

# Assessment Cycle Academic Year 2016 – 2017

## Program – Bachelor of Music (BM)

College: Arts and Sciences

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**Northwestern Mission.** Northwestern State University is a responsive, Student-oriented institution that is committed to the creation, dissemination, and acquisition of knowledge through teaching, research, and service. The University maintains as its highest priority excellence in teaching in graduate and undergraduate programs. *Northwestern State University prepares its Students to become productive members of society and promotes economic development and improvements in the quality of life of the citizens in its region.*

**College of Arts and Sciences' Mission.** College of Arts and Sciences' Mission. The College of Arts & Sciences, the largest college at Northwestern State University, is a diverse community of scholars, teachers, and students, working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. The College strives to produce graduates who are productive members of society equipped with the capability to promote economic and social development and improve the overall quality of life in the region. The College provides an unequalled undergraduate education in the social and behavioral sciences, English, communication, journalism, media arts, biological and physical sciences, and the creative and performing arts, and at the graduate level in the creative and performing arts, English, TESOL, and Homeland Security. Uniquely, the College houses the Louisiana Scholars' College (the State's designated Honors College), the Louisiana Folklife Center, and the Creole Center, demonstrating its commitment to community service, research, and preservation of Louisiana's precious resources.

**Department of Music.** The Music Department is part of the **Dear School of Creative and Performing Arts** at Northwestern State University, and is dedicated to the development of students for roles in academic, leadership, professional, performing, education and research careers in the challenging fields of music, music business, music performance, and music education. Utilizing transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, courses in core musical fundamentals, performances, research and service, the department produces graduates equipped to be productive members of society and professionals in the Arts in which they will help develop and improve the overall quality of life locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. The department delivers the Bachelor of Music degree with concentrations in Performance, Sacred Music, and Music Business, and works collaboratively with the Department of Teaching, Learning, and Counseling to offer the Bachelor of Music Education degree. The department also offers the Master of Music degree with concentrations in performance and music education.

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**Purpose (optional):** The Bachelor's program will prepare students for lives as artistic professionals and educators who are responsive to the artistic demands of the profession.

**Methodology:** The assessment process for the BM program is as follows:

- (1) Data from assessment tools (both direct – indirect, quantitative and qualitative) are collected and returned to the program coordinator;
- (2) The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes;
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty;
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core Music Education courses if required (show cause);
- (5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the BM faculty and curriculum committee, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

### **Student Learning Outcomes:**

**SLO 1. Students will be able to demonstrate excellence as solo and ensemble performers at a level to provide a basis for a professional career as a musician.**

#### **Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge):**

**Assessed in:** Applied Study: MUS 1710, 3710; Ensembles: MUS 1310, 1320, 1330, 1340, 1380

**Details/Description:** Students will demonstrate excellence through: performance before a jury of 2-5 faculty each semester; auditions for ensembles at least once a year; and qualifying juries to assess whether they are ready for upper-class applied study. For Performance Majors, a Senior Recital is required, for which a Preview hearing performance in front of the student's Recital Committee must be passed.

**Acceptable Target:** A rubric for each of these juries is used to evaluate the student and is kept on file. Qualifying jury results are filed and noted in the CAPA offices. Acceptable target is 90% passing the Qualifying Jury and Senior Recital.

**Ideal Target:** Ideal target is 100% passing Qualifying Jury and Senior Recital.

**Implementation Plan (timeline):** each semester

**Key/Responsible Personnel:** Music Faculty

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**Supporting Materials:** Jury comment/grading form; Jury repertoire form; Qualifying Jury Assessment form; Recital checklist; Recital Grading Sheet; Recital Preview Hearing Form; Voice Jury Form; Voice Qualifying Jury Form; Voice Recital Preview Hearing Form

**Finding:** *Fall 2016: 12 attempted qualifying juries; 9 passed*  
*Spring 2017: 40 attempted; 36 passed*

**Analysis:** *Acceptable target not reached for both Fall (75%) Spring semester: target met.*

Continue to monitor the average passing rate; however, it is more important that the Spring numbers be taken into account, as this is most often the students' first or third attempt at the Qualifying Jury. The second attempt (usually taken in the Fall) is typically a student who needs more time to pass the Qualifying Jury.

**Action - Decision or Recommendation:** Students are allowed to take the Qualifying Jury up to three times (in consecutive semesters). Due to the high standards needed for this professional degree, it is not uncommon for students to have two or three attempts at the Qualifying Jury. This explains the discrepancy between percentages between Fall and Spring semesters

**SLO 2: Demonstrate specific knowledge in music theory and aural skills at a level to provide as basis for a professional career as a musician.**

**Measure 2.1. (Direct – Skill / Ability):**

**Assessed in:** Music Theory 1-4: MUS 1150, 1160, 2150, 2160  
Aural Skills 1-4: MUS 1151, 1161, 2151, 2161

**Details/Description:**

Students will demonstrate knowledge through ongoing assessment and cumulative final exams which require the student to demonstrate competence in these areas before continuing on to the next level. Completion of all 4 levels satisfies the requirement.

**Acceptable Target:** These courses serve as pre-requisites for several upper-level required courses. Having this knowledge and these skills is essential to progressing towards the completion of the degree. Acceptable target: 90% of students passing final exam and final composition project (in MUS 2160), working toward completion of the cycle of these courses.

**Ideal Target:** Ideal target is 93% passing final exam and final composition project (in MUS 2160).

**Implementation Plan (timeline):** each semester/ongoing

**Key/Responsible Personnel:** Music Faculty

**Finding:** *39 students enrolled in MUS 2160; 39 students (100%) passed the Final Composition Project. 38 (of 39) passed the final exam—97%*

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***Analysis: Target met and exceeded***

***Action - Decision or Recommendation: continue with SLO and assessment in its current state.***

**SLO 3: Demonstrate specific knowledge of music history and demonstrate the ability to write and speak effectively about the art of music.**

**Measure 3.1. (Direct – knowledge)**

**Assessed in:** Music History 1-4: MUS 2030, 2040, 3030, 3400

**Details/Description:**

In each of the Music History courses, students are required to write research papers and in some they are required to make in-class presentations. Cumulative final exams require the student to demonstrate competence in these areas before continuing on to the next level. Completion of all 4 levels satisfies the requirement.

**Acceptable Target:** Students choose subjects, submit proposed topics, submit rough drafts, and after receiving feedback submit final drafts. Some are chosen to make presentations at the University's Research Day. Acceptable target is 60% students receiving a passing grade on the research portion of their grade in the course.

**Ideal Target:** Ideal target is 70% receiving a passing grade on the research paper portion of their grade.

**Implementation Plan (timeline):** each semester/ongoing

**Key/Responsible Personnel:** Music Faculty

**Finding:** *Fall 2016: 114 enrolled, 73 passed the research paper. 64% passed  
Spring 2017: 87 enrolled, 81 passed the research paper. 93% passed*

**Analysis:** *Fall 2016: Acceptable target (60%) reached; Ideal target (70%) is approaching.*

*Spring 2017: Acceptable and Ideal targets exceeded*

***Action - Decision or Recommendation: A research assistant was hired after analysis of Fall 2016 findings to tutor students and offer research and writing assistance for all Music History students. Spring results show this was highly successful and the research assistant will be maintained.***

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**SLO 4. Gain keyboard proficiency sufficient to assist in their professional career as a musician.**

**Measure 4.1. (Direct – Skill / Ability).**

**Assessed in:** Class Piano 1-4: MUS 1800, 1810, 1820, 1830 Applied Study in Piano: MUS 1700A, 1710A, 3710A

### **Details/Description:**

Proficiency is demonstrated at the conclusion of each semester of keyboard study (prescribed proficiencies for each level). A cumulative proficiency is administered and required at the completion of the 4<sup>th</sup> semester--MUS 1830. Skills achieved include playing accompaniments, score-reading, improvisation, transposition, scales major and minor, and melodic harmonization.

**Acceptable Target:** Students must complete the keyboard proficiency exams in all these areas before they are granted a passing grade in the final course in the sequence. If they do not pass the proficiency exams, they simply re-take the course. Acceptable target is 90% of students passing each proficiency level.

**Ideal Target:** Ideal target is 95% of students passing each proficiency level.

**Implementation Plan (timeline):** each semester/ongoing. To be assessed at the end of each academic year.

**Key/Responsible Personnel:** Head of Keyboard Area/Music Faculty/Department Chair

**Supporting Documents:** Proficiencies 1-4 (tied to each class and/or minor study)

**Finding:** *45 enrolled in MUS 1830 (Piano 4) in which the cumulative proficiency exams are administered; 42 passed. 93% passed*

**Analysis:** *Acceptable target (90%) exceeded; Ideal target (95%) approaching*

**Action - Decision or Recommendation:** Continue to prepare students as we are. Monitor number of students passing the proficiency exams to see if extra preparation or tutoring is needed.

Students are being prepared well--see if a pattern evolves of less than 90% of students passing. Address if this pattern presents itself.

### **Bachelor of Music: Key Findings and Decisions:**

The majority of our SLO targets are being met. The assessment for performance expectations, music theory expectations, and piano/keyboard skills expectations show that our current methods of instruction, guidance, and advising are working well. We will continue to monitor these areas and challenge students for even greater competencies and outcomes.

## **Assessment Cycle Academic Year 2016 – 2017**

In the area of performance, we found that there were fewer Qualifying Juries in the fall semester. While this could be due to several factors, it indicates that it is likely that more students are reaching this competency in the first attempt at the Qualifying Jury (usually taken in the spring semester). We will continue to monitor this area to see if a trend is developing in this respect.

The assessment for music history and writing skills were helpful this academic year. The acceptable assessment target was not met for Fall 2016. As a response, we hired a Research Assistant to tutor students and offer research and writing assistance. This person visited the Music History classes, offered tutoring hours, and was available for research/writing assistance as the students needed. This response proved incredibly helpful, and we exceeded the acceptable target considerably. We will maintain the Research Assistant and will continue to monitor progress in this area to be sure it is consistent.