

**Master in Migration Studies**  
**Assessment - 2023**  
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**Mission Statement**

The Master in Migration Studies reflects the University's commitment to "distinguish itself as a diverse, socially responsible learning community of high quality scholarship and academic rigor." The Master in Migration Studies Program meets a critical need to educate students and future professionals in the theoretical and practical bases for understanding, evaluating, creating, and implementing strategies that transform the realities of migrants, not only in the Americas, but throughout the world. The curriculum provides students the opportunity to analyze one of the most important social issues of the 21st century from multiple disciplinary perspectives and from direct experience with scholars, service providers, and migrants. The program will be of benefit to individuals hoping to develop migration policies, provide support services to migrant communities, lead non-governmental organizations and international agencies, and head government agencies.

**Program Learning Outcomes**

At the end of the program, students will be able to:

1. Critically analyze the theories, concepts, and research findings in migration studies from an interdisciplinary perspective.
2. Evaluate the role of governments and civil society organizations in community representation, policy creation, and resource allocation in relation to migration and mobility.
3. Apply knowledge of the humane, legal, and political characteristics of migration as a social reality and create related social interventions.
4. Plan, generate, and interpret a research study on an important issue in migration studies.
5. Develop field studies among migrant communities to understand realities, dynamics and logics of migration.

**Curricular Map**

In spring 2023, the Master in Migration Studies advisory board approved a curriculum change that increased the units of each course from 3 to 4, while keeping the overall units required for the degree the same. The MIMS advisory committee approved a new curricular map that reflects these changes at its meeting on December 4th, 2023.

	PLO1	PLO2	PLO3	PLO4	PLO5
	Critically analyze theories, concepts, and research findings in migration studies from an interdisciplinary perspective	Evaluate the role of governments and civil society organizations in community cooperation, policy creation, and resource allocation in relation to migration.	Apply knowledge of the humane, legal, and political characteristics of migration as a social reality	Utilize different methodologies to understand the migration phenomenon	Plan, generate, and develop field studies among migrant communities and a research study on an important issue in migration studies
MIMS 601 Policy and Perspectives	Introductory	Introductory	Introductory	Introductory	N/A
MIMS 602 Research Methods	Developing	N/A	Introductory	Developing	Introductory
MIMS 604 Cultural Manifestations	Developing	N/A	Developing	Developing	N/A
MIMS 605 Introduction to MIMS	Introductory	Introductory	Introductory	Introductory or N/A	Introductory
MIMS 611 Critical Refugee Studies	Developing	Developing	Developing	Introductory	Introductory
MIMS 609 Capstone	Mastery	Mastery	Mastery	Mastery	Mastery
MIMS Special Topics	Developing or Mastery	Developing or Mastery	Developing or Mastery	Developing or Mastery	Developing
Internship	N/A	Mastery	Mastery	Mastery	Mastery

## **Assessment Timeline**

PLO 1 was assessed in 2017, PLO 2 was assessed in 2018, PLO 3 was assessed in 2019, and an overall assessment was conducted in 2021. No assessment was carried out in 2022.

Based on this background, in 2023 we are starting a new cycle of assessing individual PLOs. In addition, we are assessing the program's curriculum and career outcomes.

## **Assessment, Results and findings**

### **PLO1. Critically analyze theories, concepts, and research findings in migration studies from an interdisciplinary perspective**

PLO1 was assessed through direct methods, reviewing student work in MIMS 602 Research methods (scheduled for their second semester), and MIMS 609 Capstone (schedules for their fourth semester).

#### *MIMS 602. Research Methods*

Student work for the final assignment for the course, 'Chapter 1' of their capstone project, was reviewed. This assignment includes a brief literature review and research design, and can thus be reviewed to assess students' knowledge of and engagement with the background literature, as well as their ability to situate their own research within existing literature. Overall, student work from the fall 2022 iteration of the course showed that the learning outcome was met at the developing level, as intended by the curricular map.

The review of student work was corroborated by a brief interview with the instructor of the course over the past two years, dr. Didem Ekici, who suggested that more detailed guidelines be developed for the final capstone, in order to guide student work in the research methods course.

#### *MIMS 609. Capstone.*

MIMS 609 capstone course has the objective of leading students through the drafting of their final project, which may be a thesis, publishable article or applied project. Regardless of their choice, all students are required to include a literature review in their final capstone project.

In order to assess how well this course has met PLO1, the literature review section of the final capstone for all students graduating in spring 2023 was reviewed. In particular, three aspects of the literature review were assessed: breadth of literature cited, engagement with the literature, and situation of the research project in the literature. Overall, all the capstones reviewed showed extensive engagement with the literature and a successful situation of the capstone within

broader academic and policy debates. With regards to the breadth of the literature cited, 75% of the projects cited a wide range of literature, showing command of the field, while the remaining 25% relied on a more restricted range of sources. In addition, about 25% of the capstone projects summarized articles as opposed to making more general conceptual points. Overall, based on the overview of student capstones, the course effectively met the PLO1 at the mastery level.

### *Summary*

The current curriculum allows students to achieve PLO1 at the appropriate level at different stages of the curriculum.

### **Curriculum and career outcomes**

We carried out an overall assessment of the program curriculum and career outcomes, based on student exit surveys handed out at the end of every academic year. The exit surveys include quantitative questions about student learning and level of confidence in a range of different skill areas, as well as a series of open ended questions on the program's strengths and weaknesses, and their existing and desired career outcomes. This report will discuss survey results from 2021, 2022 and 2023. This data was then corroborated with an alumni survey carried out in summer 2023.

### *Curriculum & Academic Support*

Students identified border immersion trips, relationships with faculty and the sense of community within MIMS as the most impactful academic experiences of the program. Other elements that were also mentioned by multiple students were the opportunity to study abroad at the Universidad Iberoamericana, the quality and variety of courses offered, and the opportunity to carry out independent research.

In terms of areas of the curriculum that could be altered, many students identified the program as being overly focused on the Americas and requested that the curriculum be broadened to include other regions and migratory experiences. Other observations included the need for the program to offer more policy related courses, as well as more practice-based ones, while also appreciating the existing theoretical and conceptual foundations of the curriculum. Some suggestions include adding a quantitative methods element to the curriculum. Overall, students were generally satisfied with the type and number of courses offered, as well as the workload.

Students identified a variety of areas where additional support would be needed. A key area is increased financial support, mentorship in navigating the program (in particular more

unstructured elements such as the capstone), and further support in accessing internships and employment opportunities.

### *Skills*

Based on a series of quantitative questions (on a scale from 1 to 5), recent graduates seem very confident in the skills they have to offer following the end of the program. The skill they are most confident in having acquired is research, followed by writing.

	Average (mean)	Most common answer (mode)
How much did your writing skills improve as a result of your participation in MIMS?	3.9	4
How confident do you feel in carrying out your own in-depth qualitative research?	4.1	4
Has your understanding of Ignatian values and practices/social justice improved?	3.8	4
How comfortable would you be approaching a community organization to offer your collaboration, partnership, or services?	4.2	5

### *Professional opportunities*

According to the exit survey, immediately post-graduation 74% of MIMS graduates are employed and 26% are not. Amongst those employed, the largest group works in educational settings (either in administration at USF or at other institutions, ranging from preschool to secondary education). The second largest group works in positions directly related to the MIMS degree, either in the legal field (as paralegals), or in the non-profit sector. A few others have administrative or sales positions that are not directly related to MIMS. In analyzing this data, it is important to note that the majority of MIMS students were employed while they were attending the program, so their employment data immediately following graduation is more likely to reflect their previous work than their career outcomes resulting from the MIMS program.

With regards to long-term career ambitions (where recent graduates had the opportunity to choose multiple options), by far the most interesting sector for graduates was the non-profit sector, closely followed by governmental agencies. The legal sector (including law school) and

foundations followed, with a small but significant number of respondents expressing interest in a PhD. The for-profit and think tank sector received very little interest.

This data was compared with our current alumni database, which includes alumni from the program since its foundation. According to this database, the great majority of alumni work in migration-related non-profit organizations. Roughly similar amounts of graduates work in the legal field and as staff in higher education institutions. Other less represented fields included local and state-level politics, international or intergovernmental organizations, government, and further higher education (PhD). Overall, career outcomes several years following graduation appear to match recent graduate's aspirations.

### *Concluding comments & recommendations*

Career outcomes generally seem positive for the program, based on the alumni and exit survey, and recent graduates are generally satisfied with the skills they have acquired. In terms of curricular development, key areas for improvement are the following:

- Expanding the geographic scope of the program (with a focus on migration corridors outside the Americas or beyond the LatinX experience) - we currently have some elective courses cross-listed with other programs that may do this
- Providing more training in quantitative methods - we currently offer a workshop in quantitative methods across MIMS, MAIS and UPA. We also offer a cross-listed GIS course through MAIS.
- Enhancing the 'practice' side of the program through a stronger focus on policy, and more developed connections with partners in the field, in order to also foster internships or career opportunities - the hire of a director of partnerships has allowed for more structured connections with external organizations, and more streamlined processes for placing students in internships.

Students also indicated the need for more financial support.