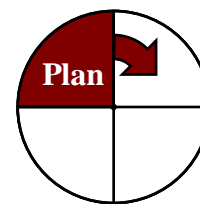


**Learning Assurance Plan for the**  
**Bachelor of Business Administration**

# 1. Plan – What abilities do we want to assess?

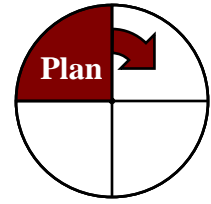


In order to comply with accreditation standards and to further the mission of the College of Business at Loyola University New Orleans, the five Learning Goals of the BBA degree are rooted in the mission of the college and the vision of the university, which are, in turn, rooted in Ignatian values. These five Learning Goals encapsulate the knowledge, skills, and abilities that students of all majors should possess as graduates of the College of Business and that we must continually assess student learning of.

Derivation of Learning Goals from our Mission, Vision, and Values			
Learning Goals	College Mission	University Vision	Ignatian Values
<b>1. Business Disciplines:</b> Graduates will demonstrate ability and competency as bus. professionals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a well-rounded education... of the art and science of management and administration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A just and ordered society needs men and women trained in business.</li> <li>Provide a foundation of learning experiences which enable students to develop values and life goals.</li> <li>Provide the leaders of tomorrow with values that strengthen society.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emphasizes a holistic education, and human and academic excellence.</li> <li>Looks to the fullest development of each person's individual capacities.</li> <li>Prepares leaders for participation in Church, commerce, and community.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Critical Thinking:</b> Graduates will be able to apply critical thinking skills to issues in business.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance critical thinking skills.</li> <li>Graduate students who possess critical thinking skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop students into leaders who possess a love for truth and the critical intelligence to pursue it.</li> <li>Equip students to know themselves, their world, and their potential.</li> <li>Foster in students a critical sense based upon values and principles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community is bound together by a common search for knowledge, and dedicated to the discovery of truth.</li> <li>Teaches leaders to be critical of every decision made, to examine attitudes, to challenge assumptions, and to analyze motives for acting.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Communication:</b> Graduates will be able to communicate effectively in the business world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance written and oral communication.</li> <li>Enable students to become effective business leaders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop students with the intelligence to pursue and the eloquence to articulate truth.</li> <li>Develop high degree of ability to express ideas orally and in writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dialogue and debate concerning controversial issues are not only tolerated, but actively encouraged.</li> <li>Emphasizes active participation by students in the educational process.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Ethical Decisions:</b> Graduates will be able to apply a values-laden method for responding to ethical issues in business settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare students to become socially responsible leaders, to enhance ethical decision-making.</li> <li>Graduate students who possess the courage to act justly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare students to lead meaningful lives with and for others, to pursue virtue, and to work for a just world.</li> <li>Educate students to meet change with equanimity and good judgment.</li> <li>Assist students in becoming more aware of the problems of society, and their ability to correct them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seeks men and women for others who are free to give of themselves and responsible for their actions.</li> <li>Discerns what is good and true in the movements of history.</li> <li>Insists on individual care and concern for each person, and that principles must lead to decisive action, with "love shown in deeds".</li> </ul>
<b>5. Global Awareness:</b> Graduates will be able to succeed in the global economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable students to become effective leaders in a global environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepare students to lead meaningful lives with and for others in order to benefit their larger communities.</li> <li>Motivate ever-widening circles of concern for human solidarity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>True freedom requires a realistic knowledge of the various forces present in the surrounding world.</li> <li>Is world-affirming and condemns self-aggrandizement or nationalism.</li> </ul>

Each of the five Learning Goals is defined in terms of the concept or ability that we want our graduates to master, and broken down into 2-4 operational Learning Objectives that can easily be directly measured through assessment rubrics. The definitions and associated objectives for each Learning Goal are given in the Summary of Learning Goals and Objectives on the following page.

# Summary of Learning Goals and Objectives



1. **Business Disciplines** is a collective term for the basic areas of accounting, decision science, economics, finance, management, and marketing.

**Learning Goal:** Graduates will demonstrate competency and ability as business professionals.

**Learning Objectives:** Graduates will be able to:

- a. Demonstrate overall competency in using all of the various functional areas of business.
- b. Synthesize business knowledge and skills from multiple disciplines to solve a complex problem.

2. **Critical Thinking** is the careful, deliberate, and rational determination of what to believe or do, using cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome.

**Learning Goal:** Graduates will be able to apply critical thinking skills to solve issues in business.

**Learning Objectives:** Graduates will be able to:

- a. Analyze the structure and content of an argument relating to a business issue.
- b. Formulate a sound argument relating to a business issue that leads to a viable strategy.
- c. Analyze the business environment of a firm from all internal and external perspectives.

3. **Communication** in business is a process in which two or more people interact using communication skills in order to achieve a desired outcome in a business context.

**Learning Goal:** Graduates will be able to communicate effectively in the business world.

**Learning Objectives:** Graduates will be able to:

- a. Articulate ideas clearly and concisely in a one-on-one professional business setting.
- b. Compose clear and concise business writing.
- c. Make effective persuasive business presentations.

4. **Ethical Decision-Making** in business is an application of critical thinking skills to address a business problem that has more than one legal solution, but in which the decision-maker seeks to find the most responsible action for all of the stakeholders of the decision.

**Learning Goal:** Graduates will be able to apply a values-laden method for responding to ethical issues.

**Learning Objectives:** Graduates will be able to:

- a. Describe the context of an ethical problem.
- b. Execute a procedure of ethical decision-making that leads to actionable solutions for a problem.
- c. Communicate the results of an ethical decision-making process to all stakeholders of a decision.
- d. Reflect on an ethical decision-making process and demonstrate the capacity for self-evaluation.

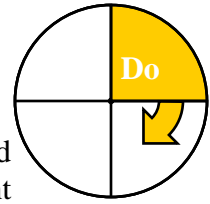
5. **Global Awareness** is the knowledge of cultural, regional, and national issues that will enable the graduate to respond appropriately in all international business situations or scenarios.

**Learning Goal:** Graduates will possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to succeed in the emerging global economy.

**Learning Objectives:** Graduates will be able to:

- a. Demonstrate overall competency concerning global business issues.
- b. Apply business theory and skills in order to solve a business problem in a global setting.
- c. Use the analytic tools of business to perform a comparative analysis of firms, markets, or industries in different nations or regions.

## 2. Do – How have we assessed student learning?



To ascertain the percentage of graduates who possess the desired knowledge, skills, and abilities, we implemented a basic assessment metric that can be applied to each of the five Learning Goals. Each student is given an individual assessment score using the metric below. The use of a single metric and of the individual student as the unit of analysis is consistent with the accreditation standards and provides a basis for comparisons.

- 2:** Exceeds learning standards
- 1:** Meets learning standards
- 0:** Fails learning standards

By using this single metric to measure student achievement of each of the five Learning Goals, individual rubrics and evaluation tools can easily be revised or replaced over time to incorporate recommendations for continual improvement. Although these rubrics and evaluation tools will change over time, each rubric or evaluation tool used will follow the basic framework below.

Title of Learning Goal						
Learning Objective	Definition of Learning Standards			Achievement		
a. First Objective	0: Fails	1: Meets	2: Exceeds	Score		
i. First dimension				0	1	2

Although each student is evaluated individually using the assessment metric, the level of student achievement of each Learning Goal must be calculated aggregately. Aggregate achievement of each Learning Goal is calculated as the percentage of the total number of students assessed that met or exceeded learning standards on their individual assessment score. The performance scale below will be used to interpret the aggregate level of student achievement of each Learning Goal.

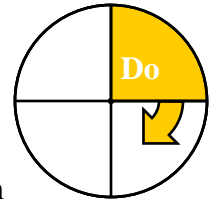
- > 90%: Superior achievement
- 80-90%: Satisfactory achievement
- < 80%: Unsatisfactory achievement

[75-80%: Marginal achievement]

For each Learning Goal, Learning Objective, and operational dimension, the aggregate level of student achievement will be calculated and compared to the performance scale above. The scale will be used to identify areas for improvement, as well as to prioritize improvements according to the size of the achievement gap. Reports will be generated using the basic framework below.

Title of Learning Goal								
Learning Objective	Individual Student Achievement						Performance	
a. First Objective	Fails		Meets		Exceeds		Achieves	
i. First dimension	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%

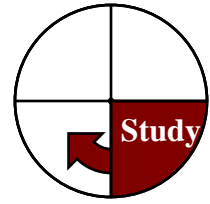
# Course Coverage and Assessment Schedule



The assessment of Learning Goal achievement is spread out across the business curriculum. Our Learning Goals consider the “graduate” as the relevant unit of analysis, and the majority of embedded assessment tools are found accordingly in upper-level courses, where it is easier to effectively assess the achievement of our graduates.

<b>Learning Goal Course Coverage and Assessment Schedule</b>					
<b>Bus Core Course</b>	<b>Learning Goals Covered in Business Core Courses</b>				
	<b>1. Business Disciplines</b>	<b>2. Critical Thinking</b>	<b>3. Communication Skills</b>	<b>4. Ethical Decisions</b>	<b>5. Global Awareness</b>
<b>BA 100</b> Intro to Business					
<b>BA 101</b> Business Cmmn					
<b>ACCT 202</b> Fin Accounting					
<b>ACCT 203</b> Mgrl Accounting					
<b>DECS 205</b> Business Statistics					
<b>ECON 200</b> Microeconomics					
<b>ECON 201</b> Macroeconomics					
<b>LGST 205</b> Legal Env of Bus					
<b>MKT 280</b> Basic Marketing					
<b>FIN 300</b> Financial Mgmt					
<b>MGT 245</b> Mgmt & Org Beh					
<b>MGT 250</b> Mgmt Info Sys					
<b>MGT 310</b> Prod & Ops Mgmt					
<b>BA 415</b> Business Ethics					
<b>BA 445</b> Business Policy					
<b>Assessment Phase</b>	<b>Learning Goals Measured in each Assessment Phase</b>				
	<b>1. Business Disciplines</b>	<b>2. Critical Thinking</b>	<b>3. Communication Skills</b>	<b>4. Ethical Decisions</b>	<b>5. Global Awareness</b>
<b>Phase I (2008-09)</b>					
<b>Phase II (2010-11)</b>					

### 3. Study – What do our students currently learn?



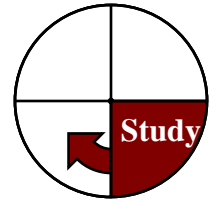
As of Fall 2008, and according to the most recent measures taken of each Learning Goal and Learning Objective, the current level of student achievement is as shown in the table below. Achievement is calculated as the percentage of students that met or exceeded the learning standards of a given Learning Objective.

Current Level of Student Achievement of Learning Goals								
Learning Goal	Individual Student Achievement						Performance	
1. Bus. Disciplines	Fails		Meets		Exceeds		Achieves	
a. Overall ability	28	24%	49	42%	39	34%	88	76%
b. Synthesize skills*								
Learning Goal	Individual Student Achievement						Performance	
2. Critical Thinking	Fails		Meets		Exceeds		Achieves	
a. Analyze argument	36	28%	37	28%	58	44%	95	72%
b. Form argument	7	29%	13	54%	4	17%	17	71%
c. Analyze environ.	5	7%	49	66%	20	27%	69	93%
Learning Goal	Individual Student Achievement						Performance	
3. Communication	Fails		Meets		Exceeds		Achieves	
a. Speaking skills	10	18%	29	53%	16	29%	45	82%
b. Writing skills	14	26%	32	58%	9	16%	41	74%
c. Presenting skills	15	27%	37	67%	3	6%	40	73%
Learning Goal	Individual Student Achievement						Performance	
4. Ethical Decisions	Fails		Meets		Exceeds		Achieves	
a. Describe problem	7	19%	20	54%	10	27%	37	81%
b. Make decision	13	35%	14	38%	10	27%	24	65%
c. Describe solution	8	22%	16	43%	13	35%	29	78%
d. Reflect on process	13	35%	9	24%	15	41%	24	65%
Learning Goal	Individual Student Achievement						Performance	
5. Glob. Awareness	Fails		Meets		Exceeds		Achieves	
a. Overall ability**							95 <sup>th</sup> percentile	
b. Solve intl. issue*								
c. Analyze intl. env.*								

\* As of Fall 2008, these Learning Objectives had not yet been measured. Rubrics are under development for each objective, and will be implemented in the 2008-2009 academic year.

\*\* As of Fall 2008, this Learning Objective had only been measured aggregately (not using the student as the unit of analysis) using mean ETS scores. A better rubric is under development.

# Analysis of Current Student Achievement



Currently, the only Learning Objective on which our students perform at a superior level is Critical Thinking 2.c. (Analyze the business environment of a firm from all internal and external perspectives). This is a skill that is taught in detail in a large number of our courses, across disciplines as diverse as economics, finance, management, and marketing, so it is expected that students would perform well on the objective.

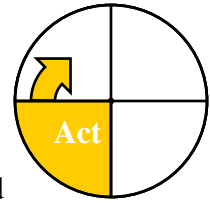
Additionally, students performed at a satisfactory level on Communication 3.a. (Speaking skills) and Ethical Decision-Making 4.a. (Describe an ethical problem). While it is difficult to interpret the aggregate level analysis of Global Awareness 5.a. (Overall ability) the institutional percentile ranking indicates “satisfactory” performance on this objective as well. The latter two factors are hallmarks of our Jesuit education, and performance on these objectives should be “excellent.”

Finally, students performed at a marginal level on Business Disciplines 1.a. (Overall ability) and Ethical Decision-Making 4.c. (Communicate a solution) but at an unsatisfactory level on all of the remaining six Learning Objectives measured as of the Fall 2008 semester. These latter six objectives represent the areas in need of the most improvement, while the former objectives represent the areas where improvement to student achievement could be made most easily.

The learning difficulties encountered by students in each Learning Objective are outlined below.

- 1. Business Disciplines:** Graduates taking the ETS Field Test in Business scored well within their own major discipline, but poorly on questions from other disciplines. Their individual overall test scores, from which Business Disciplines 1.a. (Overall ability) was assessed, were subsequently lower than necessary to display a satisfactory level of performance.
- 2. Critical Thinking:** Freshmen in BA 100 were not sufficiently prepared to perform the level of analysis required by Critical Thinking 2.a. (Analyze an argument); upper-level students should be assessed instead. Students completing the proposal project for Critical Thinking 2.b. (Formulate an argument) were unable to identify alternative assumptions to their own or to change their recommended strategy in light of the knowledge of the other assumptions.
- 3. Communication:** Although freshmen are taught advanced topics in writing and presentation skills in BA 101, they do not have enough experience using these skills to show satisfactory achievement for Communication 3.b. or 3.c. Upper-level students would be more prepared.
- 4. Ethical Decision-Making:** Students in MKT 330 struggled with the procedural, philosophic framework-based decision-making method required by the EthicsGame assignment and the Ethical Decision-Making 4.b. (Execute a procedure) and 4.d. (Reflect on decision-making process) objectives. In particular, students found it difficult to identify tensions between different stakeholders or ethical viewpoints, or to correct for their own personal biases.
- 5. Global Awareness:** Although Loyola’s institutional mean score on the “International Issues” Assessment Indicator #9 from the ETS Field Test in Business was in the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile, it was impossible to calculate individual results on this objective. Because of this, the individual level of student achievement or the specific learning difficulties encountered are as yet unknown.

## 4. Act – How have we improved student learning?



Based on current and previous measurements of student achievement, the faculty and staff of the College of Business have adopted a number of changes to assessment and teaching processes in order to close the gap between actual and desired levels of achievement. The changes made over the previous five years are outlined below.

### 1. Business Disciplines:

The ETS Field Test in Business on its own has proven to be a weak assessment tool. In response to this finding, we have developed an additional course-embedded rubric that will be used to assess part of the Business Disciplines goal in the BA 445 capstone course. This change will allow us to identify specific areas in which students fail to meet standards.

### 2. Critical Thinking:

Freshmen in BA 100 were not sufficiently prepared to perform the level of analysis required by the Critical Thinking goal. In response to this shortcoming, we have considered assessing Critical Thinking 2.a. and 2.b. in the BA 445 capstone course with Critical Thinking 2.c. and the Business Disciplines goal. This change is still under review and has not been developed.

### 3. Communication:

In 2004, the rubric used to assess Communication 2.c. (Presentation Skills) was based on an inconsistent 4-point scale. This was changed in 2007 to a 3-point scale that uses the single metric identified in this plan. The new rubric is based on the dimensions measured by the instructor's grading worksheet, and is consistent with the writing and speaking rubrics.

### 4. Ethical Decision-Making:

To devote more time to teaching values, ethical tensions, and competing ethical frameworks in class, the full Ethics Game simulation in MKT 330 was dropped in favor of the shorter Hot Topic option. This change will allow the teacher to develop students' understanding of the issues raised by the project, through in-class discussions to supplement students' reflections.

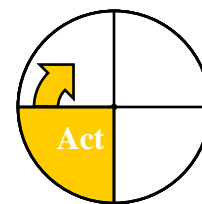
In addition, the shorter Hot Topic format will allow students to more readily compare the different outcomes of the four philosophical ethical frameworks used in the simulation, and to understand the importance of developing their own ethical perspective in order to respond appropriately to business situations where multiple values are placed in tension to each other.

### 5. Global Awareness:

As in Business Disciplines, the ETS Field Test in Business proved to be a poor assessment tool for measuring the Global Awareness goal. In response to this, we have developed a set of new course-embedded measures to be used in the required international business courses of each major in the BBA. This change will allow us to assess Global Awareness more effectively.



# Recommendations for Continued Improvement



This revised Learning Assurance Plan is the first step in an action plan for the continued improvement of assessment and academic processes in the College of Business. The recommendations below represent current needs in each category of processes, categorized by the relevant persons responsible for implementing the improvements.

## 1. Business Disciplines:

	Assessment Coordinator / Team	Individual Faculty Members
<b>Assessment</b>	Develop and distribute new rubric	Collect data in capstone course
<b>Academic</b>	Analyze learning achievement by major in each functional area	Ensure enough individual work assigned on integrative topics

## 2. Critical Thinking:

	Assessment Coordinator / Team	Individual Faculty Members
<b>Assessment</b>	Review current assessment rubrics for effectiveness in BA 100 course	Collect data in BA 100 / BA 445 again to compare with 2004 data
<b>Academic</b>	Analyze content of BA 445 for potential inclusion of new rubric	Highlight the importance of giving alternative scenarios / assumptions

## 3. Communication:

	Assessment Coordinator / Team	Individual Faculty Members
<b>Assessment</b>	Revise current assessment rubrics to align with grades less perfectly	Develop consistent standards for communication across curriculum
<b>Academic</b>	Explore opportunities to use peer-evaluation feedback from BA 100	Create cooperative culture, using high-performers to assist low ones (explore bus. communication lab?)

## 4. Ethical Decision-Making:

	Assessment Coordinator / Team	Individual Faculty Members
<b>Assessment</b>	Review success of the Hot Topic simulation as new assessment tool	Pilot Hot Topic for assessment in other areas of business curriculum
<b>Academic</b>	Compare Hot Topic learning achievement with Ethics Game	Review conflicting values, justice theory, and virtue ethics in class

## 5. Global Awareness:

	Assessment Coordinator / Team	Individual Faculty Members
<b>Assessment</b>	Develop and distribute new rubric that uses individual student as unit	Work with assessment team to develop rubrics and collect data
<b>Academic</b>	Analyze learning achievement by major and comprehensively	Look for opportunities to include global topics in non-INTB courses

## **Appendix of Individual Rubrics and Reports**

In the following pages are the individual rubrics that were used and assessment results that were reported for each Learning Goal during the previous 5-year period. Each section contains a record of the assessment rubric and the individual dimensions measured, as well as a copy of the assessment results and subsequent analysis.

