

Assessment Cycle 2025-2026

Fine Arts. To explore the purposes and processes in the visual and performing arts and the ways in which fine arts conceive and express the human experience.

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Date: 6/30/26

Approved by: Dr. Greg Handle

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Northwestern Mission. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

Northwestern Core Curriculum: In January 2018, under the direction of the Provost, the General Education Committee completed a deliberate and systematic 18-month review of the University Core Curriculum to ensure its alignment with the Louisiana Board of Regents' Statewide General Education Requirements (Policy 2.16). As a result, the University modified its General Education Core Curriculum, ensuring that the selected courses were introductory, survey, or appreciation courses and not tied to any specific degree program. The current broad-based core curriculum leverages six key competencies central to the University's mission and is consistent with the Louisiana Board of Regents' general education requirements. The selection of courses encompasses the knowledge and abilities that Northwestern believes are essential to college graduates. The requirements are designed to improve students' writing and speaking; provide students with mathematical skills at the level of college algebra and above; strengthen students' understanding of biological, physical, social, and behavioral sciences; and develop an appreciation and knowledge of the arts and humanities. These courses provide the breadth of a student's educational program while the degree program requirements provide the depth of education. The goal of the core curriculum is for undergraduate students, depending on their respective degree program, to obtain appropriate learning outcomes for this general education competency

Purpose: The purpose of this Fine Arts core competency is to improve students' understanding of the artistic endeavors of artists who contribute to our society. The knowledge and skills developed in this class can be put into context with other upper-level courses, in the workplace, and in everyday life.

Methodology.

(1a) The instructors will conduct two online assessments for each student enrolled in FA 1040 in the summer, fall, and spring semesters.

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(1b) Faculty will also require students to complete four written assignments and gauge student audience participation in artistic events in the community.

(1c) Results from the six assessments will be sent to the program coordinator for data compilation and interpretation.

(2) The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine whether the applicable outcomes are met.

(3) Results from the assessments will be discussed with faculty during the on-call week of the fall semester. Any changes to the methodology will be discussed at this time.

(4) Faculty will meet during the fall on-call week to discuss the results and determine the actions that need to be taken in response to the evaluation. Individual meetings with faculty will be held during the week of an on-call week, if necessary. The program coordinator, in consultation with the college, school, and departmental leadership, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next period, and, where needed, service, curriculum, and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes.

SLO 1. Students identify genres, artists, works, techniques, and trends within the arts

Measure 1.1. The student will recognize important terminology used to describe the arts; important individual works of art; famous composers, playwrights, artists, choreographers, and performers; and identify important historical periods and trends in the arts.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Fine Arts 1040 Pre-test and Post-test.

Target: 40% growth between the two tests, with at least 70% of the students enrolled taking the exam. 45% growth is ideal. Students take two online tests to partly assess their understanding of basic terminology, important artists, and critical moments in the history of art.

Course Name	Methodology	Target	Term
FA 1040	Pre-and Post-Test	40% Growth	AY 2025-2026
FA 1040	Participation Rate	70% Participation	AY 2025-2026

Findings: target met for growth percentage, Pre-test participation, and Post-test participation.

Analysis: In AY 2024-2025, the target was 40% growth with a 70% participation rate. Students achieved a 67% growth rate, with 97% pre-test participation and 81% Post-test participation. All three 2024-2025 targets were accomplished. A total of 1329 online and live students were enrolled in 39 sections of FA 1040 throughout the summer, fall,

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and spring semesters. Of these 1329 students, 367, or 28% were dual enrollment students.

In AY 2025-2026, targets were met for the growth rate, the pre-test, and the post-test.

Pre-test:	1194/1295	student completion rate (92.2%)
		26.7 average
Post-test:	1070/1294	student completion rate (82.7%)
		44.0 Average
		64.82 Growth rate

The lower post-test completion rate can be explained by the fact that, as the semester progresses, students either drop, stop attending, or experience assessment fatigue, reducing the percentage of available students. There is no disparity between dual enrollment, online, distance learning, or live students since everyone takes the same assessment in the same format. Students are given the online pre-test at the beginning of the semester and the same exam as the post-test at the end of the semester. Individual scores are collected, and growth is determined using the following formula:

$$\frac{[\text{Post-test Average} - \text{Pre-test Average}]}{\text{Pre-test Average}}$$

Enrollment in FA 1040 was higher than last year, and the percentage of dual-enrollment students also increased: last year, 1329 students were enrolled in 39 sections of FA 1040, and 367 of them, or 28%, were dual-enrollment students. For the pre-test, 1210/1253 students (97%) participated, and for the post-test, 1021/1253 students (81%) participated. This was the first year in which the data collected included the changes made to targets. The growth rate target increased, and the participation rate decreased. Last year was also the first year that the post-test target was above 80%.

This year, 1347 students were enrolled in 44 sections of FA 1040, and 424 (24.9%) were dual enrollment students. Of 1295 students (two sections did not take the pre- or post-test), 1194 (92.2%) participated in the pretest and 1070 (82.7%) in the post-test. The pre-test average was 25.9/50, and the post-test average was 43.4/50, leading to a growth rate of 67.4%.

Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in fall 2025 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- sent reminder emails to encourage student participation in assignments and tests,

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- utilized different procedures for tests and assignments,
- annotated lecture notes,
- updated tests, web resources, welcome videos, assignments, forums, and lecture slides, quizzes, and guidelines

These changes were made to reflect the changing needs of the students.

As a result of these changes, the 2025-2026 targets (a 40% growth rate with participation rates at 70% of the total number of students enrolled) were met. The growth rate for the AY 2025-2026 assessment cycle was 67.4%, which exceeds the ideal target for the year. The pre-test participation rate was 92.2%, and the post-test participation rate increased by 3 percentage points from last year to 82.7%, meeting the target of 70%.

Decision or Action to drive future improvement. In 2025-2026, the target was met for the growth rate and the pre- and post-test participation rates. The post-test participation rates have been improving since last year. Based on the analysis from 2024-2025 data, the faculty will implement the following changes in the 2025-2026 AY to drive the cycle of improvement:

- make the post-test a mandatory assignment
- restructure the mostly adjunct instruction to increase faculty participation in assessment measures and buy-in of the assessment strategy
- maximize the involvement of dual enrollment students in the assessment process. As more DE sections are added to the results, we anticipate a more comprehensive set of results.

Measure 1.2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the arts in European culture as well as the arts and culture of other countries. Students take two online tests to partially assess their understanding of European and non-European cultural trends, as well as key examples and figures in the artistic community.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Fine Arts 1040 Pre-test and Post-test.

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Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in fall 2025 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- sent reminder emails to encourage student participation in assignments and tests,
- utilized different procedures for tests and assignments,
- annotated lecture notes,
- updated tests, web resources, welcome videos, assignments, forums, and lecture slides, quizzes, and guidelines
- in the Spring 2026 semester, we changed buildings to Alost Hall, so most the core curriculum classes could be in closer proximity.

These adjustments were made to reflect the changing needs of the students.

As a result of these changes, the 2025-2026 targets (a 40% growth rate with participation rates at 70% of the total number of students enrolled) were met. The growth rate for the AY 2025-2026 assessment cycle was 67.4%, which exceeds the ideal target for the year. The pre-test participation rate was 92.2%, and the post-test participation rate increased by over three percentage points from last year to 82.7%, meeting the target of 70%.

Decision or Action to drive future improvement. In 2025-2026, the target was met for the growth rate and the pre- and post-test participation rates. The post-test participation rates have been improving from last year. Based on the analysis from 2024-2025 data, the faculty will implement the following changes in the 2025-2026 AY to drive the cycle of improvement:

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SLO 1. Students will examine the arts through event attendance and reflection.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Performance Critiques.

Course Name	Methodology	Target	Term
FA 1040	Assignment participation	70%	AY 2025-2026

Finding. Target met in Music, Theater, Dance, and Visual Art performance critique assessments.

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Measure 2.1. Students will attend, review, and analyze a music event using Standard American English with 70% student participation.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Performance Critiques. By the end of each semester, the student will have completed the music performance critique, a reflection paper based on their participation as an audience member at a music recital.

Analysis: In 2024-2025, the target was met. 973/1329 (73%) students completed the assignment. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- added online options for completion,
- emphasized the importance of completing this assignment,
- updated the wording of the assignment,
- focused on instructor involvement early to stress the importance of these assignments.

In 2025-2026, the target was met. 118/1347 (87.6%) students completed the assignment, with 424 of those students (31.5%) being dual-enrollment students. Because of the chaotic structure of this educational environment, with many online and dual-enrollment students, music opportunities were offered online, making the assignment process much easier for the students. Live events will continue to be emphasized, but they are no longer the only source for completing this assignment.

Decision or Action to drive future improvement.

In 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty will continue to implement the changes made in the 2024-2025 academic year, which were proven to be successful:

- stress the importance of this assignment to students to encourage participation and completion.
- accepting watched videos on Moodle as opposed to only going to live events.

Measure 2.2. Students will attend, review, and analyze a theater event using Standard American English with 70% student participation.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Performance Critiques. By the end of each semester, the student will have completed the theater performance critique, a reflection paper based on their participation as an audience member at a theatrical performance.

Analysis: In 2024-2025 the target was met. 946/1329 (71%) students completed the assignment. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- added online options for completion,
- emphasized the importance of completing this assignment,

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- updated the wording of the assignment,
- focused on instructor involvement to stress the importance of these assignments.

In 2025-2026, the target was met. 1190/1346 (88.9%) students completed the assignment, with 424 (31.5%) being dual-enrollment students. Because of the chaotic structure of this educational environment, with many online and dual-enrollment students, theater opportunities were offered online, making the assignment process much easier for students. Live events will continue to be emphasized, but they are no longer the only way to complete this assignment.

Decision or Action to drive future improvement.

In 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty will continue to implement the changes made in the 2024-2025 academic year, which were proven to be successful:

- stress the importance of this assignment to students to encourage participation and completion.
- accepting watched videos on Moodle as opposed to only going to live events.

Measure 2.3. Students will attend, review, and analyze a music event using Standard American English with 70% student participation.

Methodology: Direct Measure—Performance Critiques. By the end of each semester, the student will have completed the dance performance critique, a reflection paper based on their participation as an audience member at a dance recital.

Analysis: In 2024-2025, the target was met. 988/1329 (74%) students completed the assignment. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty made the following changes in 2025-2026 to drive the cycle of improvement:

- added online options for completion,
- emphasized the importance of completing this assignment,
- updated the wording of the assignment,
- focused on instructor involvement early on in stressing the importance of these assignments.

In 2025-2026, the target was met. 1182/1335 (88.5%) students completed the assignment, with 424 of those students (31.7%) being dual-enrollment students. Because of the chaotic structure of this educational environment, with many online and dual-enrollment students, Dance opportunities were offered as an online option, making the assignment process much easier for the student. Live events will continue to be stressed, but they are not the only source for completing this assignment anymore.

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Decision or Action to drive future improvement.

In 2024-2025, the target was met. Based on the analysis of the 2024-2025 results, the faculty will continue to implement the changes made in the 2024-2025 academic year, which were proven to be successful:

- stress the importance of this assignment to students to encourage participation and completion.
- accepting watched videos on Moodle as opposed to only going to live events.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvement based on the Analysis of the Results.

- Faculty were briefed on the assessment process and expectations. The objective of each measure was discussed to ensure understanding and facilitate student learning.
- Instructor feedback improved, as more individual critiques were given as opposed to addressing the entire class.
- Adjusted or added course material in the following subjects: institutional racism, creativity, the “Dies Irae,” martyrs, Humanism, absolute monarchs, and 20th-century art.
- Student totals differed this year due to multiple issues that arose during the data-collecting phase. This led to a longer-than-usual completion of the report and some inconsistencies in the reporting method. This issue is a one-off event and will be fixed in future reports.
- Addressed issues involving end-of-semester and exam weariness.

The consensus amongst the Fine Arts faculty is that we seem to have hit a wall in our ability to improve our numbers to meet our target. This is a freshman course with a high dropout rate, and it feels like our accreditation process is being penalized because of student attrition. We will try to develop strategies to address this issue, but right now we are not sure raising our numbers will be possible.

Plan of Action Moving Forward.

- Student achievement of targets for measures 1.1 and 1.2 demonstrates the success of the program regarding our established SLOs that tie directly to the purpose of the Fine Arts core competency. The results for measure 2.2 have steadily improved, and this momentum will be built on in future semesters.

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- At the Fine Arts Committee meeting, the agenda included
 - switching from using growth rate as a measure to a set target number.
 - Further training in the administration, collection, evaluation, and reporting of assessment data for both SLOs and all six measures for all faculty teaching FA 1040.
 - Establish more realistic targets
- Revised and refined training practices for the administration, collection, evaluation, and reporting of assessment data for all SLO's and measures for all faculty teaching FA 1040.
- Targeted outreach to new dual enrollment instructors working in the k-12 setting and to experienced instructors who are not currently sending assessment reports.
- The post-test will be given as part of the course grade (the equivalent of a final exam), and the target will change from a growth rate to a target number. Changes will reflect the various types of learning occurring in the classroom, thereby improving assessment results.