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**AACSB  
ASSURANCE OF LEARNING**

**Master of Finance**

**LEARNING GOAL # 1**

**Students will communicate effectively in written presentations.**

**Responsibility: Suman Banerjee (or Course Instructor FIN 629)**

May 2024

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# 1. INTRODUCTION: LEARNING GOAL #1

**Goal: Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral presentations.**

*Objective 1: Students will be able to write effectively*

*Objective 2: Students can deliver presentations effectively.*

A major educational objective of the School of Business at Stevens is to ensure that all of our graduates have effective written and oral communications skills.

While many of our students have strong communications skills, other students, especially foreign students, need special training in this area. In the past, all academic programs and individual instructors have made an effort to assess and improve the communications skills of their students. An advantage of the AACSB assessment process is that it helps us take a more organized and uniform approach to achieving this crucial educational objective.

This goal is assessed in the course FIN 629A Fixed Income Analysis offered in the spring term

# 2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND TRAITS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **MFIN - 1** | **Learning Goal, Objectives and Traits** |
| **GOAL** | **Our students will communicate effectively in writing and oral presentations.** |
| **Learning Objectives** |  |
| **Objective 1:** | *Students will be able to write effectively* |
| **Traits** |  |
| Trait 1: | Logical flow |
| Trait 2: | Grammar and sentence structure |
| Trait 3: | Spelling and word choice |
| Trait 4: | Global Ideas and Understanding the Role of Ethics |
| **Objective 2:** | *Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively* |
| **Traits** |  |
| Trait 1: | Organization and logic |
| Trait 2: | Voice and body language |
| Trait 3: | Use of slides to enhance communication |
| Trait 4: | Ability to answer questions |
| Trait 5: | Content: National and International concepts |

# 3. RUBRICS

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MFIN GOAL - 1: RUBRIC 1** | | | | | |
| **GOAL** | **Our students will communicate effectively in writing and oral presentations.** | | | | |
| **Objective 1** | *Students will be able to write effectively* | |  |  |  |
|  | **Trait** | **Poor** | **Good** | **Excellent** | **Score** |
|  | **Value** | **0** | **5** | **10** |  |
| Trait 1: | Logical flow | Unclear introduction or conclusion. Does not use a sequence of material to lead reader through the paper. Draws illogical conclusions | Develops ideas through effective use of paragraphs, transitions, opening & concluding statements. Generally well structured to suggest connection between sub-topics. | Maintains clear focus, uses structure to build the paper's conclusions. Presents analysis using sequence of ideas, clarity of flow and continuous voice or point of view. |  |
| Trait 2: | Grammar and sentence structure | Frequently uses inappropriate grammar and incomplete or poorly structured sentences which interfere with comprehension. | Generally complies with standard English and grammar and sentence usage. | Sophisticated use of English language, using varied sentence structured, phrasing and cadence. Grammar is error-free |  |
| Trait 3: | Spelling and word choice | Frequent misspellings. Poor or limited choice of words for expression ideas. | Has proofread or checked spelling, and uses vocabulary correctly. Minor errors. | Demonstrates good use of words to support written expression of topic. Spelling is error-free. |  |
| Trait 4: | Development of Ideas | Many unsupported statements offered. Uses flawed or unclear reasoning. | Most statements supported, ideas explained with examples and written with sufficient explanation. | Shows thoughtful reasoning and explores alternatives. Uses existing, supported ideas to develop well-formed, readable output. |  |

**Criterion: Does not meet expectations: 0 – 19; Meets: 20--29; Exceeds: 30-40**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MFIN GOAL - 1: RUBRIC 2** | | | | | |
| **GOAL** | **MFIN - 1: Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral presentations.** | | | | |
| **Objective 2** | *Students can deliver presentations effectively.* | | | |  |
|  | **Trait** | **Poor** | **Good** | **Excellent** | **Score** |
|  | **Value** | **0** | **5** | **10** |  |
| Trait 1: | Organization and logic | Fails to introduce topic; no evidence of or poor logical flow of topic. | Prepares listeners for sequence and flow of topic. Loses place occasionally but flow and structure are still clear. | Engages listeners with overview, guides listeners through connections between sections, and alerts audience to key details and concepts. |  |
| Trait 2: | Voice Quality | Cannot be heard or understood well due to volume, mumbling, speed, monotone delivery, and/or heavily accented English. | Clear delivery with well-modulated voice. Displays some confidence and enthusiasm, but may also contain flatter periods or sound overly rehearsed. | Exemplary delivery, with a voice that sounds fully engaged, conveys enthusiasm and confidence, and relates to the audience well. |  |
| Trait 3: | Physical Presence | Turns away from audience or uses distracting gestures, such as pacing or tugging clothing. Speaker seems stiff, awkward or uncomfortable. Little eye contact. | Speaker is relaxed in front of the room and keeps distracting movements and gestures to a minimum. Generally faces audience and makes eye contact. | Speaker’s body language is superb and fully engages the room. Strong, consistent eye contact to the entire audience. Uses confident gestures to underscore key verbal points. |  |
| Trait 4: | Use of Slides to Enhance Communications | Misspelled, too busy, too much text, too many slides for allotted time, and/or poor use of graphics like charts. | Slides are readable, containing a reasonable amount of material per slide. Good use of graphics or illustrations. | Slides are well written/designed, engaging to the audience, and used as support to verbal content presentation. |  |
| Trait 5: | Transitions  Time Management Q&A | Transitions are awkward or non-existent. Speakers go over time limits. Answers are disorganized or non-responsive. | Transitions are smooth. Speakers generally stay within time limits. Speakers respond to questions well and provide sufficient response. | Transitions are professional and very smooth. Speakers respond convincingly and address all aspects of question. |  |
| **Criterion: Does not meet expectations: 0 – 19;Meets: 20-35 ; Exceeds: 36-50** | | | | | |

# 4. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

*Objective 1*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Where & when measured?** | **How measured?** | **Criterion** |
| Course-embedded detailed case-report and presentation in course *FIN 629A Fixed Income Analysis.*  Assessed in the Spring semester each year. | Description: in-class presentations are graded by course owners and aggregated to obtain a total score.  Sampling: 100% of the students in the MFIN program are assessed. | % of students get a grade of GOOD or better as measured by the rubric for this learning goal |

*Objective 2*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Where & when measured?** | **How measured?** | **Criterion** |
| Course-embedded detailed case-report and presentation in course *FIN 629A Fixed Income Analysis.*  Assessed in the Spring semester each year. | Description: in-class presentations are graded by course owners and aggregated to obtain a total score.  Sampling: 100% of the students in the MFIN program are assessed. | % of students get a grade of GOOD or better as measured by the rubric for this learning goal |

# 5. RESULTS OF LEARNING GOAL ASSESSMENT – INTRO

No learning goal assessment has been carried out to date according to the following structure.

**Explanation**

Each learning goal has a number of learning objectives and performance on each objective is measured using a rubric that in turn contains a number of desired “traits”. Students are scored individually on each trait.

The grading sheets for each student are used to develop a Summary Results Sheet for each learning goal objective. A selection of these Summaries is included below.

The first table in the Summary Results Sheet for a learning objective and trait gives the counts of students falling in each of the three categories:

- Does not meet expectations  
- Meets expectations  
- Exceeds expectations

The right-hand column in the table is used to record the average score of the students on each trait. This table provides an indication of the relative performance of students on each trait.

The second table on each sheet provides the counts of students who fall in each of the above three categories for the overall learning objective.

The person doing the assessment provides explanatory comments and recommendations on the bottom of the Results Summary Sheet. The recommendations improve content or pedagogy changes for the next time the course is given.

# 6. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT – SPRING 2022

**LEARNING GOAL #1:***Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:***Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***May 2022*

**ASSESSOR:***Pelphrey, Minsloff*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***44 students – FIN 629*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **0** | **23** | **21** | **7.6** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **0** | **25** | **19** | **7.4** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **0** | **25** | **19** | **7.6** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **0** | **25** | **19** | **7.5** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **7.5** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **23** | **21** |

**COMMENTS:**

*All students in this program who participated in the writing assessment in Spring 2022 met or exceeded expectations. This is on par with how these students scored in previous assessments. Scores were generally consistent across the four Learning Goals, but there were slight increases in Goals 1 and 4, which rate the writer’s overall ability to convey their ideas in an orderly, logical way. Goals 2 and 3, which assess more word- and sentence-level writing issues, was slightly weaker, and is likely attributable to this being a very international cohort.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Writers are strongly encouraged to seek assistance from the Writing & Communication Center on campus to refine and improve their proofreading abilities. Recognizing common errors is the first (and most crucial) step to addressing them. Faculty are encouraged to allow students extra class time to submit their documents for peer review. Wherever possible, instructors should give out samples of documents (both academic and professional) to model professional-level writing for all students.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2:***Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:**

*May 2022*

**ASSESSOR:**

*Balog*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***34 Students – FIN 629*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | **0** | **0** | **34** | **9.8** |
| 2: Voice Quality | **0** | **4** | **30** | **8.1** |
| 3: Physical Presence | **1** | **17** | **16** | **6.6** |
| 4: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | **0** | **15** | **19** | **7.2** |
| 5: Transitions, Time Mgt, Q&A | **0** | **0** | **34** | **9.9** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **8.3** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **2** | **32** |

**COMMENTS:**

*Students in this program easily met or exceeded expectations in the ability deliver effective presentations. Organization and logic were generally strong, and information was delivered in a way that was both clear and impactful. The use of smooth transitions and time management were also strong. Overall, areas relating to the speaker’s physical presence and voice quality were the weakest, but still effective. This is an element that can be taught, but is really only internalized by repeated exposure to public speaking. Slide creation was generally strong, but many presentations still suffered from cramped data and small text, which made it a bit hard on the audience.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Faculty should give the students more opportunity to speak in front of the class, in order to gain experience and confidence. Faculty should also consider giving out style templates with minimum text size, recommended fonts, and examples of clear, uncluttered layouts. Students tend to copy what they see in class, so faculty should take more care in creating their own PowerPoint decks and be sure they are modeling best practices. Students can also be encouraged to visit the Writing & Communication Center for extra help developing slides and practicing their oral delivery.*

# 7. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: FALL 2022

**LEARNING GOAL #1:***Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:***Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***Dec 2022*

**ASSESSOR:***Pelphrey, Minsloff*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***8 Students – BIA 650, MGT 609, MGT 635, FA 582, FE 620*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **0** | **7** | **1** | **6.8** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **0** | **6** | **2** | **6.6** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **0** | **6** | **2** | **6.6** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **0** | **7** | **1** | **6.4** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **6.6** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **6** | **2** |

**COMMENTS:**

*An overwhelming majority of students in the graduate program met or exceeded expectations in their written communication. Overall scores were slightly better than in previous semesters. Organization of ideas and supporting arguments continue to be strong. Sentence-level mechanics varied widely across some classes, which more likely than not was a function of the complexity level of the prompt. But overall, grammar and word choice to help convey complex ideas was strong and slightly improved over the prior year.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*We are entering a new era of online tools and resources to help students with their writing. ChatGPT can be accessed to help correct grammar and demonstrate proper syntax and style. Instructors should be careful to assign prompts that require some personal or experiential component from the students to help limit the ways that AI can be utilized for written assignments. As always, we encourage all students to visit the Writing & Communications Center for personal feedback and assistance with outlining, writing and proofreading.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2:***Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***Dec 2022*

**ASSESSOR:***Minsloff, Middleton, Balog, Stein*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***11 Students – BIA 650, MGT 609, FA 582, FE 620, EMT 696*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | **1** | **0** | **10** | **7.5** |
| 2: Voice Quality | **1** | **10** | **0** | **6.0** |
| 3: Physical Presence | **1** | **10** | **0** | **5.7** |
| 4: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | **5** | **5** | **1** | **4.7** |
| 5: Transitions, Time Mgt, Q&A | **0** | **3** | **5** | **7.4** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **6.3** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **9** | **2** |

**COMMENTS:**

*Students in this program continue to do well with the structural and organizational aspects of presenting. Delivery quality varied much more widely from student to student, which reflects different levels of experience as well as language challenges. Quality of slides also varied widely from class to class and from student to student. Instructors should do more to encourage students to break from the mold and not simply try to recreate the classroom examples. This often leads to slides with too much data in fonts that are too small to easily read.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Public speaking should be encouraged at all stages of the academic journey. Online learning represents a particular challenge, and instructors should get the students speaking whenever possible. Presentations delivered online are useful (and represent the general direction of the business world) but students have to learn to speak to an audience in front of them and all of the (potential) anxiety and body-language challenges that go along with that. Faculty should continue to model good presentation practices and encourage students to present multiple times in class, not just as a final project. The Writing & Communications Center is also available to help students with developing and rehearsing their presentations.*

# 8. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: SPRING 2023

**LEARNING GOAL #1:***Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:***Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***May 2023*

**ASSESSOR:***Pelphrey, Minsloff*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***23 Students – FIN 629A, EMT 625A*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **0** | **9** | **14** | **7.8** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **0** | **13** | **10** | **7.3** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **0** | **13** | **10** | **7.5** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **0** | **10** | **13** | **7.6** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **7.6** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **11** | **12** |

**COMMENTS:**

*An majority of students in the graduate program met or exceeded expectations in their written communication. Organization of ideas and supporting arguments continue to be strong. Sentence-level mechanics varied, which more likely than not was a function of the complexity level of the prompt. Overall, grammar and word choice to help convey complex ideas was strong and slightly improved over the prior year.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*ChatGPT can be a powerful tool to help correct grammar and demonstrate proper syntax and style. However, instructors should be careful to assign prompts that require some personal or experiential component from the students to help limit the ways that AI can be utilized for written assignments. As always, we encourage all students to visit the Writing & Communications Center for personal feedback and assistance with outlining, writing and proofreading.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #2:***Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***May 2023*

**ASSESSOR:***Minsloff, Balog*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***32 Students – FIN 629A, EMT 625A*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | **0** | **8** | **24** | **8.8** |
| 2: Voice Quality | **0** | **5** | **27** | **8.4** |
| 3: Physical Presence | **0** | **19** | **13** | **7.3** |
| 4: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | **0** | **20** | **12** | **7.2** |
| 5: Transitions, Time Mgt, Q&A | **0** | **3** | **29** | **9.3** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **8.2** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **4** | **28** |

**COMMENTS:**

*Students in this program continue to do well with the structural and organizational aspects of presenting. Delivery quality was of a very high quality. Quality of slides also varied from student to student, but was of a generally high quality and stronger than prior semesters.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*Public speaking should be encouraged at all stages of the academic journey. Online learning represents a particular challenge, and instructors should get the students speaking whenever possible. Presentations delivered online are useful (and represent the general direction of the business world) but students have to learn to speak to an audience in front of them and all of the (potential) anxiety and body-language challenges that go along with that. Faculty should continue to model good presentation practices and encourage students to present multiple times in class, not just as a final project. The Writing & Communications Center is also available to help students with developing and rehearsing their presentations.*

# 9. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: SPRING 2024

**LEARNING GOAL #1:***Our students will communicate effectively in written and oral communications.*

**LEARNING OBJECTIVE #1:***Students will be able to write effectively.*

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***May 2024*

**ASSESSOR:***Minsloff*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***11 Students – FIN 629-WS*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Learning Goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **1** | **4** | **6** | **7.5** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **1** | **4** | **6** | **7.5** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **1** | **3** | **7** | **7.7** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **1** | **2** | **8** | **7.9** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **7.7** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **1** | **2** | **8** |

**COMMENTS:**

*Many students in the graduate program met expectations in their written communication. The students’ written work was well thought out in terms of organization of ideas and supporting arguments. Sentence-level mechanics varied, which more likely than not was a function of the complexity level of the prompt. Overall, grammar and word choice to help convey complex ideas was strong and continues to improve.*

**REMEDIAL ACTIONS:**

*There are many resources available to assist students with grammatical errors, such as ChatGPT, instructors should stress the importance of keeping the assignments unique and personal, however it is vital to also ensure that all resources are reviewed. Ensuring that the assigned prompts require some personal or experiential components is always critical to help limit the ways that AI can be utilized for written assignments. As always, we encourage all students to visit the Writing & Communications Center for personal feedback and assistance with outlining, writing, and proofreading.*

# 10. Outcomes from Previous Assessments:

The following table shows the average scores on each goal objective.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Objective 1  Written Communication | Objective 2  Oral Communication |
| Spring 2022 | 7.5 | 8.3 |
| Fall 2022 | 6.6 | 6.3 |
| Spring 2023 | 7.6 | 8.2 |
| Spring 2024 | 7.7 | Not assessed |

# 11. Close Loop Process – Continuous Improvement Record:

**Assurance of Learning**

**Assessment/Outcome Analysis**

**Close Loop Process - Continuous Improvement Record**

**Program:** Master of Science in Finance

**Goal 3:** Students will be able to formulate and articulate plans to align business and IT

**Goal Owner:** Suman Banerjee

**Where Measured:** Course-embedded analysis assignment in required course *FIN 629-A Fixed Income Analysis.* Assessed in spring semester each year.

**How Measured:** Sampling: Sample of FIN 629-A students from one section of course taught in Spring 2022: Individual written project also presented individually in class.

**Closing the Loop: Actions taken on specific objectives**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **When Assessed** | *Spring 2022* |
| **Remedial Action** |  |
| **Outcome from previous assessment** | NA |

# APPENDIX A: ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

The main evaluation of this goal is based on the individual contribution to a group project. The project will focus on the analysis of a business case requiring participants to run financial analyses, simulation and prepare a final recommendation to a relevant stakeholder. Students are expected to use methodologies reviewed in class, prepare a written 2,3 pages report (professionally formatted) with the outline of the problem the drivers and the proposed solution. Additionally groups will support the in-class presentation with slides and spreadsheets..

The final report must include at least the following sections:

* Problem
* Analysis
* Recommendation