College of Business
Assessment Plan for Business Administration (BUA)

Mission and Goals of the BUA Program

The baccalaureate program in Business Administration is an interdisciplinary major that provides a background in a wide range of areas such as accounting, finance, information systems, management, marketing, and international business. The program is a general business program that provides students with sufficient depth and breadth in the development of analytical and behavioral skills so that they may be able to seek employment in various areas of business and not-for-profit organizations in this globally competitive environment. The program was revised in the 2005-06 academic year into a highly structured sequence of courses that will provide a designated skill base for employers as well as for program assessment.

The mission and goals of the Program are consistent with, and central to creating the most supportive and productive community possible to serve the citizens of Illinois and beyond, which is an important aspect of the University's Educating Illinois mission. The program also helps achieve the mission of the University and the College by preparing students to be skilled and ethical business professionals who will make significant contributions to organizations, communities, and our larger society.

BUA Learning Objectives

As a "skills-focused" program that highlights both behavioral and quantitative skills, the Business Administration major at Illinois State University pursues the following five learning goals.

Goal 1: Excellent preparation in the content knowledge in a range of functional areas as well as contemporary business in general

Goal 2: Effective written communication skills.

Goal 3: Effective oral communication skills

Goal 4: Able to work effectively in teams.

Goal 5: Possession of critical thinking skills.

Goal 6: Able to be ethical decision makers.

Note: Additional learning goals may be developed as the assessment plan is continuously implemented, reviewed, and revised based on the actual data collection and subsequent changes and improvements in the program delivery.

The specific learning objectives under each of the five goals are detailed below.

Goal 1: We want students in the BUA major to be adequately prepared to function as effective professionals in a range of business functional areas with sufficient knowledge and understanding of contemporary business in general

    Objective 1a: Students in the major will understand and apply content knowledge from major courses in relevant functional areas and business in general.

Goal 2: We want students in the BUA major to be effective written communicators

    Objective 2a: Students in the major will communicate clearly both verbally and in writing.

Goal 3: We want students in the BUA major to be credible and persuasive speakers.

    Objective 3a: Students in the major will be effective persuasive speakers.

Goal 4: We want students in the BUA major to possess the ability to work in teams.

    Objective 4a: Students in the major will work effectively and professionally in teams.

Goal 5: We want students in the BUA major to be critical thinkers that can effectively solve problems with necessary analytical skills.

    Objective 5a: Students in the major will think critically and solve problems using appropriate reasoning and analytical skills.

    Objective 5b: Students in the major will be able to draw logical conclusions and make appropriate recommendations based on appropriate data.

Goal 6: We want students in the BUA major to be ethical decision makers.

    Objective 6a: Students will understand ethical and legal issues in business decision making.

Measurement via Content Tests and Rubrics

Assessment of Content Knowledge

The content knowledge specific for the BUA majors, as well as the general business knowledge, is assessed through the College-adopted MFT (Major Field Test) provided by the ETS. The test is administered in MQM 385, the required capstone course for all College of Business majors including BUA.

Assessment of Skills using the College rubrics

BUA applies the appropriate rubrics (attached) for assessing relevant skills utilizing the following courses as data collection points. Various assessment indicators are employed such as term papers, presentations, case studies, homework reports, and tests.

- Written Communication Skills (Goal 2)   MQM 221, ACC 255

- Oral Communication Skills (Goal 3)   MKT 232, ACC 255

- Team Skills (Goal 4)   MKT 232, MQM 335

- Critical Thinking and Analytical Skills (Goal 5) MQM 221, FIL 242, ACC 230

- Ethics Reasoning Skills (Goal 6)   ACC 230, MQM 221

Use of Data in Decision Making

In the fall semester of each year the BUA faculty (those who taught BUA required courses in the previous academic year and those who teach the same courses in the current academic year) meet to review the assessment data collected during the prior academic year. Decisions regarding remedial changes and improvements to the program delivery are also made at this time.

The process of the implementation, review, and revision of the BUA assessment follows the following timeline and cycle.

Every Semester   Content Knowledge (Goal 1) through ETS Test

Year	Learning Goals
2008-09	Team Skills
2009-10	Ethics
2010-11	Oral Communication
2011-12	Written Communication
	Critical Thinking
2012-13	Team skills
2013-14	Ethics
2014-15	Oral Communication
2015-16	Written Communication
	Critical Thinking
2017 and beyond	Cycle repeats

Note: By the end of the Fall 2009 Semester the whole assessment sequence has been completed at least once for all 6 learning goal categories.

BUA Program Assessment Rubrics

BUA Goals # 2 & 5   **Written Communication & Critical Thinking Rubric**

At least 75 percent of the students will be evaluated as Acceptable or Exemplary on the following criteria.

Criteria	Levels		
	Unacceptable	**Acceptable**	**Exemplary**
Professional Appearance and Document Format (e.g. Appropriate binding, Headers/subheadings, margins, table of contents, etc.)	Not formatted to specifications Lacking professional appearance.	Formatting is generally correct, acceptable professional appearance.	Assigned format followed explicitly: Exceptional professional appearance
Visual Presentation Elements (e.g. Charts, graph, exhibits, figures, etc.)	Very few or none: Not well connected or integrated to support the document	Some used in a generally effective manner to support the document	Appropriately used to effectively illustrate and support the document
Grammar and Readability (e.g. writing mechanics/conventions)	Frequent grammatical errors and misspellings inhibit readability Informal language, abbreviations and slang are used	Few grammatical errors and misspellings (e.g. three or fewer per page) Correct verb tense used Paragraphs flow from one to another Active voice pervasive	Free of grammatical errors and misspellings Effective verb tense used Uses phrases and construction that delight as well as inform the reader Primarily active voice
Breadth of Discussion **(critical thinking)**	Omits arguments or perspectives Misses major content areas/concepts Presents few options	Covers the breadth of the topic without being superfluous	Considers multiple perspectives Thoroughly delves into the issues/questions Thoroughly discusses facts relevant to the issues
Depth of Discussion **(critical thinking)**	Ignores bias Omits arguments Misrepresents issues Excludes data Includes but does not detect inconsistencies of information Ideas contain unnecessary gaps, repetition or extraneous details Sees no arguments and overlooks differences	Detects bias Recognizes arguments Categorizes content Paraphrase data Sufficient detail to support conclusions and/or recommendations	Analysis includes insightful questions Refutes bias Discusses issues thoroughly Critiques content Values information Examines inconsistencies Offers extensive detail to support conclusions and recommendations Suggests solutions or implementation

Criteria		Levels		
		Unacceptable	**Acceptable**	**Exemplary**
Clarity		Writing is not clear. It is difficult to understand points being made. The writing lacks transitions, and few examples and/or illustrations are provided to support explanation or recommendations.	Writing is generally well organized and understood. Transitions are used to facilitate clarity. Some examples and/illustrations are used to support explanation or recommendations.	Writing is succinct, precise, effectively organized and without ambiguity. Transitions, explanation and elaboration are extensive to elucidate points. Detailed illustrations and/or examples are used to support explanation or recommendations.
Relevance **(critical thinking)**		Critical issues/questions are omitted or ignored in the writing.	Most of the critical issues/questions are addressed in the writing.	All critical issues/questions are addressed completely in the writing.
Internal Consistency **(critical thinking)**		There is little integration across the sections of the paper. Several inconsistencies or contradictions exist. Few of the issues, recommendations and explanations make sense and are well integrated.	Sections of the paper are generally well linked/connected. Only minor contradictions exist. Most of the issues, recommendations and explanations make sense and are well integrated.	All sections of the paper are linked. There are no contradictions in the writing. All issues, recommendations and explanations make sense and are well integrated.
Conclusion **(critical thinking)**		Fail to draw conclusions or conclusions rely on author's authority rather than strength of presentation Draws faulty conclusions Shows intellectual dishonesty	Formulates clear conclusions with adequate support	Assimilates and critically reviews information, uses reasonable judgment, and provides balanced, well justified conclusions
References and Support of Discussion		Omits research Reliance on direct quotes rather than integrating concepts into body of text Include biased sources Incomplete or missing bibliography	Adequate number of current sources References generally cited correctly	Shows intellectual honesty Attributes sources completely and properly Wide range of current and relevant sources used

BUA Goal # 3 **Oral Communication Rubric**

At least 75 percent of the students will be evaluated as Acceptable or Exemplary on the following criteria.

Criteria		Levels		
		Unacceptable	**Acceptable**	**Exemplary**
Organization		Audience cannot understand or has trouble following presentation because student jumps around and/or there is no sequence of information.	Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow. There is a definite "flow" of the presentation from one topic to the next.
Subject Knowledge		Student does not have grasp of information or is uncomfortable with information. Student can only answer rudimentary questions about the subject.	Student is at ease with the information and can answer expected questions but does not elaborate or go beyond a surface-level of knowledge.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) by answering all class questions with explanations and elaboration.
Graphics		Student uses superfluous graphics, no graphics, or graphics/visual aids that rarely support text and presentation. The graphics or visual aids are not clear or easily interpretable.	Student's graphics or visual aids relate to the text and presentation.	Student's graphics/visual aids explain and reinforce screen text and presentation, are creative, and help to distinguish the student's presentation from other presentations.
Mechanics		Student's presentation has two or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than one misspelling and/or grammatical error.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors. Sentences or phrases are clear and concise.
Eye Contact		Student reads all or majority of report; presentation is highly "canned' and rigid; minimal or no eye contact throughout presentation	Student speaks and presents without reading, although may refer to notes or presentation materials occasionally; delivery exhibits some extemporaneous characteristics; eye contact is maintained and managed with total audience the majority of the presentation time.	Student speaks with little or no reference to notes or presentation materials; presentation appears very relaxed and non-scripted; eye contact is maintained and managed with total audience throughout the presentation.
Elocution		The student's voice lacks inflection and does not project well; student often mumbles or stumbles over words; there is frequent interjection of "crutch" words or sounds such as "ums," "uhs," "like," "you know," stuff," etc.; words are mispronounced or word choice is often poor or incorrect.	The student's voice is clear and audible to all audience members and exhibits at least moderate inflection; there is minimal but some use of "crutch" words or sounds such as "ums," "uhs," "like," "you know," stuff," etc.; words are pronounced accurately and word choice is acceptable.	The student's voice is clear and audible to all audience members and exhibits a high degree of inflection and precision; word choice is appropriate for the audience, well-selected and interesting; words are pronounced correctly; use of "crutch" words or sounds such as "ums," "uhs," "like," "you know," stuff," etc. is seldom or non-existent.

BUA Goal # 4 **Team Skills Rubric**

At least 75 percent of the students will be evaluated as Acceptable or Exemplary on the following criteria.

Criteria		Unacceptable	Acceptable	Exemplary
			Levels	
Criteria		**Unacceptable**	**Acceptable**	**Exemplary**
Attendance		Missed more than 20% of the team meetings and/or was often late to meetings.	Attended at least 80% of the team meetings and was rarely, if ever, late.	Attended at least 90% of the team meetings and was on-time.
Participation		Was mostly quiet in group meetings, or participated in an ill-informed or otherwise non constructive manner.	Came to meetings prepared and participated constructively in group discussions.	Took a leadership role, came to meetings prepared and participated actively and constructively in group discussions.
Effort		Ended up doing significantly less than his/her fair share of the work.	Showed willingness and necessary effort to do his/her fair share of the work.	Willingly accepted his/her fair share of the team's work and was appropriately proactive in taking on additional duties as needed.
Work Quality		Completed assigned tasks either so late and/or so lacking in quality that other group members had to do significant additional work.	Completed assigned tasks in a reasonably timely fashion and produced quality results that made meaningful contributions to the group's work.	Completed tasks on-time and produced exceptional quality results that made outstanding contributions to the group's work.
Interpersonal Behaviors		Exhibited a demeanor and interpersonal style that was intimidating, domineering, and/or non-supportive and, thus, detracted from the team's ability to work collaboratively.	Exhibited behaviors consistent with a collaborative group climate that fostered productive group outcomes including effective decision making and constructive disagreement.	Played a key role in creating a collaborative climate that fostered productive group outcomes including effective decision making and constructive disagreement.

BUA Goal # 6   **Ethics Rubric**

At least 75 percent of the students will be evaluated as Acceptable or Exemplary on the following criteria.

Criteria		Levels		
		Unacceptable	**Acceptable**	**Exemplary**
Students demonstrate an understanding of the responsibility of business in society.		Students unable to explain the role of business in society. Students do not understand monetary role (profit maximization) of business in society.	Students identify and understand : direct stakeholders when explaining the role of business (treatment of employees, optimal firm value) in society. and indirect stakeholders when explaining the role of business (corporate citizenship, Stakeholders' view) in society.	Students apply an understanding of direct and indirect stakeholders when examining the role and responsibility of business in society.
Students demonstrate an understanding of ethical decision making.		Students do not recognize an ethical situation exists. Students use at most a single framework for assessing and evaluating an ethical situation.	Students explore only two frameworks for assessing and evaluating an ethical situation.	Students explore more than two frameworks for assessing and evaluating an ethical situation.
Students demonstrate moral development in ethical decision making.		Students show pre-conventional level of moral development (deferring to authority and satisfying their own needs).	Students show conventional level of moral development (stereotypical roles of people in society and how individual fits into social order).	Students show post-conventional level of moral development (morality based on "society as a whole" or "universal principles").
Students demonstrate an understanding of the responsibilities of a leader's role as it relates to ethics.		Students unable to explain the role leaders in organization's ethical conduct.	Students recognize leaders play some role in the organization's ethical conduct.	Students recognize organization leaders' actions and polices determine the ethical tone of the organization.
Students demonstrate an understanding of the roles of various corporate governance entities and policies as they relate to ethics.		Students unable to identify components of effective corporate governance.	Students recognize the organization's (code of conduct and ethical culture) and external entities (government and professional organizations via laws and professional codes of conduct) role in creating effective corporate governance.	Students apply appropriate organization and external entity roles (code of conduct, professional codes of conduct, laws and professional codes of conduct) when evaluating corporate governance.

Utilization of BUA Assessment Results - "Closing the Loop"

Measures Taken to Enhance Instructional Efficiency and Student Learning Outcome for
Business Administration (BUA) Program

Goal 6 – Ethics Reasoning Skills

October, 2008: Following the discussion on ethics coverage at the 2008 annual BUA
assessment meeting, a devoted intranet resource drive (U-Drive) was created to collect
and share ethics-related instructional materials including AACSB ethics topics summary,
major ethics theories, the King Report and the Cadbury Report on Ethics, and the
Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) materials.

Goal s 3, 5, and 6 – Communication, Critical Thinking, and Ethics Reasoning Skills

Since Fall 2008: At the fall 2008 annual assessment meeting the BUA faculty decided to
"forcefully" urge BUA students to participate in various college- and university-
sponsored events and activities that are relevant to BUA majors' learning experience in
these goals. Noting the broad and comprehensive nature of the program, the faculty felt
that many of those campus events were more relevant to BUA students than to other
specific functional majors.

- Annual Business Week program offered in every spring by College of Business
- Annual presentations by winners of Early Career Achievement Award in fall
     The keynote speeches and alumni panel presentations at these events typically
     address leadership (communication, critical thinking) and business ethics.
- Guest speaker sessions, resume writing workshops, mock interviews, and various student
  organization activities commonly address the issues related to communication skills, critical
  thinking ability, business ethics, corporate social responsibility, and sustainability.

Examples: BUA students were encouraged to attend the following events.

- April 2, 2009   Removing Doubt in an Interview: A Better Way to get the Job you want (by Eric Hoss)
- October 23, 2009   Business Ethics: A Critical Investment in Today's Economy (by Linda and OC Ferrell)
- March 30, 2010   Build-A-Blanket: Corporate Social Responsibility Day
- Sept. 28, 2010   Nothing Can Stop You But You: Be the best by being your best (by Walter Bond)
- October 12, 2010   Roadtrip Nation Campus Tours
- October 15, 2010   Panel Presentation by Early Career Achievement Award Winners
- February 28, 2011   Corporate Environmental Responsibility Symposium
- March 30, 2011   Business Week Keynote Speech (by David Magers)
- April 15, 2011   Undergraduate Research Symposium Oral Presentations
- October 14, 2011   Panel Presentation by Early Career Achievement Award Winners
- March 28, 2012   Business Week Keynote Speech (by Diane Irvine)
- April 20, 2012   Undergraduate Research Symposium Oral Presentations

Goal 2 – Communication Skills

Fall, 2010: To address the poor writing ability it was recommended that some kind of writing standards and guidelines be developed. Following the example of the Marketing Department, BUA writing standards and guidelines were created as attached. It was also recommended that other campus resources, such as the writing workshops offered by the Visor Learning Center, be utilized for improvement of BUA students' writing skills.

Goal 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – Communication, Team, Critical Thinking, and Ethics Reasoning Skills

Fall, 2010: In order to provide more opportunities for BUA majors to improve their awareness, understanding, and abilities in relevant skills categories the BUA faculty decided that they would make effort to employ the following measures in their BUA required courses.

- Include in the course syllabus the web links for the COB Standards of Professional Behavior and Ethical Conduct (http://www.cob.ilstu.edu/standards/) and the PRME (http://www.unprme.org/sharing-information-on-progress/index.php), and discuss them in class, and/or give related assignments.

- Give every student at least one opportunity to speak in front of the class.

- Give at least one team assignment (e.g., a team-based homework assignment, presentation, or project, or term paper) per semester.

- Invite at least one guest speaker per semester to address one of the learning goals.

- Have students attend at least one relevant campus event per semester.

Goal 1 – Business Content Knowledge (Finance/Insurance/Accounting/Quantitative Analysis)

Fall 2010: In order to strengthen our students' knowledge in Finance, Accounting, and Quantitative analysis, the faculty decided to urge their BUA students to utilize tutorial sessions and GA tutors offered by the departments throughout the semester.

Spring 2011: A college-wide decision was made to include a chapter about Insurance and Risk Management in the College's customized textbook for BUS 100 Enterprise, an introductory business course for all incoming business students. The new material was prepared by Katie School of Insurance and Financial Services and included in the book for the fall 2011 semester.

Guidelines for the Preparation of Written Assignments
(For COB Business Administration Majors)

This document presents a set of guidelines for the preparation of written assignments in general. While students are encouraged to follow these guidelines carefully, they should also consult their instructors for additional guidelines for specific written projects and assignments.

1. General Structure/Format

- Spacing

  Except when otherwise noted, manuscripts should be double-spaced. This allows space for the reader to make comments. All headings or titles containing more than one line should be single spaced. A triple space should precede and proceed a visual support (table, graph, chart, etc.) placed within the text. Any quote requiring more than four lines of text should be indented and single spaced. A triple space should precede any centered heading or major subheading. All paragraphs should be indented five spaces.

- Margins

  Manuscripts should be prepared with one inch borders surrounding the text, i.e. one inch at the top, bottom, and sides. Paper should be 8 1/2" x 11" except for large visual aids that are folded to the proper size. The page number is part of the text and should be inside the 1" margin. Do not use right justified margins.

- Print

  Manuscripts should be word processed using a ten or twelve point print, using Times New Roman or Arial font.

- Pagination

  With only a few exceptions, all pages in the manuscript should be numbered. Any page with a centered heading at the top, which includes any page only containing a table or other visual support, should be numbered at the bottom center of the page. All other pages are numbered in the upper right hand corner. The cover page is not numbered. The Executive Summary is given page "i" (Roman numeral 1). Each following page prior to the first page of the text is given the next sequence Roman numeral. An Arabic number 1 is placed on the bottom center of the first page of text and all following pages are given the next Arabic number in the sequence, generally in the upper right hand corner. Generally all the following pages should be numbered. The sequence of the presentation is addressed below.

  At least two lines of text must remain together when going to the following page. That is, do not leave one line of text at the top or bottom of a page. The only exception is a situation that is unavoidable (e.g., a paragraph containing three lines).

2. Presentation of the Narrative

- Structure

One of the most common weaknesses in student presentation of the narrative is the lack of structure. The narrative should be presented in a fashion such that an individual looking for a specific item of information can locate it rapidly. In addition, the writer must presume that the reader approaches the narrative with less interest than the reader of, say, a Hemingway novel. Furthermore, structure greatly enhances the clarity and comprehension of the text.

The introduction of the narrative should explain to the reader exactly what is to be presented, why it is being presented, and in what sequence is it to be presented. During the presentation of the narrative, the writer should remind the reader where the narrative is in the sequence. The conclusion should remind the reader what the purpose was, how it was presented, and how the narrative has accomplished its objectives. The narrative should be developed in a logical, systematic fashion as a person would develop a persuasive argument.

The presentation of the narrative should use headings and subheadings liberally (but not overly). The following is the generally accepted levels of structure in descending order:

1. centered heading, underlined.
2. centered heading, not underlined.
3. side heading (flush with left margin), underlined.
4. side heading, not underlined
5. paragraph heading (beginning of paragraph, followed by a period), underlined.

Generally, it is not necessary to use all five types of headings; however, the order must be followed. For example, you may choose to use 1, 3, and 5 (which is common). All topics having the same level should be of similar importance in the narrative. If this is not the case, more heading levels are needed.

- Cover Page

Every written assignment should contain a cover page. It should present the title of the document, the author(s), the course number and section, the course title, the instructor's name, the date, and the name of the institution.

All the information should be centered on the line. The title should be placed approximately one inch from the top of the page, and the name of the institution should be placed one inch from the bottom of the page. The course information should be grouped together and double spaced. The author(s), course information, date, and instructor should be evenly spaced on the page. The cover page is not numbered.

- Executive Summary

"Out there in the real world" managers will seldom read an entire lengthy document or report. Most business managers only want very specific information. Executive summaries are included so that a busy executive can, in a short time, determine the essence of the document. If the summary triggers an interest, then the executive can continued to read and determine where in the document to look for the information desired. The executive summary should

succinctly address the purpose of the report, topic(s) addressed, data collected, person(s) involved, methods used, and conclusions.

The executive summary is normally less than one page in length. Where there are page constraints placed on the report, the executive summary does not count as a page. Generally, the executive summary is page i.

- Tables, Charts, and Graphs

If appropriate, tables, charts, and graphs should be used to summarize or clarify the text. Often visual representations can greatly clarify many pages of text. Many business executives strongly recommend students become familiar with the process of developing these visual support mechanisms. Once again, it is more efficient for a busy business executive to examine a visual support for understanding than to read several pages of text. The writer's purpose is to communicate understanding and information in the most thorough and yet efficient way possible. If the executive understands what s/he needs to understand from the visual support, then that is sufficient; however, if a clearer, deeper understanding is needed, the executive can read the text.

Tables, charts, and graphs should be clearly labeled with a centered title containing the number of the exhibit in a sequence and its subject. For example, the second table might be labeled, "Table 2: A Summary of Significant Aspects to the Central Problem." If possible, the visual supports should be presented in the same physical direction as regular text, so that the reader does not have to shift the text. Place visual supports as close as possible to their logical place in the text. Reference visual supports in the text by their title (e.g., Table 2.). If the visual support takes more than one-half of a page, it should be placed on a separate page and should be centered on the page from top to bottom. This page is numbered on the bottom center in the proper sequence.

- Reference Section

It is most unusual when a manuscript is prepared without utilizing any outside sources. Only those sources referenced in the text should be listed. The reference should be presented in the proper format (see the discussion below) beginning on a separate page entitled "References." This section follows the text and is not counted in page constraints. The page number is placed at the bottom center of the first reference page, and the remaining pages are numbered in the upper right hand corner. The page number follows in the sequence from the text. The body of a reference is generally single spaced. A double space is used between references.

Prior to using any source of information, the student needs to assess the credibility of that source. Milner Library provides means to assess the credibility of the source: http://www.library.ilstu.edu/assets/pdf/handouts/evalinfo.pdf. In particular, sources from wikipedia.com (or any other similar web site) are not credible, and information gleaned from the sources should not be used in any of your reports/papers.

- Appendices

Sometimes items referenced are either too lengthy or not of sufficient importance to warrant placing them in the body of the text. This can include items such as copies of important documents, technical notes, and lengthy visual supports. Such items are placed in the Appendix. All appendices should be titled in a sequence beginning with Appendix A. Each

page of the Appendix is numbered in the sequence continuing from the text. The page number for any page of the Appendix containing a title must have a page number placed at the bottom center of the page. Only appendices that are referenced in the text should be included.

3. Style and Grammatical Errors

Errors made in style and grammar can greatly damage the credibility of the writer and entire research project. No substitute exists for careful and thoughtful proofing of any document before submission. This requires that the document be prepared far enough in advance that corrections can be made in time to meet deadlines. The lack of adequate proofreading has been found to be the most common source of student's writing problems (i.e., the writer hurriedly prepares the document and does a sloppy job). When appropriate, other individuals should be asked to proof the document as they may see errors not detected by the writer.

Students are urged to obtain a copy of The Elements of Style by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White for consultation about grammar, punctuation and style. The following is a list of the most common inexcusable errors committed by students in their writing:

1) Use of colloquial expressions, e.g., "Being that", "Reason being"
2) Misspelled words (in this day of word processors hard to understand).
3) Normally, possessive nouns should contain an apostrophe.
4) The term "a lot" is two words and is very ambiguous.
5) Verb and subject do not match, e.g., the data is analyzed.
6) Absence or misuse of commas.
7) No use of semicolons.
8) Use of the indefinite "you," e.g., "When you hire folks like him, you run the risk of getting burned."
9) Use of they, them, this, and other pronouns that could reference more than one noun. Beginning sentences with such pronouns is generally hard to support, because the pronoun must modify the entire preceding sentence.
10) Lack of specificity and use of ambiguous terms and expressions, e.g., the foreseeable future.
11) Failure to be specific or "say what you mean and mean what you say."
12) Constructing two very short sentences that could easily be combined into one sentence.
13) Beginning several sentences in a row with the same word.
14) Starting almost every sentence with "there."
15) Using double negatives, e.g., "We didn't do nothing to deserve this."
16) Writing in passive rather than active voice.
17) Use of the past tense exclusively; avoidance of the present tense.
18) Paragraphs that contain only one or two sentences.
19) Paragraphs that develop several non-related thoughts.
20) Using a conversation tone, e.g., "Oh, you know what I mean."
21) Sentences that contain a string of several pronouns, e.g., "They did it to them so they would know that he could do business with them."
22) Splitting an infinitive, e.g., to vigorously investigate.
23) Using the words "firstly," "secondly," "thirdly," etc.
24) Writing in the first person, singular and plural.
25) Using colloquial two-word verbs, e.g., talk over (discuss), look into (investigate), and throw out (remove).
26) Ending sentences with prepositions, e.g., ". . . seeing where he is at."

27) Using "which" instead of "that."
28) Ending sentences with abbreviations.
29) Illogical expressions, e.g., the quota system's nonexistence.
30) Incorrectly beginning sentences with "however" instead of "nevertheless."
31) Using profanity is never appropriate.

4. Referencing Sources

- Footnotes and Endnotes

Generally, footnotes and endnotes should be avoided. Only when a clarification of information in the text is explicitly needed should a footnote be used. In business publications, endnotes are generally preferred to footnotes. A raised number should be placed in the text at the point where the endnote is referenced. A separate page entitled "Endnotes" follows the last page of text with the notes appropriately numbered. The page is numbered on the bottom center of the page in the sequence following the text.

- Reference Citations Within The Text

Citation in the text should be by the author's last name and year of publication, enclosed in parentheses without punctuation: "(Kinsey 1960)." If practical, the citation should stand by a punctuation mark. Otherwise, insert it in a logical sentence break. If you use the author's name within the sentence, there is no need to repeat the name in the citation; just use the year of publication in parentheses, as in "...The Howard Harris Program (1966)."

If a particular page, section, or equation is cited, it should be placed within the parentheses: "(Kinsey 1960, p. 112)." For multiple authors, use the full citation for up to three authors; for four or more, use the first author's name followed by "et al." (no italics). A series of citations should be listed in alphabetical order and separated by semicolons: (Donnelly 1961; Kinsey 1960; Wensley 1981).

- Reference List Style

References are to be listed alphabetically, last name first, followed by publication date in parentheses. Use full first name, not just initials. The reference list should be double spaced on a separate page. Use two hard returns between each reference.

Authors are responsible for the accuracy of their references. Check them carefully. There must be a reference for every citation, and a citation for every reference. Do not include uncited works in the reference list, and be sure that you have included a complete reference for every citation.

1. Single- and multiple-author references for books:

Donnelly, James H. and William R. George (1981), Marketing of Services. Chicago: American Marketing Association.

2. Single- and multiple-author reference for periodicals (include author's name, publication date, article title, complete name of periodical, volume number, month of publication, and page numbers):

Wensley, Robin (1981), "Strategic Marketing: Betas, Boxes, or Basics," Journal of Marketing, 45 (Summer), 173-82.

3. Single- and multiple-author reference for an article in a book edited by another author(s):

Nevin, John R. and Ruth A. Smith (1981), "The Predictive Accuracy of a Retail Gravitation Model: An Empirical Evaluation," in The Changing Marketing Environment, Kenneth Bernhardt et al., eds. Chicago: American Marketing Association, 150-73.

4. If an author appears more than once, substitute four hyphens (this will appear as a 1-inch line when typeset) for each author's name (do not use underlines):

Fornell, Claes and David F. Larcher (1981a), "Evaluating Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error," Journal of Marketing Research, (February), 39-50.

----and---- (1981b), "Structural Equation Models with Unobservable Variables and Measurement Error: Algebra and Statistics," Journal of Marketing Research, 18 (August).

5. If two or more works by the same author have the same publication date, they should be differentiated by letters after the date. The letter also should appear with the citation in the text:

Day, George (1981a), "Analytical Approaches to Strategic Market Planning," in Review of Marketing 1981, Ben Enis and Kenneth J. Roering, eds. Chicago: American Marketing Association.

----(1981b), "The Product Life Cycle: Analysis and Applications Issues," Journal of Marketing, 45 (Fall), 60-67.
6. References to unpublished works, such as doctoral dissertations and working papers, should be included in the references list as follows:

Coughlin, Maureen (1980), "Fear of Success: Reaction to Advertising Stimuli and Intention to Purchase," doctoral dissertation, City University of New York.

7. Websites and URLs should be included in the references list as follows:

Doe, John R. and Mary Smith (2000), "Learning from the Web," (accessed June 2, 2000), [available at insert URL here]."

American Marketing Association (2007), "Manuscript Style Specifications for the Journal of Marketing," (accessed January 2, 2007), [available at http://www.marketingjournals.org/jm/ms_stylespecs.php#general].

Final Notes

Students generally have the abilities necessary to write well but fail to use them. No substitute can be made for careful diligence, thoughtfulness, and adequate time allotment. Students are

urged to acquire, develop, and polish their written and verbal communication skills before entering their professional careers.

(This document is based on the Guidelines for the Preparation of Written Assignments developed by the COB Marketing Department).