

Summary of Proposed Changes to MBA

Purpose: Reorganize MBA to a uniform size (and cost) across tracks that provides a competitive and attractive educational experience, is scalable, and offers flexibility for future growth. Further, we were asked to revisit the introductory courses (currently called “the Foundation” courses) to insure that students entering more advanced MBA classes (currently called “the Core” courses) are adequately prepared for graduate-level study.

Process and Findings Regarding Current MBA: We reviewed the curriculums of several dozen MBA programs both regionally and nationally. We also interviewed graduate faculty who teach Core MBA courses. We found that:

- Compared to most other programs, OSU’s had a **high degree of variability** in time-to-completion and cost. The primary reason for this variability was the range of credit requirements among our tracks, from 45-68.
- Many faculty reported an unacceptably **wide variation in the background knowledge of students entering Core classes**. In many instances, this effectively translates into MBA Core courses being taught as if students lack any topic-specific background knowledge. Several Core courses (e.g. BA528, BA540, BA590) report high overlap with undergraduate curriculum and lack of ability to adequately introduce graduate-level content due to wide-spread lack of prerequisite knowledge. As a result, the educational opportunities for students with undergraduate business degrees is curtailed, and no students are provided true graduate level training in these areas.
- The current Core, with 11 courses, **limited track-specific options** with a 45-credit goal (the minimum required by the Graduate School) **to 4 track-specific/option courses**, which is comparatively low relative to many other MBA programs.
- Faculty express continued concerns with the **variability in preparedness among INTO Pathway students** and the lack of diversity among these INTO students.

The GPC met with many of the graduate faculty, examined the syllabi of the current Core and Foundation courses and discussed options and goals with the Dean, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Associate Dean of Academic Programs, the Graduate Program Advisor, the Dean’s MBA Curriculum Task Force, the Assistant Dean for Assessment and Accreditation, and the Vice Provost of International Programs.

We noted the following concerns in the current program:

- 1) Our MBA and its tracks are difficult to market because of the wide-range in requirements and cost. This is a distinct disadvantage compared to competitor programs.
- 2) Unlike every other MBA we examined, OSU’s MBA lacks a course or specific coverage of Managerial Economics. We confirmed that this lack translated into a general deficit in students’ understanding of the general principles guiding many business decisions.
- 3) Our MBA has relatively heavy coverage of law and ethics compared to other programs. Including the Foundation courses, OSU MBAs have 3 required courses (BA513, BA531/533, MGMT559), where most competitor programs have one combined or two courses. While prudent for some tracks, we were concerned that 3 courses might unnecessarily limit coursework opportunities for certain tracks, especially in light of the current 3-credit-per-course model.
- 4) OSU has a free-standing Project Management course (BA562) in the Core, which is unusual among other MBA programs.
- 5) OSU’s MBA awards credit for up to 9 credits (effectively 3 courses) with a letter grade “C”. Most other MBA programs require a B- or higher in each course and an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher.

Proposal: Operating under a guideline of a 60-credit MBA framework, and in accordance with a request to change the course names to something less confusing than “Foundation, Core, and Track-Specific,” we are proposing the following refinements to the OSU MBA:

- The OSU MBA will consist of “Core 1, Core 2, and Elective/Track-Specific” courses. Core 1 comprises 15 credits of graduate-level coursework designed to successfully prepare all admitted students, regardless of academic background, for the more advanced courses which follow. Core 2 consist of more advanced courses that require students to attain the high level of understanding specified in the Learning Goals and Objectives (LGs and LOs) of our MBA program. Core 2 courses are explicitly designed to go beyond the content taught in analogous undergraduate courses.
- All MBAs will be capped at 60 credits. This permits a highly motivated and capable full-time student to complete an MBA in 4 terms (12 months) with one full summer academic load. Core 1 includes 15 credits of content (5 courses). Core 2 consists of 27 credits of content (9 courses). This leaves 18 credits (6 courses) of Elective/Track-Specific content. We note that not all tracks will necessarily be able to be completed in 4 terms based on pre- and co-requisite requirements, but at least one track will be available for interested students.
- Qualified applicants can have the 15 credits of Core 1 waived. Typically, a qualified student is one with a recent business undergraduate degree from an accredited business school with a sufficiently high GPA. We will also consider OSU students with a business minor to be qualified.
- Pathway INTO students must take BA512: Business Analysis & Communication (6 credits) **in addition** to the 60-credit MBA.

Core 1 (must earn B- or higher in each to progress; * indicates a substantially redesigned course)

- 1) BA513: Business Legal Environment (3 credits)
- 2) BA514: Operations Management (3 credits)
- 3) BA 515: Markets & Valuation* (3 credits)
- 4) BA 516: Creating Value in Exchange* (3 credits)
- 5) BA 517: Accounting & Business Decisions* (3 credits)

Core 2 (required of all MBA students; must earn B- or higher in each in order to progress)

- 1) BA 528: Financial & Cost Analysis
- 2) BA540: Corporate Finance
- 3) BA550: Organizational Leadership & Management
- 4) BA555: Practical Business Analysis
- 5) BA 561: Supply Chain Management
- 6) BA 569: Advanced Strategic Management
- 7) BA 572: Advanced Information Systems
- 8) BA 590: Marketing Management
- 9) MGMT 559: Ethics & Corporate Social Responsibility

Track Specific/Elective courses - All MBA students will need to complete an additional 18 credits (6 courses) to fulfill their MBA requirements. These courses can be track-specific and electives.

Additional information:

The Core 1 courses include the existing BA513 and BA514 courses (potentially revised), as well as three re-designed courses (BA 515, BA 516, and BA 517; course descriptions included below). The three re-designed Core 1 courses have a joint responsibility to cover critical topics in Financial Accounting, Managerial Accounting, Managerial Economics, Marketing, and Finance. Generally, these three courses are designed to be taken as a block, with coordinated and overlapping assignments.

Core 2 courses are all from existing “Core” courses. The Core 2 courses are the only necessarily shared courses amongst all MBA students. As such, all assessment of non-track-specific degree Learning Goals and Learning Outcomes (LO) will occur within these courses as specified in the Assessment Table. The GPC continues to require that each LO be assessed on an individual student-basis in a minimum of two courses.

Two current “Core” courses will be moved. BA 562 (Managing Projects) and BA 533/BA 531 (Business Law-Technology & New Ventures/Business Law for Managers) will become electives/track-specific courses.

The additional element of the proposed change relates to INTO Pathway students. Noting that qualified INTO students can be directly admitted to the extant MBA program, we are proposing that INTO Pathway students will take a communication-intensive 6-credit course (BA 512) in addition to the full Core 1, Core 2, and track specific course loads. Please note that BA 512 is currently required of INTO Pathway students. The effective change in this policy is to award INTO students graduate credit from graduate-only coursework in the Pathway (through the Core 1 courses).

Regarding the requirement of B-, other MBA programs we reviewed require a B- or higher in all graduate-level courses. Our belief is that a letter grade of lower than a B- signifies an unacceptable level of understanding for a graduate student. We are particularly concerned that poor performance in Core 1 or Core 2 coursework signifies a student who is currently not qualified to progress through the remainder of the MBA curriculum.

Changing Course Descriptions in Core 1:

BA 515: Markets & Valuation

A graduate course that examines the economic topics of market type, competition, pricing, identifying and sustaining competitive advantages, understanding the time value of money, valuation of financial and real assets, and analyzing investment opportunities to maximize firm value. Students will understand how to use accounting information to guide valuation and investment decisions.

BA 516: Creating Value in Exchange

The primary goal of this course is for students to gain a conceptual understanding of the ways in which firms and their customers create opportunities for, and participate in, exchange which provides value to both. Upon completion of this course, student should understand relevant managerial economic principles; be familiar with ways in which firms gain insight into what constitutes customer value, and how firms create and communicate customer value through offering design, distribution, and promotion; and understand pricing strategies for capturing value for the firm.

BA 517: Accounting and Business Decisions

The primary goal of this course is to introduce students to the preparation and interpretation of financial statements, income recognition and determination, and the evaluation of performance using these data. Students will also understand data accumulation and cost measurement for products, projects, jobs, customers, and markets; strategic cost decision making for pricing and resource allocation.

Assessment Plan for Revised MBA

| | Assessment | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| | BA528 | BA540 | BA550 | BA555 | MGMT559 | BA561 | BA 569 | BA572 | BA590 |
| | Financial & Cost Analysis | Corporate Finance | Organizational Management | Practical Business Analysis | Ethics | Supply Chain Management | Advanced Strategic Management | Advanced Information Systems | Marketing Management |
| GOAL #1: Integrative Experience and Experiential Learning | | | | | | | | | |
| LO1a: Analyze and synthesize information across disciplines/functions in order to evaluate business opportunities and make sound business decisions. | | | | | X | | | | |
| GOAL #2: Social, Legal, and Ethical Responsibilities of Organizations and Society | | | | | | | | | |
| LO2a: Analyze the impact of an enterprise on its various stakeholders using deontological and consequential lenses. | | X | X | | X | | | X | |
| LO2b: Demonstrate awareness of the current U.S. legal and global regulatory business environment. | X | X | | | X | | | | |
| GOAL #3: Effect of Global Environment on Business | | | | | | | | | |
| LO3a: Demonstrate comprehension of cultural commonalities and differences in international business activities and customs. | | | X | | | X | | | X |
| LO3b: Develop effective management techniques for cross-cultural business. | | | X | | X | | | | |
| GOAL #4: Strategic and Innovative Thinking and Analysis Skills to Enable Effective Opportunity Identification, Problem Solving, and Decision-Making | | | | | | | | | |
| LO4a: Demonstrate and apply appropriate management science and statistical tools to analyze business conditions. | X | X | | X | | | X | | |
| LO4b: Evaluate business environment and opportunities and devise strategies for responding effectively to problems, threats, and opportunities. | | | | | | X | | X | X |
| GOAL #5: Effective Oral, Written, and Presentation Communication Skills | | | | | | | | | |
| LO5a: Construct and communicate a logical, relevant, and professional quantitative assessment of business information in an effective manner. | X | X | | X | | | X | | |
| LO5b: Construct and communicate a logical, relevant, and professional qualitative assessment of business information in an effective manner. | | | | | | | X | X | X |
| GOAL #6: Team Participation and Leadership | | | | | | | | | |
| LO6a: Summarize and apply theories of effective leadership. | | X | X | | | | | | |
| LO6b: Summarize and apply theories of team composition, process, and motivation (including inclusivity and diversity) to effectively manage work teams. | | X | X | | | | | | |

