Stevens Institute of Technology

School of Business

**AACSB  
ASSURANCE OF LEARNING**

**Master of Science in Technology Management (MSTM)**

**Executive Master of Business Administration (EMBA)**

**COMPETENCY GOAL # 1**

**Students can communicate effectively in written and oral communications**

**Responsibility: Pete Dominick / Andrew Stein**

December 2022

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# 1. INTRODUCTION: COMMUNICATIONS COMPETENCY GOAL #1

**Goal: Students can communicate effectively in writing and oral presentations**

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

*Objective 2: Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively.*

A major educational objective of the Stevens School of Business education 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.

The communications competency goal as described in this report is the same for all undergraduate and graduate programs in the School of Business and is assessed using the same learning objectives, traits and rubrics as described in Sections 2 and 3 of this report.

The specific communication **competencies** that are related to this competency goal fall into two broad categories – those that apply to written communication and those that apply to oral communication.

Written communication competencies include: logic flow and organization, grammar & sentence structure, syntax, idea development

Verbal communication competencies include: clear articulation of ideas, presentation capability and confidence, appropriate use of visual aides, transitions, time management, and ability to engage the audience

# 2. LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND TRAITS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Competency goal:** |  |
| **Competency goal: MSTM/EMBA -1** | **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: | Development of ideas |
| Trait 5: |  |
| **Objective 2:** | *Students will be able to deliver presentations effectively* |
| **Traits** |  |
| Trait 1: | Organization and logic |
| Trait 2: | Voice Quality |
| Trait 3: | Physical Presence |
| Trait 4: | Use of slides to enhance communications |
| Trait 5: | Transitions/Time Management/Q&A |

# 3. RUBRICS

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Trait** | **Poor** | **Good** | **Excellent** |
|  | **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 and 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. |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Trait** | **Poor (0)** | **Good (5)** | **Excellent (10)** |
| **Trait 1:  Organization & 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. |

# 4. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Where & When Measured?** | **How Measured?** |
| Embedded in design assignment in all required courses. ***EMT 635:***  ***Managerial Judgment & Decision Making*** is the course of assessment for written communication and ***EMT 696: Human-Centered Design Thinking*** is the course of assessment for the oral presentation.  **Indirect Measure**  A Student Feedback Exit Survey will be administered and imported into excel  Indirect measurements will be taken periodically. | Sampling: All MSTM/EMBA Students Description: Instructor's grade of individual performance is monitored at various stages in the program.  The indirect measure will include student feedback responses from recent or soon-to-be program graduates about skill development |

**Current Process**

The MSTM/EMBA program assesses the communication learning skills of all students through *EMT 635: Managerial Judgment & Decision Making*, and *EMT 696: Human-Centered Design Thinking*. The instructor in the selected class collects written essays/case studies from students as part of the normal course work. These writing samples are holistically graded by staff in the College of Arts & Letters (CAL). Feedback to students consists of a score (out of a possible 40 points). Those above 30 were rated as exceeding, 20-30 as meeting and <20 as not meeting expectations. The instructor managing the competency goal gets a list of the students and their scores – which is used for AACSB reporting purposes. An exit survey will also be administered to collect student feedback on new skill development.

# 5. RESULTS OF COMPETENCY GOAL ASSESSMENT - INTRODUCTION

The results of the competency goal assessments when carried out will be included below.

**Explanation**

Each competency 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 competency 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.

**Explanation - Indirect Measure**

We will conduct a survey of recent graduates to obtain their perspective on the extent to which their studies helped them develop in relation to this Communication Competency goal. The survey questions will focus on their communication efficacy/confidence and their perceptions on the professional relevance and application of the communication skills they learned in their graduate studies.

# 6. RESULTS OF ASSESSMENT: SUMMER 2022

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

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

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***August 2022*

**ASSESSOR:***Minsloff*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***5 Students –EMT 635*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Competency goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Logical flow | **0** | **5** | **0** | **6.0** |
| 2: Grammar & Sentence Structure | **0** | **5** | **0** | **5.8** |
| 3: Spelling & word choice | **0** | **4** | **1** | **6.0** |
| 4: Development of ideas | **0** | **5** | **0** | **6.0** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **6.0** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **1** | **4** | **0** |

**COMMENTS:**

*The majority of students in this program who participated in the writing assessment in Summer 2022 met or exceeded expectations. This is on par with how these students scored in previous assessments. Scores were generally consistent across the four Competency 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:***August 2022*

**ASSESSOR:***Balog*

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***5 Students – EMT 635*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Competency goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | **0** | **0** | **5** | **10.0** |
| 2: Voice Quality | **0** | **0** | **5** | **9.8** |
| 3: Physical Presence | **0** | **0** | **5** | **9.7** |
| 4: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | **0** | **0** | **5** | **8.8** |
| 5: Transitions, Time Mgt, Q&A | **0** | **0** | **5** | **9.7** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **9.6** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** |
| **Total Students by Category**  *(Based on average score across all traits)* | **0** | **0** | **5** |

**COMMENTS:**

*Students in this program easily 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

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

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

***Writing was not assessed for this cohort in Fall 2022.***

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

**ASSESSMENT DATE:***Dec 2022*

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

**NUMBER OF STUDENTS & COURSE:***9 Students – BIA 650, MGT 609, FA 582, FE 620, EMT 696*

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Number of Students** | | |  |
| **Competency goal Traits** | **Not Meet Expectations** | **Meets Expectations** | **Exceeds Expectations** | **Average Grade** |
| 1: Organization & Logic | **0** | **0** | **9** | **10.0** |
| 2: Voice Quality | **0** | **0** | **9** | **10.0** |
| 3: Physical Presence | **0** | **0** | **9** | **10.0** |
| 4: Use of Slides to Enhance Comm | **0** | **0** | **9** | **9.8** |
| 5: Transitions, Time Mgt, Q&A | **0** | **0** | **9** | **10.0** |
| **Average Grade (Out of 10) =** | | | | **10.0** |

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

**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. OUTCOMES: MSTM/EMBA COMPETENCY GOAL # 1 AFTER ROUNDS OF ASSESSMENT

**After First Round Review – Summer 2022**

**Written Communications Skills**

**Oral Communications Skills**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Objective 1  Written Communication | Objective 1  Oral Communication |
| Summer 2022 | 6.0 | 9.6 |
| Fall 2022 | n/a | 10.0 |

# 9. CLOSE LOOP PROCESS – CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT RECORD

**Assurance of Learning**

**Assessment/Outcome Analysis**

**Close Loop Process - Continuous Improvement Record**

Program: Executive Master of Business Administration/Master of Technology Management

Goal 1: Students can communicate effectively in written and oral communications

Goal Owner: Peter Dominick / Andrew Stein

Where Measured: Embedded in design assignment in all required courses. **EMT 635: Managerial Judgment & Decision** Making is specifically structured to evaluate this competency

How Measured: Sampling: All MSTM/EMBA Students

Description: Instructor's grade of individual performance is monitored at various stages in the program.

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objective 1** | *Students will be able to write effectively* |
| **When Assessed:** | *Summer 2022* |
| **Remedial**  **Action** |  |
| **Outcome from previous assessment:** |  |
| **When Assessed:** |  |
| **Remedial**  **Action** |  |
| **Outcome from previous assessment:** |  |

# APPENDIX A

**ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Essays/case studies submitted in the EMT 758 class.

# APPENDIX B

**HOLISTIC WRITING ASSESSMENT**

Holistic Grading

A holistic reading allows the instructor to view the student's work as a whole and to judge whether the work is generally effective in communicating a complete idea. Holistic evaluation is based on the assumption that the effective communication of an idea to a particular audience is the essential element of written discourse and that the parts of a composition are interdependent. Thus, in this phase of the evaluation process, the emphasis is on the whole work, rather than on its individual parts.

Whereas a [rubric reading](https://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/135/rubric.html) is far more specific regarding strong and weak [Rubric](https://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/pdf/Rubric.pdf) areas, a holistic reading is nearly instantaneous. Nevertheless, evaluations would be just the same.

**Stevens Institute of Technology English Competence Exam**

**S.E.C.E.**

**Holistic Grading Scale**

            The S.E.C.E. will be graded holistically on a scale from one to four by each reader.  There will be four possible grades:  low fail, high fail, pass, high pass.  All S.E.C.E. essays will be read by two readers and the resulting scores added.  In the case of a split between low fail and high fail, or any passing and any failing grade, the Director of Writing Programs will be the third reader and decide the split.  A low fail will be the result of a grade of 2.  A high fail will be the result of a grade of 4.  (A grade of 3 will not be possible.)  A grade of 6 or 7 will result in a pass.  A grade of 8 will result in a high pass.  (There will be no possible grade of 5.)

            The following scale will be used by the graders.

**4**  The essay provides a well-organized response to the topic and maintains a central focus.  The ideas are expressed in appropriate language.  A sense of pattern of development is present from beginning to end.  The writer supports assertions with explanations or illustrations, and the syntax is within the ordinary range of standard written English.  Grammar, punctuation and spelling are almost always correct.

**3**  The essay shows a basic understanding of the demands of essay organization although there might be occasional digressions.  The development of ideas is sometimes incomplete or rudimentary, but a basic logical structure can be discerned.  Vocabulary generally is appropriate for the essay topic but at times is oversimplified.  Sentences reflect a sufficient command of standard written English to ensure reasonable clarity of expression.  Common forms of agreement and grammatical inflection are usually, although not always, correct.  The writer generally demonstrates through punctuation an understanding of the boundaries of the sentence.  The writer spells common words, with the possible exception of so-called "spelling demons," with a reasonable degree of accuracy.

**2**  The essay begins with a response to the topic but does not develop that response.  Ideas are repeated frequently or presented randomly.  Diction often too informal or limited for the demands of written English. Syntax is tangled and unstable to the point of impeding clarity of expression.  There are many errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**1**  The essay provides a response to the topic, but it either incompletely or insufficiently develops that response.  Ideas are repeated frequently, presented randomly, or not organized at all.  The writer either merely records conversational speech (instead of the more formal diction required of written English) or displays a high frequency of error in the regular features of standard written English.  Words are often misused and vocabulary is limited.  Syntax is tangled enough to present serious difficulties of comprehension which frustrate the reader.  There are numerous errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling to the point where meaning is obscured.  --OR-- The essay is so brief that any reasonably accurate judgment of the writer's competence is impossible.