

2009 Yearly Assessment Report

**Department of Music
Master of Arts Degree with Emphases in Music**

Emphases:

**Music Composition
Music Education (Thesis and Non-Thesis Option)
Music History/Literature (Thesis and Non-Thesis Option)
Music Performance**

**December 15, 2009
Dr. Jeffrey Pappas, Chair**

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I. Program's Mission:

The mission of the Department of Music is to prepare students for careers in performance, education, and other music-related fields who will make a positive impact on their artistic discipline and on schools and communities. Additionally, the Department will provide enriching experiences for those who will continue their musical activities as an avocation; and to cultivate within the region an increased awareness of the educational, cultural, and aesthetic aspects of music.

In fulfilling its mission, the department is committed to the following goals:

- To provide a nurturing environment for musical, academic and personal growth.
- To educate students to think critically, work creatively, communicate effectively, and become technologically literate.
- To function as a visible, responsible and responsive student-centered department dedicated to academic excellence.
- To maintain a faculty of musicians/teachers who, through dedication to excellence, sound pedagogy and effective communication skills, present models that inspire students to achieve their full potential.
- To meet educational, research, and service needs of the region through collaboration with academic and technical institutions, businesses, government agencies, and cultural organizations.
- To contribute to the cultural life of the University and community by providing concerts, recitals, festivals, joint musical ventures and other services.
- To provide leadership within the University and the region in all matters pertaining to music.

The Master of Arts with an Emphasis in Music degree is consistent with and supports the mission of Marshall University as specifically outlined under the Marshall University heading of the mission statement. The degree specifically:

- “provides affordable, high quality...graduate education appropriate for the state and the region;”
- “educates a citizenry capable of living and working effectively in a global environment;”
- “furthers the intellectual, artistic, and cultural life of the community and region;”
- “make instruction available throughout Marshall’s service area using all appropriate modes of delivery,” and;
- “adhere to the Marshall University Creed and to the Statement of Ethics.”

Faculty teaching in the degree share and embody all the commitments found under the faculty responsibilities and every student has the opportunities outlined under the student section of the mission statement.

II. Program's Student Learning Outcomes (chart not used):

Students in the Master of Arts in Music degree will be able to:

1. Create an effective applied music performance:
 - a. by integrating comprehensive capabilities in major performing medium including technical facility, musicianship, musical styles, and musical interpretation;
 - b. by demonstrating knowledge of literature for performing medium.
2. Identify use of theoretical materials in music:
 - a. through synthesizing and articulating theoretical and stylistic concepts and perspectives;
 - b. by utilizing aural skills for performance, historical and theoretical analysis.
3. Explain knowledge of musical repertoire and the relationship between repertoire and musical developments:
 - a. through synthesizing and articulating historical and stylistic concepts and perspectives;
 - b. by integrating knowledge of historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts in compositional, performance, scholarly, pedagogical and historical contexts, according to specialization emphasis.
4. Justify a student's communication of musical ideas and musical information in a written and oral media:
 - a. through the application of research techniques as summarized in the completion of portfolio, thesis or creative projects;
 - b. by integrating theoretical, historical, and interpretive knowledge via oral and musical performance.

III. Assessment Activities (chart not used, narrative only):

Overview of Department of Music Assessment Activities:

A three-part assessment process (entrance, midway, graduation) provides regular and coherent data for evaluation of student progress and that information helps to inform us about program effectiveness. The entrance assessment requires a performance audition for all incoming students, regardless of the intended area of emphasis. This audition

evaluates performing skills and determines the incoming applied music level. In the Performance area of emphasis, Level 8 is the standard entry level; anything below results in probationary entry. In addition, applicants to the Music History/Literature and Theory/Composition areas must submit one or more samples of research, writing, or original compositions. Applicants in Music Education may submit a videotape of teaching or conducting. All applicants complete an interview process to assess their potential for success in the program.

The midpoint assessment most generally is in the form of the Plan of Study, which provides a review of progress and organization. Procedures used to assess each outcome differ according to the activity. For instance, a faculty jury evaluates students in applied music every semester. The outcome of the jury is one of several criteria considered by faculty before students are permitted to register for applied lessons in the next semester, and, in the case of applied majors, to continue in the graduate program. At each juried performance, students are graded on performance elements, such as intonation, technique, interpretation, and literature. Simultaneously, the student's applied music level is reviewed. A level of 10 is required for graduation.

A final assessment tool prior to graduation is either the graduate recital or thesis, in addition to the comprehensive examination and oral examination, each of which is juried by a faculty panel. In addition to the written questions supplied by the committee, students are asked to submit a current résumé, sample cover letter, and biographical statement. With either assessment approach, the student's abilities within our learning outcomes is measured.

Specific assessments as listed in the attached table are conducted in the following manner:

- Course assessment instruments are given and graded by faculty teaching the specific courses. These include a wide range of writing assignments, tests, and research activities.
- A faculty panel conducts jury exams of all students enrolled in applied music. Students receive a grade from the jury panel, which counts for one-third of the semester grade in applied music.
- Forms for the applied level and Recital Hearing are completed by the appropriate faculty committee, filed in the department, and shared with the student. The faculty panel must approve the entire recital before the program will be presented. Approval is based upon demonstration of a high level of proficiency in technique, presentation, interpretation, and intonation.
- Faculty in the area of emphasis meet to discuss the progress of graduate students and at the completion of 18 hours of earned graduate credit recommend further study.

- Final projects (recital, thesis, etc.), comprehensive examinations, and oral examinations are reviewed and evaluated by committees of three or more faculty with graduate status.

Using a variety of measures, a faculty jury of at least three members evaluates semester juries, recital hearings, and recitals. The evaluative measures include course descriptions and literature/technique/musicianship requirements given in the levels description. Each combine faculty experiences at a variety of institutions, which reflect national norms for graduate performance in our degree options.

Ensemble conductors are responsible for evaluating student progress in performance groups. This evaluation is based upon their performance skill and overall musical and professional contributions to the ensemble. In addition, external judges are used for various competitions sponsored by the Department of Music. These include the Jackson, Turley, Orchestra Concerto and Wind Symphony Soloist competitions.

Music theory remains the major stumbling block for most students not majoring in theory or composition. Some students lack background in specialized areas, such as analysis, or twentieth-century music. To assess a student's theoretical knowledge, the department administers a placement exam at the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. MUS 540, a developmental course in music theory, has been designed and is currently offered to address the background deficiencies of incoming students. This permits MUS 640A, the required graduate theory course, to be taught as a graduate theory course rather than part review and part graduate level.

Graduates are enjoying success in many music fields after graduation. Indirect data shows that the overwhelming majority of our master's graduates hold positions in music. This is due in large part to our strong curriculum and the high standards we set within our program via the assessment measures we use. Each ensures a strong and on-going feedback loop throughout a student's enrollment at Marshall. The program revision in January 2006 has only strengthened our degree and, as it matures, we look forward to further success.

LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSED DURING 2008-09 ACADEMIC YEAR:

The two learning outcomes (25% of total outcomes) assessed during the 2008-09 academic year were:

- 1a. Create an effective applied music performance by integrating comprehensive capabilities in major performing medium including technical facility, musicianship, musical styles, and musical interpretation, and;
- 2a. Identify use of theoretical materials in music through synthesizing and articulating theoretical and stylistic concepts and perspectives.

A. Assessment Measures (Tools) for 1a:

The creation of an effective applied music performance by integrating comprehensive capabilities in major performing medium including technical facility, musicianship, musical styles and musical interpretation is assessed through entrance auditions and interviews, jury exams (final exam in applied music study), graduate recital hearings (presented at least two weeks prior to the recital), and the comprehensive examination. Each of these assessment procedures provides unique opportunities for faculty to gather as a panel (at least three are present at each event) and consider the body of work by individual students throughout their course of musical study at Marshall. Students choosing performance emphases are given a level designation after their audition. This system is designed to maintain consistency throughout the applied music program and describes and outlines the relative performing abilities across the various curricula and according to the number of years of study. Graduate students must reach a level of 10 to graduate. Due to differences in the study of various instruments, each area in the department (brass, percussion, piano, voice, woodwinds and strings) determine the specific studies and repertoire required at each level.

B. Benchmarks for 1a:

One of the goals outlined in the department's 2007-08 Yearly Assessment Report (we were exempt from this report in 2008-09 due to the submission of our Five-Year Program Review) was the creation of benchmarks for the assessment tools within this outcome. In lieu of national benchmarks, the department in spring 2009 through faculty discussions created internal benchmarks for the:

Recital Hearings:	80% pass rate for first attempt 75% pass rate for second attempt
Comprehensive Exam:	100% pass rate for first attempt 95% pass rate for second attempt

As in the past, students are expected to progress one level per year in the applied levels system. Exceptions are made in circumstances when an applied teacher feels further study is necessary to achieve a higher level.

C. Results/Analysis for 1a.

Since the majority of the benchmarks for this outcome were established during spring 2009 and the department has had only one semester of data to cultivate, long-term results are inconclusive. In reviewing this one semester, the department has exceeded our internal benchmarks, except for second attempt numbers, since those events haven't occurred yet.

The department also had a discussion concerning the standardization of jury forms. It was decided that a standard form for all areas of our department would not be possible. Although we have standard areas of assessment (i.e., tone, pitch, musicality, etc...), there are some areas (i.e., bowing, hand position, etc...) that are unique to certain instruments

and cannot be evaluated throughout the department. Thus, numbers would be skewed. Individualized jury forms are still used in each area, leading to an assessment of a student's level. The *overall* outcome of the jury would be used in the department's assessment collection.

D. Analysis/Planned Action for 1a.

As previously mentioned, data collection is still in the early stages with this outcome. The good news is the department has identified the benchmarks and had a discussion regarding the lack of need for codified jury forms that we identified in the previous report. We plan on continuing to collect the necessary data to assist us in making informed decisions with our assessment and how that will affect curriculum and other important issues that can be assessed through this process.

Further codification of the comprehensive exam process and the evaluation procedures associated with it are currently under review.

A. Assessment Measures (Tools) for 2a:

The department notes the struggle many of our incoming graduate students have in theory as assessed through our entrance exam. In some cases, this is due to the lack of the importance placed on, or differences in the teaching of, theory at some undergraduate schools. It may be a retention issue of the materials learned. Any of these reasons place the department in a quandary when teaching *true* graduate theory in our graduate theory courses. In order to assess student learning, there must be an even starting point.

Students not scoring a 70% or higher are required to take a developmental theory course that reviews theoretical concepts commonly taught in undergraduate curricula. After successfully completing this course (it is taught online), students can begin the department's graduate theory courses.

During these courses (and all others for that matter), faculty are looking for use of higher order thinking using theoretical terms and concepts and the correct applications of those terms and concepts. Continued development and broadening of theoretical knowledge is expected throughout the curriculum.

The department understands success in these individual courses is not a true indicator in the assessment process; a broader picture of theoretical applications is needed. Students in every emphasis (music education, music history, composition and performance) must apply theoretical concepts to all their graduate work and ultimately pass a final oral and written comprehensive exam that includes at least one faculty member representing the theory area. All exam committee members are reviewing the student's ability to synthesize and articulate their knowledge of theoretical concepts and perspectives.

B. Benchmarks for 4b:

Theoretical knowledge is necessary to pass recitals and the written and oral components of the comprehensive exam. The departmental benchmarks (no national benchmarks exist) established in spring 2009 are:

Recital Hearings:	80% pass rate for first attempt
	75% pass rate for second attempt
Comprehensive Exam:	100% pass rate for first attempt
	95% pass rate for second attempt

Because of the reasons mentioned earlier, only a 20% pass rate is expected with the entrance exam.

C. Results/Analysis for 4b.

Since the benchmarks for this student outcome were established in spring 2009, no data is available.

D. Analysis/Planned Action for 4b.

With fewer events in the graduate curricula to assess this student outcome, the department needs to create a comprehensive assessment tool that will give quantitative data to assess theoretical knowledge (among other areas) demonstrated during recital hearings and comprehensive exams.

IV. Overview of changes implemented in your program this past year based on results and planned action specified in last year's report.

During the past two years, the Department of Music has attempted to engage in the Assessment process as fully as possible and take the task of improving our procedures seriously. We have heeded the advice of Dr. Mary Beth Reynolds in doing so: "I'd like to caution you against trying to do too much at once." With that in mind, the department has engaged in a deliberate and thoughtful approach to the following changes since the previous yearly report. Excellent progress has been made in the following areas, but the tempo of change has been tempered by the inclusion of every faculty member in the process.

1. reviewing our learning outcomes and modifying them as necessary (still in progress);
2. created numerical benchmarks for Recital Hearings, and the comprehensive exam;
3. discussed the option of creating a standardized jury form for the department. After much discussion, it was agreed not to change the form. Broader assessment measures (i.e. Recitals, Comprehensive Exams) will not be affected, since juries indicate successful completion of an individual semester class.

V. Specify any changes/modifications made to your program based specifically on data obtained during Assessment Day Activities.

The changes outlined in Section IV were either initiated and/or discussed during Assessment Day. No changes/modifications to programs have been made *specifically* due to Assessment Day activities.

VI. Assistance Needed with Assessment: What assistance can the Office of Assessment give you to help improve your assessment program?

This report is only the second Yearly Assessment Report written by the current chair. The first being only four months into my tenure. A comprehensive 5 Year Program Review was researched and written for the 2008 assessment period.

As I reflect on this year's report, I am struck by the sense our student outcomes need to be reduced without losing specificity and our assessment measures codified even further. Part of this is due to *my* broader and more educated sense of our department and the thought process this updated yearly assessment form directs us in organizing and reporting our assessment efforts.

In one way, all of our "general" outcomes (successful performances, application of theoretical and historical knowledge, and the ability to express these areas through written and oral communication) cannot be assessed individually. The majority cannot exist without others. They need to be assessed comprehensively and, at the current time within this format, we are not equipped to do so.

Guidance from the Assessment Office that would lead us to this more efficient and streamlined approach to assessment without losing the focus of what we are ultimately trying to learn from the process would be welcomed.