

EMPLOYERS PERCEPTIONS OF AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS
MANAGEMENT (ASM) GRADUATES COMPETENCIES AND
SKILL LEVEL IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

The University of Missouri Agricultural Systems Management and Agricultural Engineering Extension program is undergoing a six year review in order to evaluate whether or not the department is satisfying the needs of the community and student population. In order to increase the usefulness of this review a survey was sent to 100 employers of ASM graduates and self-employed ASM graduates asking for their perception of the skill level of the ASM graduate they employ and the importance of that skill to their industry for 11 general competencies and 29 ASM competencies that the ASM program is currently teaching in its curriculum.

The data generated by this survey was used to calculate a Mean Weight Discrepancy Score (MWDS) for each of the 40 skills in order to see which skills needed to be emphasized/de-emphasized in the ASM program. Respondents suggested that general skills such as effective use of financial management skills (MWDS = 1.90), skills associated with marketing of a product (MWDS = 1.81), and ability to motivate employees or co-workers (MWDS = 1.07) should be emphasized more in the ASM program curriculum. Survey participants suggested that ASM skills such as ability to install, calibrate, and demonstrate precision agriculture systems (MWDS = 1.14) should be emphasized more in the ASM program and skills such as ability to select appropriate equipment for pesticide/fertilizer application (MWDS = -1.16), understanding of challenges associated with logistics of biofuels (MWDS = -1.61), and knowledge of renewable energy and sustainable energy sources (MWDS = -1.74) should be de-emphasized.