

**Central Washington University
Assessment of Student Learning
Department and Program Report**

Academic Year of Report: 2011-2012
College: Arts and Humanities
Department: Music
Program: Master of Music: Music Education

1. What student learning outcomes were assessed this year, and why?

In answering this question, please identify the specific student learning outcomes you assessed this year, reasons for assessing these outcomes, with the outcomes written in clear, measurable terms, and note how the outcomes are linked to department, college and university mission and goals.

We examined several indicators related to two student learning outcomes: *Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the major such as performance, conducting, theory and analysis, and history and literature* (NASM 2011-12 Handbook, XIV.E.2, p. 128) and *Students develop graduate-level perspectives on contemporary issues and problems in music education.* (NASM 2011-12 Handbook, XIV.E.3, p. 128). As part of the newly developed summer cohort MM in Music Education, students engaged in coursework in research methods and curriculum design relevant to their ongoing work in K-12 classrooms. We feel that developing competence and leadership in these areas are primary goals of our MM program, and wished to examine student performance in their initial quarter. Given the importance of a breadth of musical knowledge, we felt it was important to assess initial student skills and knowledge in aural and written music theory, musical audiation, and music history. These outcomes are linked to department goal 2. *Students will receive a general body of knowledge consistent with accreditation requirements of NASM, CAH student learning goal 1. Ensure that students develop disciplinary specific competencies for success in their field,* and university goal 1. *Maintain and strengthen an outstanding academic and student life on the Ellensburg campus.*

As indirect measures of student attitude related to the selected objectives, we examined SEOI results from MUS 560 and the aggregated data on inquiries, applications, and admissions to the new program.

2. How were they assessed?

In answering these questions, please concisely describe the specific methods used in assessing student learning. Please also specify the population assessed, when the assessment took place, and the standard of mastery (criterion) against which you will compare your assessment results. If appropriate, please list survey or questionnaire response rate from total population.

A) What methods were used?

i. We examined student achievement on a curriculum design project assigned as part of MUS 560: Instructional Development in Music Education. This project was evaluated by the instructor, with the expectation that 90% of students would receive a passing grade (75% or above) on the components of the project.

ii. We administered the CWU graduate music history exam, the CWU graduate music theory placement exam, and the *Advanced Measures of Music Audiation* (a standardized instrument developed by Edwin Gordon and widely used in research and education). As baseline measures of the first year of a new program, we had no pre-determined criterion levels. However, for the music theory and history exams, the traditional cut score is 80%. Students scoring below this threshold are required to enroll in review courses.

iii. As indirect measures of student attitude, we examined SEOI results from MUS 560 for this cohort, as well as an examination of inquiries, applications, and admissions to the new program for 2011-2012. These data were maintained by the faculty music education coordinator as a log of email and phone inquiries as well as a sign-up sheet from the WMEA state conference in February 2012. Our enrollment goal was a maximum of 15 students per cohort.

B) Who was assessed?

A complete cohort of 8 students enrolling as the initial candidates for the summers-only MM in Music Education.

C) When was it assessed?

The theory, history, and AMMA exams were administered July 6-7, 2012. The curriculum projects were evaluated August 17, 2012. Inquiry, application, and admission data were collected throughout the academic year 2011-2012.

3. What was learned?

In answering this question, please report results in specific qualitative or quantitative terms, with the results linked to the outcomes you assessed, and compared to the standard of mastery (criterion) you noted above. Please also include a concise interpretation or analysis of the results.

i. Students in MUS 560: Instructional Development in Music Education were required to design an ideal K-12 music program, a selected course within that program, a selected unit of study within that course, and specific lessons within that unit. This was accomplished using the Understanding by Design framework and required to be aligned with Washington State's Essential Academic Learning Requirements and the MENC voluntary national standards for music. All students were successful in these progressive assignments, scoring above 75% on evaluation rubrics. This exceeds our desired standard of mastery of 90% of students with a C or above. In one case, the student's work could serve as a model curriculum for any school and merited the highest praise.

ii. The following table contains the compiled results of the departmental music theory diagnostic exam (aural and written), the departmental music history diagnostic exam, and the AMMA percentile ranks (aural, written, and composite) for the complete initial cohort of summer MM students.

Area	Year	Theory Aural %	Theory Written %	History %	AMMA Tonal PR	AMMA Rhythm PR	AMMA Total PR
Chor	2012	81.81	69.37	48	96	96	95
Chor	2012	60.9	32.5	30	44	16	29
Chor	2012	61.36	45	60	57	65	56
Inst	2012	42.72	49.37	61.5	32	35	32
Inst	2012	44.09	42.3	-	32	30	38
Inst	2012	24	48.12	72	64	78	65
Chor	2012	90	63.75	60	94	87	88
Inst	2012	51.81	44.24	61	44	65	50

The traditional departmental cut score for the music theory and history exams is 80%, and students scoring below this threshold are required to enroll in graduate review courses in these areas. We were interested to note the wide spread of scores and the generally low performance among this cohort of full-time music teachers.

The AMMA is a valid and reliable standardized measure of music audiation widely used in research and higher education. It is predictive of musical achievement and most commonly used to identify students with various learning needs. In our sample, it correlates positively with the aural theory diagnostic exam. It would be expected that a random sample of college music majors would cluster at the 50th percentile. Our distribution of scores is not particularly surprising.

iii. Student evaluations (SEOI) of MUS 560 were generally strong. All responses were above the midpoint (3) although in some cases below department and college means. Students were particularly positive about course content being presented in an understandable sequence (mean 4.83, department mean 4.55, college mean 4.45) and the instructor encouraging students to connect course content to issues beyond the university classroom (mean 4.83, department mean 4.72, college mean 4.55). This is particularly gratifying given the general aversion among members of the profession to the subject matter at hand—curriculum and assessment. Students responded in a more mixed manner to items “instructor used a variety of methods, as needed, to make content clear” (mean 3.50, department mean 4.42, college mean 4.41) and “course activities challenged students to think critically” (mean 4.00, department mean 4.67, college mean 4.54).

As an indirect measure of student (and potential student) attitude, we tabulated email and phone inquiries, applications, and admissions. Between Fall 2011 and summer 2012, the music education area chair received 23 inquiries resulting in correspondence, and 7 people signed up for more information at the CWU booth at the WMEA conference in February. We received 9 applications for admission and all candidates were qualified, resulting in 9 admissions. Of these, 8 began the program (one deferred until 2013 for personal reasons). We also had 3 non-degree (workshop only) attendees for the one-week intensive sessions. As this was the first year of a new program, we had no expectations as to the volume of inquiries and applications. We would like to enroll 15 students per summer, which would imply a future target level of 56 inquiries at the current yield rate.

4. What will the department or program do as a result of that information?

In answering this question, please note specific changes to your program as they affect student learning, and as they are related to results from the assessment process. If no changes are planned, please describe why no changes are needed. In addition, how will the department report the results and changes to internal and external constituents (e.g., advisory groups, newsletters, forums, etc.).

Based on student testing results, we are designing a graduate music theory seminar *for music educators* to address specific areas of weakness and emphasize practical applications of music theory in the classroom. This course will be taught in summer 2013. The same approach will apply for the music history seminar in summer 2014. We will also re-evaluate the exam preparation materials and the exams themselves to refine the approach for summers-only students who do not have access to remedial or review courses. The AMMA is a powerful and subtle tool—two of the students scored in the 90th percentile on this measure, indicating particularly strong audiation skills, and three were in the 30th percentile, indicating challenge in “visualizing” tonal and rhythmic patterns in the absence of sound. We will build on these strengths and account for these challenges in designing and instructing courses for this particular cohort.

MUS 560: Instructional Development in Music Education is a course that existed at one time but not offered for many years. It is representative of a rather technical and laborious area of the professional educator’s work, and shares this aspect with other areas of educational leadership and policy. Nevertheless, students produced work of quality, and in some cases exceptional and exemplary curriculum documents and plans. These students were clearly motivated and eager to apply their new perspectives on curriculum directly in their own classrooms. This is gratifying and will allow us to seek to replicate this success in future offerings of this course and others related to educational policy and educational psychology (two other areas that may be perceived as dry, boring, and aversive). Instructors will be encouraged to use multiple instructional methods and seek opportunities to elicit and strengthen student critical thinking skills in these courses.

We will continue to pursue all available methods to publicize the program. One option may be to gather current student testimonials and use this direct appeal to reach our target audience of practicing K-12 music educators.

Results of ongoing assessment will be discussed in music education committee meetings, full faculty meetings, and briefings with the CAH Dean and Associate Provost, and will continue to be an element of NASM accreditation. The annual reports available on the Associate Provost’s website will be linked on the department homepage.

5. What did the department or program do in response to last year’s assessment information?

In answering this question, please describe any changes that have been made to improve student learning based on previous assessment results. Please also discuss any changes you have made to your assessment plan or assessment methods.

The primary result of previous assessments was the creation of the summers-only program itself. Low interest in the residential MM in music education resulted in nearly non-existent

enrollments which were identified by the department, the Academic Planning Task Force, and CAH Dean as an area for concern. With the possibility of losing the program at the pre-eminent music education college in the region, we researched and designed the new program. This involved looking at online and summer programs at other institutions, creating or reactivating courses, redesigning existing courses to work in a hybrid summer format, and actively promoting the program.

In response to feedback on the 2010-11 report, we aligned program outcomes with NASM requirements, used indirect as well as direct methods, and endeavored to assess student attitude as well as knowledge and skill.

6. Questions or suggestions concerning Assessment of Student Learning at Central Washington University: