

Anderson School of Management, Master of Accounting  
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes  
The University of New Mexico

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**A. College, Department and Date**

1. College: Anderson School of Management
2. Department: N/A
3. Date: 2/17/2009

**B. Academic Program of Study\***

*Master of Accounting*

**C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan**

*Doug Thomas (thomas@mgt.unm.edu), Assistant Dean*

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\* Academic Program of Study is defined as an approved course of study leading to a certificate or degree reflected on a UNM transcript. A graduate-level program of study typically includes a capstone experience (e.g. thesis, dissertation, professional paper or project, comprehensive exam, etc.).

## **D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

### **Master of Accounting Learning Goals and Objectives**

The MACC program is intended to serve two populations. The professional track provides students without an undergraduate degree in accounting the opportunity to “retool” and acquire the knowledge necessary to enter the accounting profession. The advanced/tax tracks allows students with an undergraduate accounting degree the opportunity to build upon their core accounting knowledge. These students have already acquired basic skills with respect to external and internal reporting, regulation, financial decision makers needs, taxation, control systems and attest services.

#### **MACC Advanced / Tax Track**

Our students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate competency in ethical reasoning skills
  - A. Students will be able to identify ethical issues in accounting contexts and/or practice.
  - B. Students will be able to apply an ethical reasoning process to make a choice or evaluation and will be able to effectively justify this choice or evaluation.
  
2. Demonstrate competency in critical thinking skills
  - A. Able to structure and synthesize ambiguous information
  - B. Able to sort relevant from irrelevant information
  - C. Apply technical knowledge to new problem settings
  - D. Analyze and summarize information
  - E. Interpret the results of analysis
  
3. Demonstrate ability to verbally communicate accounting information
  
4. Demonstrate effective written communication skills
  
5. Demonstrate effective research skills in investigating accounting issues/topics
  - A. Locate and obtain information using professional literature and professional data bases
  - B. Organize and evaluate the relevance of this information for the research issue/topic

NOTE: Students have acquired accounting core competency through successful completion of an undergraduate accounting degree and this competency is not assessed for advanced/tax track students.

## MACC Professional Track

Our students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate core accounting knowledge:
  - a. Development, measurement, recording, analysis, and communication of financial and other business information in both for profit and nonprofit contexts
  - b. Tax policy and compliance for individuals and enterprises
  - c. Role of accountants in ensuring the integrity of financial and other information
  - d. Internal controls in business systems

The assessment materials will be gathered via embedded examination questions. These materials will be reviewed annually by the department.

2. Demonstrate competency in ethical reasoning skills
  - a. Students will be able to identify ethical issues in accounting contexts and/or practice.
  - b. Students will be able to apply an ethical reasoning process to make a choice or evaluation and will be able to effectively justify this choice or evaluation.
3. Demonstrate competency in critical thinking skills
  - a. Able to structure and synthesize ambiguous information
  - b. Able to sort relevant from irrelevant information
  - c. Apply technical knowledge to new problem settings
  - d. Analyze and summarize information
  - e. Interpret the results of analysis
4. Demonstrate ability to verbally communicate accounting information
5. Demonstrate effective written communication skills
6. Demonstrate effective research skills in investigating accounting issues/topics
  - a. Locate and obtain information using professional literature and professional data bases
  - b. Organize and evaluate the relevance of this information for the research issue/topic
7. Demonstrate competency in using computer technology  
Measurable: Students complete a project using general ledger package and database software in MGT 549.

## **Master of Accounting Assessment: Location (e.g., course) and Tool(s)**

During the past several years (beginning in Spring 2004), the accounting program has used a portfolio review as a means to assess learning outcomes. Faculty members review written documents prepared by students to determine the achievement of learning goals relating to various program objectives and to develop suggestions to revise course content and teaching methods. Department members have met 1-2 times per year to conduct the assessment. Given the department's close ties to the accounting profession (including an accounting advisory council composed of various accounting professionals) and frequent contact with employers of our graduating students, we have relied on employer surveys and other contacts to provide information on the assessment of core accounting knowledge.

As the school discussed alternative assessment practices during the 2007/2008 academic year, the department undertook preparation of a curriculum map. This map provided more substantive documentation regarding the coverage of learning objectives and enabled us to ascertain whether our coverage is adequate. The map also provided evidence about the interpretation of such objectives in our various course offerings. (See Table 1 for map). This year we are in the process of adopting the following changes to our assessment processes:

1. Use of embedded examination questions to assess core accounting knowledge (Goal #1). This method has already been applied in the MBA core class, MGT 502, and will also be adopted in appropriate classes in our professional concentration. Each faculty member should return in spread sheet or other appropriate form the questions and results for each question for all students.
2. Use of rubrics to collect information regarding research, writing, critical thinking and ethical reasoning skills. These rubrics will provide us with consistent evidence regarding the skills levels of our students in these areas. Materials from course projects in one or more of the following courses -- MGT 550, 640, 548, 559 or the advanced tax courses – will be gathered annually. These courses have been selected as they will enable us to capture data for both the professional and advanced/tax track students. A rotating team of faculty will review the results from these rubrics and suggest appropriate alterations to the curricula based upon the results.
3. Use of rubric to capture evaluation of in-class presentation. Each year, this information will be gathered from one of the following courses: MGT 550 or 548. These courses have been selected as they will enable us to capture data for both the professional and advanced/tax track students. The rotating team of faculty will review the presentation evaluations in June of each year.

The main finding from our portfolio assessments and employer surveys has consistently indicated the need for improved writing skills and greater attention to ethical reasoning skills. With respect to writing skills, MGT 541 and 550 instructors will be working with ASM writing workshop assistants to develop additional ideas for enhancing our student writing skills. With respect to ethical reasoning skills, MGT 550 has been revamped to incorporate more emphasis upon ethical issues.

This year we are in the process of adopting the following changes to our assessment processes:

1. Use of embedded examination questions to assess core accounting knowledge (Goal #1). This method has already been applied in the MBA core class, MGT 502, and will also be adopted in the following classes in our professional concentration: MGT 541, Each faculty member should return in spread sheet or other appropriate form the questions and results for each question for all students.

2. Use of rubrics to collect information regarding research, writing, critical thinking and ethical reasoning skills. These rubrics will provide us with consistent evidence regarding the skills levels of our students in these areas. Materials from course projects in one or more of the following courses -- MGT 550, 640, 548, 559 or the advanced tax courses – will be gathered annually. These courses have been selected as they will enable us to capture data for both the professional and advanced/tax track students. A rotating team of faculty will review the results from these rubrics and suggest appropriate alterations to the curricula based upon the results.
3. Use of rubric to capture evaluation of in-class presentation. Each year, this information will be gathered from one of the following courses: MGT 550 or 548. These courses have been selected as they will enable us to capture data for both the professional and advanced/tax track students. The rotating team of faculty will review the presentation evaluations in June of each year.

As noted above, core accounting knowledge has been assessed primarily through employer surveys and the continuing successful placement of our graduates with professional and other firms. The evidence (both direct through surveys) and anecdotal (through other contacts such as the advisory council) indicates that our graduates have acquired the knowledge necessary to be successful in the profession. However, as noted above, we are in the process of gathering more direct data about specific learning objectives.

**Table 1- Curriculum Map**

MGMT	Core Accounting Knowledge	Ethical Reasoning	Technology Skills	Critical Thinking	Writing Skills	Verbal Skills	Research Skills
540	Begins with review of introductory material.	Students wrote about the role of accountants in subprime crisis and about role of accountants in revealing risk.	In addition to basic financial reporting, requires the use of Excel to find present values.	Did paper on subprime crisis and accounting's role.	Student write memos and short reports.		Must research on FASB issue.
541	Builds and reviews basic statements.	Midterms require students to write on a complex accounting issue that involves ethics.	Excel is required for evaluating and report on bonds, leases etc.	Students are required to explore at least one complex issue on each midterm.	Midterms require one memo with attachments and one short-report. We also do frequent short writing assignments in class.		Students are required to research a financial accounting reporting issues and write a short report. This is usually a complex issue and students are required to provide references.
542	This course covers individual income taxation. This material is one of the "core" areas covered by the Uniform CPA Exam. The course is designed for students in our "Professional" track.	We discuss a limited number of ethical reasoning situations in the class. The topics tend to deal with the proper recognition of income and situations vis-a-vis clients.	We use WebCT in the class. This requires knowledge of basic skills including online material access, uploading files, etc.	We discuss a limited number of critical thinking situations in the class. Primarily, the discussion involves application of rules to tax planning situations.	Students are required to provide short answer test questions. Students are required to provide written homework assignments.	Future classes will likely include a presentation.	This class incorporates an introduction to tax research methods.
543	Core tax knowledge - tax treatment of various income/expense items; tax planning - organizational form. This course is an introduction to the taxation of business entities with some special topics. This material is all covered by the Uniform CPA Exam. This course is designed for our "Professional" track students.	Situations preparers face regarding aggressive tax positions. We engage in ethical reasoning discussion in this class. The discussion, usually, revolves around the application of tax rules in uncertain situations. The discussion is more in depth than 343.	Use of online databases for tax law research. The course utilizes WebCT to engage in quizzes, upload documents, etc. The technology component requires access and basic computer knowledge.	In the classroom - asking them net effect of a tax law; asking them why might the law have been enacted. We apply tax rules to business planning situations.	This class incorporates an introduction to tax research sources and methods. Students produce short written assignments.	Future classes will likely include a presentation.	One research oriented project, and completion of tax returns requires them to research how to report items on the forms. Introduction to tax research methods.

544	The course introduces auditing and assurance services with a primary emphasis on the auditor's decision-making process and evidence accumulation to support the audit report issued as a result of those services.	Ethics is an integral part of the course.	Students complete quizzes and access resources using WebCT.	Students are required to make decisions or solve problems of judging by applying the auditing techniques taught in the course to real world scenarios.	Much of the course requires students to complete writing essays and papers demonstrating their ethical reasoning and audit knowledge.	Students are required to make a presentation to the Board of Directors on an audit issue.	Students are required to research fraud cases and reflect how their newly obtained auditing skills would have prevented these frauds.
546	Core expansion with sophisticated topics such as business combinations & introduction to derivatives and international accounting and partnership accounting.				Exams contain a short answer essay question.		
547	This course provides an in-depth exposure to tax research sources and methods.	The course incorporates ethical reasoning discussion via the assessment of "substantial authority" and its relationship to the "correct" answer for the client.	This course is heavily technology dependent utilizing both WebCT and extensive use of CCH Tax Research Network.	Students are required to apply a great deal of critical thinking skills in identifying and assessing relevant tax authority. Students are introduced to the research process.	Students write 4-5, approximate 10 page research memos. The memos sharpen both writing skills and critical thinking.	Future classes will likely include a presentation.	Students are required to provide detailed tax research on a wide-array of current tax topics.
548	IFRS and relationship to US GAAP.	Poor quality/lack of transparency in international contexts. Corruption and auditing in different international contexts.		Comparison and critical evaluation of accounting in international contexts. Different documentary evidence e.g. professional, academic.	Two independent and three group project papers.	Three group oral presentations in class.	Extensive research retrieval - academic, professional material.
549	Accounting is an information system. Revenue and acquisition transaction cycles, internal controls for data input, processing and storage, flow of accounting information, computerized accounting, and database concepts are presented.		Spreadsheet modeling of costs and revenues for a company. General ledger package and database software are used. Setting up an AIS for a business using a computerized accounting package.	Internal controls are discussed for various production systems.			

550		Ethical reasoning is a significant part of the course. Students learn about the business and professional ethics for directors, executives and accountants in three stages, the ethics environment, ethical governance and accountability, and significant ethical issues facing business and the accounting profession.	Students access class resources and edit group work using WebCT.	Students apply the ethical framework to real world scenarios and real fraudulent cases.	Students are required to answer and submit in writing chapter questions and cases.	Students are required to make 2 group presentations and 1 individual presentation.	Students are required to research the similarities and dissimilarities of the following accounting professions: tax accountant, governmental accountant, financial planner, not-for-profit accountant, internal auditor, and financial auditor.
559		Cases are evaluated not only for the probable legal outcome, but also the ethical one. We also have a unit on ethics and business decision-making.	WebCT quizzing, assignment and discussion tools are used.	Writing assignments require students to apply rules and consider the weight of authority. Online course requires extensive discussion posting on selected topics and problems, requiring students to defend their answers.	Two writing assignments containing several fact patterns. Writing assignments graded using "track changes;" extensive comments. Model answers posted and discussed not only for content, but for presentation, and a critique of class performance (what was effective).	Class is highly interactive; students must defend their answers and work in several different groups during the semester.	Use LEXIS for legal research--students must find federal and state statutes, cases and regulations, particularly insofar as the regulation of accountants. They are show and also have a reference librarian from PML illustrate successful search strategies using our many electronic databases.
590	This course focuses on the details of the taxation of both C and S corporations. This topic is core knowledge for tax professionals.	This course incorporates some ethical reasoning discussion via assessment of competing tax strategies.	Students are required to use both WebCT and CCH Tax Research Network, as well as, Microsoft Office.	Students are required to learn and apply corporate rules to a variety of business situations.	Homework assignments are written analyzes.	Future classes will likely include a presentation.	Students are required to use research skills in completing written homework assignments.
591	This course focuses on the details of the taxation of property transfers both through gifts and the estate. This topic is core knowledge for tax professionals.	This course incorporates some ethical reasoning discussion via assessment of competing tax strategies.	Students are required to use both WebCT and CCH Tax Research Network, as well as, Microsoft Office.	Students are required to learn and apply transfer tax rules to a variety of family planning situations.	Homework assignments are written analyzes.	Future classes will likely include a presentation.	Students are required to use research skills in completing written homework assignments.

592	This course focuses on the details of partnership taxation. This topic is core knowledge for tax professionals.	This course incorporates some ethical reasoning discussion via assessment of competing tax strategies.	Students are required to use both WebCT and CCH Tax Research Network, as well as, Microsoft Office.	Students are required to learn and apply the partnership tax rules across a variety of business situations.	Homework assignments are written analyzes.	Future classes will likely include a presentation.	Students are required to use research skills in completing written homework assignments.
593	This course focuses on the details of the taxation of property transactions with some emphasis on real estate. This topic is core knowledge for tax professionals.	This course incorporates some ethical reasoning discussion via assessment of competing tax strategies.	Students are required to use both WebCT and CCH Tax Research Network, as well as, Microsoft Office.	Students learn the general rule of property taxation under Section 1001. They also learn exceptions to the general rule and the tax principles underlying the exceptions.	Homework assignments are written analyzes.	Future classes will likely include a presentation.	Students are required to use research skills in completing written homework assignments.
640			Students are required to use WebCT's discussion board as a group to work and report on their group projects.		Students are required to complete a comprehensive group paper.		Students are required to research a city CAFR and evaluate the financial well-being of the city based on their research.
594 (Fraud)		Students complete at least two ethics cases that require ethical reasoning.		Many of the homework assignments include problems that involve critical thinking skills.	Students are given a minimum of 4 individual writing assignments and 1 group writing assignment.	Students are required to make multiple oral presentations during the course of the semester.	The term project requires students to conduct research and exams also require the use of external reference materials.
594 (Internal Audit)		Cases used in this class (both exam and homework) involve ethical reasoning.		Both in and out of class assignments involve the use of critical thinking skills.	Students are given multiple writing assignments (minimum of 4 individual assignments).	Students are required to make multiple oral presentations throughout the semester.	Exam cases require students to conduct research (library databases and internet).
641		Students complete several cases containing ethical issues.	Computer forensics is covered as part of the course (2-3 chapters), and two guest speakers.	Cases require critical thinking.	Multiple writing assignments (3).	Class participation and one formal presentation.	Term project involved conducting library research.