

# MSU Departmental Assessment Plan 2009-2011

Department: MUSIC

Department Head: Alan Leech

Assessment Coordinator: Alan Leech

Degrees/Majors/Options Offered by Department:

Bachelor of Arts in Music

Bachelor of Arts in Music Technology

Bachelor of Music Education

Also, a non-teaching minor is offered by the Department of Music to non-music majors.

- Assessment Management Structure

The Department of Music has decided that the assessment procedures should be managed by the Music Department Head. The Department Head will manage collection of data and direct the addressing of the data as it pertains to improving the course offerings and other aspects of the department's mission.

- Degree Objectives

The role of the Department of Music is to develop and deliver innovative curricula at the forefront of music, music technology, and music teacher training, designed to prepare students for careers in music and related fields.

The Bachelor of Arts in Music degree provides a basic Liberal Arts degree with an emphasis in the study of music. Students most often choose this path when they are very interested in studying music at Montana State but do not wish to either teach in the public schools or work within the field of music technology (our two other degree offerings). Students might work toward a graduate degree in music performance, library science, or other specialty that focuses around the field of music.

The Bachelor of Arts in Music Technology (BA MTEC) teaches the skills required for graduates to build their own studios and music-related businesses, as well as preparing them for work and/or graduate study in music composition, film music, audio engineering, or interdisciplinary media. Our program is unique of those around the U.S. in that it is centered around a fundamental understanding of music performance, written theory and skill in ear training rather than only of the technology of computers and various recording media.

The Bachelor of Music Education (K-12 Broadfield) degree leads to certification to teach music at all levels of the public schools in Montana. This degree allows a music major to select instrumental or choral music as a major field. The curriculum provides training in the alternate field so graduates are prepared to teach in both disciplines. Emphasis is equally divided among music pedagogy, performance, and historical and theoretical study.

- **Expected Competencies—major specific**

Music concentration competencies for all three degree options include the mastery of performance skills in one major performance area; the understanding and acquisition of skills in music theory and aural skills sufficient for aural, visual and verbal analyses; the development of composition and improvisation skills; and the accumulation of experiences with music of diverse cultures, historical periods, and media.

BME students develop additional competencies in the areas of elementary general music, choral, and instrumental pedagogy. This coursework requires proficiency in teaching voice, strings, brass, woodwinds, and percussion.

BA MTEC students develop additional competencies in the areas of composition, production, and marketing of independent music; sound design for film, television programs, theater, visual art, games and virtual environments; concert sound system design and live multimedia performance; and internet and broadcast media.

Communication skills are necessary - Although music is primarily a form of non-verbal communication, all music major students must be able to present the results of their work not only musically, but also orally and in written form.

Likewise, problem-solving skills are very necessary for music major students – By combining their skills in and knowledge of performance, analysis, and music history, students are expected to have the ability to work independently to solve a variety of musical problems, allowing for more accurate and musically expressive performances.

BME majors also use their knowledge of teaching strategies and pedagogical methodologies to solve problems while teaching in university laboratory settings and field placements in public schools.

BA MTEC majors use their knowledge and skills to design sounds and compose high-

quality music for electronic and acoustic media, with a particular focus on visual media and interdisciplinary collaboration. Students achieve a working knowledge of standard hardware and software in music and audio production, and learn to teach themselves new technologies as they appear, following the rapidly changing roles of the commercial recording studio, broadcast media, the internet, and digital media.

- **Assessment Plan for Gathering and Summarizing Data**

Every music major must perform before a jury of 3-4 faculty members, as the culminating evaluative event for Applied Music (MUS 160-460) each semester. This is an important assessment tool for Applied Music, which is a required course for music majors for every semester in residence. Both written and verbal critiques are given to the student by the jury. All students must successfully complete a piano proficiency exam following requisite keyboard coursework. BME majors are also required to complete Guitar in Class I (MUS 153) or a proficiency test.

A comprehensive sophomore review ensures that students can synthesize and apply sufficient discipline-specific knowledge to enter upper division courses. The faculty feels that this is an important step in ensuring success in graduation and beyond. BME majors undergo a file review and advising session with music education faculty prior to submitting their Teacher Education Preparation Program application to the School of Education.

All course grades are reviewed and plans are made for continuing coursework or retaking coursework to maintain minimum grade requirements. The Department's policy of not accepting grades lower than C in music concentration courses, or allowing such grades to be accepted as prerequisite for student teaching, insures that competencies are maintained. For BME majors, whose degree program culminates in student teaching, it is necessary to regularly demonstrate the acquisition of musical and pedagogical skills by developing musical concepts and acceptable performance skills in their students. Success in this area is evaluated by both the cooperating teachers in the public schools and the university supervisor. BA students study the core music courses in theory, aural skills, keyboard, history, ensemble performance, and applied music. In addition to the core music courses, BME students study conducting, instrumentation, vocal and instrumental techniques, elementary, choral and instrumental pedagogy. These courses have numerous laboratory experiences during which the student demonstrates the ability to communicate musical concepts, both orally and musically. Written communication skills are integral to music history courses; choral, instrumental, and elementary methods courses; and Senior Project (MUS 405R). Furthermore, students enrolled in elementary and secondary methods courses and student teaching participate in field experiences requiring written and verbal analyses, which are evaluated by course instructors.

BA MTEC students begin as pre-majors and must apply to be accepted into the major through a gate process, after successfully completing the first sequence of music theory, aural and keyboard skills, performance, and music technology coursework. Successful completion is defined as a grade of C or better in all music courses. Following

acceptance through the gate, BA MTEC students undergo the sophomore review process along with BA and BME students. Finally, the independent Senior Project course (composition and live performance of a large work based in electronic media) will assess each student's readiness for graduation in core competency areas.

Problem-solving skills are apparent in several upper-level courses in which students must synthesize knowledge and skills acquired in requisite coursework. In music technology, students gain problem-solving experience in music software management, recording, and live sound. They also gain experience in compositional problem-solving: composing music to given specifications and communicating with other artists in the interdisciplinary collaboration process, all essential skills for the modern composer working in collaborative media.

In the capstone experience, MUS 405R – Senior Project, students are expected to demonstrate the synthesis of all musical competencies, with the exception of performance. A comprehensive analysis by the student of a major work brings together listening, theoretical, historical and stylistic analytical skills acquired in many prior courses. Student teachers placed in the public schools must apply a multitude of problem-solving skills as they assume the teaching duties of their cooperating teachers. This experience is evaluated by using videotapes of the student in classroom situations, on-site observations, and written evaluations prepared by both the cooperating teachers and university supervisors. Additional opportunities for program synthesis (i.e., recitals, lecture-recitals, research papers, etc.) are provided in MUS 489, Undergraduate Research. Through the MTEC curriculum, BA MTEC students achieve competency and problem-solving skills to an appropriate level in music performance, music theory, and aural and keyboard skills.

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- Plan for Utilizing Data

As data is collected, it is referred to appropriate groups of faculty. There is an Option Head for each of our degree options, and they help the Department Head decide how best to deal with data and problems that might surface as we analyze the data. We have regular faculty meetings, as well as a Faculty Retreat at the beginning of each year.

In the past two years, we have discussed assessment in faculty meetings, and also sent certain items to committees as their jurisdiction applies. We created a Curriculum Revision Committee in order to best deal with a number of improvements that we identified as necessary to our degree options.