

Assessment Cycle 2019 – 2020

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 Mission. 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.

Course Map:

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

Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge):

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

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019 the target was met (88% in Fall 2018 and 93% in Spring 2019 yielding an average of 90.5% for AC 2018-2019). It is important to note that the Spring attempt at the Qualifying Jury 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. 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 occasional discrepancies between percentages between Fall and Spring semesters. If there are more first-time qualifying juries attempted, it is expected that the percentage of students passing will likely be lower. The fact that the passing rate was similar for each semester is a sign that there is improvement in the first attempt at the Qualifying Jury.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. The plan of action was to ensure that the passing numbers from Spring 2019 rose in the Fall 2019 semester, as this would indicate students taking the Qualifying Jury for a second attempt. Each applied professor has individualized methods and lessons to focus on scales, technique, fundamental tone production, and repertoire—which allows for highly personalized responses and practice plans to address areas of weakness for each student. The Fall 2019 numbers were the same as the Fall 2018 numbers (88%).

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was 90% passing rate. Having implemented the plan of action from AC 2018-2019 to ensure higher passing rates as students are at their 2nd or 3rd attempt at the Qualifying Jury resulted in 88% of students attempting Qualifying Juries passed in Fall 2019.

Decision: Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the faculty will build upon the students learning experience by incorporating further individualized practice plans addressing weaknesses, and by providing more performing opportunities in front of a small audience (studio class, master class, elective or shared recitals). These changes will provide more opportunities for experience performing in live situations, which will in turn improve the student's ability to deal with possible performance anxiety issues, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

Course Map: Music Theory 1-4: MUS 1150, 1160, 2150, 2160

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Aural Skills 1-4: MUS 1151, 1161, 2151, 2161

Measure 2.1. (Direct – Skill / Ability):

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

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AY 2018-2019, the target was met for the final project (94%) and not met for the final exam (91%). Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Music Theory Coordinator provided an alternate option (research/analysis paper) for a student to choose their method of demonstrating the culmination of music theory skills and knowledge.

As a result of these changes, in 2019-20 the target was met with a 93% passing rate. The decision of the Coordinator of Music Theory to include the research/analysis paper as an alternate option for the composition assignment allowed for options for the student to demonstrate fluency. It was found that, while the large majority of students chose the composition option, the inclusion of a research paper option proved valuable for nearly 20% of the students. The analysis of the 100% passing rate for the final project reflects the importance of providing these two options to allow for varying learning styles.

Decision: In AC 2019-2020 the target was 93% passing rate for the final project and final exam. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. Additional opportunities for student composition projects and further development of student research/analysis papers will be explored. These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate and assimilate music theory knowledge, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

Course Map: Music History 1-4: MUS 2030, 2040, 3030, 3400

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Measure 3.1. (Direct – knowledge)

In each of the Music History courses, students are required to write research papers. In-class essay questions on 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

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019, the acceptable target of 60% of students passing the research portion of these courses was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. The research/writing assignments were redesigned into several shorter research/written assignments, which allowed the professor more opportunities for feedback and the students more opportunity for reflection and improvement.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 data shows that 89% passed in that Fall and 95% passed in the Spring. The increase is positive feedback that more short research/written assignments allowed students opportunities to reflect and implement improvement strategies. This, in turn, provided better results.

Decision: In AC 2019-2020 the ideal target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. In addition to reviewing the shorter research/written assignments for improved writing technique and implementation of research skills, several written concert reviews will be added to the assessments of writing style. A combination of essay assignments, essay test questions, and written concert reviews will be assessed.

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

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

Measure 4.1. (Direct – knowledge)

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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 4th 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

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2018-2019 the target met with a 94% passing rate and was within 1% of meeting the ideal 95% passing rate. Based on the analysis of the AC 2018-2019 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2019-2020 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Head of the Keyboard Area met with piano faculty to clarify any questions on the pedagogical plan and to assure that the plan was being adhered to. There was also more consistency in who was teaching the classes, as well as supervision of the teaching of these classes, where needed, by the Head of the Keyboard Area. The plan of action was to continue with the current format for proficiency exams with careful attention paid to consistency of instruction to determine if the current model is meeting student needs. As a result of these changes, in AC 2019-2020 the target was met with 100% of students passing the piano proficiency exams.

Decision: In AC 2019-2020 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Piano faculty will meet again to review the proficiency exams and evaluate on how classes will be supervised and monitored. The Head of the Keyboard Area is retiring this year, so efforts will also focus on working with the new piano faculty member to assimilate what has worked, and to collaborate on any new ideas this person will bring to the department. These changes will improve the student's ability to learn, retain, and demonstrate piano proficiency necessary as a professional musician, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on Analysis of Results:

As a result of the AC 2018-2019 data, the following changes were implemented in AC 2019-2020:

- Incorporated highly personalized responses and practice plans for each student

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who did not pass the Qualifying Jury in the 1st attempt

- Included the research/analysis option for the final project in MUS 2160
- Modified research/written assignments from one large research paper to several smaller assignments that incorporated research and written work
- Gave the proficiency exams as several smaller exams to allow for feedback and help with each section has proven helpful

Plan of action moving forward:

- Faculty will build upon the students learning experience by incorporating further individualized practice plans addressing weaknesses, and by providing more performing opportunities in front of a small audience
- Additional opportunities for student composition projects and further development of student research/analysis papers will be explored
- Several written concert reviews will be added to the assessments of writing style
- A combination of essay assignments, essay test questions, and written concert reviews will be assessed
- The Piano faculty will meet again to review the proficiency exams and evaluate on how classes will be supervised and monitored
- New faculty will be hired to replace retiring faculty