

An Analysis of MBA Major Field Test Scores 2008-2011

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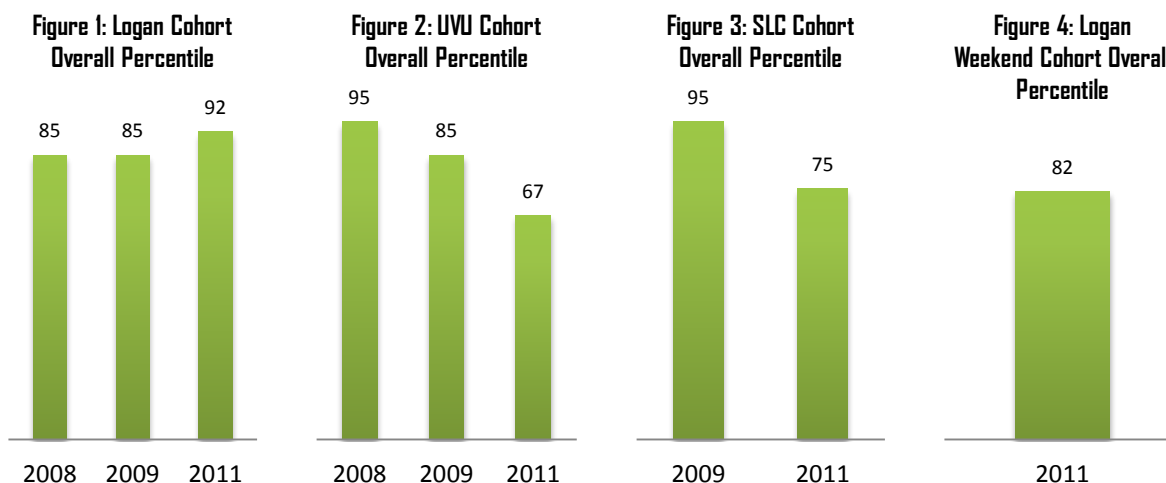
Background

This document contains an overview and summary analysis of Huntsman student performance on the MBA version of the ETS Major Field Test in Business, conducted each spring at the Huntsman School. The MBA Major Field Test in Business is comprised of 124 multiple-choice questions, half of which are based on short case-study scenarios. Questions use diagrams, graphs, and statistical data to illustrate points and provide students with opportunities to analyze situations and data. Questions are derived from five main topical fields—marketing, management, finance, and managerial accounting. Upon completion of the exam, the mean percent correct for each section is used to generate a *scaled score*, falling between 220 and 300. All test questions are designed to measure a student's critical thinking ability, including the ability to interpret data, apply concepts and ideas, and to analyze data, theories, and relationships deductively and inductively. The overall scaled score can be considered a measure of a student's critical thinking and reasoning within the context of a standard MBA curriculum. (http://www.ets.org/s/mft/pdf/mft_mba_flyer.pdf)

First, a summary of the years 2008-2011 will be provided, followed by a more in-depth analysis of trends and patterns that exist within the results.

Summary Huntsman Results by Year:

Figures 1-4 illustrate, by campus, how well Huntsman MBA students have scored on the Major Field Test since 2008. Scores shown in these figures correspond to the national institutional percentile of the overall scaled score. As can be generally seen, Huntsman students score highly when compared to other institutions around the nation. At the Logan campus, students have exhibited remarkable consistency in scoring at or above the 85th percentile each year, including the 92nd percentile in the most recent year (2011). Students at the RCDE locations have also scored highly in the past, though scores dropped precipitously in 2011.



Assessment Indicator Performance

As mentioned in the Background section of this document, there are five topical areas of focus on the exam that students are tested on. **Figures 5-8** illustrate Huntsman student performance on these five core areas on the exam since 2008. As shown, Huntsman students have shown consistently high placement in each of the five core areas of the exam. Students at the Logan Campus have scored in the 70th percentile or above on each section every year. In 2008 and 2009, off campus programs at SLC and UVU scored in the 75th or higher on each section.

Figure 5: Logan Cohort

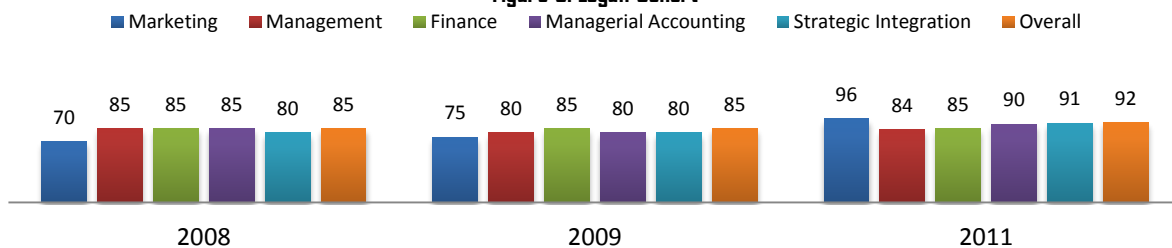


Figure 6: UVU Cohort

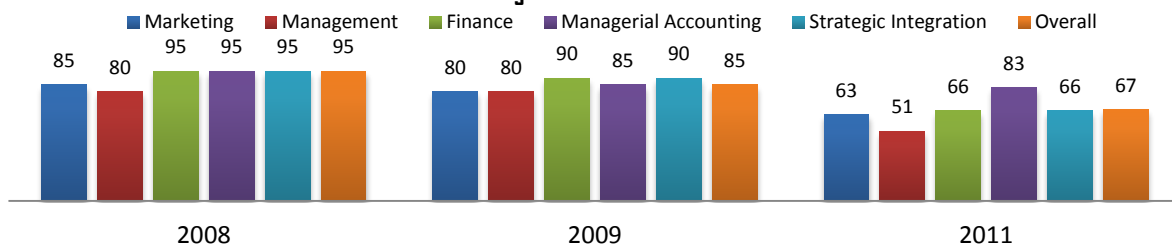


Figure 7: Salt lake City Cohort

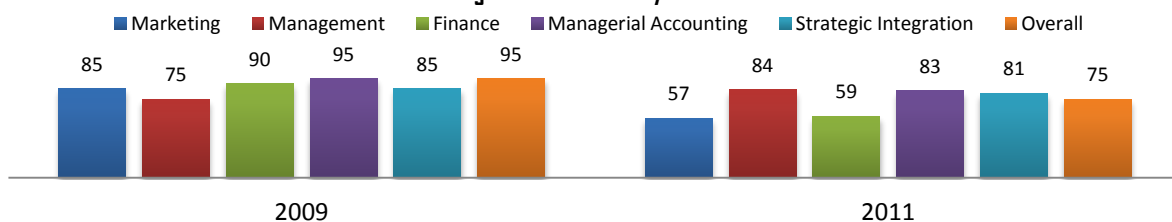
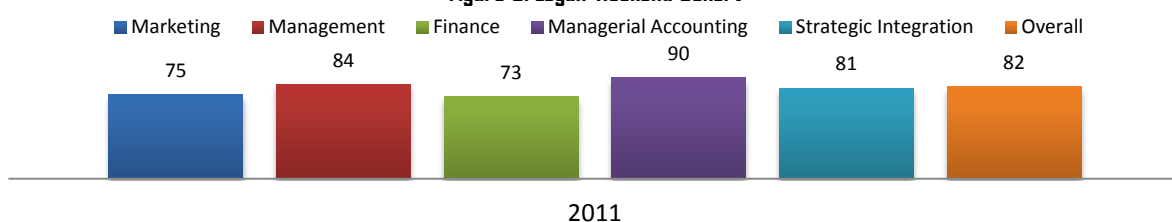


Figure 8: Logan Weekend Cohort

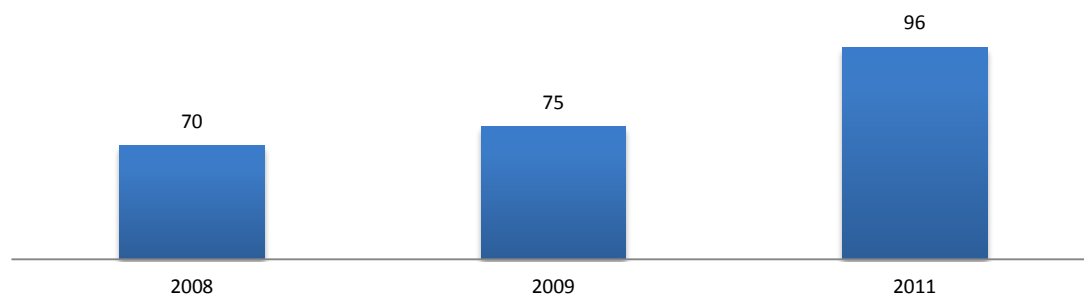


Analysis of Results

A closer look at the data presented in **Figures 1-8** reveals several identifiable patterns or trends that warrant additional focus:

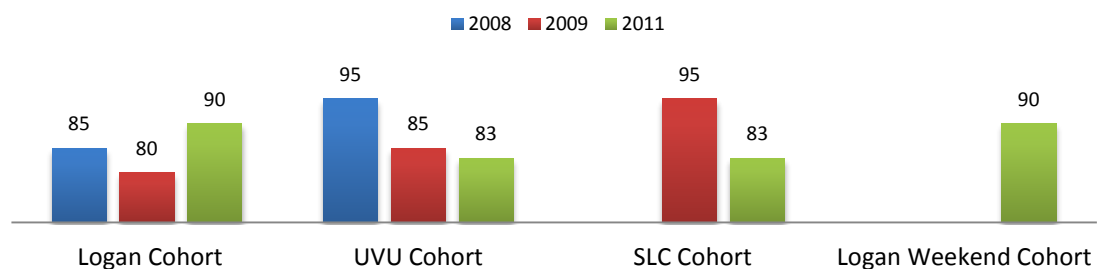
- 1) Logan Campus students had remarkably consistent scores over the 4 year period from 2008-2011.
- 2) In 2008-2009, marketing was clearly the weakest area for Huntsman Logan Campus students, scoring as the lowest ranked (70th, 75th percentile, respectively) section in both years. This appears to have changed between the years 2009 and 2011, as marketing was the strongest section for Logan students in 2011 (96th percentile). Students placed a full 26 percentage points higher on the 2011 exam VS 2008's. **Figure 9** illustrates this trend.

Figure 9: Logan Cohort Marketing Percentile



- 3) Students at Off-Campus locations (SLC and UVU) in 2008 and 2009 scored very highly--higher even than Logan students; however, this was not the case in 2011 as both locations scored notably lower.
- 4) Huntsman students consistently score highly on the managerial accounting section of the exam. Even when factoring in the markedly lower overall off-campus scores in 2011, students never dropped below the 75th percentile on the managerial accounting section, for any year, at any location. **Figure 10** highlights these results. Managerial Accounting is the only section of the exam Huntsman students did not score at less than the 75th percentile any time, any location, during the period.

Figure 10: Managerial Accounting Percentile



Detailed Results from 2011

In 2011 at the Logan Campus, there were several questions Huntsman students got wrong more often than students nationally. **Table 1** highlights the details of these questions including section and question number, the disparity between Huntsman and national results, and the content area of the corresponding question (sorted by magnitude of disparity). Using this table, it is possible to identify exactly which question Huntsman students struggled with and decide whether or not they would have been expected to do so, given exposure (or not) in the Huntsman curriculum.

Table 1: 2011 Logan Campus—Questions Huntsman students did worse than the national average on. (>5% disparity)							
Section	Number	% Correct	% Correct National	Disparity	Domain	Content Area	Sub-Content Area
2	36	24.1	32.7	-8.6	Management, Strategic Integration	Organizational Theory	Systems Thinking
1	15	50	58.5	-8.5	Accounting	Product Costing	Process vs. Job Order
2	3	22.2	29.5	-7.3	Finance	Investments	Securities Valuation & Analysis
1	2	61.1	68	-6.9	Management	Operations Planning/Management Science	Quantitative Decision Making Models
1	53	22.6	29.3	-6.7	Finance, Strategic Integration	Corporate Finance	--
2	42	48.1	53.3	-5.2	Finance, Strategic Integration	Corporate Finance	International Finance

Table 2 provides the same analysis as above for students taking the exam at the UVU location. This list has been truncated, showing only those questions where Huntsman students show a 10% percentage point disparity or higher between them and the national data.

Table 2: 2011 UVU Location—Questions Huntsman students did worse than the national average on. (>10% disparity)							
Section	Number	% Correct	% Correct Nationally	Disparity	Domain	Content Area	Sub-Content Area
2	58	20.5	33.4	-12.9	Finance, Strategic Integration	Investments	Options, Futures, & Other Derivatives
2	40	33.3	46.2	-12.9	Marketing, Strategic Integration	Marketing Planning: Target Segments and Marketing Mix	Channels & Distribution/Supply Chain
1	19	38.5	51.2	-12.7	Management	Organizational Theory	Organizational Change & Development
2	51	66.7	79.4	-12.7	Management, Strategic Integration	Operations Planning/Management Science	Quality/ Process Management
2	52	17.9	30.3	-12.4	Finance, Strategic Integration	Corporate Finance	International Finance
2	9	17.9	30.2	-12.3	Management	Human Resource Management	Recruiting & Selection
1	44	10.3	21.6	-11.3	Accounting, Strategic Integration	Cost-Volume-Profit Analysis	Break-Even Analysis
2	57	33.3	44.4	-11.1	Marketing, Strategic Integration	Market Research	Competitive Intelligence
2	45	48.7	58.7	-10	Management, Strategic Integration	Human Resource Management	Training & Development

Table 3 provides the same analysis for the 2011 Logan Weekend cohort, using an eight percent disparity for filtering.

Table 3: 2011 Logan Weekend Location—Questions Huntsman students did worse than the national average on. (>8% disparity)							
Section	Number	%Correct	Percent Correct National	Disparity	Domain	Content Area	Sub-Content Area
2	26	18.2	26.8	-8.6	Accounting	Relevant Cost	Special Order
1	53	18.2	28.3	-10.1	Finance, Strategic Integration	Corporate Finance	--
1	35	0	15.2	-15.2	Finance, Strategic Integration	Corporate Finance	Cost of Capital
1	6	54.5	65.2	-10.7	Management	Operations Planning/Management Science	Quantitative Decision Making Models
1	22	77.3	85.7	-8.4	Management	Organizational Behavior	Leadership
2	36	9.1	32.8	-23.7	Management, Strategic Integration	Organizational Theory	Systems Thinking

Conclusion

Huntsman students have been, and remain, very competitive with their peers at other institutions around the nation. Significant strides have been made to improve the performance of Logan Campus students on the marketing section of the exam since 2008. This is in-line with the recognition years ago that marketing was one of the weaker areas in the Huntsman MBA curriculum, and the subsequent changes made to the curriculum and marketing faculty. Clearly there is supporting evidence that these changes have made a difference in the performance of Huntsman MBA students on this section.

On the most recent 2011 exam, Huntsman students at the off-campus locations seem to have exhibited either a severe drop in comprehension in core MBA topics, or a severe drop in motivation to do their best. More research will be needed in the future to decide whether this drop in scores is a one-time event, or the beginning of a more concerning trend that will need further action.