

# Assessment Cycle 2021 - 2022

## Master of Music (MM)

**College: Arts and Sciences**

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**Date: May 18, 2022**

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**Date: 10 June 2022**

**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.

## Assessment Cycle 2021 - 2022

**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.

**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: Tied to Course Objectives:

MUS/MUED 5900 - Research Methods in Music

MUS 5150 - Pedagogy

MUS/MUED 5400 - Special Problems

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.

## Assessment Cycle 2021 - 2022

**Findings:** Target was met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2020-2021 the target was met. All students attempting the final scholarly document received approval and successfully completed the document(s). The small class sizes and individual guidance that each student received has proven a successful way of giving the student frequent feedback and tangible guidance throughout the graduate degree.

Based on analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty made the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The faculty more evenly distributed committee work, and the Department Chair and Coordinator of Graduate Studies for Music gave more guidance to current Graduate Faculty to strengthen the understanding of graduate committee responsibilities and expectations. The Coordinator of Graduate Studies also encouraged all graduate students to enroll in MUS or MUED 5400 Special Problems in their penultimate semester to focus on research/writing skills. These changes improved the student's ability to conduct research, comprehend scholarly readings, and apply this knowledge in their preparation of a scholarly document, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met. All graduate students enrolled in the MUS 5400 course must prepare for their capstone project. By enrolling in this course in their penultimate semester, it allowed for an additional semester of one-on-one guidance in research and writing skills. It also allowed for the major professor to work within a more comfortable timeline to provide feedback and guidance. Having three graduate faculty on each student's committee and dividing the work more evenly between music faculty has also proven more effective.

**Decision:** In AC 2021-2022 the target was met.

Based on analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. With the current Coordinator of Graduate Studies retiring, the Department Chair will re-distribute the graduate advising duties and will more evenly distribute graduate committee work. The Department Chair and graduate advisors will update the current curriculum checklists and documentation for both graduate faculty and students to outline the responsibilities of both more clearly. In addition, more frequent communication with graduate faculty will occur in an effort to keep all members current in their understanding of expectations and requirements. Graduate advisors will encourage all graduate students to enroll in MUS or MUED 5400 Special Problems in their penultimate semester to focus on research/writing skills.

These changes will improve the student's ability to conduct research, comprehend scholarly readings, and apply this knowledge in their preparation of a scholarly document, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

## Assessment Cycle 2021 - 2022

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

Course Map: Tied to Course Objective:

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 2020-2021 the target was met. All students who attempted the final recital passed the recital hearing and final performance (100%). The performance standards for each semester of applied lessons are consistently adhered to throughout the department. This allows for each student to receive multiple opportunities for feedback as they work toward this capstone performance. In addition, each student must prepare for a recital hearing to occur no less than two weeks before the recital, which provides feedback and assessment in the final stages of preparation for the student.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The instrument-appropriate major professors encouraged more frequent live performances earlier in the degree plan. This allowed for the major professor to assess the students' weaknesses in performing earlier in the degree, allowing for more time to address areas in need of improvement. Similarly, faculty sought out resources to help discuss musician's health issues, such as performance anxiety and pre-performance mental health strategies. In addition, resources were explored to address further mental and physical wellness issues that arise in professional musicians.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-2022 the target was met. 100% of students attempting the final recital performance passed. These changes improved the students'

## Assessment Cycle 2021 - 2022

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.

**Decision:** In AC 2021-2022 the target was met.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. The instrument-appropriate major professors will encourage more frequent live performances in varying venues and audience sizes earlier in the degree plan. This allows for the major professor to assess the students' weaknesses, both in performing and in navigating performances of varying size and venues, earlier in the degree. This earlier assessment will give the faculty flexibility to adapt to, and address, each student's individual needs and weaknesses. Similarly, faculty will seek out further virtual and online resources to help discuss musician's health issues, such as performance anxiety and pre-performance mental health strategies. In addition, resources and possible guest artists 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: Tied to Course Objectives:

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

## Assessment Cycle 2021 - 2022

**Findings:** Target was met.

**Analysis:** In AC 2020-2021 the target was met. All students who submitted a final project/research paper successfully completed this capstone project with a 100% passing rate. Students are poised to succeed with several benchmarks in place to appropriately and responsively assess students' progress in this area throughout the process.

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

As a result of these changes in AC 2021-2022 the target was met. These changes impacted the students' ability to analyze and discuss current issues in the music/music education fields in a professional manner.

**Decision:** In AC 2021-2022 the target was met.

Based on analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. The graduate music faculty will assess and solidify the current rotation of graduate music courses in order to provide more accurate planning of coursework. The Department Chair, in conjunction with senior graduate faculty, will communicate with all graduate faculty members more frequently to assure knowledge of deadlines, guidelines, and requirements. In addition, graduate faculty will be encouraged to remain active and current in their field(s) through regional and national performances/presentations and/or publication opportunities.

These changes will improve the student's ability to seek out, analyze, and creatively solve current issues in the music/music education thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

**Comprehensive summary of key evidence of improvements based on analysis of results.** The following reflects all the changes implemented to drive the continuous process of seeking improvement in AC 2021-2022. These changes are based on the knowledge gained through the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 results.

- More evenly distributed membership on graduate student committees to better facilitate communication and engagement with students.
- The Department Chair and Coordinator of Graduate Studies gave more guidance

## Assessment Cycle 2021 - 2022

to faculty to strengthen the understanding of graduate committee responsibilities and expectations.

- The Graduate Coordinator encouraged all graduate students to enroll in MUS or MUED 5400 Special Problems in their penultimate semester to allow for an additional semester of one-on-one guidance and feedback in research and writing skills with their major professor.
- The instrument-appropriate major professors encouraged more frequent live performances earlier in the degree plan.
- Faculty looked for 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 included further reflection and class discussion in these courses.
- Music graduate faculty implemented more online webinars, panel discussions, and presentations.
- Music graduate brought in more guest speakers to discuss first-hand knowledge and understanding of current issues and trends in the music/music education field.
- Graduate faculty built 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.

### Plan of action moving forward.

In order to drive continuous improvement, the following will be implemented in AC 2022-2023:

- With the retirement of the current Coordinator of Graduate Studies, the Dept. Chair will re-distribute graduate advising duties, as well as more evenly distribute graduate committee work.
- Dept. Chair and graduate advisors will update the current curriculum checklists and documentation for both graduate faculty and students.
- Graduate advisors will encourage all graduate students to enroll in MUS or MUED 5400 Special Problems in their penultimate semester to focus on research/writing skills.
- More frequent live performances in varying venues and sizes of audience will be encouraged.

## **Assessment Cycle 2021 - 2022**

- Department Chair and graduate advisors will assess and solidify the current rotation of graduate music courses.
- Dept. Chair and graduate advisors will provide more frequent communication of guidelines and requirements to graduate faculty members.
- Graduate faculty will be encouraged to remain current in their field(s) through regional and national performances/presentations/papers.