

Business Administrative Systems
(Fall 2014-Name Changed to Business Technology)

Assessment of Learning
for Career and Technical Programs

Fall 2012-Spring 2014

Submitted by:

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ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

Business Administrative Systems

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The mission and goals for the Business Administrative Systems (Business Technology as of Fall 2014) program remain the same; we continue to train students to meet the needs of today's work force in the areas of application software, effective communication, good work habits, quality decision making and management. Because we emphasize teaching current skills, technology changes impact curriculum on a regular basis. Hence, our assessment process is constantly evolving to keep up with the pace of curriculum changes.

Our assessment process for degree candidates is administered in a capstone course, BAS (BTC) 250: Business Simulations. This course is offered each spring. Students create a portfolio to demonstrate their skills related to the program objectives. Beginning 2013, under Perkins IV a separate assessment of General Education skills was no longer required. The emphasis was solely placed on assessing completer's technical skills. Although we continue to required students to take separate general education course work, those knowledge and skills areas are integrated into the program specific courses. Thus mastery of those general education knowledge and skills areas are reflected in the students' ability to demonstrate mastery of the technical skills.

Students create a portfolio of their work to demonstrate the skills they have learned in the program and present it to the advisory committee. The sections of the portfolio are graded using a simple 5-point Likert scale. The portfolio submitted includes the following elements:

1. Cover Page that is a well-designed to identify you (**customized** template okay)
2. A well-written cover letter (writing ability demonstrated)
3. Resume
4. Software Components-for each application you want to demonstrate your skills (features of your choice) in one or two documents. Be sure to think of this as a marketing tool that you would want to use to get a job; in other words, highlight your strengths and advanced abilities. Each sample should be introduced with a short description of the document and the skills used to create it (software, creativity, research, writing)
 - Word Processing
 - Spreadsheets
 - Database (do not include entire databases, but maybe pdf reports created from a query you can describe or a sample form you designed)
 - Presentation

- Desktop Publishing
5. Across the work samples, you should also be demonstrating (and documenting in the description) written and oral communication, problem solving, as well as creative and critical thinking.
 6. The presentation to the advisory committee will also be graded on
 - Organization
 - Neatness

DATA AND RESULTS

The following table displays the assessment results for students who participated in the assessment process between Fall 2012 and Spring 2014. The scores on the BAS skill assessment are displayed as a percent of total points possible on the rubric; again, all students attained at least the minimum level.

Only degree candidates are required to participate in the assessment process; however, there are only a few students graduate with a certificate alone. Some students come into the program with the intention of earning a certificate but usually continue and complete a degree. Any student may choose to add a certificate to their degree program to enhance their marketability. Even though none of the current students were planning on adding certificates to their degree, it may work out they have met the requirements when they are ready to graduate.

Student ID No.	Last Name	First Name	Degree	Certificate	Semester Tested	Graduation Semester	BAS Skill Assessment (%)
XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	AAS.AOM		SP13	May 2013	85%
XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	AAS.AOM		SP13	May 2013	92%
XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	AAS.AOM		SP13	May 2013	88%
XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	AAS.AOM		SP14		98%
XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	AAS.AOM		SP14		100%
XXXXXX	XXXXXX	XXXXXX	AAS.AOM		SP14		95%

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The skill assessment is a portfolio that demonstrates a variety of skills over multiple projects as well as a resume and cover letter. A rubric is used to analyze the data based on a scale of one to five. All students exceeded the 80 percent benchmark with an average of 93 percent over the reporting period. The system has been in place for three years and has been successful for students, faculty, and the advisory committee.

1. Students are able to see their growth in the major competency areas as they progress through the program, since portfolio documents are created throughout their coursework.

They also have an opportunity to correct or upgrade those documents before placing them in the portfolio to present their current skill level to the advisory committee and in job interviews. Since the portfolios are created using Adobe Acrobat, students can choose to maintain the portfolio long-term, adding additional evidence of their skills as time goes by.

2. Faculty in the program can access student portfolios to review a student's workplace readiness. This provides some specific information to help match students with jobs and write letters of recommendation.

3. The advisory committee is able to see first-hand the results of coursework in the program. While they have always been involved in developing curriculum and been an audience for student presentations, nothing this comprehensive has been shared before. They have been very impressed with the quality of the assignments and the quality of work completed by students.

DISCUSSION OF DATA WITH PROGRAM FACULTY AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Full time and adjunct faculty are involved with curriculum development, textbook selection, and course delivery (face-to-face and online). Courses are designed to meet the objectives for that specific content while also emphasizing the importance of interpersonal skills, time and resource management, critical thinking, and proofreading and editing work. Many course formats have been updated to hybrid or online to provide students with time and place flexibility. Alternate class formats keep students accountable for work done outside of the classroom (i.e. discussion, testing, and projects) and allows for maximizing any face-to-face time. The soft skills continue to be offered in four-week online courses: Customer Service, Your Professional Image, Time Management, Telephone Skills, and Interpersonal Skills. Beginning next spring, the Business Communication with Customers has been renamed as E-communication with Customers and will be upgraded to 2 credit hours. Coursework in the program is designed to prepare students for the assessment process as a means of validating they are ready to enter the work force.

The advisory committee is representative of the area's workforce; therefore, the discussions held have a direct impact on curriculum change or redesign. The assessment results we are seeing with our students accurately reflect the skill set employers are seeing in entry level employees. So far, the advisory committee members have been very impressed with the quality of student portfolios and the work they display in them. Other competencies cannot be measured by a test, so those skills are continually given emphasis throughout the program: attendance, promptness, being prepared to work, meeting deadlines, and team work. Policies have been put into place across the curriculum to enforce these items and make students accountable with an impact on their final grades.

The portfolio skill assessment directly involves the advisory committee. As part of our spring meeting, the students presented their portfolio and answered questions posed by the committee members. Each member evaluates each presenter, and the feedback has been very

helpful. They have made suggestions to students related to building presentation skills and self-confidence; they continue to commend students for their excellent skills in each of the evaluated areas. Some of the overall comments have included, “This was a great way to focus on the projects and personalities.” and “Each student had a unique way of presenting their work—it was great to have them walk us through the process.”

IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS OR CHANGE

While the scores on all assessment instruments are acceptable, there is always room for improvement. Based on the current data, the following changes will be introduced in hopes of increasing scores for the next reporting period.

- Some of our courses have been moved to an online environment for time and place flexibility. This will allow students to work in a somewhat self-paced environment. Since our students now have access to Microsoft Office for free, they have more opportunities to complete work on their own time.
- Many courses in the Business Technology program are reading intensive, and students will continue to encounter comprehension checks (discussion, projects, tests) and assignments in all classes. Students will also continue to be assessed on their writing skills and proofreading on all assignments in the program.
- The skill assessment for BTC 250 allows students to demonstrate their skills in a more realistic environment and also leave them with a product to share with potential employers.

ACTION STEPS

1. The BTC faculty has still been trying to begin the process to have our portfolio skill assessment approved by the state, since there is not a nationally normed test available to test our competencies and objectives. It has been very challenging to get the proper information from the state to move forward.
2. The BTC faculty will continue to monitor assessment results in order to provide a quality program with graduates who can attain entry level employment in our area.
3. The advisory committee will be consulted annually regarding program goals, competencies, and assessment tools.
4. The application level assignments in the BTC 170, 175, 145, 245, 247, and 250 courses will continue. This provides for some individualized assignments to upload into their portfolio, documents where they have made all of the decisions like they would in the workplace.