

Assessment Cycle 2020 – 2021

Master of Music (MM)

College: Arts and Sciences

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

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 unequaled 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.

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

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Methodology: The assessment process for the MM 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 (Graduate Program Coord.) will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes; coordinator communicates with Graduate Faculty in the program on a regular basis to discuss findings.
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty.
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core Music courses if required (show cause);
- (5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the MM 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 the ability to conduct research, comprehend scholarly readings, and apply this knowledge in a scholarly document.

Course Map: Assessed in:
MUS/MUED 5900 Research Methods in Music
MUS 5150 Pedagogy
MUS/MUED 5400 Special Projects
MUS 5970 Performance Document

Measure 1.1. (Direct – knowledge): Research Paper (Student Artifact)

Completion of these courses demonstrates acquisition of these abilities. Completion of the scholarly document is the actual product resulting from this learning.

Acceptable Target: The final document must be approved by a committee of the Music Graduate Faculty of at least 3 members and then submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School. Acceptable Target is 93% of students receiving approval of their final document.

Ideal Target: Ideal target is 97% of students receiving approval of their final document.

Implementation Plan (timeline): Every semester

Key/Responsible Personnel: Graduate Music Faculty/Major Professors for each student submitted a final document.

Findings: Target was met.

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Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the ideal target of 97% was met, as 100% of students received approval of their final document. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-20 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. The new Department Head in Music met with the Graduate Coordinator to distribute committee work more evenly. More frequent meetings with the Graduate Faculty were held in order to keep up to date with professional development and expectations of committee members.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021 the target was met. Based on analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Department Chair and Coordinator of Graduate Studies for Music will provide Professional Development in order to strengthen the understanding of graduate committee responsibilities and expectations. The Graduate Advisor will also encourage all graduate students to enroll in MUS or MUED 5400 Special Problems in their penultimate semester to focus on research/writing skills.

SLO 2: Demonstrate professional competency in such disciplines as performance or music education.

Course Map:

MUS 5700, 5710 Applied Study
MUS 5230 Advanced Conducting
MUED 5000 Seminar in Music Education
MUS 5720 Recital

Measure 2.1. (Direct – Skill / Ability): Capstone Experience

Students will be evaluated on one significant capstone experience as it pertains to their chosen concentration. Examples include solo recital, conducting recital, or significant written projects.

Acceptable Target: Because these are Capstone experiences, they are evaluated and approved under the supervision of the Major Professor with the approval of the student's graduate committee. Acceptable target is 93% of students passing the final recital, as this is the capstone event for the courses listed.

Ideal Target: Ideal target is 97% of students passing the final recital.

Implementation Plan (timeline): Each semester

Key/Responsible Personnel: Graduate Music Faculty and Major Professor for each student giving a final recital.

Findings: Target was met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the ideal target was met. One hundred percent (100%) of students who attempted their capstone experience (recital) passed. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-20 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. Due to COVID-19, live music performances have

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become much less frequent. Although performance opportunities have declined, the department adapted to virtual/livestreamed performances. Graduate students were encouraged to use the jury performances as a mock-audition or performance situation so that faculty could more effectively comment on areas of strength and weakness in performance situations.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-2021 the target was met. 100% of students attempting the capstone recital passed.

Decision: In AC 2020-2021 the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The instrument-appropriate major professors will encourage more frequent live performances earlier in the degree plan. Faculty will seek out resources to help discuss musician's health issues, such as performance anxiety and pre-performance mental health strategies. In addition, resources will be explored to address further mental and physical wellness issues that arise in professional musicians. These changes will improve the students' ability to perform a full recital at a professional level, as well as help to prepare a student to do the same, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 3: Demonstrate the potential to solve current problems in various aspects of music or music education. (Classroom Assessment)

Course Map:

MUED 5010 Foundations of Music Education

MUED 5020 Current Issues and Trends in Music Education

MUS 5150 Pedagogy

MUS 5390 Performance Literature

Measure 3.1. (Direct – knowledge)

Students make presentations in class, research, write papers, lead discussions, and facilitate dialogue on a variety of pertinent issues.

Acceptable Target: Students will be assigned culminating or final projects which ask them to research and offer solutions to a specific problem. Acceptable target is 90% of students receiving a passing grade of B or better of the final presentation and/or project for the above courses, as the presentation and/or project are culminating assignments that apply the knowledge gained throughout the above courses. The implementation of the knowledge gained is paramount, and the presentation and/or final project allows the student to showcase and implement this knowledge.

Ideal Target: Ideal target is 95% of students receiving a grade of B or better on the final presentation/project.

Implementation Plan (timeline): Each semester/ongoing

Key/Responsible Personnel: Graduate Music Faculty

Supporting Document: MUED 5010 Syllabus

Findings: Target was met.

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Analysis: In AC 2019-2020, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2020-2021. Class sizes remained small, and the move to virtual and hybrid classrooms allowed for individualized guidance and discussion. This allowed for expectations to be more easily communicated and monitored. Students participated in online discussion groups, webinar opportunities, etc.

In addition, the Music Department Chair encouraged faculty to seek out opportunities for professional development to remain current in their areas. Several graduate faculty members presented research in presentation at NSU Research Day, as well as at National and International virtual conferences.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-2021 the target was met. The efforts to remain current in the field, continue to offer individualized guidance, provide more opportunities for discussion and debate, and to maintain standards and expectations was successful, as the success rate remained the same (100%).

Decision: In AC 2020-2021 the target was met. Based on analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The graduate music faculty will include reflection and discussion in these courses. Music graduate faculty will also implement more online webinars, panel discussions, and presentations, as well as discuss bringing in more guest speakers to discuss first-hand knowledge and understanding of current issues and trends in the music/music education field. Graduate faculty will build on the students' learning success by remaining current in their field, offering individualized guidance and small class sizes, and maintaining high standards and expectations.

Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2019—2020 results, the following changes were implemented in AC 2020-2021:

- Faculty more evenly distributed graduate course loads to better facilitate communication and engagement with students.
- The Graduate Advisor encouraged all graduate students to enroll in MUS or MUED 5400 Special Problems in their penultimate semester.
- Faculty made a concerted effort to provide more focused feedback on comment sheets in end-of-semester jury performances.
- Graduate students were encouraged to use the jury performances as a mock-audition or performance situation.
- Graduate faculty members presented research in presentation at NSU Research Day, as well as at National and International conferences

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- The syllabi for upper-level music education courses were revised to include more discussion and debate about current issues.
- Use of online webinars and discussion groups allowed for further discussion/debate opportunities in virtual or hybrid class situations.

Plan of action moving forward.

To drive continuous improvement, the following changes will be implemented in AC 2021-2022:

- Faculty will have more evenly distributed membership on graduate student committees to better facilitate communication and engagement with students.
- The Coordinator of Graduate Studies for Music will provide Professional Development to strengthen the understanding of graduate committee responsibilities and expectations.
- The Graduate Advisor will encourage all graduate students to enroll in MUS or MUED 5400 Special Problems in their penultimate semester.
- The instrument-appropriate major professors will encourage more frequent live performances earlier in the degree plan.
- Faculty will seek out resources to help discuss musician's health issues, such as performance anxiety and pre-performance mental health strategies, as well as overall mental and physical wellness and health.
- The graduate music faculty will include further reflection and discussion in these courses.
- Music graduate faculty will implement more online webinars, panel discussions, and presentations.
- Music graduate faculty will discuss bringing in more guest speakers to discuss first-hand knowledge and understanding of current issues and trends in the music/music education field.
- Graduate faculty will build on the students' learning success by remaining current in their field, continuing to offer individualized guidance and small class sizes, and maintaining high standards and expectations.