

**Unit Plan for Assessing and Improving
Student Learning in Degree Programs
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Unit:

Unit Head approval:

Date:

SECTION 1: PAST ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Brief description of changes or improvements made in your unit as the result of assessment results since 2000.

The School of Music has made many curricular changes since 2000. Some of these were based on data other than assessment results (e.g. institution of an Artist Diploma to be competitive with peer Music Schools). The ones listed below resulted in whole or in part from analysis of student performance in various musical competencies, based on internal and external review processes.

- Comprehensive exam added to Master of Music Education. Exam now requires students to synthesize learning over core courses and apply to their own teaching practice. Students may opt to conduct a research thesis in place of this comprehensive exam. (In response to accreditation review by the National Association of Schools of Music, 2001)
- Changes to structure of music theory courses. Elimination of remedial theory “trailing sections.” Replaced by intensive first semester instruction to bring remedial students level to regular theory track. (In response to recommendations from Theory Review Committee, 2006-07.)
- Portfolio review required for undergraduates in music education seeking teacher certification. (In response to Illinois State Board of Education accreditation report, requiring evidence of student outcomes in relation to Illinois State Teaching Standards.)
- Courses in music technology and literacy across the curriculum added to requirements for all music education majors. (In response to five-year surveys of graduates who reported lack of technology was a weakness in their preparation, and in response to increased requirements in technology and literacy in Illinois State Teaching Standards.)
- Created degree programs in jazz performance at undergraduate, masters and doctoral level. (Partly in response to informal reports from recruiting and

admissions personnel, and from prospective students who wish to pursue in depth jazz studies as a major.)

SECTION 2: REVISED ASSESSMENT PLAN

A. PROCESS: Brief description of the process followed to develop or revise this assessment plan.

In consultation with the Associate Director of the School, Dr. Edward Rath, and the Director of the School of Music, Dr. Karl Kramer, the assessment coordinator undertook four tasks: 1) to identify changes to program requirements and courses since 1999 resulting from assessment of student outcomes; 2) to identify the kinds of assessment currently used to assess student learning outcomes throughout the School; 3) to document evidence in cases where our current program is achieving excellence in terms of student learning outcomes; and 4) to make recommendations for additional data sources, systematic and repeated measures of student learning that will guide future decisions within the School.

The assessment coordinator consulted a variety of print and human resources to gather information relate to these four areas. Primary print sources include surveys, reports from external accrediting bodies, reports of actions by curriculum committees and web based documents describing the various degree granting programs and majors of the School. The coordinator also interviewed selected faculty and administrative officers and solicited additional information on assessment procedures from the faculty at large.

A listing of the sources reviewed to prepare this report follows.

Survey Data

2007 Senior Survey comments related to music instruction

1993 (latest available) Five Year Survey of Bachelor of Music Education graduates

2006-07 Council on Teacher Education Exit Survey of Certification Students: Music Education

Internal Reports

1999 School of Music Assessment Report

2007 Report of the Theory Review Committee (including three external reviewers as well as UIUC music faculty. The charge was to assess the content of theory offerings and student learning in our music theory curriculum)

2000-2007 Fine and Applied Arts Curriculum Committee Reports

2007 Report from Council on Teacher Education, Certification Data: Music Education

Reports from External Reviewers

2001 Final Accreditation Report for University of Illinois by National Association of Schools of Music

2001 Illinois State Board of Education Accreditation Report on Teacher Education at UIUC

External Examination Results

State of Illinois Teacher Certification Test Results, data reported from UIUC Council on Teacher Education for 2005-2007

Other Documents and Online Sources

Mission Statement for the School of Music
 Mission Statement for the College of Fine and Applied Arts
 Undergraduate Handbook for Music Students
 Graduate Handbook for Music Students
 Music Education Advising Handbook
 UIUC Programs of Study 2000-2007

Interviews

Chair, Undergraduate Committee, School of Music
 Chair, Graduate Committee, School of Music
 Chair, Music Composition/Theory Division
 Director, School of Music
 Associate Director, School of Music

B) STUDENT OUTCOMES: UNDERGRADUATE

“The principal end-purpose of successful teaching is a student who has learned to sustain a self-conscious, self-critical stance and who will encourage and facilitate such stances in others. Such a student no longer requires a teacher.”(School of Music, Composition Division website)

“The ultimate manifestation of synthesis is the senior juried recital for performance or composition majors, thesis for musicology or music theory majors, or student teaching for the music education major.” (2001 NASM accreditation self-report p. 87)

All degree programs in the School have as outcomes the creation of independent musicians, students who have synthesized and internalized learning from the entire program. The School offers three undergraduate degrees, Bachelor of Music, Bachelor of Music Education, and Bachelor of Arts with a Music major. Each of the degrees offers a variety of majors, as shown in Appendix One. The School complies with guidelines from its accrediting body, National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) for all three degrees in terms of defining student knowledges, skills, and dispositions. A detailed listing of expected competencies, skills, and knowledges is available from the accrediting body for the School, the National Association of Schools of Music (http://nasm.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/Handbook/NASM_HANDBOOK_2007-2008_2ndEd.pdf).

The Bachelor of Music degree prepares students for graduate study and for careers in music including performance, studio teaching, and composition. There is a music core which includes the following outcomes for all students:

- 1) performance skills (technical and expressive skills; rehearsal and conducting skills; keyboard competency);
- 2) aural, verbal, visual, and historical analytical skills across varied repertoires;

- 3) composition and improvisation skills;
- 4) ability to use music technology;
- 5) ability to synthesize understandings and skills across the musical areas of study.

The Bachelor of Music Education degree prepares students to become effective teachers in K-12 public schools. These students meet outcomes defined by the Illinois State Board of Education (22 specific standards) in addition to those defined above by NASM. Additional outcomes for students in the BME program include:

- 1) knowledge of subject matter appropriate for success as a K-12 music instructor;
- 2) keyboard, conducting, organizational, communication, and pedagogical skills;
- 3) leadership, interpersonal, collaborative, and problem solving skills.

The Bachelor of Arts with a Major in Music is designed for students whose academic interests are broader than can be accommodated within the Bachelor of Music or Bachelor of Music Education. The BA in music, which incorporates a high degree of flexibility beyond the core of required courses, can prepare the way for graduate study in music theory, composition, or the various branches of musicology. With the exception of performance study, which is optional but not required, these students meet the same outcomes defined in the music core (see above). Students submit a senior thesis or a portfolio or original compositions in the senior year. The B.A. degree was transferred from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences two years ago. The School of Music is in the process of reviewing this curriculum and defining appropriate student learning outcomes.

B) STUDENT OUTCOMES: GRADUATE

The over-arching goal of learner independence and ability to synthesize across areas of music applies at advanced levels to graduate students. The graduate programs prepare students for careers in higher education, professional performance, and studio teaching. The School offers graduate degrees in performance and literature, choral music, instrumental conducting, theory, composition, piano pedagogy, accompanying and vocal coaching, music education, and musicology. A complete listing of graduate degrees and related areas of specialization is provided in Appendix One. In addition to meeting musical outcomes required of undergraduates, graduate students are expected to demonstrate the following abilities:

- 1) independent original research
- 2) advanced analytical skills
- 3) command of professional and scholarly literature in the area of specialization.

C. MEASURES AND METHODS TO MEASURE OUTCOMES

The School of Music uses a variety of assessment measures to evaluate student learning. All students are expected to demonstrate competence in music theory, performance, and musicology, as well as aural, keyboard, and conducting skills. Specific courses in each of these areas are required in the curriculum and include internal assessment measures, appropriate to the individual disciplines, including lab work, discussions, written papers and exams, sight reading, aural skills, conducting, and playing tests. Music education students must also demonstrate knowledge of theories of instruction and pedagogical

skills, typically through practical classroom instruction, early field experiences, and student teaching.

Summative Authentic Assessments

Culminating or capstone experiences require students to synthesize across courses and to demonstrate that they have internalized and integrated understandings and skills. The School endeavors to provide authentic assessment measures as the final project in each degree, appropriate to the specific majors of its students.

Performance majors: Junior and Senior Recitals (BM students), Master's (MM), and Doctoral (DMA) Recitals. In the world of professional musicians, public performance or recordings of one's work are the standard means of displaying competence. Since the performance degree programs prepare students for a professional performance career, the ability to demonstrate advancing musicianship through public performance is an authentic assessment measure. Undergraduates in the performance and composition majors are required to present recitals in the junior and senior year. Master's and DMA candidates perform significant recitals and are evaluated by the faculty members in the appropriate instrument (e.g. piano, voice, winds). DMA candidates may choose either a substantial original research paper or a series of such lecture recitals as an alternative to a research paper; the lecture recital requires students to demonstrate theoretical and historical understanding of the works they are performing. (The DMA thesis is evaluated, as are dissertation documents, by a committee using criteria described below under dissertations.) Final recitals at all levels are adjudicated by a panel of faculty appropriate for the student's area (e.g. voice, winds, strings etc.)

Music Composition majors: Recital Performance of Original Compositions. Junior and Senior Recitals (BM students), Master's (MM), and Doctoral (DMA) Recitals are required for completion of each degree. Composers in the professional world submit their portfolio of compositions, including recordings of performances, to demonstrate their competence. Doctoral candidates are also expected to write a substantial document explaining the origin and development of their doctoral composition. Final composition recitals are adjudicated by the composition faculty.

Musicology: Thesis and Dissertations. Music historians demonstrate their scholarly achievements through written essays, articles, and books. Undergraduates in musicology complete an original research thesis over the final two semesters. Master's students submit a thesis, doctoral students a dissertation, demonstrating their competence in research, command of related literature, historical and theoretical analysis, and writing ability. Faculty committees in musicology evaluate the quality of theses and dissertations through committees.

Music Education Undergraduates. Student Teaching and Portfolios. In the final semester, music education students are placed as student teachers. They receive clinical supervision reports using a standardized rubric from the cooperating teacher and from university supervisors. They also submit a teaching portfolio, artifacts, and reflective statements indicating their competence in the 22 Illinois State Teaching Standards. Portfolios are reviewed by music education faculty and academic professional staff. Such portfolios and

ratings of teaching performance in the classroom, along with transcripts of grades, provide the basis for hiring decisions made by principals and music supervisors.

Music Education Graduates. Students in the MME degree may choose either a research thesis or a comprehensive oral exam to demonstrate their professional expertise in educational research, theory, and practice. EdD and PhD candidates complete a dissertation, demonstrating their command of research literature and methods using quantitative, qualitative, philosophical, or historical designs.

Formative Assessments.

Comprehensive exams. Preliminary or qualifying examinations for graduate students require demonstration of the ability to synthesize large bodies of literature, and show mastery of the research or repertoire appropriate to the individual discipline (e.g. ethnomusicology, music education, musicology, conducting, theory, performance and literature, etc.). Students who do not pass such preliminary examinations cannot proceed to the dissertation or thesis portion of the program. A complete list of the comprehensive and preliminary exams in each program is available in the Graduate Music Handbook.

Juries. All students taking applied music lessons are evaluated at the end of each semester through playing juries that are evaluated by several faculty members. The jury process serves as an additional review of the student's proficiency and musicianship, beyond that provided by the individual studio teacher.

Sophomore reviews. Students in performance and music education are reviewed by the faculty in the division to ensure that they are performing at a sufficient level to advance to upper level courses at the end of the sophomore year. Music education faculty review technical GPA's in music core courses, professionalism in classes, and academic achievement in music education courses. Performance students' sophomore juries (see above) serve as a checkpoint. They are reviewed by the faculty for evidence of ability to play at an advanced level. Students who do not demonstrate satisfactory level of achievement are given the opportunity to continue study at the 100 level in order to raise their playing level to pass the sophomore jury in a subsequent semester.

Annual Portfolio Review. Students in the composition major must pass a portfolio review of their work each year in order to advance to the next level of composition instruction (MUS 106, 206 etc.)

External Assessments. Standardized Exams; Job Placements

Music education students typically comprise 50-60% of the undergraduate enrolment. As part of obtaining teacher certification, these students must take a series of tests administered by the State of Illinois Certification Testing System. The UIUC Council on Teacher Education receives the results and has reported the following for UIUC music students.

- UIUC music students are consistently above the statewide average on the new Music Content Test and the Assessment of Professional Teaching (data 2005-07)

- The passing rate for 2005-07 on the Music Content Test is 100% (97 students total passed on the first attempt).
- The APT results 2003-07 show that of the 152 who took the test, 148 passed on the first attempt.

We take these results as indicative that our students are well prepared by their program here to begin a teaching career. This finding is supported by placement rates.

“The high rate of professional placements (above 90% in any given year) among music education graduates is also a measure of the success of the program.” 2001 NASM Self-Study Report p. 95

SECTION 3 : PLANS FOR USING RESULTS

(a) PLANS: Brief description of plans to use assessment results for program improvement.

The School plans the following means to improve student learning

- 1) update course outlines in all eleven divisions to clarify where intended student outcomes are addressed in our courses and programs;
- 2) identify and analyze available assessment data systematically, including sources used for this report;
- 3) develop an annual online survey of graduating seniors and recent alumni;
- 4) reinstate the five-year music education survey of graduates;
- 5) appoint an assessment coordinator and committee to report results from points 1-4 to the faculty.

Currently we have no systematic way of tracking the career development of our graduates, although we have anecdotal evidence of many “success” stories. The survey instruments (items 3 and 4) will provide quantifiable data on how many of our students are accepted to graduate schools, to positions in higher education, to full- and part-time employment as performing musicians, or other forms of professional achievement. Additionally, the online surveys will ask students to assess the quality of their preparation as musicians, identify areas where the preparation was inadequate, and identify weaknesses or omissions in our offerings.

Results of all these data sources will be reported to the Director and to the faculty, and serve as the basis for making curricular and instructional decisions to improve student learning.

(b) TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

2007-09 Course Updates. The School is currently engaged in updating all our course outlines, as part of preparation for the next NASM review (2010-2011).

2008-09 Appoint Assessment Coordinator and Committee.

2008-09 Design and administer online survey of seniors and recent graduates.

2009-10 Reinstate Music Education Five-Year Survey of Alumni.