

Assessment Cycle 2020 – 2021

Bachelor of Music Education (BME)

Division: 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. 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.

College of Education and Human Development Mission. The Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the School of Education and Departments of Health and Human Performance, Military Science, Psychology, and Social Work, the College produces knowledgeable, inspired, and innovative graduates ready for lifelong learning who contribute to the communities in which they reside and professions they serve. Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their families related to learning and development.

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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.

Purpose: 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.

Note. During Assessment Cycle 2020-2021, the COVID-19 virus forced Northwestern State University to reevaluate how to execute its mission. Through deliberate planning, Northwestern substantially modified academic programs, facilities, services, and resources to enhance learning and the health and safety of students, faculty, staff, and the public.

Assignments and student learning assessments were modified to maximize the principles of equitable evaluation and assure the highest quality in-person classes,

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online delivery of courses, and hybrid face-to-face and virtual studies. Technological equipment and resources were updated and expanded to provide high academic quality and flexibility while using lower bandwidth.

Student learning outcomes guide the design and delivery of instruction to ensure student learning. While the assessment process continues, it would be naïve to assume academic program assessments have not been affected – the degree of which is based on individual programs. Because of the tireless efforts of Northwestern’s highly accomplished and respected leadership, faculty, and staff, the trust of current and future students in the University’s commitment to extraordinary academic and experiential student learning opportunities is evident through increased enrollment, even during these trying times.

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, 4720; 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

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 not met.

Analysis: In AC 2019-2020 the target was met with 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.

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Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the faculty built 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 provided more opportunities for experience performing in live situations, which in turn improved the student's ability to deal with possible performance anxiety issues, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-20 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2020-21 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2020-21, even with necessary adaptation to virtual teaching platforms, faculty were able to implement incorporating further individualized practice plans to address weaknesses, providing performing opportunities in front of a small audience (virtual studio class and master class opportunities), and discussion on, and sharing of resources, dealing with performance anxiety and musicians health issues. Individualized practice plans became even more detailed for many students because of the move to virtual teaching platforms. Also, with the move to virtual teaching platforms, new opportunities became available: students recording more material for virtual applied lessons (which is form of small-scale performance), numerous webinars and online resources focusing on musician's health, and more master class opportunities from professional musicians around the country. Faculty were proactive in using these resources, which added to the tools available for driving the cycle of improvement in this area. Because of live performance restrictions, there have been fewer elective recitals. However, the inclusion of the above-mentioned opportunities is allowing for several small-scale performance opportunities for students.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-21, the target was not met.

The passing rate was 87% for all Qualifying Juries and Senior Recitals. The faculty noticed as the year progressed that many students were having to deal with issues outside of their control (family health, uncertainties in living situation and finances, isolation, mental health issues). While some modes of applied teaching had to be modified for student/faculty safety, the faculty feel that many of the strategies implemented for virtual lessons proved highly beneficial and successful, some of which will continue to be used in live applied lessons (recorded portions of the weekly assignments and analysis of those recordings with the student, discussions on wellness). The drop in passing rate is not alarming, and the faculty feel that, as students' lives stabilize and classes return to more in-person format, the passing rate will soon be at the acceptable level again.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to 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.

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Decision or Recommendation.

In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2021-2022, faculty will assess the strategies used in virtual applied lesson to keep those strategies that proved beneficial. The faculty will also review those changes made to, and incorporate further, individualized practice plans addressing weaknesses. More small live performing opportunities (master classes, studio class, elective recitals, MUS 1500 performances) will also be re-introduced into applied lessons, and discussions of musicians' physical and mental wellness will increase in master classes and applied lessons.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate excellence as solo and ensemble performers at a level to provide a basis for a professional career as a musician, 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
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 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 (for final project, 94%)—not met (for final exam, 81%).

Analysis: In AC 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 most 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.

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Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results, the faculty implemented 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 were explored. These changes improved the student's ability to demonstrate and assimilate music theory knowledge, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-21, the target was met (for final project, 94%)—not met (for final exam, 81%).

The capstone project and final exam for this course has proven to be a successful measure of students' ability to apply the necessary music theory knowledge as will be expected in the professional environment. In AC 2020-21 all students chose the composition project, as opposed to research paper assignment. 94% of those students passed the project, while 81% passed the final exam. The Music Theory Coordinator and faculty are assessing implementation of on-line music theory skill practice options that may be incorporated into class assignments to provide an additional option for student to practice applying music theory knowledge.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate knowledge through ongoing assessment and cumulative final exams which require the student to demonstrate competence in these areas before continuing to the next level.

Decision or Recommendation.

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met (for final project, 94%)—not met (for final exam, 81%).

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2021-2022, faculty will assess implementation of on-line music theory skill practice options that may be incorporated into class assignments.

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 specific knowledge in music theory and aural skills at a level to provide a basis for a professional career as a musician, 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

Measure 3.1. (Direct – knowledge)

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

Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results the faculty implemented 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 were added to the assessments of writing style. A combination of essay assignments, essay test questions, and written concert reviews were assessed.

Several small writing assignments were introduced, as an option to live concert reviews. This option allowed for students to have even more flexibility in completing these shorter research assignments.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-21, the target was met.

Small research assignments were given in the form of short chapter essays as homework assignments and short essays on each exam for Fall 2020. For Fall 2020 the passing rate was 81%, and the passing rate for exam essays was 71%. For Spring 2021, concert reviews were again an option for the short research assignments. This approach was successful in that it resulted in an average passing rate of 84%. The younger class (Music History II) was slightly lower (71%), while the older class (Music History IV) had a passing rate of 93%. This shows that the approach of having smaller writing assignments appears to be working, as students are improving in this learning outcome through the four-semester series of Music History courses.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to write research papers. In-class essay questions on exams require the student to demonstrate competence in these areas before continuing to the next level.

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Decision or Recommendation.

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2021-2022, faculty will continue to provide options for shorter research/writing assignments, as this approach allows for more frequent feedback. With the hopeful return to in-person learning, the faculty plan to provide more in-person opportunities for face-to-face individual meetings with students to assist in their research/writing. The Music History professor will also re-evaluate the format of exams, as these had to be altered with the virtual testing environment.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate specific knowledge of music history and demonstrate the ability to write and speak effectively about the art of music, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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)

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 2019-2020 the target was met with 100% of students passing the piano proficiency exams.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 results the faculty implemented the following

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changes in AC 2020-2021 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Piano faculty met again to review the proficiency exams and evaluated how classes were to be supervised and monitored. The Head of the Keyboard Area retired last year, so efforts also focused on working with the new piano faculty member to assimilate what has worked and to collaborate on any new ideas the incoming professional would bring to the department. These changes improved 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.

While no major changes were planned for the year, the new faculty member jumped in with no disruption to the pedagogical integrity of these courses. In fact, his experience with teaching virtual Group Piano classes was an incredible help.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2020-21, the target was met.

Individual proficiency exams were able to be offered as they have in the past, as the class piano classes met in a hyflex environment. So, there was less disruption than anticipated in the cycle of proficiency assessment for keyboard classes. The passing rate was 93%, which is lower than the previous year, but still an acceptable passing rate. However, because of the need for virtual and hybrid class delivery, a few concerns have arisen. First, there is some concern that the piano teacher is not able to adequately monitor the students' hands during class or testing (posture, correct fingerings, etc.). The keyboard faculty is considering rearranging the piano classroom to allow for a better view of students' hands. Also due to the nature of the virtual delivery, it is difficult to do ensemble and accompaniment practice with the piano classes. This is an area that will return once the pandemic is over, so there is not great concern here, but the keyboard faculty will monitor the situation, as well as consider other options for ensemble/accompaniment playing.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability demonstrate proficiency at the conclusion of each semester of keyboard study (prescribed proficiencies for each level).

Decision or Recommendation.

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met.

Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2021-2022, faculty will consider rearranging the piano classroom for better instructor view of students' hands. They will also consider further options for including more ensemble/accompaniment playing in class piano.

These changes will improve the student's ability to gain keyboard proficiency sufficient to assist in their professional career as a musician, thereby continuing to push the cycle

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of improvement forward.

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

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of data analysis from AC 2019-2020 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2020-2021.

- Faculty will continue to provide highly personalized practice plans for each student who did not pass the Qualifying Jury in the 1st attempt and will include more discussion of musicians' physical and mental wellness.
- Explore the use of on-line music theory skill practice options for possible incorporation into class assignments.
- Several small writing assignments were introduced, as an option to live concert reviews. This option allowed for students to have even more flexibility in completing these shorter research assignments.
- A combination of chapter assignments, essay assignments, essay test questions, and written concert reviews were assessed.
- The Piano faculty met again to review the proficiency exams and evaluated on how classes were to be supervised and monitored.
- New faculty were hired to replace retiring faculty.

Plan of Action for Moving Forward: [To be written June 2021]

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2020-2021 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2021-2022:

[Include a bulleted list of each action item from each "Decision or Recommendation" section for each measure described in the report.

- Faculty will build upon the students learning experience by incorporating further individualized practice plans to address weaknesses, including more discussion of musicians' physical and mental wellness, 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.
- Faculty will continue to provide options for shorter research/writing assignments, as this approach allows for more frequent feedback.
- With the hopeful return to in-person learning, the faculty plan to provide more in-person opportunities for face-to-face individual meetings with students to assist

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in their research/writing.

- The Music History professor will also re-evaluate the format of exams, as these had to be altered with the virtual testing environment.
- Piano faculty will consider rearranging the piano classroom for better instructor view of students' hands.
- Piano faculty will also consider further options for including more ensemble/accompaniment playing in class piano.