

ASSESSMENT PLAN

Music Program, Visual & Performing Arts Department A.A., B.A., B.F.A. Degrees

Program Mission:

Music Program at New Mexico Highlands University provides our students with exceptional educational experiences, fostering creative talent through the performance and creation of musical art. Working closely with faculty, music students transform into capable musicians as they create, perform, and critically examine diverse music from the past, present, and across the globe.

Program Vision:

The Music Program continuously enhances and refines its ability to provide opportunities for students in order to cultivate an appreciation for a diversity of musical styles through the curriculum, performances, and productions, with the goal of preparing its students for an active professional life as a musician.

Criteria for Assessment:

- Detail about proficiencies will be included in outcomes assessment data such as student classification (freshman, sophomore, etc.) in data reports.
- Assessments will be reviewed in department and program meetings to foster discussions regarding adjustments to program instruction, curriculum, etc.
- Piano proficiency juries, recitals, convocations, and key assignments from Rudiments and theory classes may be included in assessment.
- Information on students, post-graduation, may be collected.

Student Learning Outcome 1:

1. Creativity, Originality, and Expressiveness

We music faculty expect that the students will demonstrate clear signs of solving the artistic problems in his/her choice of music with creativity, originality and expressiveness.

The assessment of these outcomes is important for the Music Program in order to inspire students to make creative and expressive ideas the foundation of their lives and in their work, which is the essence of the “cultivation of the human mind and spirit;” to prepare our students for an active professional life; and to develop the student’s knowledge and skill, literary and historical backgrounds, and ethical applications of communication and the arts in order to “develop broadly literate students and leaders, educated in analytical and critical thought and in the appreciation of the arts and sciences.”

For voice and instrumental music students, the particular aspects of performance assessed for this area are Musicianship and Presentation. Musicianship includes the performer's ability to express the emotional content of the music. Emotion may be communicated with facial expressions, body movements, physical actions that convey meaning, dynamic fluctuations in the music (loudness and quietness), and articulation (the envelope of notes or syllables). Presentation includes the deportment and decorum of the musicians as they perform, and student collaboration with accompanists or other performers.

Music Technology, Composition, or Production students may perform alone, with other musicians, or present audio recordings of their studio productions. The particular aspects of performance or presentation assessed in this area are Dynamic and Aesthetic Content. Dynamics (loudness and quietness) and changes in dynamics is a fundamental technique by which musicians communicate emotional meaning in music. Although the principles underlying the musician's works may vary, the existence of aesthetic content must be presented in the work in an integral way that may be recognized by a knowledgeable listener.

The Music Program goals include a proficiency in these assessments of 80 percent or greater.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills
- Effective Communication Skills

Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

Music Outcome Assessment occur at each semester end in jury examinations. Juries are a required final examination for each student who enrolls in an Applied Music course. (Applied Music courses are one-on-one "lessons" where the student seeks specialized instruction in a specific musical skill such as singing or songwriting.) During finals week, faculty set aside a day or two half-days for students to schedule a 10- to 15-minute performance before the jury. The jury panel is comprised of Music Program faculty who assess individual student performances or recordings created during the semester. Audience members are not permitted in juries.

Each faculty jury member uses a jury assessment form to evaluate aspects of the student's performance or musical work on a scale of 1 to 5. The jury's evaluation may influence, but not determine the student's final grade in their Applied Music lesson. Students may review their own evaluation form after the jury. The process also provides the opportunity for each faculty to discuss with the student strengths, weaknesses, and progress as an artist. Additionally, data are collected from jury forms for the purposes of program assessment. The student's performances in

Convocations, recitals, and other music courses are taken into consideration by faculty on the jury, and contribute to the overall jury assessment.

An additional positive element of juries is an implicit level of peer evaluation among faculty colleagues, which encourages continuous improvement in the instruction and motivation of students. Faculty know that at the end of the semester, certain levels of improvement in their students will be expected other faculty on the jury. Faculty often discuss strategies for increasing instructional success according to the particular student's personality and level of musical artistry.

Student advisement also often occurs in juries, often focusing on student's artistic goals, but sometimes including recommendations for specific courses (not detailed schedule-planning). Such general advisement may help a student decide which particular path in music could be more advantageous for them. Juries provide a unique opportunity at the end of the semester to have discreet, yet truthful discussions with students regarding their progress toward becoming an accomplished musician.

At the jury, faculty assess each performance/presentation feature on the following scale:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 5 - Excellent | (with a recommended grade of A) |
| 4 - Good | (with a recommended grade of B) |
| 3 - Average | (with a recommended grade of C) |
| 2 - Poor | (with a recommended grade of D) |
| 1 - Unprepared | (with a recommended grade of F) |

The program goal will be considered met if the percentage of students meeting this criteria is greater than 90%.

Copies of the Music Jury forms are located at the end of this document.

Summary of Data:

- Total number of students assessed
- Number of students meeting criterion (A score of 3.5 or higher meets criterion)
- Number of students not meeting criterion
- Percentage of students meeting criterion

Student Learning Outcome 2:

2. Knowledge of Style

We music faculty expect that the students will demonstrate a clear understanding of the appropriate style and context of music chosen for the performances.

The assessment of these outcomes is important for the Music Program in order to inspire students to make creative and expressive ideas the foundation of their lives

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For voice and instrumental music students, the particular aspects of performance assessed for this area are Pitch Accuracy and Tone Production/Quality. Pitch accuracy is an essential skill for every musician. Stated negatively, pitch inaccuracy has the capacity to produce intense discomfort in the listener. Pitch accuracy requires skillful control of musical audio frequencies while the musician is in the act of performing a musical work. Similarly, tone production is the “color” of sound, which may be altered with seemingly insignificant alterations in the musician’s posture, breath control, or hand position. The development of skills in these areas is vital to the development of successful musicians.

Music Technology, Composition, or Production students are assessed in Melody/Harmony and Rhythm for Outcome 2. The focal point in music is the melody, and therefore is a prominent feature in musical works. Harmony is the accompanying notes that support or create tension with the melody. Rhythm is the occurrence of these elements across time. The competence of the songwriter or composer to manage the combination of these three elements is assessed in this outcome.

Music Program goals include a proficiency in these assessments of 80 percent or greater.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills
- Effective Communication Skills

Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Music Outcome Assessment occur at each semester end in jury examinations. Juries are a required final examination for each student who enrolls in an Applied Music course. (Applied Music courses are one-on-one “lessons” where the student seeks specialized instruction in a specific musical skill such as singing or songwriting.) During finals week, faculty set aside a day or two half-days for students to schedule a 10- to 15- minute performance before the jury. The jury panel is comprised of Music Program faculty who assess individual student performances or recordings created during the semester. Audience members are not permitted in juries.

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Student Learning Outcome 3:

3. Technical Competence

We expect that the students will perform the music chosen for the recital with technical competence according to the instrument and the level of difficulty of each piece. (Traits 1 & 4)

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For voice and instrumental music students, the particular aspects of performance assessed for this area are Rhythm and Basic Technical Competence. Rhythm is the occurrence of musical elements across time, and it is imperative that the musician possess an exactitude of pulse that is necessary for an effective musical performance. Musicians may refer to this skill as an internal clock, which provides a level of precise timing needed in order to provide the listener with a gratifying experience. Technical requirements for effective musicianship include breath control and a kinesthetic facility that is particular to the student’s instrument or voice.

Music Technology, Composition, or Production students, the particular aspects of performance or presentation assessed for this area are Timbre/Balance and Form. Timbre is the “color” of a particular note, and occurs when a compendium of overtones resonate along with a fundamental pitch. Timbre is the characteristic that enables a listener to identify a piano from a trumpet, even though they play the same pitch. The timbral palate is virtually limitless considering the large numbers of orchestral and synthetic instruments, as well as the possible combinations, available to contemporary musicians. Form is sectionalization, repetition, and order of musical building blocks presented in a work. Form in music has the function of piquing and holding the interest of the listener, which usually involves variations in the density of texture, variations within repeated sections, and contrasts in implications of character in the various sections of music.

The Music Program goals include a proficiency in these assessments of 80 percent or greater.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Effective use of Technology

Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

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MUSIC TECHNOLOGY & COMPOSITION JURY FORM

NEW MEXICO HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY

Name: _____ Student ID: @_____

VOCAL & INSTRUMENTAL JURY FORM

NEW MEXICO HIGHLANDS UNIVERSITY

Name: _____ Student ID: @_____

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