

Professional Music Assessment 2011-2012

1. Changes since 2011 include more specific instructions and showing concrete examples of assignments for MUC 164, which are used for assessing Outcomes 4 and 5. Previously, we passed students who attended the class and gave letter grades for the assignments. We now require the assignments before a student can pass the course.

Outcomes 1 and 2

2. From our CTE Assessment Plan, we have assessed Outcomes 1 and 2 using the final composition assignment from Commercial Music Theory III (MUC 103). This is the third in three-course sequence in the Professional Music program. All students in the program must take this sequence so it is an excellent way to evaluate student performance.

The composition was a two-part invention for two alto saxophones. The parameters were tonality, rhythm, theme, action between parts, and publish-ready. The grading was:

<u>Below Standard</u> (fails to meet min.)	<u>Fair</u> Needs editing difficult to play	<u>Good</u> Needs only minor correction	<u>Excellent</u> Easily performed, Publish-ready
---	---	---	--

The pieces were provided to the two alto saxophonists (instructor and outside professional). Parts were to be bracketed one above the other. They were written to be easily sight-read. Student composers described their pieces regarding *tonality* (major or minor, modal, bi-tonal, mirrored, atonal), *rhythm* (conventional time or odd or mixed meters), *theme* (clear theme suggesting harmony if applicable, feature up-ramp, repeated note motif, arrangement), and *action between parts* (oblique, contrary, parallel, passive, active, 'hooky').

3. The compositions were then performed. In most cases, only one or two stops and restarts were necessary. The instructor and guest performer commented on the pieces, evaluating ease of playing, musicality, and challenges, etc. Then a member of the class described the piece as per the above components. The Department Chair observed and noted comments for each submission.

The results were: Excellent (17), Good (5), Fair (0), and, Below standard (0).

Generally, the downgrading to Good was due to notational errors, rhythmic confusion, etc.

Everyone met the standard. There were no consistent problems.

Outcomes 4 and 5

2. Outcomes 4 and 5 were evaluated from the Business Plan Assignment from MUC 164. Students did a three-part submission: *Skill Assessment* (current skills and skills they need

to acquire), *Short and Long-term Goals* (6 mos.-one year, 2-5 years) and a *Career Plan*. (The students also submitted a time management exercise which was not part of the evaluation.)

Fall term, for MUC 165 (Business for the Musician) the students submitted the *Skill Assessment* and the *Short and Long-term Goals*. The students revisited those assignments six months later for MUC 164 (Survey of the Music Industry) and updated their skills and goals.

3. The following tables show the comparison between the evaluations done in spring 2011 and spring 2012:

Skill Assessment

Year	Specific & Logical	Too General	Lots of Narrative/Reflection	No List of Skills Needed
2011	13	12	5	8
2012	10	12	9	1

Goals

Year	Very Specific	Very General	Logical & Realistic	Not Realistic	Not Done
2011	9	19	12	13	–
2012	14	11	21	1	1

Career Plan

	2011	2012
Overall Professional Presentation	17	25
Uses Realistic Research	8	7
Uses Philosophical Research	1	5
Specific Examples	9	18
Has Marketing Strategy	7	9
Has No Marketing Strategy	14	9
Includes Self-Awareness	5	12
Realistic/Logical Plan	8	15
No Plan or Unrealistic Plan	15	7
Plan Described in Goals Assignment	–	4

Trend Analysis

There were 34 submissions of the first versions done fall term (MUC 165) and 25 submissions or final versions done spring term (MUC 164). However these two versions were not compared. A comparison was made using trends identified in submissions from

spring 2011 with those same categories in submissions of spring 2012. To insure consistency of scoring, the SAC Chair and Assessment Coach jointly scored each submission.

There was marked improvement in the overall quality of the submissions for MUC 164 (2012). There was 100% “Professional Presentation.” The narrative reflection almost doubled. There was great improvement in the “No Skills Needed” category for *Skill Assessment*. The specificity and logical and realistic numbers for *Goals* were up, and the very general number was down. For the *Career Plan* there was improvement in the use of specific examples, self-awareness, and a marketing strategy.

4. Regarding Outcomes 1 and 2, we will show examples of correct notation, format, examples of common mistakes, and a checklist of items to double check before submission. This should result in more polished compositions that are performance and publish-ready.

Regarding Outcomes 4 and 5, we will show examples of complete assignments, and better convey the criteria of the qualities that define a successful assignment. By having the students do the *Skills* and *Goals* assignments in the fall MUC 165 seminar with more clear instructions and with feedback provided we hope to see continued improvement in work.

5 .Outcomes 3 and 7 will be assessed fall term when MUC 140A (Group Piano I), MUC 143 (Group Percussion), and MUC 145A (Group Guitar/Bass I) will be offered and results evaluated. We will collaborate between the disciplines to develop and employ an evaluative process that maintains appropriate consistency.

Outcome 6 will be evaluated winter 2013 when MUC 234 will be offered and the results evaluated.

At this juncture, the existing assessment tools and process are adequate to assess our students. We recognize that clearer examples and instructions will result in cleaner and improved assignments, and, by extension, greater student success in the industry.