

Performance-Based Assessment System for the Master of Public Affairs (PBASMPAff) (last updated on April 24, 2007)

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACs), the accrediting body for the University of Texas at Austin, requires that performance-based systems be developed for all academic programs. In this context, the LBJ School has developed a system described below.

Teaching Mission of the MPAff is:

To prepare graduate students for leadership positions in government and the private and nonprofit sectors.

This mission is closely aligned with UT's broader teaching mission:

To achieve excellence in...graduate education...and public service. The university provides superior and comprehensive educational opportunities... [By doing so] the university...serves the citizens through public programs and provides other public service.

Program Educational Objectives (PEOs)

The Program Educational Objectives refer to the accomplishments of graduates during the first few years after graduation. We view the following three Program Educational Objectives as important:

1. Graduates will exercise leadership in contemporary public policy discussions in local, national, and global arenas.
2. Graduates will be able to analyze public policy and management issues in their multiple dimensions and to develop pragmatic, effective solutions to policy problems.
3. Graduates will maintain the highest ethical and professional standards throughout their careers.

Program Outcomes (POs)

Program outcomes are defined as what students are expected to know and be able to do *by the time of graduation*. They include knowledge, skills, and behaviors. In accordance

with the LBJ School's educational objective of developing public service leadership within a practically oriented curriculum of the Master's Program in Public Affairs, we view the following seven program outcomes as important:

Knowledge Program Outcomes

Program Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of how public policy is developed and implemented in a political, institutional, and global environment.

Program Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate substantive knowledge in financial, managerial, economic, and quantitative analysis required for public policy.

Skills Program Outcomes

Program Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate proficiency in written and oral communication in the public policy context.

Program Outcome 4: Students will demonstrate proficiency in the application of analytical skills and practical problem-solving skills required for policy analysis and development.

Program Outcome 5: Students will demonstrate proficiency in analyzing and developing systems to manage human, organization, information and technology resources in a public policy context.

Behaviors Program Outcomes

Program Outcome 6: Students will display ethical behavior in public service.

Program Outcome 7: Students will display strong leadership and team building behavior in public service, including a sensitivity to diversity.

		Program Educational Objectives (PEOs)		
		PEO 1: Engage in public policy	PEO 2: Analyze problems	PEO 3: Ethical standards
Program Outcomes (POs)	PO 1: policy process	X	X	
	PO 2: analysis tools	X	X	
	PO 3: communication	X		X
	PO 4: application of analytical skills/problem-solving skills		X	
	PO 5: management skills		X	
	PO 6: ethical behavior			X
	PO 7: leadership and teambuilding	X		X

Responsibility and Implementation

Timeline for assessment activities

All proposed assessment activities will be at the pilot stage in 2007.

Employer Focus group (pilot)	Feb 9, 2007
Develop instruments	March and April 2007
Student exit survey (pilot)	May 2007
Program assessment exercise (pilot)	May 2007
Alumni survey (pilot)	May 2008

Responsibilities

The Associate Dean and Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) will develop instruments for surveys and program assessment. Staff of the Office of Student Affairs and Programs (OSAP) will assist in the data collection and analysis.

The Associate Dean and Graduate Studies Committee will be responsible for

- analyzing the assessment results,
- determining whether the performance criteria are met,
- making changes in teaching practices and the curriculum, and
- making budgetary adjustments based on assessment results.

Input by faculty members and students will be solicited throughout the process.

Methods of Assessment

The Program Outcomes will be measured through various instruments, relying on both direct assessment (e.g., program assessment exercise) and indirect assessment (e.g., self reporting). The involvement and perspectives of faculty, students, graduates, and employers are crucial for providing evidence on whether the performance criteria are met.

These include:

- Program assessment exercise (PAE)
 - Individual components:
 - Writing assignment (individual component)
 - Technical assignment
 - Team component:
 - Group presentation
 - Oral presentation
 - Management simulation exercise
- Exit survey
- Alumni survey
- Focus group with employers

Assessment Results

There will be a designated staff person in the Office of Student Affairs and Programs who will collaborate with the Associate Dean, Graduate Studies Committee Chair, and Graduate Advisor.