The University of Texas at Austin MPA program is committed to offering its students a comprehensive education. Our goal is to create highly qualified financial professionals that can serve as leaders in the business community. Our relationship with over two hundred employers allows us to gather input on the essential skills necessary to succeed and lead in today’s business world. Employers have told us unequivocally that one of those skills is a comprehensive knowledge of Microsoft Excel. It is easy to see why. Excel is used to perform a multitude of everyday business tasks and many employers rely on Excel for advanced business decision support. In short, employers will expect you to know how to execute advanced tasks in Excel such as filtering data, working with advanced functions, creating pivot tables, conducting v lookups, etc. Due to the importance and prevalence of Microsoft Excel, we’ve teamed with Cengage to design a series of self-paced online Microsoft Excel courses. As an added value, the online training and interactive project course also includes other popular Microsoft applications such as Access, Word and PowerPoint. The online course is called Skills Assessment Manager (SAM).

**Mandatory Excel Skills Testing**
Every incoming MPA student is required to complete all assigned Excel 2013 projects (not trainings or exams) in SAM and score at least 70% for each project. There are 10 projects in all. A typical path would include viewing an assigned project and reviewing the associated training sections. If you feel that you already have a deep knowledge of Excel, you may load the project into Excel 2013 and complete it. (It is highly recommended that you use Excel 2013 or later to complete the projects rather than earlier versions of Excel). If a score of 70% or higher is not achieved, you have the option of viewing the trainings and redoing the projects. Microsoft Access, Word and PowerPoint are provided as a courtesy. There is no mandatory testing associated with those products.

**Getting Started**
The total cost for the SAM training and testing program is only $50.00. It is easy to use, available 24/7 and you can get started right away! To purchase SAM 2013 and enroll in the SAM course follow the instructions below:

1. Navigate to: [http://www.cengagebrain.com/course/site.html?id=1-1VL89TP](http://www.cengagebrain.com/course/site.html?id=1-1VL89TP)
2. Click “Add to Cart”
3. On the next screen click “Checkout” and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the online purchase
4. Please note: This is an Instant Access Product. At the completion of your purchase, go to "My Home" to access this product
5. Go to: [http://sam.cengage.com](http://sam.cengage.com) and click the button to create a “new user”
6. Enter Institution Key T2044946 and then your access code (your code is case sensitive)
7. Create a user profile and accept the user agreement
8. Select link on Welcome page to join a section, choose the section provided by your instructor. The section you should join is “Texas MPA Class 2016 (summer 2015).” Click “Save”

**NOTE:** When returning to SAM, please return to [http://sam.cengage.com](http://sam.cengage.com) and enter your username and password created during the registration process. You will not need to remember your access code or Institution Key.

If you have any issues, tech support can assist at 1-800-354 9706 option 5, then 3 or at [www.cengage.com/support](http://www.cengage.com/support).

1. Your access to this product will stay active until you graduate.
   - It can be used during the school year if you need to learn something specific for a class you are taking.
   - You can take additional trainings during the summer or on breaks.
   - You can use it to learn other programs like Microsoft Access, Word or PowerPoint.
2. Our Excel training program has been customized for the Texas MPA program. If you have purchased a Cengage Skills Assessment Manager subscription at another educational institution, that account cannot be transferred to UT-Austin. Our program is available at a substantial discount vs. the manufacturer’s regular price and can be used in conjunction with all applicable MPA courses.

*Please note that you may not be able to purchase SAM from certain international locations, such as China. In this case, we would require you to complete the training within two weeks from the start of our program.

**Questions?** Please contact the MPA Program Office at: [MPA@mccombs.utexas.edu](mailto:MPA@mccombs.utexas.edu).