spring of ACC 5315; 51 graduate students were required to compare and contrast a financial accounting topic between US GAAP and IFRS in a research paper; 45% met or exceeded expectations.

In a section of 35 graduate students in fall 2009 of ACC 5320 were given a pretest and posttest on auditing standards, ethics, internal controls, auditing testing and reporting; 60% scored 80% or better on the posttest. In a section of 19 graduate students in the spring of 2010 of ACC 5320, 80% of students met expectations by scoring 80% on embedded exam questions on applying accounting knowledge in new and unfamiliar circumstances.

In 2 sections in the spring 2010, 27 graduate students in ACC 5366 were tested over choice of entity, corporate and partnership formations, taxable income, loss limitations, and distributions; 85% met and exceeded expectations.

In a section in the spring in ACC 5371, 34 graduate students answered embedded exam questions; 82.35% met or exceeded expectations.

Faculty observations are that most students are able to apply appropriate accounting in new and unfamiliar situations. Some students are uncomfortable in such situations; others can apply the accounting but are hesitate to draw conclusions. To facilitate the application of accounting in new and unfamiliar situations, faculty will adjust goals and refine assessment methods to aid in assessment of student improvement. Faculty will continue to refine assessment questions, method of assessments and number of questions

Method 2

Another way to assess students' accounting knowledge is through the required exit exam. The exit exam is patterned after the CPA exam, with coverage of content objectives and level of difficulty to mirror that professional exam. Twenty of the 100 multiple-choice questions on the exit exam are used to evaluate students' ability to apply accounting knowledge in new and unfamiliar situations. It is expected that 90% of the students will score 75 or better on these questions during the first attempt and the remaining 10% of students will score 75 or better for the second attempt.

Result 2

In the fall, 32 graduate students took the exit exam; 90.6% made an 75 overall and in each area on the first attempt; the other 9.4% made a 75 overall and in each area on the second attempt. In the spring, 28 graduate students took the exit exam; 89.3% made 75% or better on the first attempt; the other 10.7% made a 75 overall and in each area on the second attempt

Action Plan

Based on the results, the program faculty plan to challenge the students to apply accounting in new and unfamiliar situations. New personnel have joined the faculty and need to be trained in working to refine goals and provide a detailed grading structure and expectations of levels for each class.

Outcome Number 2

Accounting students will use advanced analytical and critical thinking skills at a level expected of a master's student to evaluate information, solve problems, and make sound decisions in the different areas of accounting, including financial, cost, accounting information systems, taxation, accounting ethics, professional research and audit and controls. To accomplish this outcome, the student will synthesize and evaluate the relevance of data and demonstrate analytical and critical thinking skills in exploring new questions, analyzing complex issues from multiple perspectives and arrive at reasoned conclusions.

Method 1

In order to assess MACy students' ability to use advanced analytical and critical thinking skills to solve accounting problems, the following assessment vehicles will be used.

In ACC 5315 (Selected Topics in Financial Accounting), ACC 5366 (Advanced Taxation), and ACC 5371 (Accounting Information Systems), embedded exam and final exam questions will be used. Targets for each class are: ACC 5315 expects that 70% of students will score 75% or better on the embedded test questions; ACC 5366 expects that 75% of students will score 80% or better on embedded test questions; and ACC 5371 expects that 75% of students will score 75% or better.

In ACC 5320 (Auditing) a pretest and posttest will be given. The pretest will be used to assess student analytical and critical thinking skills in areas of accounting at the beginning of the course and the posttest will assess skills at the end of the course. The change in the two tests will also measure the improvement. Instructors of ACC 5320 expect that 80% of students will score 80% on posttest.

ACC 5389 (Corporate Governance and Ethics) will use a project. It is expected that 80% of the students will meet or exceed the 80% level. An established rubric will be used to grade student performance.

Result 1

In a section in the fall and a section in the spring of ACC 5315; 51 graduate students were tested on pension and post retirement benefits, deferred taxes, intangibles, derivatives, accounting changes and errors, statement disclosures and international accounting; 73.5% met or exceeded expectations.

In a section of 35 graduate students in fall 2009 of ACC 5320 were given a pretest and posttest on selecting the correct auditing standards, ethics, internal controls, auditing testing and reporting; 60% met or exceeded expectations. In a section of 19 graduate students in spring 2010, 80% of students met or exceeded expectations on exam questions on critical thinking on auditing standards, ethics, internal controls, auditing testing and reporting.

In 2 sections in spring 27 graduate students in ACC 5366 were tested over calculations of taxable income, loss limitations, and distributions for different entities; 85% met and exceeded expectations.

In spring in ACC 5371, 34 graduate students were tested on appropriate information system controls; 82.35% met or exceeded expectations.

In a section in the fall and 2 sections in the spring 66 graduate students in ACC 5389 did a critique project on determining the ethical dilemma, ethical reasoning and decision making, alternative solutions, and the best ethical solutions; 80% met or exceeded expectations.

Faculty observations are that students are able to analyze and critical think in exploring new questions, analyzing complex issues from multiple perspectives and arrive at reasoned conclusions. Some students are hesitant to draw conclusions. To bolster confidence and facilitate the analytical and critical thinking skills, faculty will adjust goals and refine assessment methods to aid in students analyzing complex issues and arriving at reasoned conclusions. ACC 5320 will add a writing assignment in which the students are required to analyze and draw a conclusion on the amount of risk of accepting an audit client.

Method 2

The required exit exam, which is patterned after the CPA exam, contains 20 multiple-choice questions to evaluate students' ability to use advanced analytical and critical thinking skills to solve accounting problems. It is expected that 90% of the students will score 75 or better on these questions during the first attempt and the remaining 10% of students will score 75 or better for the second attempt.

Result 2

In the fall, 32 graduate students took the exit exam; 90.6% made an 75 overall and in each area on the first attempt; the other 9.4% made a 75 overall and in each area on the second attempt. In the spring, 28 graduate students took the exit exam; 89.3% made 75% or better on the first attempt; the other 10.7% made a 75 overall and in each area on the second attempt.

Action Plan

Based on the results, the program faculty plan to stress the analysis and critical decision making skills to accounting situations to arrive at reasoned conclusions. For example, ACC 5371, Accounting Information Systems, is adjusting the projects and software utilized. New personnel joining the faculty will be trained on assessment and work to refine goals and provide a detailed grading structure and expectations of levels for each class.

Outcome Number 3

Accounting students will apply information technology skills in decision making at a level expected of a master's student for practice and research. To fulfill this outcome, the student will learn to use information technology (IT) and be able to apply IT in analysis and communication.

Method 1

ACC 5371 (Accounting Information Systems) will use a project to evaluate IT skills in analysis. It is expected that 80% of the students will meet the 80% skill level. Established rubrics will be used to assess student performance on the assignments.

Result 1

In spring in ACC 5371, 34 graduate students did IT Excel projects; 82% met or exceeded expectations.

Faculty observations are that students are able to apply IT skills in decision making . More practice of using many different kinds of software and databases will improve confidence and ability to utilize IT skills and communications in decision making.

Method 2

ACC 5350 (Professional Accounting Research) and 5372 (Tax Research) will use online research projects using a common rubric. It is expected that 80% of the students will meet the 80% skill level.

Result 2

In a section in the fall and a section in the spring of ACC 5350, 25 students used online databases and research tools; 100% met or exceeded expectations. In a section in the fall and a section in the spring of ACC 5372, 39 students used online tax databases and research tools; 95% met or exceeded expectations.

Action Plan

Based upon the results, the program faculty plan to continue the use of IT projects and expand the use of IT in the appropriate classes. For example, the ACC 5371, Accounting Information Systems, is considering adding a project using Microsoft Dynamics or SAP to set up and record accounting transactions for companies. Faculty are working to refine goals and provide a detailed grading structure and expectations of levels for each class.

Outcome Number 4

Accounting students will acquire appropriate research skills needed for practice. To fulfill this outcome, the student will learn to use professional research skills, analyze the application to a problem, and communicate authoritative sources, findings, and conclusions.

Method 1

To assess MACy students' knowledge of research skills needed for practice, the following assessments will be accomplished.

In ACC 5315 (Selected Topics in Financial Accounting), a research paper will be used. It is expected that 80% of the students will score the 80% level, based on an established rubric.

In ACC 5320 (Auditing) and ACC 5389 (Corporate Governance and Ethics) projects will be used. It is expected that 80% of the students will meet the 80% level in ACC 5320 and 90% of the students will score at the 80% level in ACC 5389. Grading will be done using established rubrics.

In ACC 5366 (Advanced Tax), case write ups will be used. It is expected that 80% of the students will meet the 80% level. Grading will be done using established rubrics.

Result 1

In a section in the fall and a section in the spring of ACC 5315, 51 graduate students were required to research a financial accounting topic in US GAAP and IFRS; 65% met or exceeded expectations. The rubric and goals of the paper are being emphasized.

In fall and spring of ACC 5320 of 54 graduate students 100% met or exceeded expectations on research into auditing testing of accounts receivable and payable on the IDEA project.

A new faculty member was teaching ACC 5366 and did not assess research skills.

Faculty observations are that students need improvement on research skills including ability to research authoritative sources, analyze the application to a problem and communicate findings and conclusions. The research sources and problems will continue to be expanded to include international accounting standards in ACC 5315 and 5320. A professional research class (either ACC 5350, Professional Accounting Research, or ACC 5372, Tax Research) is required for CPA eligibility and for the MACy degree. These classes will be used to assess the research skills needed for practice in the next academic year.

Method 2

Students' knowledge of accounting research skills is also evaluated through the required exit exam. The exam contains 20 multiple-choice questions used to assess this outcome for all students. It is expected that 90% of the students will score 75 or better on these questions during the first attempt and the remaining 10% of students will score 75 or better for the second attempt.

Result 2

In the fall, 32 graduate students took the exit exam; 90.6% made an 75 overall and in each area on the first attempt; the other 9.4% made a 75 overall and in each area on the second attempt. In the spring, 28 graduate students took the exit exam; 89.3% made 75% or better on the first attempt; the other 10.7% made a 75 overall and in each area on the second attempt.

Action Plan

Based the results, the program faculty plan to change the assessment of the use of professional accounting research in the appropriate classes, either ACC 5350, Professional Accounting Research, or ACC 5372, Tax Research. These courses will use the reporting of professional research to write professional memos to prepare students for the workplace.

Outcome Number 5

Accounting students will conceptualize a complex issue into a coherent, persuasive written or oral statement. To fulfill the written portion of the outcome, the student will develop well-written reports, memos, and projects that explain findings, organize ideas into a coherent train of thought, and justify a conclusion or recommendation. To fulfill the oral portion, the student will make effective oral presentations that explain findings, organize ideas into a coherent train of thought, and justify a conclusion or recommendation.

Method 1

To evaluate the written and oral communication skills of MACy students, the following assessments will be conducted. Established rubrics will be used on all of the written and oral communication components.

ACC 5315 (Selected Topics in Financial Accounting) will use research or term papers to assess writing skills. It is expected that 80% of students will score a 75% or better on the written communications projects.

In ACC 5320 (Auditing) and ACC 5389 (Corporate Governance and Ethics), written projects will be used. It is expected that 80% of the students will make an

80% or better on the written communication portion of projects in ACC 5320 and 90% of the students will make an 80% on written communication skills in ACC 5389.

In ACC 5366 (Advanced Taxation) a case will be used. It is expected that 80% of the students will make 80% or better on the written communication portion of the projects using an established rubrics.

Result 1

In a section in the spring of ACC 5315, 16 graduate students were assessed on writing skills on a project; 63% met or exceeded expectations.

In a section of 35 graduate students in fall 2009 and a section of 19 graduate students in spring 2010 of ACC 5320, students wrote a memo on results of the IDEA project; 100% of the students met or exceeded expectations.

A new faculty member in ACC 5366 did not assess written communication skills.

In fall and spring sections of ACC 5389, 66 graduate students were assessed for grammar, spelling and mechanics of writing on daily papers; 100% met or exceeded expectations by the end of the course. These 66 graduate students wrote a critique project; 90% met or exceeded expectations.

Faculty observations are that students can meet or exceed expectations on written and communications. The courses will continue to stress these communications and provide opportunities for the students to practice and utilize the skills.

Method 2

ACC 5389 (Corporate Governance and Ethics) uses presentations to assess oral communication skills. It is expected that 90% will make an 85% or better on the oral communications assignments.

Result 2

In the fall and spring sections of 66 graduate students in ACC 5389, debates on ethical dilemmas were assessed by peers and the instructor using a common rubric; 100% met or exceeded expectations.

Action Plan

Based the results, the program faculty plan to continue the use of communications in projects in the appropriate classes. Expectations and examples of good writing are emphasized to students.

Outcome Number 6

Accounting students will understand the importance of culture and diversity. To fulfill this outcome, the student will comprehend the nature and significance of differences in individuals and groups based on their culture, ethnicity, religion, and other background factors and understand the impact of globalism and multiculturalism.

Method 1

ACC 5315 (Topics in Financial Accounting) will use research papers to determine the impact of culture, diversity and global issues in accounting. It is expected that 80% of the students will demonstrate their ability to correctly identify, analyze and synthesize the impact of diversity and culture by scoring at least an 80% on the papers. Established rubrics will be used for grading.

Result 1

In the fall and spring sections of ACC 5315, 51 graduate students determined the impact of culture, diversity and global issues in accounting; 69% met or exceeded expectations.

Faculty observations are that the students need to be exposed to more diversity issues. The impact of the IFRS timeline set by the SEC will expand opportunities to discussion these issues in more classes (for example, ACC 5315, ACC 5350, ACC 5366, and ACC 5371). Faculty and the courses will continue to stress diversity, culture and global issues in accounting.

Method 2

Culture and diversity issues are also addressed on the required exit exam. There are 16 multiple-choice questions contributing to the assessment of this culture and diversity outcome. It is expected that 90% of the students will score 75 or better on these questions during the first attempt and the remaining 10% of students will score 75 or better for the second attempt.

Result 2

In the fall, 32 graduate students took the exit exam; 90.6% made an 75 overall and in each area on the first attempt; the other 9.4% made a 75 overall and in each area on the second attempt. In the spring, 28 graduate students took the exit exam; 89.3% made 75% or better on the first attempt; the other 10.7% made a 75 overall and in each area on the second attempt.

Action Plan

Based on the results, the program faculty will stress the global, diversity and cultural impact on accounting. The timeline to implement IFRS global accounting standards has made this a relevance topic in all classes. ACC 5350 is adding a U.S GAAP and IFRS comparison project.

Outcome Number 7

Accounting students will apply ethical reasoning for resolution of ethical dimensions of accounting and reporting in the business world. To satisfy this outcome, the student will be able to recognize an ethical dilemma, apply ethical reasoning to resolve it and provide support for the resolution and effects on stakeholders.

Method 1

ACC 5320 (Auditing) and ACC 5389 (Corporate Governance and Ethics) will use embedded test and exam questions to assess ethical reasoning. It is expected that 80% of the students will be score 80% or better on these questions.

ACC 5389 (Corporate Governance and Ethics) will use term papers. It is expected that 90% of the students will demonstrate the ability to correctly identify, apply ethical reasoning and provide support for the resolution by scoring at least an 80% on these papers. An established rubric will be used for grading.

Result 1

In a section of 35 graduate students in fall 2009 and a section of 19 graduate students in spring 2010 of ACC 5320, students were assessed on ethical standards of the auditing profession; 90% met or exceeded expectations.

In fall and spring sections of ACC 5389, 66 graduate students were assessed on ethical theories, ethical reasoning, and professional ethics on the mid-term and through a critique paper; 91% met or exceeded expectations.

Faculty observations are that students are able to apply appropriate ethical reasoning and decision making and professional ethics in accounting. Faculty will continue to stress the expected ethical environment of the profession in all classes. Faculty will adjust goals and refine assessment methods to the level appropriate for classes.

Method 2

Students’ ability to apply ethical reasoning in an accounting environment is also assessed through the required exit exam. There are 12 multiple-choice questions contributing to the assessment of this ethics related outcome. It is expected that 90% of the students will score 75 or better on these questions during the first attempt and the remaining 10% of students will score 75 or better on the second attempt.

Result 2

In the fall, 32 graduate students took the exit exam; 90.6% made an 75 overall and in each area on the first attempt; the other 9.4% made a 75 overall and in each area on the second attempt. In the spring, 28 graduate students took the exit exam; 89.3% made 75% or better on the first attempt; the other 10.7% made a 75 overall and in each area on the second attempt.

Action Plan

Based the results, the program faculty will stress the ethical dimensions and expectations in accounting in all classes. The present economic stresses and financial scandals since 2000 provide timely case examples for the classes.

Chair	Dean	Chair	Dean
Outcomes Status	Outcomes Status	Results Status	Results Status
✓	✓	✓	✓