

Florida Atlantic University  
**School of Accounting Executive Programs**  
Academic Program Review  
Self-study Report  
2013

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## **Introduction**

The School of Accounting Executive Programs (SOAEP) was established in 2002 as an executive branch of the School of Accounting in Florida Atlantic University's AACSB-accredited and nationally recognized College of Business.

The mission of the School of Accounting Executive Programs at Florida Atlantic University is to be a leading provider of specialized education in the areas of taxation and forensic accounting, including fraud examination and business valuation.

The major differences that distinguish SOAEP from traditional programs are (a) targeted groups of students and (b) program delivery methods. The SOAEP is designed to offer an educational alternative to busy professionals who want to advance their careers in accounting or taxation or those who want to change careers to specialize in accounting or taxation.

Cutting edge technology in online learning gives students the flexibility and convenience to complete the entire curriculum from any place in the world. The hybrid delivery method allows students to choose whether they want to complete their entire degree completely online, in the classroom, or a combination of these two options. All students can view class lectures on an iPod, iPad, PC, Mac or cell phone or listen to lectures on an MP3 player. Students who desire a more traditional classroom experience may participate in the optional live lectures held on Saturday mornings at the Fort Lauderdale campus. This unique approach offers flexibility which allows students to achieve their educational goals while pursuing careers and meeting their everyday responsibilities.

SOAEP has a diverse student body comprising students from 35 states and several countries. Students have the opportunity to learn from a highly-qualified faculty of professors and industry experts. Our faculty members and guest speakers publish articles and textbooks on forensic accounting and fraud education. All teaching faculty members hold advanced degrees in accounting, taxation or law (Ph.D., LL.M., or J.D.). Students also benefit by learning from practitioners who have firsthand experience in expert witness testimony and active investigative work, and who serve as guest speakers.

Students are admitted as cohorts and progress through the curricula together, leading to a camaraderie that often lasts long after they have graduated.

The Executive Master of Accounting with a concentration in Forensic Accounting, administered as the Executive Master of Accounting Forensic Program (EMFAP), is a two-year online degree program that enjoys a strong international reputation in an area that U.S. News and World Report has declared one of the most important career paths of the future.

The Executive Master of Taxation (EMTAX) offers students the possibility of becoming a tax professional and earning their degree in a little more than two years.

Each program consists of ten courses (30 graduate credits) and allows students to earn 27 credits towards fulfilling their requirements for CPA licensure.

An innovative lecture delivery method, highly qualified advisors, strong retention practices and nearly 24/7 information technology (IT) assistance are some, but not all, of the strengths of the SOAEP that set it apart from its competitors.

## Executive Master of Accounting – Forensic Accounting Concentration

### A. Enrollment – Headcount

Executive Master of Accounting Forensic Program (EMFAP) / Student Enrollment									
Year (Summer, Fall, Spring)									
Year	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>Non-Florida Resident</b>									
Admitted	17	15	43	61	70	89	78	57	38
Registered	14	12	30	38	64	65	65	46	26
<b>Florida Resident</b>									
Admitted	36	19	53	57	70	75	73	83	83
Registered	27	15	44	46	59	71	65	77	71
<b>All</b>									
<b>Admitted</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Registered</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>97</b>

	Fall Semesters - EMFAP					Spring Semesters - EMFAP				
	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013
<b>Non-Florida Resident</b>										
Admitted	29	41	26	21	20	27	30	32	19	5
Registered	24	28	25	18	14	27	22	21	16	4
<b>Florida Resident</b>										
Admitted	27	29	25	30	37	26	34	31	36	28
Registered	19	26	24	27	33	26	33	27	35	24
<b>All</b>										
<b>Admitted</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Registered</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>28</b>

	Summer Semesters - EMFAP				
	Summer 2008	Summer 2009	Summer 2010	Summer 2011	Summer 2012
<b>Non-Florida Resident</b>					
Admitted	14	18	20	17	13
Registered	13	15	19	12	8
<b>Florida Resident</b>					
Admitted	17	12	17	17	18
Registered	14	12	14	15	14
<b>All</b>					
<b>Admitted</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Registered</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>22</b>

As the year-to-year analysis of headcount indicates, except for the academic year 2005-2006, EMFAP enrollment numbers grew steadily until the end of the academic year 2009-2010. Compared to the high year of 2009-2010, enrollment for the 2010-2011 year was down by 4.4%; down by 9.6% in the 2011-2012 year; and down by 28.7% in the 2012-2013 year. These calculations were based on the number of new students registered during each academic year compared to the registration numbers from the historical high registration experienced during the 2009-2010 academic year.

Drops in student enrollment could be attributed to factors such as: unstable economic conditions, growing number of schools offering alternative forensic accounting education (master's programs and certificates), and competitive admission standards that exist at other schools.

Unstable economic conditions forced more conservative thinking about financing one's education. The main symptom of that thinking was a shift in spread of in-state and out-of-state student population. From the 2009-2010 academic year to the 2012-2013 academic year the number of Florida residents registered in the EMFAP was increasing while during this same period the number of out-of-state students (who are charged higher tuition) was decreasing.

In 2003, the EMFAP was the first program of its kind in the nation. Since that time, a number of new forensic programs have been created. Currently, there are over 31 schools in U.S. offering either master degree programs or certificates in forensic accounting.

With a variety of schools available to each prospective student, competing for new enrollments has become increasingly difficult. Today's recruits carefully select programs to which they apply by making choices that involve comparing schools, curricula, and admission criteria. A number of schools (including some that are AACSB-accredited) are not requiring a GMAT score as a condition for admission. These schools are basing their admission decisions on factors such as relevant business experience. As a result, FAU has found itself in a disadvantageous position within the last several years due to its reliance on the GMAT score as a condition for admission and, as a result, has lost prospective students who were otherwise fully qualified.

## B. Degrees Conferred

### Total Degrees Awarded- EMFAP

Academic Year	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	Total
Non-Florida Resident	9	26	36	21	23	115
Florida Resident	20	25	42	46	42	175
All	29	51	78	67	65	290

### Degrees Awarded - EMFAP - Fall Semesters

Semester	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	All
Non-Florida Resident	3	11	10	8	10	42
Florida Resident	9	10	15	16	15	65
All	12	21	25	24	25	107

### Degrees Awarded - EMFAP - Summer Semesters

Semester	Summer 2008	Summer 2009	Summer 2010	Summer 2011	Summer 2012	All
Non-Florida Resident	2	7	14	7	7	37
Florida Resident	5	8	20	13	15	61
All	7	15	34	20	22	98

### Degrees Awarded - EMFAP - Spring Semesters

Semester	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013	All
Non-Florida Resident	4	8	12	6	6	36
Florida Resident	6	7	7	17	12	49
All	10	15	19	23	18	85

The number of degrees awarded in the EMFAP increased during the years 2008-2011, hitting a peak of 78 degrees awarded during the 2010-2011 year and decreasing slightly during the next two years.

Not surprisingly, among fall and summer graduates, there are a greater number of Florida residents who graduated (65 - fall and 61- summer) in comparison with out-of-state graduates (42 - fall and 37 - summer). The number of degrees awarded during the fall semesters is fairly constant during the last three academic years whereas the number of degrees awarded during the summers for the last two years have declined.

Florida residents are also the strongest group among spring graduates. However, whereas the number of degrees awarded to non-Florida residents has remained relatively constant (except for a peak of 12 during the spring 2011 semester), the number of degrees awarded to Florida residents show no specific pattern over the 2009-2013 period.

Degrees Conferred - Retention by the Cohort - EMFAP														
Start Date	Spr '09	Sum '09	Fall '09	Spr '10	Sum '10	Fall '10	Spr '11	Sum '11	Fall '11	Spr '12	Sum '12	Fall '12	Spr '13	Sum '13
Number of Students in a Cohort	44	26	56	53	36	49	47	26	44	47	18	46	30	21
Dropped	11	11	18	12	12	12	8	6	9	8	2	8	5	1
Terminated	2	4	11	15	3	13	8	7	6	8	4	2	2	1
Graduated	31	11	27	26	20	23	25	10	18	4	0	0	2	0
Dropped Percentage	25.0%	42.3%	32.1%	22.6%	33.3%	24.5%	17.0%	23.1%	20.5%	17.0%	11.1%	17.4%	16.7%	4.8%
Terminated Percentage	4.5%	15.4%	19.6%	28.3%	8.3%	26.5%	17.0%	26.9%	13.6%	17.0%	22.2%	4.3%	6.7%	4.8%
Retention Percentage	70.5%	42.3%	48.2%	49.1%	58.3%	49.0%	66.0%	50.0%	65.9%	66.0%	66.7%	78.3%	76.7%	90.5%
Graduation Percentage	70.5%	42.3%	48.2%	49.1%	55.6%	46.9%	53.2%	38.5%	40.9%	8.5%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%
Graduated within one year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Graduated within two years	16	10	15	19	13	16	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Graduated within three years	13	1	9	3	6	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Graduated within four years +	2	0	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cohort % of year one	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cohort % of year two	36.4%	38.5%	26.8%	35.8%	36.1%	32.7%	36.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cohort % of year three	29.5%	3.8%	16.1%	5.7%	16.7%	0.0%	17.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cohort % of year four +	4.5%	0.0%	1.8%	7.5%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Active Cohort Remaining %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.8%	2.0%	12.8%	11.5%	25.0%	57.4%	66.7%	78.3%	70.0%	90.5%

The increase in degrees conferred may be attributed to the excellent retention advising provided which resulted in an improved retention rate (see table above, titled *Degrees Conferred – Retention by the Cohort – EMFAP*). Some of the student cohorts have higher than average retention rates (Spring 2009 – 70.5 %, Spring 2011- 66%).

Another factor that contributed to the increase in number of degrees awarded may be a change in the average student profile. Students now applying to the program are older and the number of students with an accounting/business background has been increasing.

## C. Learning Goals

The learning goals of the EMFAP are as follows:

1. Increase students' knowledge of forensic accounting and fraud examination
2. Enhance students' critical thinking skills
3. Develop students' written communication skills

Learning goal (1), "Increase students' knowledge of forensic accounting and fraud examination" is not currently being assessed independent of classroom examinations, quizzes, threaded discussions, and short papers assigned in the forensic accounting and fraud examination courses. There is no external examination, such as the CPA exam, that is appropriate as an assessment since many of the EMFAP students do not take the CPA exam. In addition, other credentials in this area are either more specialized, e.g., Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) than the topics taught in the EMFAP, or are limited to those who already have the CPA certificate, e.g., Certified in Financial Forensics (CFF) which can only be obtained by those who are CPAs and members of the AICPA. This program differs from traditional Master of Accounting degree programs in the sense that students in FAU's EMFAP have more diverse career goals than do students in traditional programs. Since most of our students enroll in this program to advance their careers, the SOAEP is considering assessing the practical result of increasing student knowledge by means of a survey intended to determine how helpful their degree is in furthering their careers.

Learning goal (2), "Enhance students' critical thinking skills" has not yet been measured in this program. At this time, the SOAEP is developing a plan to assess students' critical thinking skills by means of a measure such as the "Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric" by Facione and Facione published by the California Academic Press. This rubric rates students' critical thinking skills on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 being the lowest score and 4 being the highest or best score).

Learning goal (3), "Develop students' written communication skills" has not yet been measured in this program. Currently, the SOAEP is in the process of designing an assessment that will consist of a list of criteria students will have to meet in order to prove that specific educational goals are achieved. Each criterion will be applied to written samples of papers submitted by the students, and measured. The criteria will evaluate, among other things: thinking, quality of research, and number of reliable sources cited. Papers will be evaluated by professors and practitioners to make sure that the EMFAP is not only meeting academic standards, but is also satisfying practical approaches to presented issues. The SOAEP expects to distribute this assessment at least once per academic year and have student responses evaluated by an independent committee.

## D. Admission Standards

Currently, in addition to other requirements for admission to the Graduate College at FAU, to be considered for these masters programs in the College of Business, applicants must:

- Have earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university or the international equivalent.
- Have a strong grade point average on all previous college work, though emphasis is placed on the last 60 credits earned.
- Submit an official, competitive score on a GMAT, GRE or LSAT exam taken within the past five years. For the Executive Master of Accounting: at least a 500 on the GMAT; or a 148 on the GRE verbal, 147 on the GRE quantitative and 4 on the GRE analytical writing section; or a 150 on the LSAT. When evaluating test scores, the admissions committee looks for a balance between verbal, quantitative and analytical writing strengths. All three components are required. Admission test waivers considered for students with an active CPA license, J.D., Ph.D. or those with a master's degree from an AACSB accredited business program.
- International applicants whose native language is not English must have a TOEFL score of at least 600 (paper), 250 (computer) or 100 (Internet).

Supplemental information applicants may provide in support of applications includes:

- A one-page résumé;
- Letter(s) of recommendation from employers, faculty members or others who can attest to the applicant's scholarly ability and/or agency;
- A writing sample demonstrating analytical and explanatory skills.” (University Catalog)

(Retrieved from FAU Catalog accessed on September 26, 2013

<http://www.fau.edu/academic/registrar/FAUcatalog/business.php#accounting>.)

These admission standards seemed to work well until 2010, most likely because there was little competition in the area of graduate forensic accounting education.

After 2010 the number of applicants (and those admitted) to the EMFAP began to decline. The SOAEP believes that one of the main reasons for this decline is the lack of flexibility in admission standards which tied admission decisions to test scores such as the GMAT and undergraduate GPA while placing little weight on professional experience and other relevant indicia of potential success in the program. Use of these admission criteria continued to occur in the face of increasing competition, while competitors began to abandon use of the GMAT as an indicator of potential success. Furthermore, the SOAEP encountered cases in which non-traditional executive program

applicants graduated from their undergraduate program years before maturing to the point of realizing the true benefit of an education. To penalize such applicants by deciding whether to admit them based on an undergraduate GPA that was earned when they were very young (and sometimes foolish) seems harsh. Furthermore, research has shown that the GMAT is not a statistically-significant predictor of executive graduate business education GPA and that there is only weak evidence that undergraduate GPA is a predictor of executive graduate education GPA.

Since an average executive student is older (for the most recent semester, the average age of the applicants to SOAEP is 36 years) and has at least three or more years of job experience, the admission standards applying to executive students should be more encompassing than standards used to judge the success of a traditionally-aged applicant (at FAU, approximately 26 years).

Recently, the School of Accounting unanimously approved a change in the admissions requirements so that more weight can be given to relevant factors such as professional experience. In the future, an in-depth analysis of admission processes to the EMFAP is planned to provide information for refinement of admission criteria to the executive program.

## E. Curriculum

The schools chosen by FAU as peer, aspirant, and SUS schools do not have executive programs that are comparable to the EMFAP. Therefore, the SOAEP has chosen two peer schools, Florida International University and Western New England University, and two aspirant schools, Georgia State University and The University at Albany (State University of New York). Comparisons of these schools with Florida Atlantic University (FAU) is shown below in the following four tables and discussed in the section beneath the tables.

Master of Accounting: Forensic Accounting Concentration Curriculum Comparison to Peer Schools						
School	FAU	FAU	FIU	FIU	Western New England University	Western New England University
Degree	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting
Concentration/Track	Forensic Accounting	non-accounting track	Assurance	non-accounting track	Forensic Accounting & Fraud Investigation	non-accounting track
Classes	10	up to 12	10	up to 16	10	up to 19
Credits	30	up to 36	30	up to 51	30	up to 57
Communication Course	1	1	0	0	0	0
non-accounting track courses	0	3	0	0	0	0
Core Courses	4	2	2	2	7	7
Concentration Courses	5	4	8	8		3
non-accounting major prerequisites	0	up to 2 (6 credit hours)	0	up to 6 (21 credit hours)	0	up to 9 (27 credit hours)
Accounting prerequisites	0	1	0	4	0	7
Finance prerequisites	0	1	0	0	0	1
Taxation prerequisites	0	0	0	1	0	1
Business Law prerequisites	0	0	0	1	0	0
Semester Length	15 weeks	15 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	15 weeks	15 weeks
Duration	24 months	24+ months	10 months	10+ months	24 months	24+ months

Master of Accounting: Forensic Accounting Concentration Course Comparison to Peer Schools						
School	FAU	FAU	FIU	FIU	Western New England University	Western New England University
Degree	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting
Concentration/Track	Forensic Accounting	Forensic Accounting /non-accounting track	Assurance	Assurance/non-accounting track	Forensic Accounting & Fraud Investigation	Forensic Accounting & Fraud Investigation /non-accounting track
Intermediate Accounting		x		x(2)		x (2)
Cost Accounting		x		x	x	x (2)
Business Valuation	x	x			x	x
Writing for Forensic Accounting	x	x				
Accounting Information Systems	x	x				x
Auditing		x		x	x	x (2)
Advanced Auditing Theory and Practice	x					
Accounting Fraud Examination Concepts	x	x	x	x	x	x
Accounting Fraud Examination Conduct and Procedures	x	x			x	x
Forensic Accounting and the Legal Environment	x	x				
Forensic Accounting, Fraud and Taxation	x					
Advanced Digital Forensics	x					
Concepts of Federal Income Tax	x	x		x	x	x (2)
Financial Accounting Concepts		x				
Financial Management		x			x	x (2)
Evaluation of Financial Reports, Business Analysis and Valuation			x	x		
Environment of Accounting and Auditing			x	x		
electives				x(7)		
Business Law				x	x	x
Government Accounting					x	x
Accounting Theory					x	x
elementary accounting						x (2)

Master of Accounting: Forensic Accounting Concentration Curriculum Comparison to Aspirant Schools						
School	FAU	FAU	Georgia State University	University at Albany (SUNY)	University at Albany (SUNY)	
Degree	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Professional Accountancy	M.S. in Forensic Accounting	M.S. in Forensic Accounting	
Concentration/Track	Forensic Accounting	non-accounting track	non-accounting business majors only	accounting majors only	part-time	
Classes	10	up to 12	10	10	10	
Credits	30	up to 36	30	30	30	
Communication Course	1	1	0	0	0	
non-accounting track courses	0	3	3	0	0	
Core Courses	4	2	7	8	8	
Concentration Courses	5	4	0	0	0	
Elective Courses	0	0	0	2	2	
non-accounting major prerequisites	0	up to 2 (6 credit hours)	0	0	0	
Accounting prerequisites	0	1	0	0	0	
Finance prerequisites	0	1	0	0	0	
Taxation prerequisites	0	0	0	0	0	
Economics prerequisites	0	0	0	0	0	
Business Law prerequisites	0	0	0	0	0	
Semester Length	15 weeks	15 weeks	15 weeks	15 weeks	15 weeks	
Duration	24 months	24+ months	12 months	12 months	24+	

Master of Accounting: Forensic Accounting Concentration Course Comparison to Aspirant Schools					
School	FAU	FAU	Georgia State University	University at Albany (SUNY)	University at Albany (SUNY)
Degree	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Professional Accountancy	M.S. in Forensic Accounting	M.S. in Forensic Accounting
Concentration/Track	Forensic Accounting	Forensic Accounting /non-accounting track	non-accounting business majors only	accounting majors only	part-time
Intermediate Accounting		x	x(2)		
Cost Accounting		x	x	x	x
Business Valuation	x	x			
Writing for Forensic Accounting	x	x			
Accounting Information Systems	x	x	x		
Auditing		x	x	x	x
Advanced Auditing Theory and Practice	x				
Accounting Fraud Examination Concepts		x		x	x
Accounting Fraud Examination Conduct and Procedure	x	x		x	x
Forensic Accounting and the Legal Environment	x	x			
Forensic Accounting, Fraud and Taxation	x				
Advanced Digital Forensics	x			x	x
Concepts of Federal Income Tax	x	x	x		
Financial Accounting Concepts		x	x		
Financial Management		x			
electives				x(2)	x(2)
Research Seminar				x	x
Advanced Accounting			x		
Accounting Theory			x		
Business Analysis			x	x	x
Statistics				x	x

### Prerequisites and non-accounting track

One of the largest differences between Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and its peer and aspirant schools is how FAU treats its students who earned non-accounting business and non-business undergraduate degrees. Students admitted to FAU's EMFAP are required to take up to two foundation courses before starting their core coursework. These courses are equivalent to three undergraduate courses (ACG 6027, Financial Accounting Concepts, is equivalent to two elementary accounting courses and FIN 6406, Financial Management, is equivalent to FIN 3404, Principles of Financial Management). FAU is the only university in the comparison that modifies its program curriculum for students who earned undergraduate degrees in non-accounting business or non-business areas. For these students, intermediate accounting, auditing, and cost accounting replace three courses in the curriculum. Other universities either require intermediate accounting, auditing, and cost accounting before starting the program or the prerequisites are added to the program, thereby increasing the length of the program.

At Florida International University (FIU), a peer school, students who were non-accounting business undergraduate majors take up to eight prerequisites before entering their master's program. FIU may require up to six graduate level prerequisites of conditionally admitted students. Students who earned non-business undergraduate degrees are required to take additional classes through the MBA program or take their undergraduate equivalent.

Western New England University (also a peer school) admits students who earned non-accounting business or non-business undergraduate degrees into their program conditionally. Once admitted, students are required to complete up to nine classes within a two-year period. During this time, students are only allowed to take up to two graduate courses towards their degree. This requirement has the potential to nearly double the program's length.

Georgia State University (an aspirant school) only allows students who earned a non-accounting business undergraduate degree into its Professional Accountancy accelerated program. Students who earned undergraduate degrees in accounting or non-business areas are required to attend the traditional Professional Accountancy program.

The University at Albany (an aspirant school) only allows students who earned an undergraduate accounting degree into its Master of Science in Forensic Accounting. The program also requires applicants to have a minimum of three years of work experience in the accounting field. If students attend full-time, they can complete the program in one year. If they are part-time, they will complete it in two or more years.

### Curriculum

FAU is the only university in this comparison that requires a communication course. Other universities may have effective communication as a desired learning outcome or objective; however, their curriculum does not explicitly address this skill. FAU's curriculum offers four forensic accounting courses, one business valuation course, a forensic accounting communication course, and four core courses. The core courses consist of information systems, taxation, advanced auditing, and digital forensics.

#### *FAU EMFAP Course List*

ACG 6137 Financial Reporting and Accounting Concepts (non-accounting majors only)  
ACG 6347 Cost Accounting Theory and Practice (non-accounting majors only)  
ACG 6375 Business Valuation for Forensic Accountants  
ACG 6376 Writing for Forensic Accounting  
ACG 6475 Advanced Accounting Information Systems  
ACG 6635 Auditing Theory and Practice (non-accounting majors only)  
ACG 6655 Advanced Auditing Theory and Practice (accounting majors only)  
ACG 6686 Accounting Fraud Examination Concepts  
ACG 6687 Accounting Fraud Examination Conduct and Procedures  
ACG 6688 Forensic Accounting and the Legal Environment  
ACG 6689 Forensic Accounting, Fraud and Taxation (accounting majors only)  
ACG 6935 Advanced Digital Forensics in Forensic Accounting (accounting majors only)  
TAX 6025 Concepts of Federal Income Tax

#### *FAU EMFAP Business Foundation Course List*

ACG 6027 Financial Accounting Concepts  
FIN 6406 Financial Management

FIU does not offer a master's degree with a concentration in forensic accounting, but does offer a concentration in assurance, a related field. Assurance concentration students are required to take two core courses: ACG 6176, Evaluation of Financial Reports, Business Analysis and Valuation; and ACG 6657, Environment of Accounting and Auditing; and eight electives. Of these eight classes, students are required to take five auditing classes, one fraud examination class, one accounting research class, and one special topics class. Students who earned non-accounting business undergraduate degrees can be accepted into the program under the condition that they take six accelerated courses in the areas of financial accounting, cost accounting, taxation, and

business law. Students who earned non-business undergraduate degrees are required to complete additional courses from the MBA course program offerings.

*FIU Master of Accounting: Assurance Concentration Program List*

ACG 6176 Evaluation of Financial Reports, Business Analysis and Valuation

ACG 6657 Environment of Accounting and Auditing

*FIU Electives (choose eight of the following)*

ACG 6135 Seminar in Financial Accounting Theory I

ACG 6225 Value Added Accounting Practices in Strategic Business Decisions

ACG 6257 Global Accounting, Auditing and Financial Strategy

ACG 6295 Financial Accounting IV

ACG 6346 Seminar in Management Accounting I

ACG 6406 Accounting Data Warehousing and Analysis

ACG 6437 Advanced Accounting Information Systems

ACG 6466 Accounting Enterprise Resource Planning

ACG 6625 Information Technology Auditing

ACG 6675 Internal Auditing

ACG 6676 Advanced Internal Auditing

ACG 6677 Applied Internal Auditing

ACG 6686 Fraud Examination

ACG 6696 Current Issues in Auditing

ACG 6885 Accounting Research and Reporting

ACG 6935 Special Topics in Accounting

*FIU Accounting undergraduate equivalents*

ACG 6105 Accelerated Financial Accounting I

ACG 6115 Accelerated Financial Accounting II

ACG 6345 Management Accounting and Control

ACG 6655 Auditing and Accounting Systems

TAX 6005 Income Tax

BUL 6830 Survey of Business Law

Western New England University (WNEU) offers a Master's degree with a concentration in Forensic Accounting and Fraud Investigation. Its master's degree requires each student to complete seven core courses based on cost accounting, government accounting, accounting theory, taxation, auditing, business valuation, and finance. The Forensic Accounting and Fraud Investigation concentration requires students to take three courses: AC 641, Introduction to Fraud; AC 642, Forensic Accounting; and BL 640, Law for Accountants.

*WNEU M.S.in Accounting: Forensic Accounting and Fraud Investigation concentration Program List*

AC 610 Cost-Based Decision-Making

AC 611 Municipal and Fund Accounting

AC 622 Accounting Theory & Contemporary Issues

AC 614 Advanced Taxation of Business Entities

AC 620 Advanced Topics in Auditing and Assurance Services

FIN 612 Business Analysis and Valuation  
FIN 630 Managerial Finance  
AC 641 Introduction to Fraud  
AC 642 Forensic Accounting  
BL 640 Law for Accountants

*WNEU Undergraduate Foundation Courses*

AC 201 Financial Reporting  
AC 202 Managerial Accounting  
AC 305 Financial Reporting II  
AC 306 Financial Reporting III  
AC 309 Cost Accounting  
AC 330 Accounting Information Systems  
AC 413 Fundamental Concepts of  
Taxation  
AC 419 Auditing and Assurance Services  
FIN 214 Introduction to Finance

Georgia State University (GSU) offers the Fast-Track Master of Professional Accountancy (MPA) which can be completed within one year. The MPA does not offer any concentrations. Students take courses in financial accounting, cost accounting, taxation, auditing, information systems, business analysis, and accounting theory. Although the program does not offer any courses in forensic accounting, fraud may be included in the internal auditing course.

*GSU MPA Program Course List*

Financial Accounting I  
Financial Accounting II  
Managerial Accounting and Systems  
Topics in Federal Taxation  
Assurance and Information Systems Control  
Advanced Accounting  
Seminar in Accounting Theory and Policy  
Financial Statement and Business Analysis  
Seminar in Internal Auditing  
Advanced Federal Taxation

*GSU Foundation and Prerequisite Courses*

ACCT 2101 Financial Accounting Principles (may take MBA equivalent)  
Soci 1101 Sociology (or psychology, or anthropology, or buyer behavior, or management principles, or managerial decision making)  
Econ 2106 Microeconomic principles  
MATH 1111 College Algebra  
MATH 1070 Statistics (may take MBA equivalent)  
ACCT 4510 Taxation

University at Albany (UA) offers the Master of Science in Forensic Accounting. This degree program can be completed in one year. The program consists of forensic

accounting and fraud examination, financial statement analysis, cost accounting, auditing, a research seminar, an accounting elective, and a business elective. One of the forensic accounting courses is ACC 553, Digital Forensics. FAU's program, for the first time during the Fall 2013 semester, is offering a digital forensics course under a temporary prefix number, pending approval by the university.

*UA Master of Science in Forensic Accounting Program Course List*

ACC 522	Statistical Methods for Forensic Accounting and Assurance
ACC 551	Fraud Examination
ACC 552	Financial Statement Fraud and Corporate Governance
ACC 553	Digital Forensics
ACC 615	Financial Statement Analysis
ACC 630	Advanced Cost Management
ACC 661	Auditing of Advanced Accounting Systems
ACC 680	Research Seminar in Accounting
ACC XXX	Accounting Elective
BUS XXX	Business Elective

Duration

FAU's program is designed to be completed as a part-time program to better accommodate working professionals. Duration varies based on the academic backgrounds of the students. Forensic accounting students who earned undergraduate degrees in a non-accounting business area will have the same length of stay as those who earned undergraduate degrees in accounting. Students who earned undergraduate non-business degrees usually will attend an extra semester. FAU's 24-month degree program is very similar to University of Albany's duration for part-time students.

FIU's Master of Accounting with an Assurance concentration can be completed in 10 months, 14 months sooner than FAU's program. However, students who earned undergraduate degrees in non-accounting business or non-business areas will not be able to complete the program within this timeframe due to the number of prerequisites. If students take the six graduate level accelerated (in eight weeks) prerequisites, the program duration may increase to 16 months, eight months sooner than FAU's program. The required MBA courses for students who were undergraduate non-business majors are not accelerated and may increase the length of their stay closer to that experienced by students at FAU. Students may also choose to take all eight prerequisites at the traditional, non-accelerated pace before starting the 10-month program.

Western New England University's duration is the same as FAU's for students who earned undergraduate degrees in accounting. However, students who earned undergraduate degrees in non-accounting business or non-business areas must take up to seven more prerequisites than they would at FAU, potentially increasing their length of stay by two additional years.

Georgia State University's MPA can be completed in one year, half the time of FAU's master's program. Georgia State's MPA does not offer forensic accounting classes and does not accommodate students who earned undergraduate degrees in non-business areas. The University at Albany's Master of Science in Forensic Accounting can be completed

within one year by students who attend full-time. Part-time students may take two or more years to complete the degree.

## **SWOT Analysis**

A SWOT analysis was undertaken as a means of further enhancing the self-assessment by identifying the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the EMFAP.

### Strengths:

- Preeminent (and first of its kind in the US) executive masters of accounting with a concentration in forensic accounting
- College of Business accredited by AACSB
- Highly-qualified faculty
- Exceptional education delivery approach which makes obtaining education more convenient for non-traditional students
- Highly competent IT team
- Highly competent executive program support staff
- FAU is located in a high-fraud area (provides benefits such as availability of guest lecturers)
- Textbook on forensic accounting and fraud examination written by FAU faculty members and published by major educational publisher McGraw-Hill
- Involvement of academic director in national organizations and activities

### Weaknesses:

- Lack of sufficient staff to help with admissions and other tasks
- Have not formally assessed executive program as has been done in for traditional MAC
- Have not tracked graduates well enough to determine long-term assessment
- Do not have a job placement function

### Opportunities:

- Potential to increase quality of applicants due to recent change in admission criteria
- Potential to increase quality of program by means of formal assessment (we are working on this)

### Threats:

- Increasing competition from online programs that have lower obstacles for admission
- Inability to obtain credentialed status for qualified instructors

## **F. Internships**

At the present time, FAU's EMFAP does not have internships and does not expect to offer or arrange internships. The main reasons are (1) its students are so geographically

dispersed that there is no practical manner by which all students can have an equal opportunity to engage in an internship and (2) the program does not have sufficient resources in terms of staff time to seek out possible internship opportunities.

## **G. Pedagogy/Pedagogical Innovations**

All faculty members teaching in the EMFAP are encouraged to participate in training programs promoting innovative methods of teaching offered by the university. For example, FAU's Center for eLearning fosters development of faculty proposals for eLearning course development and delivery.

In addition to training offered by the university, the SOAEP offers individual training to its instructors. This training is delivered by the SOAEP IT team and consists of customized sessions based on individual professors' needs. New faculty members usually use the IT's assistance to familiarize themselves with a platform used for course material management and lecture delivery (Blackboard) as well as the tools they can utilize within this platform (Power Point presentations, supplemental recordings, Whiteboard, etc.)

## **H. Recruitment Strategies**

The first stage of recruitment strategies is planning marketing campaigns designed to attract candidates matching a specific profile.

The EMFAP is advertised in local newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and online. This blend of advertising media reaches a broad spectrum of prospective students. An ideal candidate for the forensic accounting program is a person with an accounting background and at least three or four years of job experience although candidates from various disciplines (such as criminal justice/criminology or psychology) and backgrounds (such as private investigators or employees of the FBI) not only succeed in the program but also contribute to the education of their fellow students by, for example, providing their experiences and thoughts in threaded discussions.

The length of the recruiting process depends on a given candidate. Some program candidates make a decision to apply during their first conversation with recruiting advisors. After making such a decision, the candidate is connected to an Admissions Advisor who collects all necessary information, processes it and, after successful admission, introduces the candidate to a Retentions Advisor.

Some program candidates require more time to make a decision to apply. Those prospective students usually will speak with a Recruiting Advisor at least a few times, are not sure if the program is a good match for them, and compare the program with programs offered by other schools. They also seek information pertaining to their potential future career and may want to speak with a few program alumni. The goal of the SOAEP advising staff is to provide these candidates with comprehensive information that will make them comfortable with their final decision and discuss with them all options available within the SOAEP or SOA. If they prefer a more traditional approach and want to attend classes on a daily basis, they are referred to advisors in the traditional

accounting program. The objective is to help students find the program that best matches their educational goals.

Over the years different recruiting strategies have been tested. Because of the hybrid nature of the program, open houses with live streamed video feeds did not work well. Usually, a large group of prospective students signed up for them but only a fraction attended.

Recently, the number of students who have heard about the program through word of mouth has been increasing. This increase may be due to the strong reputation of the program and an increasing awareness among those interested in forensic accounting.

The plan for the future includes hiring a Recruiting Advisor with an accounting background who, partly because of his or her knowledge and understanding of accounting, who will be able to nurture student leads and convert them into applications.

## **I. Advising Procedures**

Students are aided by six different types of advising:

1. Recruiting
2. Admissions
3. Financial Aid
4. Retention
5. Other: Academic Director, COB Graduate Advising Office / Graduate College, Faculty
6. Writing Consultant

These types of advising are discussed below.

1. Recruiting Advisors provide prospective students with information pertaining to the program and the application process. They answer career-related questions and provide information of program benefits.

2. Admission Advisors discuss with the students admission requirements in detail and provide to the applicant the checklist of all necessary documents that have to be submitted in order to process student's application. Usually, this process is accomplished by a phone conversation that is followed by email messages pertaining to the documents received and those that still must be submitted. Prospective students are informed of the status of their application and given an approximate timeframe within which the final decision on their application will be made.

3. Financial Advisors begin to communicate with a student as soon as he or she expresses a wish to apply. Available financial aid options are discussed and students are directed to the financial aid university website to apply for financial aid. For students paying out-of-pocket, an installment plan is designed. The phone or in-person discussion is followed by email correspondence. Financial Advisors also inform students of deadlines that could affect changes in their tuition rates and the financial aspects of withdrawals.

4. The Retention Advisor assists students in successful program completion. This Advisor is responsible for tracking students' progress, staying in touch with them each semester, fostering communication between themselves and professors or other departments, assisting in course schedule adjustments and book shipments, helping with registration for courses that are not offered by the SOAEP but required for CPA licensure, and any other function believed to be important to student success in the program.

5. Others, such as the SOAEP Academic Director, COB Graduate Advising Office staff, the Graduate College, and faculty might become involved to settle more complicated academic issues and unavoidable disputes.

Faculty members play an important role in student advising. Students may consult with them on issues such as studying for the CPA/CFE exams, working on individual projects that add to real life job skills, starting an independent study course, or collaborating on a research paper.

6. Additional advising pertaining to writing skills is provided on as needed basis by the SOAEP's Writing Consultant who provides advice on preparing resumes and cover letters.

## **J. Placement Rates/Employment Profile**

The SOAEP does not adequately track its graduates' employment. It expects to begin this process at some point. This task is difficult for a few reasons. First of all, SOAEP students are scattered over the U.S. and other parts of the world and, after graduation, they do not always stay in touch with FAU. Attempts to contact them to update their files and learn about their present employment have been highly unsuccessful due to changed physical addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers.

The SOAEP does not have a job placement center but works at notifying students about position offers. Those offers are usually obtained from accounting firms and are posted on a secure website accessible only to SOAEP students. Students are also referred to FAU's Career Development Center and informed of all networking events organized by the university (which are of limited benefit to those students physically located outside the southeast Florida area).

SOAEP's goal is to build a strong connection between its students and accounting firms. To reconnect with alumni, the SOAEP began publishing a newsletter (titled "Reconnect") addressed to alumni, students and professors. The effort is beginning to pay off: it has produced an increasing number of job offers shared by students and alumni. Finally, a free resume review service is provided to all students and alumni by an SOAEP writing consultant.

## Executive Master of Taxation (EMTAX)

### A. Enrollment - Headcount

		Year (Summer, Fall, Spring)							
Year	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013
<b>Non-Florida Resident</b>									
Admitted	19	9	15	26	36	38	33	30	36
Registered	14	8	13	18	33	29	29	26	33
<b>Florida Resident</b>									
Admitted	6	4	9	25	17	17	22	13	8
Registered	5	3	8	22	15	17	21	11	8
<b>All</b>									
<b>Admitted</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Registered</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>41</b>

		Fall Semesters - EMTAX				
	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	
<b>Non-Florida Resident</b>						
Admitted	19	17	13	14	13	
Registered	18	13	12	13	12	
<b>Florida Resident</b>						
Admitted	6	7	9	7	6	
Registered	5	7	8	6	6	
<b>All</b>						
<b>Admitted</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>19</b>	
<b>Registered</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>18</b>	

		Spring Semesters - EMTAX				
	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013	
<b>Non-Florida Resident</b>						
Admitted	9	13	9	4	1	
Registered	9	10	8	4	0	
<b>Florida Resident</b>						
Admitted	4	6	4	0	0	
Registered	4	6	4	0	0	
<b>All</b>						
<b>Admitted</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Registered</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	

Summer Semesters - EMTAX					
	Spring 2008	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012
<b>Non-Florida Resident</b>					
Admitted	8	8	11	12	22
Registered	6	6	9	9	21
<b>Florida Resident</b>					
Admitted	7	4	9	6	2
Registered	6	4	9	5	2
<b>All</b>					
<b>Admitted</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Registered</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>

The total number of students (per academic year) enrolled in the EMTAX program steadily increased until the 2010-2011 academic year. During the next two years the tax student enrollment numbers were lower but still higher than initially projected.

Tax enrollments were always considerably smaller than forensic enrollments, partly due to the tax area being a more mature market that contains a lot of competition. Due to a continuous drop in spring enrollments and the growing number of withdrawals during spring semesters (tax season) a decision was made that new students would start the program only during the summer and fall semesters.

Elimination of the spring semester start date provides three major benefits: (a) larger student groups during the summer and fall semesters, (b) enables professors to more easily assign group projects and include threaded discussions in their syllabi (due to all students being able to participate), and (c) allows students the opportunity to learn more by working with their peers.

During the spring, summer, and fall semesters, the number of out-of-state students increased each semester while the number of in-state students decreased each semester. Also, during the fall and spring semesters (until Spring 2012, when the spring semester tax admission was discontinued) the ratio of out-of state students to in-state students was approximately 2:1.

## B. Degrees Conferred

### Totals Degrees Awarded - EMTAX

Academic Year	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	All
<b>Non-Florida Resident</b>	6	6	5	10	5	<b>32</b>
<b>Florida Resident</b>	14	10	12	11	2	<b>49</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>81</b>

**Degrees Awarded - EMTAX - Spring Semesters**

Semester	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011	Spring 2012	Spring 2013	All
Non-Florida Resident			3	5	2	10
Florida Resident	5	1	1	5	2	14
All	5	1	4	10	4	24

**Degrees Awarded - EMTAX - Summer Semesters**

Semester	Summer 2009	Summer 2010	Summer 2011	Summer 2012	All
Non-Florida Resident	2				2
Florida Resident	7	7	8	5	27
All	9	7	8	5	29

**Degrees Awarded - EMTAX - Fall Semesters**

Semester	Fall 2008	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012	All
Non-Florida Resident	4	6	2	5	3	20
Florida Resident	2	2	3	1		8
All	6	8	5	6	3	28

Overall, Florida residents constituted the majority among all students who earned their degrees between the 2008-2009 academic year and 2012-2013 academic year. However, the semester data above indicates that during the fall semesters (Fall 2008- Fall 2012) more out-of-state students than in-state students graduated (20 versus 8).

Degrees Conferred - Retention by the Cohort - EMTAX																	
Start Date	Spr '08	Sum '08	Fall '08	Spr '09	Sum '09	Fall '09	Spr '10	Sum '10	Fall '10	Spr '11	Sum '11	Fall '11	Spr '12	Sum '12	Fall '12	Spr '13	Sum '13
Students in a Cohort	14	12	27	9	9	21	14	15	19	13	14	20	0	24	16	0	25
Dropped	9	7	14	1	5	7	5	6	7	3	3	3	0	2	2	0	2
Terminated	0	2	1	2	2	6	3	3	5	4	2	3	0	0	0	0	1
Graduated	5	3	12	6	2	7	6	6	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dropped Percentage	64.3%	58.3%	51.9%	11.1%	55.6%	33.3%	35.7%	40.0%	36.8%	23.1%	21.4%	15.0%	0.0%	8.3%	12.5%	0%	8.0%
Terminated Percentage	0.0%	16.7%	3.7%	22.2%	22.2%	28.6%	21.4%	20.0%	26.3%	30.8%	14.3%	15.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0%	4.0%
Retention Percentage	35.7%	25.0%	44.4%	66.7%	22.2%	38.1%	42.9%	40.0%	36.8%	46.2%	64.3%	70.0%	0.0%	91.7%	87.5%	0%	88.0%
Graduation Percentage	35.7%	25.0%	44.4%	66.7%	22.2%	33.3%	42.9%	40.0%	36.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0%	0.0%
Graduated within one year	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Graduated within two years	4	2	6	5	1	4	2	4	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Graduated within three years	0	0	2	1	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Graduated within four years +	1	1	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cohort % of year one	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cohort % of year two	28.6%	16.7%	22.2%	55.6%	11.1%	19.0%	14.3%	26.7%	26.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cohort % of year three	0.0%	0.0%	7.4%	11.1%	11.1%	4.8%	14.3%	6.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Cohort % of year four +	7.1%	8.3%	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Active Cohort Remaining %	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	46.2%	64.3%	70.0%	0.0%	91.7%	87.5%	0.0%	88.0%

As data presented in the table above (*Degrees Conferred-Retention by the Cohort – EMTAX*) indicates, the cohort retention rate during most semesters was close to 40%, except for the cohort that started in Spring 2009 (retention rate of 67%) as well as Summer 2008 and Summer 2009 cohorts with retention rates of 25% and 22.2%, respectively.

Reasons for the low retention rate include the following: (a) shortage of tax professors (at times, the same professor would teach two or three courses; students who were dissatisfied with this arrangement dropped classes), (b) students with advanced degrees, busy professionals, or those who hold the CPA license who, perhaps, did not need this advanced degree as much as did others, (c) some students without any accounting/tax background found the tax program challenging.

## C. Learning Goals

The learning goals of the EMTAX degree program are as follows:

1. Increase students' knowledge of taxation
2. Enhance students' critical thinking skills
3. Develop students' written communication skills

Learning goal (1), "Increase students' knowledge of knowledge of taxation" is not currently being assessed independent of classroom examinations, quizzes, threaded discussions, and short papers assigned in the tax courses. There is no external examination, such as the CPA or Enrolled Agent (EA) exams, that is appropriate as an assessment since many of our students do not take the CPA and EA exams. Since the EMTAX students have diverse career goals and enroll in this program to advance their careers, the SOAEP is considering assessing the practical result of increasing student knowledge by means of a survey intended to determine how helpful the EMTAX degree is in furthering their careers.

Learning goal (2), "Enhance students' critical thinking skills" has not yet been measured in this program. At this time, the SOAEP is developing a plan to assess students' critical thinking skills by means of a measure such as the "Holistic Critical Thinking Scoring Rubric" by Facione and Facione published by the California Academic Press. This rubric rates students' critical thinking skills on a scale from 1 to 4 (1 being the lowest score and 4 being the highest or best score).

Learning goal (3), "Develop students' written communication skills" has not yet been measured in this program. Currently, the SOAEP is in the process of designing an assessment that will consist of a list of criteria students will have to meet in order to prove that specific educational goals are achieved. Each criterion will be applied to written samples of papers submitted by the students, and measured. The criteria will evaluate, among other things: thinking, quality of research, and number of reliable sources cited. Papers will be evaluated by professors and practitioners to make sure that the EMTAX program is not only meeting academic standards, but is also satisfying practical approaches to presented issues. The SOAEP expects to distribute this assessment at least once per academic year and have student responses evaluated by an independent committee.

## D. Admission Standards

Currently, in addition to other requirements for admission to the Graduate College at FAU, to be considered for these masters programs in the College of Business, applicants must:

- Have earned a bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university or the international equivalent.

- Have a strong grade point average on all previous college work, though emphasis is placed on the last 60 credits earned.
- Submit an official, competitive score on a GMAT, GRE or LSAT exam taken within the past five years. For the Executive Master of Taxation: at least a 500 on the GMAT; or a 153 on the GRE verbal, 144 on the GRE quantitative and 4 on the GRE analytical writing section; or a 150 on the LSAT. When evaluating test scores, the admissions committee looks for a balance between verbal, quantitative and analytical writing strengths. All three components are required. Admission test waivers considered for students with an active CPA license, J.D., Ph.D. or those with a master's degree from an AACSB accredited business program.
- International applicants whose native language is not English must have a TOEFL score of at least 600 (paper), 250 (computer) or 100 (Internet).

Supplemental information applicants may provide in support of applications includes:

- A one-page résumé;
- Letter(s) of recommendation from employers, faculty members or others who can attest to the applicant's scholarly ability and/or agency;
- A writing sample demonstrating analytical and explanatory skills.

(Retrieved from FAU Catalog on September 26, 2013

<http://www.fau.edu/academic/registrar/FAUcatalog/business.php#accounting>)

The SOAEP believes that use of this set of criteria has hampered its ability to attract qualified applicants for the executive Masters of Taxation degree program. One of the problems with the admissions criteria is the lack of flexibility in admission standards which tied admission decisions to test scores such as the GMAT and undergraduate GPA while placing little weight on professional experience and other relevant indicia of potential success in the EMTAX program. Use of these admission criteria continued to occur in the face of increasing competition, while competitors began to abandon use of the GMAT as an indicator of potential success. Furthermore, the SOAEP encountered cases in which non-traditional executive program applicants graduated from their undergraduate program years before maturing to the point of realizing the true benefit of an education. To penalize such applicants by deciding whether to admit them based on an undergraduate GPA that was earned when they were very young seems harsh. Furthermore, research has shown that the GMAT is not a statistically-significant predictor of executive graduate business education GPA and that there is only weak evidence that undergraduate GPA is a predictor of executive graduate education GPA.

Since an average executive student is older (for the most recent semester, the average age of the applicants to SOAEP is 36 years) and has at least three or more years of job experience, the admission standards applying to executive students should be more encompassing than standards used to judge the success of a traditionally-aged applicant (at FAU, approximately 26 years).

Recently, the School of Accounting unanimously approved a change in the admissions requirements so that more weight can be given to relevant factors such as professional experience. In the future, an in-depth analysis of admission processes to the Executive Master of Taxation degree program is planned to provide information for refinement of admission criteria to the executive program.

## E. Curriculum

The schools chosen by FAU as peer, aspirant, and SUS schools do not have executive programs that are comparable to the EMTAX program. Therefore, the SOAEP has chosen two peer schools, Florida International University and Western New England University, and two aspirant schools, Georgia State University and The University at Albany (State University of New York). Comparisons of these schools with FAU is shown below in the following four tables and discussed in the section beneath the tables.

School	FAU	FAU	FIU	FIU	Western New England University	Western New England University
Degree	Master of Taxation	Master of Taxation	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting
Concentration/Track	N/A	non-accounting track	Taxation	Taxation/non-accounting track	Taxation	Taxation/non-accounting track
Classes	10	up to 12	10	up to 16	10	up to 19
Credits	30	up to 36	30	up to 51	30	up to 57
Communication Course	1	1	0	0	0	0
non-accounting track courses	0	1	0	0	0	0
Core Courses	9	7	2	2	7	7
Concentration Courses	0	0	8	8	3	3
Elective Courses						
non-accounting major prerequisites	0	up to 2 (6 credit hrs)	0	up to 6 (21 credit hrs)	0	up to 9 (27 credit hrs)
Accounting prerequisites	0	1	0	4	0	7
Finance prerequisites	0	1	0	0	0	1
Taxation prerequisites	0	0	0	1	0	1
Business Law prerequisites	0	0	0	1	0	0
Semester Length	15 weeks	15 weeks	8 weeks	8 weeks	15 weeks	15 weeks
Duration	28 months	28 months	10 months	10+ months	24 months	24+ months

School	FAU	FAU	FIU	FIU	Western New England University	Western New England University
Degree	Master of Taxation	Master of Taxation	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting	Master of Accounting
Concentration/Track	N/A	non-accounting track	Taxation	Taxation/non-accounting track	Taxation	Taxation/non-accounting track
Federal Income Tax	x	x				
Tax Research	x	x	x	x	x	x
Corporate Taxation	x	x	x	x		
Advanced Corporate Taxation	x	x				
Partnership Taxation	x	x				
Estates & Trusts Taxation	x	x	x	x		
International Taxation	x	x	x	x		
Contemporary Tax Topics	x		x	x	x	x
IRS Practice and Procedures	x	x				
Writing for Tax Accountants	x	x				
Intermediate Accounting		x		x (2)		x (2)
Seminar in Taxation			x	x		
Value-Added Tax Strategies			x	x		
Property Taxation			x	x		
Pass-Through Entities Taxation			x	x		
State and Local Taxation			x	x		
Business Entities Taxation					x	x
Cost Accounting				x		x
Auditing				x		x
Income Tax/Introduction to Taxation				x		x
Business Law				x		
Finance		x				x
Elementary accounting		x				x (2)

Master of Taxation Curriculum Comparison to Aspirant Schools						
School	FAU	FAU	Georgia State University	Georgia State University	University at Albany (SUNY)	University at Albany (SUNY)
Degree	Master of Taxation	Master of Taxation	Master of Taxation	Master of Taxation	M.S. in Taxation	M.S. in Taxation Practice
Concentration/Track	N/A	non- accounting track	One Year Cohort	One Year Cohort/non accounting track	accounting majors only	non-accounting majors only
Classes	10	up to 12	10	up to 16	10	up to 18
Credits	30	up to 36	30	up to 46	30	up to 54
Communication Course	1	1	0	0	0	0
non-accounting track courses	0	1	0	0	0	0
Core Courses	9	7	10	10	4	4
Concentration Courses	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elective Courses	0	0	0	0	6	6
non-accounting major prerequisites	0	up to 2 (6 credit hrs)	0	up to 6 (18 credit hrs.)	0	up to 8 (24 credit hrs)
Accounting prerequisites	0	1	0	1	0	6
Auditing prerequisites	0	0	0	0	0	1
Finance prerequisites	0	1	0	0	0	0
Taxation prerequisites	0	0	0	1	0	1
Behavioral Science	0	0	0	1	0	0
Mathematics	0	0	0	1	0	0
Economic prerequisites	0	0	0	1	0	0
Business Law prerequisites	0	0	0	1	0	0
Semester Length	15 weeks	15 weeks	15 weeks	15 weeks	15 weeks	15 weeks
Duration	28 months	28 months	12 months	12+ months	12 months	24+ months

Master of Taxation Course Comparison to Aspirant Schools						
School	FAU	FAU	Georgia State University	Georgia State University	University at Albany (SUNY)	University at Albany (SUNY)
Degree	Master of Taxation	Master of Taxation	Master of Taxation	Master of Taxation	M.S. in Taxation	M.S. in Taxation Practice
Concentration/Track	N/A	non- accounting track	One Year Cohort	One Year Cohort/non accounting track	accounting majors only	non-accounting majors only
Federal Income Tax	x	x	x	x		
Tax Research	x	x	x	x	x	x
Corporate Taxation	x	x	x	x	x	x
Advanced Corporate Taxation	x	x				
Partnership Taxation	x	x	x	x	x	x
Estates & Trusts Taxation	x	x	x	x		
International Taxation	x	x	x	x		
Contemporary Tax Topics	x		x	x		
IRS Practice and Procedures	x	x	x	x		
Writing for Tax Accountants	x	x				
Intermediate Accounting		x				x (3)
Individual Taxation			x	x		
State and Local Taxation			x	x		
Tax Electives					x (2)	x (2)
Accounting Electives					x (2)	x (2)
General Business Electives					x (2)	x (2)
Seminar in Taxation and Financial Planning					x	x
Cost Accounting						
Auditing						x
Income Tax Introduction to Taxation						x (2)
Finance		x				
Elementary accounting		x				x (2)

### Prerequisites and non-accounting track

One of the largest differences between Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and its peer and aspirant schools is how FAU treats its students who earned non-accounting business and non-business undergraduate degrees. Students admitted to the EMTAX program are required to take up to two prerequisite courses before starting their core coursework. These courses are equivalent to three undergraduate courses (ACG 6027, Financial Accounting Concepts, is equivalent to two elementary accounting courses and FIN 6406, Financial Management, is equivalent to FIN 3404, Principles of Financial Management). FAU is the only university in the comparison that modifies its program curriculum for students who earned undergraduate degrees in non-accounting business or non-business areas. ACG 6137, Financial Reporting and Concepts, which is equivalent to ACG 3131, Intermediate Theory 1, and ACG 3141, Intermediate Theory 2, replaces TAX 6875, Contemporary Tax Topics. Other universities either require intermediate accounting before starting the program or the prerequisites are added to the program, thereby increasing the length of the program.

At Florida International University (FIU), a peer school, students who were non-accounting business undergraduate majors take up to eight prerequisites before entering its program. FIU may require up to six graduate level prerequisites of conditionally admitted students. Students who earned non-business undergraduate degrees are required to take additional classes through the MBA program or take their undergraduate equivalent.

Western New England University (also a peer school) admits students who earned non-accounting business or non-business undergraduate degrees into their program conditionally. Once admitted, students are required to complete up to nine classes within a two-year period. During this time, students are only allowed to take up to two graduate courses towards their degree. This requirement has the potential to nearly double the program's length.

At Georgia State University (an aspirant school), students who earned non-accounting business or non-business undergraduate degrees can complete the Master of Taxation in one year; however, they may need to take up to six prerequisite courses before starting the program.

University at Albany (an aspirant school) typically only accepts students who earned an undergraduate accounting degree into its one-year program. However, students who earned non-accounting business undergraduate degrees may start the program if they complete 24 credit hours in undergraduate accounting. In addition to the academic requirements, the School of Business only accepts those who have a minimum of three years of full time work experience in the accounting field.

### Curriculum

FAU is the only university in this comparison that requires a communication course. Other universities may have effective communication as a desired learning outcome or objective; however, their curriculum does not explicitly address the issue. FAU's EMTAX is unique because most universities in this comparison do not offer a master's degree in taxation; taxation is offered as a concentration within the overall Master of Accounting curriculum. FAU's EMTAX offers courses in federal income tax, tax research, IRS practices and procedures, estates and trusts taxation, corporate taxation, partnership taxation, international taxation, "S" corporation taxation, and writing for tax accountants. Students who earned a non-accounting undergraduate degree substitute TAX 6875, Contemporary Tax Topics, for the intermediate accounting class ACG 6137, Financial Reporting and Accounting Concepts. Students who earned a non-accounting undergraduate degree may also have to take two foundation courses in accounting and finance.

#### *FAU EMTAX Program Course List*

ACG 6137 Financial Reporting and Accounting Concepts (non-accounting majors only)  
TAX 6025 Concepts of Federal Income Tax  
TAX 6065 Tax Research  
TAX 6105 Corporate Taxation  
TAX 6115 Advanced Corporate Taxation  
TAX 6205 Partnership Taxation

TAX 6405 Estates and Trusts: planning and Taxation  
TAX 6525 International Taxation  
TAX 6875 Contemporary Tax Topics (accounting majors only)  
TAX 6877 IRS Practices and Procedures  
TAX 6878 Writing for Tax Accountants

*FAU Business Foundation Course List*

ACG 6027 Financial Accounting Concepts  
FIN 6406 Financial Management

FIU redesigned the taxation curriculum and no longer offers the Executive Master of Science in Taxation. Instead, FIU offers the Master of Accounting with a taxation concentration. Students take two core courses: ACG 6176, Evaluation of Financial Reports, Business Analysis and Valuation; and TAX 6877, Seminar in Taxation; and eight electives. Of the eight electives, students can choose among ten taxation courses and one business law course. Students who earned undergraduate degrees as non-accounting business majors can be accepted into the program under the condition that they take six accelerated courses in the following areas: financial accounting, cost accounting, taxation, and business law. Students who earned undergraduate degrees that were in non-business areas will be required to complete additional courses from MBA course offerings.

*FIU Master of Accounting: Taxation Concentration Program Course List*

ACG 6176 Evaluation of Financial Reports, Business Analysis and Valuation  
TAX 6877 Seminar in Taxation

*FIU Electives (choose eight of the following)*

TAX 6026 Value-Added Tax Strategies for Business Decisions  
TAX 6065 Tax Research, Practice and Procedures  
TAX 6107 Federal Corporate Taxation  
TAX 6876 Transactions in Property  
TAX 6206 Taxation of Pass-Through Entities  
TAX 6305 State and Local Taxation  
TAX 6446 Wealth Transfers  
TAX 6507 Principles of International Taxation  
TAX 6875 Current Developments in Taxation  
TAX 6935 Special Topics in Taxation  
BUL 6890 Special Topics in Law

*FIU Accounting undergraduate equivalents*

ACG 6105 Accelerated Financial Accounting I  
ACG 6115 Accelerated Financial Accounting II  
ACG 6345 Management Accounting and Control  
ACG 6655 Auditing and Accounting Systems  
TAX 6005 Income Tax  
BUL 6830 Survey of Business Law

Western New England University (WNEU) offers the Master of Accounting with a Taxation concentration. The master's degree requires each student to complete seven core courses: cost accounting, government accounting, accounting theory, taxation, auditing, business valuation, and finance. The taxation concentration requires two taxation courses and one business law course. The tax research class prepares students to take one law class within the LL.M program. Students who earned undergraduate degrees in non-accounting areas may enter the program under the condition that they complete up to nine foundation courses within a two-year period; during this time, they may only complete two graduate courses towards their degree. The foundation courses, because they are undergraduate-level, will not count towards their program GPA.

*WNEU Master of Accounting: Taxation Concentration Program Course List*

AC 610 Cost-Based Decision-Making  
AC 611 Municipal and Fund Accounting  
AC 622 Accounting Theory & Contemporary Issues  
AC 614 Advanced Taxation of Business Entities  
AC 620 Advanced Topics in Auditing and Assurance Services  
FIN 612 Business Analysis and Valuation  
FIN 630 Managerial Finance  
AC 646 Selected Topics in Taxation  
AC 647 Taxation Research and Writing  
LLME 803 Federal Wealth Transfer Taxes or LLME 804 Federal Income Taxation of Estates & Trusts

*WNEU Undergraduate Foundation Courses*

AC 201 Financial Reporting  
AC 202 Managerial Accounting  
AC 305 Financial Reporting II  
AC 306 Financial Reporting III  
AC 309 Cost Accounting  
AC 330 Accounting Information Systems  
AC 413 Fundamental Concepts of Taxation  
AC 419 Auditing and Assurance Services  
FIN 214 Introduction to Finance

Georgia State University (GSU) offers the Master of Taxation which can be completed within one year. The taxation program offers similar classes to the FAU EMTAX except for TX 8270, State and Local Taxation, and TX 8510, Issues in Individual Tax. FAU's EMTAX, instead, offers TAX 6115, Advanced Corporate Taxation, and TAX 6878, Writing for Tax Accountants. Georgia State University allows part-time students to complete the master's degree within five years. Students who earned non-accounting undergraduate degrees may be required to complete an additional six foundation courses in six general areas (accounting, behavioral science, economics, mathematics, statistics, and taxation) before starting the program.

*GSU Master of Taxation Program Course List*

TX 8020 Advanced Federal Income Taxation  
TX 8030 Tax Research

TX 8040 Tax Practice and Procedures  
TX 8080 Taxation of Partnerships and Partners  
TX 8120 Taxation of Corporations and Shareholders  
TX 8180 Current Topics in Taxation  
TX 8220 Estate/Gift Taxation & Estate Planning  
TX 8270 State and Local Taxation  
TX 8300 International Aspects of Taxation  
TX 8510 Issues in Individual Tax

*GSU Foundation and Prerequisite Courses*

ACCT 2101 Financial Accounting Principles (may take MBA equivalent)  
Soci 1101 Sociology (or psychology, or anthropology, or buyer behavior, or management principles, or managerial decision making)  
Econ 2106 Microeconomic principles  
MATH 1111 College Algebra  
MATH 1070 Statistics (may take MBA equivalent)  
ACCT 4510 Taxation

University at Albany's (UA) curriculum differs from the others in this comparison because of its heavy reliance on electives. The University at Albany offers two taxation master's degrees; one (the MS in Taxation) for students who earned undergraduate degrees in accounting and another (the MS in Taxation Practice) for students who earned undergraduate degrees in non-accounting areas. The program curriculum is the same; however, the MS Taxation Practice is not focused on the expectation that the students will take the CPA exam, includes prerequisites, and is tailored to meet the needs of students who earned non-accounting undergraduate degrees. Students are required to take four core classes in tax research, corporate taxation, partnership taxation, and a taxation capstone course. The rest of the program consists of 18 credits of electives: six from taxation, six from accounting, and six credits from general business. During the program, students are required to take six classes in taxation, compared to nine classes at FAU or 10 classes at Georgia State.

*UA MS in Taxation/MS in Taxation Practice Program Course List*

ACC 631 Principles of Tax Research  
ACC 633 Corporation Taxation  
ACC 642 Taxation of Partnerships  
ACC 694 Seminar in Taxation and Financial Planning  
2 Tax Electives  
2 Accounting Electives  
2 General Business Electives

Duration

FAU's EMTAX is a 28-month program because it does not offer classes in the spring to better accommodate working professionals during tax season. Other programs do not make the same accommodation. The length of the programs at other universities can be much longer due to the number of prerequisites required.

## **SWOT Analysis**

A SWOT analysis was undertaken as a means of further enhancing the self-assessment by identifying the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the EMTAX program.

### Strengths:

- College of Business accredited by AACSB
- Highly-qualified faculty
- Exceptional education delivery approach which makes obtaining education more convenient for non-traditional students
- Highly competent IT team
- Highly competent executive program support staff
- FAU located in a geographical area in which quality instructors can be found

### Weaknesses:

- Lack of sufficient staff to help with admissions and other tasks
- Have not formally assessed executive program as has been done in for traditional MTAX
- Have not tracked graduates well enough to determine long-term assessment
- Do not have a job placement function

### Opportunities:

- Potential to increase quality of applicants due to recent change in admission criteria
- Potential to increase quality of program by means of formal assessment (we are working on this)

### Threats:

- The tax masters education market is mature and saturated
- Increasing competition from online programs that have lower obstacles for admission

## **F. Internships**

At the present time, the EMTAX degree program does not have internships and does not expect to offer or arrange internships. The main reasons are (1) its students are so geographically dispersed that there is no practical manner by which all students can have an equal opportunity to engage in an internship and (2) the program does not have sufficient resources in terms of staff time to seek out possible internship opportunities.

## **G. Pedagogy/Pedagogical Innovations**

All faculty members teaching in the EMTAX program are encouraged to participate in training programs promoting innovative methods of teaching offered by the university.

For example, the FAU's Center for eLearning fosters development of faculty proposals for eLearning course development and delivery.

In addition to training offered by the university, the SOAEP offers individual training to its instructors. This training is delivered by the SOAEP IT team and consists of customized sessions based on individual professors' needs. New faculty members usually use the IT's assistance to familiarize themselves with a platform used for course material management and lecture delivery (Blackboard) as well as the tools they can utilize within this platform (Power Point presentations, supplemental recordings, Whiteboard, etc.)

## **H. Recruitment Strategies**

The first stage of recruitment strategies is planning marketing campaigns designed to attract candidates matching a specific profile.

The EMTAX degree program is advertised in local newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and online. This blend of advertising media reaches a broad spectrum of prospective students. An ideal candidate for the EMTAX program is a person with an accounting background and at least three or four years of job experience although candidates from various disciplines (such as finance) and backgrounds (such as experienced tax preparers) not only succeed in the program but also contribute to the education of their fellow students by, for example, providing their experiences and thoughts in threaded discussions.

The length of the recruiting process depends on a given candidate. Some program candidates make a decision to apply during their first conversation with recruiting advisors. After making such a decision, the candidate is connected to an Admissions Advisor who collects all necessary information, processes it and, after successful admission, introduces the candidate to a Retentions Advisor.

Some program candidates require more time to make a decision to apply. Those prospective students usually will speak with a Recruiting Advisor at least a few times, are not sure if the program is a good match for them, and compare the program with programs offered by other schools. They also seek information pertaining to their potential future career and may want to speak with a few program alumni. The goal of the SOAEP advising staff is to provide these candidates with comprehensive information that will make them comfortable with their final decision and discuss with them all options available within the SOAEP or SOA. If they prefer a more traditional approach and want to attend classes on a daily basis, they are referred to advisors in the traditional accounting program. The objective is to help students find the program that best matches their educational goals.

Over the years different recruiting strategies have been tested. Because of the hybrid nature of the program, open houses with live streamed video feeds did not work well. Usually, a large group of prospective students signed up for them but only a fraction attended.

Recently, the number of students who have heard about the program through word of mouth has been increasing. This increase may be due to the strong reputation of the program and an increasing awareness among those interested in forensic accounting.

The plan for the future includes hiring a Recruiting Advisor with an accounting background who, partly because of his or her knowledge and understanding of accounting, who will be able to nurture student leads and convert them into applications.

## **I. Advising Procedures**

Students are aided by six different types of advising:

1. Recruiting
2. Admissions
3. Financial Aid
4. Retention
5. Other: Academic Director, COB Graduate Advising Office / Graduate College, Faculty
6. Writing Consultant

These types of advising are discussed below.

1. Recruiting Advisors provide prospective students with information pertaining to the program and the application process. They answer career-related questions and provide information of program benefits.

2. Admission Advisors discuss with the students admission requirements in detail and provide to the applicant the checklist of all necessary documents that have to be submitted in order to process student's application. Usually, this process is accomplished by a phone conversation that is followed by email messages pertaining to the documents received and those that still must be submitted. Prospective students are informed of the status of their application and given an approximate timeframe within which the final decision on their application will be made.

3. Financial Advisors begin to communicate with a student as soon as he or she expresses a wish to apply. Available financial aid options are discussed and students are directed to the financial aid university website to apply for financial aid. For students paying out-of-pocket, an installment plan is designed. The phone or in-person discussion is followed by email correspondence. Financial Advisors also inform students of deadlines that could affect changes in their tuition rates and the financial aspects of withdrawals.

4. The Retention Advisor assists students in successful program completion. This Advisor is responsible for tracking students' progress, staying in touch with them each semester, fostering communication between themselves and professors or other departments, assisting in course schedule adjustments and book shipments, helping with registration for courses that are not offered by the SOAEP but required for CPA licensure, and any other function believed to be important to student success in the program.

5. Others, such as the SOAEP Academic Director, COB Graduate Advising Office staff, the Graduate College, and faculty might become involved to settle more complicated academic issues and unavoidable disputes.

Faculty members play an important role in student advising. Students may consult with them on issues such as studying for the CPA or EA exams, working on individual projects that add to real life job skills, starting an independent study course, or collaborating on a research paper.

6. Additional advising pertaining to writing skills is provided on as needed basis by the SOAEP's Writing Consultant who provides advice on preparing resumes and cover letters.

#### **J. Placement Rates/Employment Profile**

The SOAEP does not adequately track its graduates' employment. It expects to begin this process at some point. This task is difficult for a few reasons. First of all, SOAEP students are scattered over the U.S. and other parts of the world and, after graduation, they do not always stay in touch with FAU. Attempts to contact them to update their files and learn about their present employment have been highly unsuccessful due to changed physical addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers.

The SOAEP does not have a job placement center but works at notifying students about position offers. These offers are usually obtained from accounting firms and are posted on a secure website accessible only to SOAEP students. Students are also referred to FAU's Career Development Center and informed of all networking events organized by the university (which are of limited benefit to those students physically located outside the southeast Florida area).

SOAEP's goal is to build a strong connection between its students and accounting firms. To reconnect with alumni, the SOAEP began publishing a newsletter (titled "Reconnect") addressed to alumni, students and professors. The effort is beginning to pay off: it has produced an increasing number of job offers shared by students and alumni. Finally, a free resume review service is provided to all students and alumni by an SOAEP writing consultant.

## Certificate in Healthcare Fraud Examination, Risk Management and Compliance

### A. Enrollment – Headcount

<b>Enrollment – Certificate in Healthcare Fraud Examination, Risk Management and Compliance</b>		
<b>Term</b>	<b>Spring 2012</b>	<b>Summer 2012</b>
<b>Cohort</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Dropped</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Terminated</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Graduated</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Dropped Percentage</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
<b>Terminated Percentage</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>Retention Percentage</b>	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>90.9%</b>
<b>Graduation Percentage</b>	<b>80.0%</b>	<b>90.9%</b>

The Certificate in Healthcare Fraud Examination, Risk Management and Compliance was first offered in the Spring 2012 semester and again during the Summer 2012 semester with the hope of future growth. The idea behind the certificate was to meet an important and timely need in the marketplace for education about fraud examination issues in the healthcare industry. Among the SOAEP faculty members there were experienced practitioners very eager to assist with the program creation and its operations; because of this, we hoped that the certificate would be successful and fulfill its mission of educating those persons interested in preventing and detecting healthcare fraud, engaging in risk management and compliance issues specific to the healthcare industry.

Unfortunately, after two semesters, the inability to obtain credentialed status for qualified instructors who taught graduate courses in this certificate program made offering the certificate nearly impossible. There is hope, however, that the SOAEP will be able to offer the certificate in a non-credit version (using the same curriculum as was used in the credit version) in the future.

### B. Degrees Conferred

Students do not earn a specific degree by completing the certificate. They can, however, enhance their education by adding this certificate to the list of their educational accomplishments. If, after earning the certificate, they choose to join the EMFAP to earn the Master of Accounting with a concentration in Forensic Accounting degree, they can further expand their options for future employment.

## **C. Learning Goals**

The main learning objectives include, among others, the following: (a) familiarizing students with fraud examination concepts in healthcare, (b) helping them recognize fraudulent activities and how these activities are perpetrated (e.g., improper coding, insurance fraud, overcharging for services rendered), and (c) testing those skills by analyzing specific healthcare fraud cases.

These learning goals were accomplished by requiring students to take two practicum courses that were taught by a national expert in healthcare fraud detection and providing the opportunity, by means of guest lecturers, for students to hear from healthcare fraud prosecutors and law enforcement officers.

## **D. Admission Standards**

The current admission standards (that pertain to the credit-earning certificate) are as follows:

- The student must have attained junior standing or higher and been admitted to FAU either as a degree-seeking or non-degree-seeking student.
- The student is to have completed an introduction to statistics course with a grade of “C” or above. Students must provide proof in the form of an official transcript from a regionally-accredited college or university. Proof in the form of a departmental letter, signed by an official administrator from the school where the course was completed, may be accepted as temporary proof pending the receipt of an official transcript. Such a letter must be sent on official letterhead and contain the telephone number of the signer. If the School of Accounting Executive Programs (SOAEP) does not receive a confirming transcript within the first two weeks of the semester in which the student is enrolled in ACG 5932, Healthcare Audit and Fraud Examination Principles I, the student will be administratively dropped from the course resulting in the complete loss of paid or owed fees. By registering for ACG 5932, Healthcare Audit and Fraud Examination Principles I, the student accepts full responsibility for providing the proof as required.
- The student is to have a minimum grade point average of 3.00 for last 30 college semester hours completed.
- The student is to provide, at the time of application, a written statement that addresses the reasons why he or she wants to earn this certificate and what he or she expects to learn from earning this certificate.
- Participation in the Certificate in Healthcare Fraud Examination, Risk Management and Compliance program requires that the student be admitted to the university as a degree-seeking or non-degree-seeking student and be approved by all applicable offices on campus to register for courses.

- If the student is currently pursuing a masters in accounting degree (forensic concentration) in the SOAEP, he or she must have completed the first three (3) semesters of his or her program and be in good academic standing with at least a 3.0 average.
- Persons with all majors are encouraged to apply, including accounting majors as well as those who major (or minor) in other areas of business, criminal justice, healthcare, and other areas such as science and English. Acceptance into the program is made on a case-by-case basis.
- If the student had been previously dismissed from any graduate program at Florida Atlantic University, the student may be prohibited from registering for certificate-program courses due to Graduate College policies. Any student who previously has been dismissed from a FAU graduate program should contact the office of the SOAEP before applying to the Certificate in Healthcare Fraud Examination, Risk Management, and Compliance program.

No admission criteria have been formulated for the non-credit version of this certificate (the SOAEP has not admitted any students to the non-credit version).

## **E. Curriculum**

The Certificate in Healthcare Fraud Examination, Risk Management, and Compliance is a four-course certificate program designed to provide students with specialized knowledge and skills relating to healthcare fraud and abuse investigations and regulatory compliance. Some of the important subject areas covered in the program include methods for investigating healthcare fraud and abuse, preventing and handling claim audits, and compliance with the PPACA, HIPAA, False Claims Act, Stark laws, the Federal Anti-kickback Statute, and other laws and regulations. The courses in the program are offered in a lock-step manner, so that completion of the entire program takes one year.

The four courses required to earn the certificate are as follows:

ACG 5932 Accounting Fraud Examination for Healthcare  
 ACG 5932 Healthcare Industry Overview: accounting, reimbursement, and internal control perspective  
 ACG 5932 Healthcare Audit & Fraud Examination Principles I  
 ACG 5932 Healthcare Audit & Fraud Examination Principles II

There are no other Healthcare Fraud Examination, Risk Management, and Compliance programs in existence; therefore, no comparable curriculum exists.

## **SWOT Analysis**

A SWOT analysis was undertaken as a means of further enhancing the self-assessment by identifying the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the Healthcare Fraud Examination, Risk Management and Compliance Certificate program.

### Strengths:

- College of Business accredited by AACSB
- Highly-qualified faculty
- Exceptional education delivery approach and IT team
- Highly competent executive program support staff
- National leader in healthcare fraud, risk management, and compliance an area that is recognized as very important
- Geographically well-positioned: Miami has been called the epicenter of healthcare fraud

### Weaknesses:

- Lack of sufficient staff to help with admissions and other tasks
- Inability to credential qualified faculty

### Opportunities:

- Potential to increase size of certificate program

### Threats:

- Eventual increase in competition from online programs

## **F. Internships**

At the present time, FAU's Healthcare Fraud Examination, Risk Management and Compliance Certificate program does not have internships and does not expect to offer or arrange internships. The main reasons are (1) its students are so geographically dispersed that there is not practical manner by which all students can have an equal opportunity to engage in an internship and (2) the program does not have sufficient resources in terms of staff time to seek out possible internship opportunities.

## **G. Pedagogy/Pedagogical Innovations**

All faculty members teaching in the Healthcare Fraud Examination, Risk Management and Compliance Certificate program are encouraged to participate in training programs promoting innovative methods of teaching offered by the university. For example, FAU's Center for eLearning fosters development of faculty proposals for eLearning course development and delivery.

In addition to training offered by the university, the SOAEP offers individual training to its instructors. This training is delivered by the SOAEP IT team and consists of customized sessions based on individual professors' needs. New faculty members usually use the IT's assistance to familiarize themselves with a platform used for course material management and lecture delivery (Blackboard) as well as the tools they can utilize within this platform (Power Point presentations, supplemental recordings, Whiteboard, etc.)

## **H. Recruitment Strategies**

Recruitment strategies include working with industry experts and advertising on the radio, and placing newspaper ads.

Admission Advisors usually discuss the program over the phone, via email or in person. Some of the candidates want to speak with professors teaching in the program about the program itself and career options. Finally, there are prospective students who wish to speak with someone who completed the program.

## **I. Advising Procedures**

Students are exposed to three different types of advising:

1. Recruiting/Admissions
2. Financial
3. Retention

1. Recruiting/Admission Advisors provide prospective students with information pertaining to the program and application process. They answer career related questions and inform of program benefits pertaining to that aspect. Usually, a phone conversation is followed by email messages as a means of following up.

2. The Financial Advisor begins to communicate with a student as soon as he/she expresses a wish to apply. Available options are discussed. For students paying out-of-pocket, an installment plan is designed. The phone or in-person discussion is followed by email correspondence. The Financial Advisor also informs students of all deadlines for payments.

3. The Retention Advisor assists students in successful program completion. This Advisor is responsible for tracking students' progress, staying in touch with them each semester, fostering their communication with professors or other departments, assisting in course schedule adjustments and book shipments, and helping with registration.

## **J. Placement Rates/Employment Profile**

Because some of the students work for hospitals, consulting or insurance firms, they are not necessarily looking for job placement options. Those students who are searching for positions often find them through referrals from their professors or peers. Finally, the SOAEP's newsletter (Reconnect) is a good platform for keeping students well-informed. The newsletter provides student testimonials and tips on how to actively search for a position.

## **Business Valuation Certificate**

### **A. Enrollment – Headcount**

The SOAEP has offered the certificate only to one cohort group. Students began the program in the summer of 2012 and finished in the fall of 2012. Six students completed the certificate.

### **B. Degrees Conferred**

No degrees are conferred. As mentioned above, six students completed the certificate, resulting in a 100% completion rate.

### **C. Learning Goals**

The primary learning goal is for students to be able to complete a real-world business valuation. This goal is assessed by assigning and grading comprehensive cases in the courses.

### **D. Admission Standards**

The certificate is only available to second-year students enrolled in the EMFAP. As a result, the admission standards that were described in the section on the EMFAP are the admission standards used for this certificate program.

### **E. Curriculum**

The certificate covers a sub-specialty within the EMFAP. It expands on the students' required courses in fraud examination and business valuation. To complete the certificate, students must take two additional elective courses as part of their Master of Accounting with a Concentration in Forensic Accounting degree program. These two courses add one or two semesters to the length of students' degree program.

Given the unique nature of the program and enrollment being limited to the final year of a specialized graduate degree program, there are no comparison programs.

Course Title	Description
Business Valuation for Forensic Accountants 2 (ACG 6935) 3 credits	A study of cost of capital ; valuation report writing; intermediate application of the income, market, and asset approaches to valuation; valuation synthesis; discounts and premiums; pass-through tax entities; and expert witnessing in valuation for litigation, financial reporting, taxation, and transactions.
Business Valuation for Forensic Accountants - Advanced Topics (ACG 6935) 3 credits	Course covers such topics as the valuation of intangible assets and an introduction to fair value measurements in financial reporting for business combinations and impairment testing of intangible assets and goodwill.

### **SWOT Analysis**

A SWOT analysis was undertaken as a means of further enhancing the self-assessment by identifying the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats facing the Business Valuation Certificate Program.

#### Strengths:

- College of Business accredited by AACSB
- Highly-qualified faculty, one of whom is a former chairperson of the AICPA Business Valuations committee
- Exceptional education delivery approach and IT team
- Highly competent executive program support staff
- Business valuation is currently a highly-sought after skill

#### Weaknesses:

- Lack of sufficient staff to help with admissions and other tasks
- Inability to credential qualified faculty

#### Opportunities:

- Potential to become leader in business valuation education

#### Threats:

- Eventual increase in competition from online programs

## **F. Internships**

At the present time, FAU's Business Valuation Certificate program does not have internships and does not expect to offer or arrange internships. The main reasons are (1) its students are so geographically dispersed that there is not practical manner by which all students can have an equal opportunity to engage in an internship and (2) the program does not have sufficient resources in terms of staff time to seek out possible internship opportunities.

## **G. Pedagogy/Pedagogical Innovations**

All faculty members teaching in the Business Valuation Certificate program are encouraged to participate in training programs promoting innovative methods of teaching offered by the university. For example, FAU's Center for eLearning fosters development of faculty proposals for eLearning course development and delivery.

In addition to training offered by the university, the SOAEP offers individual training to its instructors. This training is delivered by the SOAEP IT team and consists of customized sessions based on individual professors' needs. New faculty members usually use the IT's assistance to familiarize themselves with a platform used for course material management and lecture delivery (Blackboard) as well as the tools they can utilize within this platform (Power Point presentations, supplemental recordings, Whiteboard, etc.)

## **H. Recruitment Strategies**

Recruiting is not necessary for this certificate program. This certificate is made available as a within-program option for students enrolled in the EMFAP.

## **I. Advising Procedures**

Does not apply.

## **J. Placement Rates/Employment Profile**

This certificate program is only offered as part of the EMFAP; see the "Placement rates / employment profile" section for that program.

### **Questions for Reviewers**

1. Is the SOAEP using its resources effectively? If not, how can it change its processes to use its resources more effectively?
2. Are there any weaknesses not identified by the SOAEP that, if addressed, would enable to SOAEP to better fulfill its mission?
3. How can we better connect with alumni?