

## Assessment Cycle 2022 – 2023

**Program: Master of Music (MM) (542)**

**College: Arts and Sciences**

**Prepared by: Malena McLaren**

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**Approved by: Dr. Greg Handel**

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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 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 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

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

**Findings:** The target was not met.

**Analysis:** 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.

Based on analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. With the current Coordinator of Graduate Studies retiring, the Department Chair began the process of re-distributing the graduate advising duties and more evenly distributed graduate committee work. (There was one Graduate Advisor this year, who was tasked with updating and streamlining where possible the advising materials and information. This duty will be distributed to each Major Professor for their individual Graduate Students in AC 2023-2024.) The Department Chair and Graduate Advisor updated 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 occurred in an effort to keep all members current in their understanding of expectations and requirements. The Department Chair and Graduate Advisor encouraged all graduate students to enroll in MUS or MUED 5400 Special Problems with their Major Professor in their penultimate semester to focus on research/writing skills.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2022-2023 the target was not met. Of the six students scheduled to complete their final scholarly document, only five successfully did so, resulting in 83% of these students successfully completing the document. However, the sixth student is planning to complete the document in the summer, and faculty are optimistic that he will do this. The student acknowledged that he did not plan effectively, resulting in the recital hearing, final scholarly document draft due to his committee, and comprehensive exams all being due in the same two-week time period. The Department Chair, Graduate Advisor, and major professor have discussed this situation and are confident that it is an isolated situation. The updated curriculum checklists and streamlined help sheet detailing guidelines, requirements, and deadlines provided to all graduate faculty in August 2022 was quite helpful. Major professors were clearer on the expectations of committee members and there was more consistency in the process for students. Additionally, most graduate students enrolled in MUS or MUED 5400 in their penultimate semester with their major professor to work on the final document.

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.

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**Decision or Recommendation:** In AC 2022-2023, the target was not met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2022-23 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. The Graduate Advisor will update the departmental Graduate Faculty help sheet, focusing on timelines and planning of the final semester, and will distribute to all faculty in August 2023. As individual graduate faculty members prepare to begin advising the students for whom they are the major professor, the current Graduate Advisor will provide assistance where needed to ensure a smooth transition to this advising model. In addition, the Department Chair is working to appoint a Graduate Coordinator to assist her with graduate student needs in the department. In addition, the professor for MUED 5900 Intro to Research (required of all Music graduate students) will address planning and timelines as a part of the research/writing assignments in this class.

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.

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

Course Map: Tied to Course Objectives:

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:** The target was not met.

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**Analysis:** In AC 2021-2022 the target was met. 100% of students attempting the final recital performance passed. 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.

Based on the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results, the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. The instrument-appropriate major professors encouraged more frequent live performances in varying venues and audience sizes earlier in the degree plan. This allowed 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 gave the faculty flexibility to adapt to, and address, each student's individual needs and weaknesses. Similarly, faculty sought 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 were explored and invited to campus to address further mental and physical wellness issues that arise in professional musicians.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2022-2023 the target was not met. 83% of students (5 out of 6) scheduled to complete their final degree recital successfully passed. The same student who did not successfully complete his final scholarly document did not pass his recital hearing. He did, however, pass his comprehensive exams. The student took an incomplete in his recital, and the major professor, Graduate Advisor, and Department Chair are confident he will pass his recital this summer. However, more frequent live performances, earlier assessment of performances, and discussion/resources pertaining to musician's health issues were well-received by the graduate students. Discussions on overall wellness, mental health, physical health, and performance anxiety while preparing for major performances have been a positive addition to the music graduate student experience.

These changes improved 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.

**Decision or Recommendation:** In AC 2022-2023, the target was not met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2022-23 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. With each student's major professor also becoming their advisor, they will have more involvement in their overall degree timeline. This will allow for earlier and more frequent discussions regarding effective time management in preparing a full professional-level recital in the final semester. In addition, graduate students will be encouraged to perform an elective recital in their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> semester in order to learn how to prepare correctly before the degree recital in the final semester. These changes will improve the students' ability to

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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

**Findings:** The target was met.

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

Based on analysis of the AC 2021-2022 results the faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. The graduate music faculty assessed and solidified 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, communicated with all graduate faculty members more frequently to

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assure knowledge of deadlines, guidelines, and requirements. In addition, graduate faculty were encouraged to remain active and current in their field(s) through regional and national performances/presentations and/or publication opportunities.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2022-2023 the target was met. 100% of students who submitted final project/research papers successfully completed this capstone project. Students are poised to succeed with several benchmarks in place to appropriately and responsively assess their progress in this area throughout the process. These changes had a direct impact on 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.

**Decision or Recommendation:** In AC 2022-2023, the target was met. Based on information gathered from analysis of the AC 2022-23 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2023-2024 to drive the cycle of improvement. Two Music Education faculty positions were filled this year through a national search. The Department Chair will work closely with the two new faculty members to assess the current graduate music education course rotation and curriculum. Any ideas or suggestions for ways in which to update and ensure the degree remains effective and relevant for the music education field will be explored. In addition, graduate faculty will be encouraged to remain active or to re-energize their professional activity, where needed, by seeking out opportunities for regional and national performances, presentations, and/or publication submission opportunities. These changes will improve the student's ability to seek out, analyze, and creatively solve current issues in music/music education thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

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

Based on the results of AC 2021—2022, the following were implemented in AC 2022-2023:

- More evenly distributed membership on graduate student committees to better facilitate communication and engagement with students.
- The Department Chair and Graduate Advisor for 2022-2023 gave more guidance to faculty in order to strengthen the understanding of graduate committee responsibilities and expectations.
- The Department Chair and Graduate Advisor updated the current curriculum checklists and documentation for both graduate faculty and students to outline the responsibilities of both more clearly.
- More frequent communication with graduate faculty (from Dept. Chair and Graduate Advisor) occurred to keep all members current in their understanding of

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expectations and requirements.

- The Department Chair and Graduate Advisor encouraged all graduate students to enroll in MUS or MUED 5400 Special Problems with their Major Professor in their penultimate semester to focus on research/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 the following courses: MUED 5010, MUED 5020, MUS 5150, MUS 5390.
- 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 2023-2024:

- The Graduate Advisor will update the departmental Graduate Faculty help sheet, focusing on timelines and planning of the final semester, and will distribute to all faculty in August 2023.
- As individual graduate faculty members prepare to begin advising the students for whom they are the major professor, the current Graduate Advisor will provide assistance where needed to ensure a smooth transition to this advising model.
- The Department Chair will appoint a Graduate Coordinator to assist her with graduate student needs in the department.
- The professor for MUED 5900 Intro to Research (required of all Music graduate students) will address planning and timelines as a part of each research/writing assignment in this class.
- With each student's major professor also becoming their advisor, they will have more involvement in their overall degree timeline. This will allow for discussions



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regarding effective time management in preparing a full professional-level recital in the final semester.

- Graduate students will be encouraged to perform an elective recital in their 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> semester in order to learn how to prepare correctly before the degree recital in the final semester.
- The Department Chair will work closely with the two new Music Education faculty members to assess the current graduate music education course rotation and curriculum. Any ideas or suggestions for ways in which to update and ensure the degree remains effective and relevant for the music education field will be explored.
- Graduate faculty will be encouraged to remain active or to re-energize their professional activity, where needed, by seeking out opportunities for regional and national performances, presentations, and/or publication submission opportunities.