

Fellowship report

Using assessment effectively: learning environments that work for tertiary music performance students and staff

**Dr Heather Monkhouse
2010**

**<[http://www.altcexchange.edu.au/group/assessing-music-
performance](http://www.altcexchange.edu.au/group/assessing-music-performance)>**



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Report Contents

Acknowledgements	
Executive Summary	1
Introduction	3
Methodology	5
Review of assessment tasks	5
Feedback from students.....	6
The purpose of the Bachelor of Music.....	7
International/national tertiary music learning outcomes	8
Graduate outcomes	11
Curriculum design trends	12
Progression of the new degree	16
Performance assessment tasks	17
Interviewing musicians.....	18
Implementation of the new curriculum: planning review processes	18
Advice for others undertaking a similar review of their entire curriculum	20
Evaluation of the fellowship	21
Links with other ALTC Fellows and projects	21
Dissemination	22
References	23

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With thanks,



Executive Summary

Music performance, as an art form, is considered highly subjective: it is a medium that delivers its outcome in actual time and success is not necessarily measured in terms of others' recognition of the artist's process or intent. Nevertheless process and intent are integral for good performance.

Music performance is taught largely using a one-to-one modality, with the majority of staff being casual, rather than university faculty members. The intent of the fellowship program was to develop greater understanding amongst staff and students of the standards expected in the music performance stream of undergraduate study.

The fellowship program activities focused initially on assessment tasks, as this was an area where there was common agreement that change was needed. Two related issues were identified from student feedback and staff discussions regarding the assessment of undergraduate performance students:

- Performance study was far more encompassing of complementary knowledge and skills than was apparent to our students.
- For student assessment to be an effective learning tool, greater awareness and understanding of the purpose and structure of Bachelor of Music study was crucial.

Once these issues were recognised the fellowship activities were shaped to allow the school the opportunity to consider the entire degree and how it, as a learning environment, might be made better. Three important outcomes were the:

- Redesign of the Bachelor of Music's curriculum and structure to support a course of study where discipline knowledge and contextual understanding are used to explore and develop creative expression.
- Re-evaluation of the purpose of assessment and the development of new materials to explain and advise the effectiveness of the chosen tasks.
- Alignment with ALTC Learning and Teaching Academic Standards project and, in particular, the work of Professor Jonathan Holmes, Discipline Scholar for Creative and Performing Arts.

Additionally, the fellowship activities created the following outputs:

1. An ALTC Exchange site to act as a repository of the materials used and created throughout the program including:
 - methodology/materials used for curriculum and course redesign, including surveys undertaken during the fellowship program
 - criteria and standards of achievement documents for undergraduate performance assessment tasks
 - a performance log-book for students
 - interviews with professional musicians
 - a guidebook for staff and students outlining the University of Tasmania Conservatorium of Music's beliefs and purpose regarding the study of music performance.



The repository can be accessed at:

<http://www.altcexchange.edu.au/group/assessing-music-performance>

2. Redesign of the performance units' intranet website for the Conservatorium of Music at the University of Tasmania to include materials from the fellowship including the 'Talking Head' gallery for interviews with professional musicians reflecting on practice and performance issues.
3. Refinement of evaluation processes: introducing a new curriculum changes the learning environment for both staff and students. Keeping that environment effective and engaging is an ongoing activity.



1.0 Introduction

The role of assessment has received much attention in the past few years. It is generally understood as important that task and purpose should align: that what is being assessed should also be that which is taught (Biggs, 1999). Consideration has been given to when assessment is undertaken and the impact that timing may have on the quality of the learning activity (Knight, 2002; Gibbs & Simpson, 2004-05) and, more recently, further examination of the impact assessment can have on post-student experience: that in learning to assess themselves, students may learn skills to sustain a lifetime of learning (Boud & Falchikov, 2006).

Music is an art form most frequently taught in a master/apprentice modality and the strength of this modality is that tuition is individually tailored for each student and adjusted to accommodate the speed of accomplishment of any specific task. However what works well in an individual studio may not necessarily transfer easily to an institutional environment. The price of individualism is high and quality assurance, for an environment that seeks to foster the development of performance skill and musical creativity for a diverse range of instruments and voice types, demands awareness and recognition of multiple instances of equivalent congruency. The performance stream in today's Bachelor of Music accommodates a variety of conflicting, contrasting and at times, contradictory processes.

It is not unusual, for example, for the performance stream of a Bachelor of Music to offer instruction in a range of musical idioms such as classical, contemporary, jazz and rock or to have more than one staff member teaching a particular instrument. At the University of Tasmania's Conservatorium of Music, the performance staff consists predominantly of sessional staff. These people are highly trained professional musicians, often members of state orchestras, active solo, chamber or jazz ensemble musician performers. They attract students: aspiring musicians usually gravitate to the active practitioners in their community. In the tertiary environment, the result is that the performance area of study in a Bachelor of Music is mostly staffed by many; any of whom may only have a few students at any one time; some of whom will have little contact with the institution other than that which occurs while they teach their students; all of whom will teach at times to accommodate their other professional activities.

Owing to the nature of the teaching modality, the resultant student experience will be variable: practising musicians bring to the music studio individual teaching methods, techniques and expectations. As a result, there may be differences amongst teaching staff, for example, as to what repertoire should be studied and/or presented for examination. Most usually, this may lead to differences in the degree of difficulty actually explored by students in a particular unit of study. Furthermore, fluency and dexterity requirements vary, as does time on task potential and physical attributes: the needs of violinists, flautists or singers are not the same as a trombonists, drummers or pianists.

Beyond the differences however, the purpose of study unites individual ambitions: eventual outcomes demonstrate equivalencies such that Bachelor of Music study recognises as common rigour, depth of discipline knowledge, intensity of activity and consistent performance standards for all performers despite instrumental/idiom diversity.

The fellowship proposal was influenced by a local event: towards the end of 2007, the University of Tasmania endorsed the introduction into its undergraduate courses



of the use of criterion-referenced assessment, to be implemented by the middle of 2011.

The purpose of the fellowship program was, firstly, to establish a process of music performance assessment to highlight for students the value of assessment. The creation of criteria for music performance activities would require thought discussion, trial and further thought, but far more critical for the fellowship was that the purpose of assessment be clearly understood. Assessment for musicians must be a tool for evaluation, not judgment. Used effectively, assessment evaluates output and effort: its purpose is to improve future practice. Performers assess constantly: practice is a daily occurrence that focuses attention on process and product.

The second aim of the fellowship was to create an effective learning environment for performance students and staff: where assessment is productive; where time and opportunity are used to explore activities that allow integrated, creative discovery and output; and where study results in valued graduate attributes.

The obvious learning environment understood by performance students is that which is created when undertaking practical activities. Typically a performance student will have a weekly individual performance lesson, a weekly performance class, performance practice opportunities, two or three ensemble rehearsals weekly, as well as chamber music or jazz ensemble activities and, for vocal and instrumental students, regular rehearsals with an accompanist. What may be possible during the practical activities, however, is heavily dependent on complementary discipline knowledge and skills: historical, contextual understanding, literacy skills and theoretical knowledge inform good practice and are necessary for choice to be invoked. Student awareness of this reality is why the actual learning environment must be understood to extend beyond the performance studio.

In 2008, the University of Tasmania announced a second resolution for the implementation of change in its undergraduate courses: the introduction of standard course structures. Existing courses would gradually be reshaped to one of the approved standard course structures, when the resolution was announced the timeframe was that this was to be achieved by 2010. For the fellowship program, this resolution allowed the activities to be more encompassing, and more extensive, in effecting change in learning perception. The intended change to performance assessment expanded to an exploration of curriculum needs and design leading to the introduction, in February 2010, of a reshaped and redesigned Bachelor of Music degree.



2.0 Methodology

The fellowship program focussed on two major issues: performance assessment tasks and the design of curriculum that would best support an effective learning environment for performers. To do so, the program involved a number of stages and activities, as indicated below:

- Reviewing current assessment tasks
- Seeking information and feedback from students about their course and these assessments
- Identifying the purpose of the Bachelor of Music
- Reviewing current data regarding tertiary music learning outcomes: *Polifonia*, National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), The National Council of Tertiary Music Schools (NACTMUS)
- Determining graduate attributes for performance students in the Bachelor of Music
- Reviewing curriculum and design trends, nationally and internationally
- Creating and progressing the new Bachelor of Music through the University's course approval and quality assurance process
- Evaluating assessment tasks: what, when, assessed by whom, weighting, criteria, feedback
- Interviewing musicians about practice, assessment and performance
- Developing processes to allow ongoing review of the degree

Review of assessment tasks

In 2007 an audit of performance assessment practices for undergraduate Bachelor of Music classical woodwind students in 13 Australian tertiary music institutions revealed a number of similarities, as well as differences, in degree requirements and assessment practices for performance majors.

Examples of similarities of practice at the audited institutions included that performance students undertook solo performance study in each semester of the degree; that the weekly instrumental lesson was taught in an individual, one-to-one modality; and that along with the weekly instrumental lesson all schools offered a group class or workshop activity of one and a half hours to two hours duration. The audit also indicated that the most common assessment tasks were technical exams, teacher's reports, recital exams, concert practice performance/s, ensemble activities, and reflective journals. Not all tasks had weighting toward the student's grade, and a minimum of two weighted tasks was common to all but one institution.

Diversity showed in the number of lessons offered to students, with one school offering 30 lessons over the year, two offering 28, six offering 26, and four offering 24. The length of the individual lesson was one hour's duration at nine of the 13 schools, while at the remaining four schools the amount of lesson time increased during the course – ranging from at least 45 minutes in the first year up to 120 minutes for fourth year students. The institutions diverged most widely in which assessment tasks were used, how frequently they were undertaken, and the length of performance required for recital exams. Within the diversity however it was possible to see trends, and of these it became apparent that a technical exam was more common in the first half of the year; and a recital in the second half of the year. Furthermore when averaging recital lengths the typical amount of music repertoire



required in a three-year degree program was 128 minutes of music (Monkhouse, 2008).

The fellowship program began with a review of current performance assessment tasks used at the University of Tasmania, Conservatorium of Music. Each week undergraduate performance students were involved in a range of activities: a 60 minute individual lesson, a 90 minute performance class, and participation and performance in a school ensemble requiring a minimum of three hours rehearsal weekly. Each semester students were also required to attend at least 14 concerts, perform one concert practice performance of 15 minutes, one technical exam of 15 minutes duration and a semester recital ranging from 30 minutes duration in the first year of study to 50 minutes for third year students.

The amount of material students were expected to learn was very high. Over the three years of the degree students performed a technical exam of prescribed material for five of the six semesters. In the final year, the fifth semester's technical exam was 25 minutes duration and for the sixth, and final semester the student presented a concerto/song cycle or CD project. Additionally students performed a solo recital each semester, totalling four hours (240 minutes) of repertoire with only 15 minutes in total allowed to be of repeated music.

Assessment weighting was given only to the technical and recital tasks. The technical exams occurred during the eleventh week of term (The University of Tasmania's semesters are of 13 weeks duration) and the end of semester recitals were scheduled during the University's examination period as set by the Registrar.

The review highlighted the performance staff's concern that the amount of music required to be learnt was excessive and counterproductive: when students were so busy learning notes they were not able to take the time to learn to master their instrument, to listen to what they were doing, and to devise and undertake longitudinal exercises and trials necessary to improve technique, awareness and musical understandings. At the undergraduate level how to learn, how to practice, how to self-assess and develop strategies to undertake improvement were fundamental issues: these were not being addressed and this needed to be changed.

Feedback from students

The next step was to review feedback from students. Semester Student Evaluation of Teaching and Learning (SETL) data from 2007 through 2009 indicated task design and the timing of assessment tasks to be problematic for a number of students. Using the SurveyMonkey tool, the Conservatorium's undergraduate performance students were asked a number of questions about their course, practice patterns, and self-assessment strategies. Forty-six students participated out of a total of 90 undergraduates (51 per cent response rate).

The students' comments confirmed that the workload was high and indicated a desire for some assessment that focused attention on the learning process, as well as highlighted some confusion as to the standard required for grades awarded.

For example, when asked what were the main issues they faced when preparing for an assessment, the ability to learn the amount of material required in the time allotted was noted as an issue.



Student comment and suggestions on issues around assessment preparation included:

Time management when it comes to performance preparation due to the amount of work needed.

Time – preparing everything to a high enough standard – and balancing that with other ensemble commitments.

Worrying about not being able to learn everything in time

Shorten the amount of music required so that a small amount of repertoire can be perfected rather than a larger amount done not so well.

When asked what type of assessment tasks should be used, some comments indicated a desire for some assessment from the teacher, or weighting that recognised work and effort during the semester:

Practical teacher's mark on your effort

Looking at how the individual is progressing within their area of study and as the semester progresses

Assessment on improvements: if a student is showing progress in their technical skills, advancement in their playing and a growing aptitude for their instrument.

The survey asked the students a number of questions about assessment grades to see if there was a common understanding of the standard required. In the higher-grade bands this was the case, but as the grade descended opinion was less uniform. Particularly revealing were the responses given for what was needed to achieve a passing grade: these, again, indicated that the difficulty of what was being asked of the students was limiting their ability to determine an accurate understanding of both purpose and achievement. Three comments stood out:

Ability to finish presenting the entire program without major breakdowns

A struggling understanding of the music

Where there is A LOT of room for improvement

The survey also asked students to provide information about how they assessed themselves when practicing and what strategies they had when work wasn't progressing as planned. From the answers some important issues emerged: assessment was a powerful tool, self-assessment strategies varied from highly emotive and reactive conclusions to realistic, objective and planned considerations focusing on future endeavour, and that students did not necessarily experience interconnections between the individual units of study that comprised the degree.

The purpose of the Bachelor of Music

Fellowship activities involving staff began with a two-day retreat for the 18 permanent staff members of the Conservatorium of Music. During those two days discussion was focused on what we wanted our Bachelor program to be: what its



purpose was and how we could achieve what we believed was needed for our students.

The purpose of the retreat was not to make decisions on what we might be able to do, rather it was to discuss and explore what we wanted to do, what we wanted our Bachelor of Music experience to be. In the course of these discussions some common aims were identified. Figure 1 shows the ingredients identified as necessary.

Figure 1: What the UTAS BMus should include



A key finding from these discussions, as well as the previously gathered feedback from students, was the realisation that for us, the Bachelor of Music needed to provide an environment that encouraged students to see and experience performance as part of a greater whole of music understanding.

At the conclusion of the two days we had resolved that the Bachelor of Music we wanted to design would:

- produce a confident and informed approach to performance
- use assessment strategically, i.e. targeted to be objective and encouraging of independency (self-assessment, self-awareness, proactive reflection)
- provide a learning environment that fostered life-long involvement in the art, and professional practice, of music.

International/national tertiary music learning outcomes

Before developing the new curriculum a review of international and national tertiary music learning outcomes was undertaken.



Since the publication of the Bologna Declaration in June 1999, a great deal of work has been undertaken in Europe to document tertiary education in Europe. Under the auspices of the Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC) *Polifonia* was established to examine aspects of professional music training in 32 European countries. In *Polifonia* many issues related to the Declaration have been studied, one of which is the development of learning outcomes for study programs in the field of music in higher education.

The AEC/*Polifonia* Learning outcomes for 1st cycle (i.e. Bachelor) studies in music fall into three categories each with specific criteria: Practical (skills based outcomes); Theoretical (knowledge-based outcomes) and Generic outcomes, as shown below, in table 1 (Summary Tuning findings, 2009).

Table 1: AEC/*Polifonia* Learning outcomes for 1st cycle (Bachelor of Music) programs

Practical (skills-based) outcomes	Theoretical (knowledge-based) outcomes	Generic outcomes
Skills in artistic expression Repertoire skills Ensemble skills Practising, rehearsing, reading, aural, creative and re-creative skills Verbal skills Public performance skills Improvisational skills Pedagogical skills (where applicable)	Knowledge and understanding of repertoire and musical materials Knowledge and understanding of context Improvisational skills Pedagogical skills (where applicable)	Independence Psychological understanding Critical awareness Communication skills

In America, the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), founded in 1924, was established to provide better understanding of purpose in the higher education sector amongst music institutions, by creating a consistent approach to granting credit and setting national standards for awarding post-secondary, undergraduate and graduate awards as well as other credentials for non-degree-granting institutions. It is a voluntary association of schools and currently has approximately 645 members.

The association recognises two types of undergraduate degrees: liberal arts degrees and professional degrees. The Bachelor of Music is classified as a professional degree as it demands intensive work in music supported by some general studies. The association lists criteria for the six areas of specific competence, as listed in table 2 (NASM Handbook, 2009).



Table 2: NASM, six defined areas of specialization and competency for a Bachelor of Music

Performance
Technical skills requisite for artistic self-expression Overview understanding of the repertory Ability to perform from a cross-section of that repertory Fluent sight-reading ability Demonstrate general musicianship and level of skill relevant to the professional standards for particular music concentration Knowledge and skills to work as a leader and in collaboration on matters of musical interpretation Rehearsal and conducting skills, as required Keyboard competency Growth in artistry, technical skills, collaborative competence and knowledge of repertory through regular ensemble experiences, varied in size and nature
Musicianship Skills and Analysis
Understanding of common elements, organizational patterns of music and their interaction, and ability to employ this understanding in aural, verbal, and visual analyses, and the ability to take aural dictation Sufficient understanding of and capacity with musical forms, processes, and structures to use this knowledge in compositional, performance, analytical, scholarly, and pedagogical applications according to the requisites of their specializations Ability to place music in historical, cultural and stylistic contexts
Composition and Improvisation
Rudimentary capacity to create derivative or original music both extemporaneously and in written form: imitation of various musical styles, improvisation on pre-existing materials, creation of original compositions, experimentation with various sound sources, manipulating common elements in a non-traditional way
Music History and Repertory
Basic knowledge of music history and repertoires through the present time, including study and experience of musical language and primary culture of the area of specialization
Technology
Skills vary, students must acquire the ability to use technologies current to their area of specialization
Synthesis
Life-time process, by the end of undergraduate study students must be able to work on musical problems by combining, as appropriate, their capabilities in performance, aural, verbal and visual analysis; composition and improvisation; history and repertory; and technology

The association leaves determining the levels of competency in each area to the individual institution, but does indicate that these levels need to be consistent with professional level standards. Finally, the association also describes five required competencies for the complementary general studies that should comprise a professional Bachelor degree:

1. The ability to think, speak and write clearly and effectively.
2. An informed acquaintance with fields of study beyond music such as those in the arts and humanities, the natural and physical sciences, and the social sciences.
3. A functional awareness of the differences and commonalities regarding work in artistic, scientific and humanistic domains.
4. Awareness that multiple disciplinary perspectives and techniques are available to consider all issues and responsibilities including, but not limited to, history, culture, moral and ethical issues, and decision-making.
5. The ability to identify possibilities and locate information in other fields that have bearing on musical questions and endeavours.

In Australia, the National Council of Tertiary Music Schools (NACTMUS) is the peak body for tertiary music institutions offering specialist music degrees in Australia and New Zealand. As in America, defining the specific learning outcomes, and standards by which each outcome can be measured, is currently the responsibility of individual



institutions. Nevertheless quality assurance is important and, to that end, the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) was announced in 2009. TEQSA, commencing operations in 2011, will “work with the higher education sector to develop objective and comparative benchmarks and to carry out rigorous audits”. (Gillard, 2009).

To date no formally agreed standards exist in Australia for undergraduate music performance study: the current ALTC Learning and Teaching Academic Standards project and, in particular, the work of Professor Jonathan Holmes, Discipline Scholar for Creative and Performing Arts is addressing the creation of a set of national guidelines for learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

Graduate outcomes

The review of national and international learning outcomes is important as it led to the next stage of the fellowship program, i.e. reviewing information describing the graduate attributes of a Bachelor of Music graduate.

Outcomes are critical to many activities: in performance, for example it is imperative that the aim of what is to be achieved is well defined. Once defined, an effectively strategic course of practice can be designed and staged productions of output offered for review and reflection.

Internationally, NASM guidelines indicate three broad, overarching criteria for Bachelor of Music graduates as listed below in Table 3. These criteria are similar to the learning outcomes categories described by the AEC/Polifonia project: practical (skills-based); theoretical (knowledge-based) and generic outcomes (see Table 1).

Table 3: NASM Criteria for Bachelor of Music Graduates

Performance ability	Discipline knowledge	Essential Sensitivities
Technical competence Ability to integrate musical knowledge and skills sensitively to musical styles	Developed knowledge, skills and concepts leading to a broad knowledge of music and music literature	Insight into the role of music in intellectual and cultural life

NASM guidelines also include two graduate outcome statements. Upon completion:

1. Students must demonstrate achievement of professional, entry-level competence in the major area, including significant technical mastery, capability to produce work and solve professional problems independently, and a coherent set of artistic/intellectual goals that are evident in their work. A senior project or presentation in the major area is required in many concentrations, and strongly recommended for all others.
2. Students are expected to have the ability to form and defend value judgements about music, and to communicate musical ideas, concepts, and requirements to professionals and laypersons related to the practice of the major field. (NASM Handbook, 2009).

The graduate outcomes our School developed through the fellowship program emerged after much discussion. Critical to our deliberations was that outcome statements represent absolutes: all attributes had to be essential and demonstrably achievable. Additionally they were to be infused throughout the curriculum so as to create a learning environment built on a nexus of balanced purpose and outcome.



The graduate attributes we agreed upon are:

- Practical performance skill: demonstrate technical competence and ability to synthesise technique and musical sensitivities for creative expression.
- Discipline knowledge and skills: communicate knowledge, understanding and awareness of historical context, form, music materials and technology skills pertinent to music expression.
- Analytical thinking: demonstrate capacity to analyse work, reflect and develop strategies to improve process and output.
- Ensemble, group work ability: demonstrate ability to work with others in a range of ensemble groups, and other collaborative work activities.
- Professional awareness: demonstrate awareness of social, cultural and ethical issues and practice an ongoing commitment to developing a professional attitude required to work, both independently and collaboratively, in the music profession.

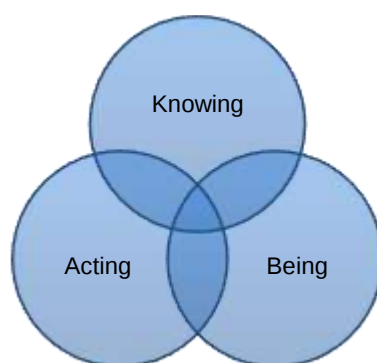
Curriculum design trends

The next stage of the Fellowship program was to survey, both nationally and internationally, current Bachelor of Music curricula preferences and structures.

As mentioned earlier, AEC/*Polifonia* learning cited three broad categories that had emerged from the research undertaken to determine common learning outcomes of professional music performance training in Europe: practical, theoretical and generic outcomes. Likewise NASM guidelines indicated the importance of performance abilities, discipline knowledge and essential sensitivities as necessary to the development of a professional standard in music performance. NASM guidelines also emphasise the importance of synthesis: that professional music performance demands that there be interconnections between practice, knowledge and emotional sensitivity.

The work of Barnett and Coate also demonstrates the need for curriculum elements to be interconnected. They posit three vital components of curriculum design, with the balance and interconnectivity between the three being variable depending upon the subject area (Barnett & Coate, 2005). Of the three subject areas they discuss, arts and humanities, sciences and technologies, and the professional subjects, it is in the latter that they found the most complete overlap between all three domains: acting, knowledge and being (figure 2).

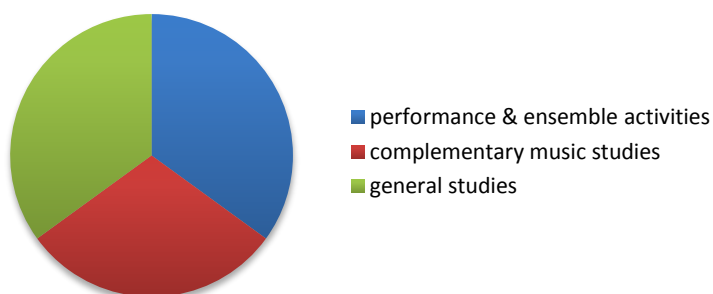
Figure 2: Barnett & Coate, curricula pattern in the professional subjects



When applied to music performance study Figure 2 suggests that a significant proportion of time would be devoted to performing; moreover, that the performance domain would require the integration of both knowledge and the self in equal proportions.

In America, NASM guidelines for the curricular structure of a Bachelor of Music in performance are that study in the major area of performance, including ensemble participation, pedagogy courses, independent study, and recitals should comprise 25-35 per cent of the total program; supportive, complementary courses in music, 25-35 percent; general studies, 25-35 percent (see figure 3). Studies in the major area and supportive courses in music normally total at least 65 per cent of the curriculum.

Figure 3: NASM guidelines for curricula activities in a Bachelor of Music degree



Additionally all students are normally expected to have a minimum of one hour of individual instruction per week, or comparable equivalent arrangement of individual and/or small group instruction, in the principal performing area(s). The operational guidelines also acknowledge that some areas of study from general education are directly supportive of particular music specialisations, for example, language study is essential to a classical voice major, and some types of historical studies may apply directly to music history or sacred music majors in a Bachelor of Music degree. Finally there are eight recommendations of the types of activities available in professional undergraduate degree programs. Students should have opportunities to:

1. *Gain a basic understanding of the nature of professional work in their major field. Examples are: organizational structures and working patterns; artistic, intellectual, economic, technological, and political contexts; and development potential.*
2. *Acquire the skills necessary to assist in the development and advancement of their careers.*
3. *Develop teaching skills, particularly as related to their major area of study.*
4. *Continue to develop improvisational skills whether as an aspect of composition, musicianship, or performance studies.*
5. *Experience a broad range of repertory through attendance at events such as recitals, concerts, opera and music theatre productions, and other types of performances.*
6. *Explore areas of individual interest related to music in general or to the majors. Examples are music bibliography, notations, aesthetics, acoustics,*



- performance practices, specialized topics in history, musicology, ethnomusicology, analysis and technology.*
7. *Explore multidisciplinary issues that include music.*
 8. *Practice synthesis of a broad range of musical knowledge and skills, particularly through independent study that involves a minimum of faculty guidance, where the emphasis is on evaluation at completion (NASM Handbook, 2009).*

In terms of structure, the international evidence is fairly conclusive: emphasis on practical work; opportunities for students to work in a variety of solo and ensemble environments; complementary discipline knowledge and skills to support the creative output; and time for self-reflection and development are necessary components for a Bachelor of Music.

The data gathered also indicated student workload and electives as issues to be considered. For example, in Europe the 1st cycle qualification (BMus) varies between three and four years' duration, full-time study normally ranges from 36 to 40 weeks per year, workload, for the average student, is calculated at about 1500 to 1800 hours per year. At 38 weeks per year, this equates to a 41 to 50 hour workload per teaching week (Boele). Table 4 shows a comparison of the average total one-to-one teaching hours in Bachelor of Music programs in America, Japan and Europe (Mundus Musicalis, 2005-2007).

Table 4: Comparison of total teaching weeks and the total hours of performance one-to-one instruction in four and three year degree programs

Country	Teaching weeks per year	4 year degree	3 year degree
America	32-36 weeks	128-144 hours	
Japan	30 weeks	120 hours	
Europe	36-40 weeks	144-160 hours	108-120 hours

Electives, when offered, were most commonly those from within the music discipline (Boele). Similarly, NASM guidelines indicate that elective areas of study are included: ideally comprising 10-15 per cent of the total curriculum, but this is an area where the prerogative remains with the institution (NASM Handbook, 2009).

Realistically, free electives are a great a luxury when the degree moves to a three-year duration, as can be evidenced when comparing the four-year structures used in the American schools which do, for the most part, accommodate the opportunity to study a limited number of liberal arts subjects whilst, in Europe, the three-year programs overwhelmingly do not.



Table 5: Table of European schools detailing credits awarded for elective units studied with a Bachelor of Music¹

School	Length of degree	Non-music electives
Academy of Music, Krakow	3 years	0 credits
CNSMD de Lyon	4 years	0 credits
Conservatoire de Paris	3 years	1/180 credits– foreign language
Conseatoire royal de Bruxelles (CRB)	3 years	0 credits
Conseatorium Hogeschool Gent	3 years	0 credits
Iceland Academy of the Arts	3 years	0 credits
Joseph Haydn Konservatorium	4 years	0 credits
Lithuanian Music Academy	4 years	39/240 credits
Malmo Music Academy	3 years	0 credits
National University of Bucharest	4 years	18/240 credits
Norwegian Music Academy	4 years	1 credit
Prince Claus Conservatoire	4 years	14/240 credits
Royal Academy of Music, Aarhus	3 years	0 credits
Royal Academy of Music, London	4 years	15/240 credits
Royal College of Music Stockholm	3 years	0 credits
Royal Danish Academy of Music	3 years	0 credits
Rytmsk Musikkonservatorium	3 years	0 credits
The Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music	3 years	12/178 credits – foreign language, computer literacy
University of Tromsø	3 years	0 credits

Table 5 lists 19 European schools and indicates the minimum number of years to complete the bachelor award as either three or four years. It also shows the number of credits attributed to non-music elective units, where non-music elective units of study are available.² This data shows that, as is the case in America, in a four-year program a small amount of time may be allocated to non-discipline specific subjects. Of the seven four-year Bachelor programs, two allow no non-music electives, one permits one credit only and the remaining four average 21 credits out of a possible 240 (8.75 per cent of the degree³) as permissible from a non-music course of study. The remaining 12 schools listed have three-year Bachelor programs and of these, only two have non-elective units of study (The Conservatoire de Paris awards one credit for foreign language study, while the Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music permits 12 credits towards the study of a foreign language and computer literacy skills). The remaining 10 institutions have no provision for non-music electives.

A brief survey of eight Australian tertiary music institutions shows a similar recognition that Bachelor of Music study requires a specialised focus: six of the eight offer three-year degrees and of these only two allow up to two possible non-music electives. The remaining two institutions offer four-year programs: one permits no non-music electives, the second allows the equivalent of up to four electives; the majority of these appear only from semester six in that course. Table 6 shows that Australian music institutions, like the European schools, do not accommodate non-music electives in their Bachelor of Music degrees.

¹ Information cited from <http://www.aecinfo.org/MembersView.aspx?id=-2> (accessed March 18, 2009). The European schools listed are all members of the AEC and have organized their curricula to indicate the number of credits awarded for each unit of study. Credits are determined on the number of hours of study a student is expected to undertake, with 1 credit averaging 30 hours of study.

² Three-year degrees typically have 180 credits; four-year degrees average 240 credits.

³ The equivalent, i.e. 8.75%, in our BMus equates to two units.



Table 6⁴: Eight major Australian music institutions detailing the length of the Bachelor of Music award and the number of non-music electives permitted.

School	Length of degree	Non-music elective opportunities
Elder Conservatorium	3 years	0
Monash University	3 years	2
The University of Newcastle	3 years	2
Queensland Conservatorium	3 years	0
Sydney Conservatorium	4 years	24-33/192 points (12 -17%)*
University of Western Australia	4 years	0
Victorian College of the Arts	3 years	0
Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts	3 years	0
*12-17% equivalent in our BMus would be 2-4 units. Sydney has a 4-year degree and over half of the elective opportunities occur from semesters 6, 7 & 8 of the degree.		

Analysing the data revealed curricula design, both nationally and internationally, recognised as an imperative that significant emphasis and time must be placed within the discipline.

Progression of the new degree

Having reviewed curriculum data, staff and student feedback, the next stage of the fellowship program was to develop the new Bachelor of Music's curriculum design using one of the University of Tasmania's standard course structures and then progress the paperwork through the University's quality assurance processes for new courses.

The standard course structure chosen for the degree was a specialist model that comprises two majors, one minor, and four student electives. A major consists of two introductory units, two intermediate units and four advanced level units; a minor consists of two introductory and two intermediate units. The new Bachelor of Music comprises:

- Music Major 1: concentrates on creative endeavour. Students choose one of four areas: musicology, composition, performance⁵, music technology
- Music Major 2: Professional Literacy and Awareness (PLA), integrated study developing aural, theoretical/technological skills, complementary and co-related study with Music Major 1
- Music Minor: historical, social and contextual units of study designed to complement Major 1
- Student Electives: students may choose from a list of music elective units, depending upon their major study specialisation, or any other elective offered within the university.

⁴ Information obtained from a selection of eight Australian Conservatories and Music Schools: Elder Conservatorium of Music (http://www.adelaide.edu.au/programfinder/2009/bmus_bmupfcs.html), Monash University (<http://www.monash.edu.au/pubs/handbooks/aos/arts-ug-study-music.html>), The University of Newcastle (<http://www.newcastle.edu.au/program/archive/undergraduate/2008/10646.html>), Queensland Conservatorium (<http://www17.griffith.edu.au/cis/p-cat/require.asp?ProgCode=1268&Type=structure.html>), Sydney Conservatorium (http://www.usyd.edu.au/handbooks/conservatorium/07_resolutions_2008.html) The University of Western Australia (<http://courses.handbooks.uwa.edu.au/courses/c1/1012>) Victorian College of the Arts (<http://vca.unimelb.edu.au/Course.aspx?topicID=18&course>) Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (http://www.waapa.ecu.edu.au/courses/courses_view.php?rec_id=0000000049) all accessed March 20, 2009. In gathering this data what also became apparent was that in Australia the average number of teaching weeks is less than European and American norms, falling between 24-30 weeks. This results in a total of 96-120 hours of possible instrumental/vocal tuition in a four-year degree, and 69-90 hours for a three-year degree.

⁵ The performance stream has two areas of focus: classical or contemporary



Table 7 Structure of the new Bachelor of Music Degree (for classical instrumentalist)

	Semester 1				Semester 2			
Year 1	Performance 1A	Elective: Ensemble Skills 1	Popular Music & Culture from 1700 to 1850	Music Materials 1A	Performance 1B	Elective: Ensemble Skills 2	Music & History	Music Materials 1B
Year 2	Performance 2A	Elective: Chamber Music 3A		Harmony & Analysis A	Performance 2A	Elective: Chamber Music 3B	Music from 1850-1950	Harmony & Analysis B
Year 3	Performance 3A		Music Business Practices	Post Tonal Techniques	Performance 3B		Music Seminar	Music Since 1950
Key	Major Study 1		Minor		Student Elective		Major Study 2	

Progressing the proposal through the University's quality assurance process required provision of paperwork detailing the rationale, educational objectives, new unit proposals, schedule and structure of the degree. The approval process allows for scrutiny by several different committees: the Faculty of Arts' Teaching and Learning Committee, Faculty Executive, the University's Standard Course Structure Committee, the University Teaching & Learning Committee, Senate and finally Council. Once approved the course may be advertised and implemented.

Approval led to the next stage of the fellowship program: creating unit outlines, assessment tasks, assessment criteria and standards for all new units.

Performance assessment tasks

To inform the development of unit outlines 93 performance lecturers and sessional staff from around Australia were surveyed to discover if there were some common beliefs surrounding performance assessment and the types of activities that were useful in performance study⁶. The survey revealed commonalities such as: the importance of one-to-one teaching; ensemble activities; performance classes; and performance practice opportunities. It also revealed that in Australia, a Bachelor of Music covers a wide range of activity, and for this reason a common purpose may not be readily apparent. The survey also affirmed that process was a vital issue in undergraduate study.

The next activity of the fellowship program was a two-day workshop with staff, to begin the task of developing the unit outlines, assessment tasks and criteria for the new performance units. For the workshop, the University's Centre for the Advancement of Learning & Teaching (CALT) provided valuable assistance, advice and practical support.

The workshop concentrated attention on the following considerations:

- performance standards: graduate attributes and year level requirements
- unit of study learning outcomes
- activities that should be in the performance units
- weighting for activities and the impact of year levels on weighting and type of activities
- the timing of when assessment tasks should be undertaken

⁶ A survey of UTAS staff teaching in related disciplines was also undertaken. Results of the surveys may be found on the ALTC Exchange site related to this program: <http://www.altcexchange.edu.au/content/developing-effective-learning-environment-tertiary-music-students-and-staff>



- who should assess the tasks
- what activities would best help students achieve stated outcomes
- specific criteria and standards for each assessment task.

After much discussion it was decided that assessment needed to recognise process, activity and product and as a result 20 per cent of the grade should be devoted to the ongoing work undertaken throughout the semester and awarded by the student's performance teacher, 30 per cent of the grade should be awarded to the ensemble work required throughout the semester and 50 per cent be devoted to end of semester demonstrations of the level of performance achieved. To help students become more aware of their work processes a log book was created wherein work being done could be described and self-assessment of effort effected.

Criteria for the assessment tasks were developed by reviewing videotapes of previous students' exams: from the evidence, it was possible to discuss performance attributes and discover consensus on how performance criteria may be evidenced in each of the proposed tasks. This activity was instrumental too in determining year level criteria: this was particularly important as graduate outcomes need to be developed throughout the three years of performance study.

Interviewing musicians

An important aspect of the fellowship program was to build an effective learning environment. My program included some recorded interviews with professional performers, as well as with members of the performance staff at the University of Tasmania's Conservatorium of Music. The importance of these narratives lies in their practical wisdom: a music performance degree is most useful when it helps students gain awareness and skills necessary to move into the chosen professional sector. In many cases, students are limited by what they do not know, and without an understanding that the learning is important for their future goals, may not engage in the process of incorporating new knowledge into their practical environment. When role models say the knowledge or learning process is important, they help encourage the enthusiasm and desire needed to tackle material that, initially, may seem unrelated or unachievable.

The interviews focussed on performance assessment and practice: what to listen for in practice, what to do when work wasn't progressing well. Stage anxiety and nerves were also discussed, as well as some biographical data and the journey to professionalism.

Sharing knowledge and information seems an obvious part of a teaching program; for students hearing the views of musicians with whom they might not otherwise have any involvement can be very beneficial, for it reveals their journey of learning is leading them to join a community of musicians.

Implementation of the new curriculum: planning review processes

The Conservatorium's new Bachelor of Music was introduced in February 2010. The process of renewal does not end with the introduction of new material. The next stage is to review its performance and reception. For this to occur it is necessary to plan the process of evaluation and review, not just for the first year, where likely problems will surface, but also for the next five years: longitudinal data and evidence are necessary for an evaluation of the effectiveness of our new curriculum.



One of the most valuable outcomes of the fellowship program is the sense of community and common purpose established amongst the staff. The discussions, arguments, reviews, revisions and discussions again were all part of the process we needed to undergo to discover what we believed and wanted to achieve for our students. The result is the new curriculum and a new commitment to achieving outcomes together. Importantly, it led to the graduate attributes we described as necessary, and to processes to be used within the performance units to help students achieve their best possible outcomes.

As the curriculum relies on greater awareness and conscious transfer of skills and knowledge across unit of study borders for successful implementation, ongoing discussion and reflection is essential. As much as we would like to say we got everything right, the reality is that it is in 'the doing' that performers discover what the score really means. The adjustments made in the performance are important: in ensemble work, communication of what worked, as well as what did not work, or indeed what partly worked, helps the next performance to achieve spontaneity and renewed focus on the work's meaning. In terms of our teaching program, this is understood as greater appreciation for internal quality assurance processes, and awareness of the role of the coordinator. Additionally, regular meeting times throughout the semester have been established with various groups of staff to discuss progress and concerns, as well as formal student evaluations of teaching and learning (SETL) and staff semester review and planning sessions.

The fellowship program helped us to identify when review was needed and with whom, and, importantly, that this process was essential to our community's well being.



3.0 Advice for others undertaking a similar review of their entire curriculum

Curriculum review requires time, energy and, above all, acceptance of the need to review. Inevitably review connotes change; whether change eventuates is dependent upon those who are charged with enacting it. In a world where there is forever less time to devote to matters of importance the need for review must be clearly understood and articulated.

The University of Tasmania announced late in 2007 that two new changes were to be introduced over a period of two years: that criterion-referenced assessment was to be implemented, and that its courses would need to conform to one of a small number of standard course structure designs. For the Conservatorium of Music these announcements created an opportunity to be seized upon: change was necessary, and at a time when both staff and students were keen to make changes for improvement. For this fellowship the timing was extremely fortuitous.

After the first enthusiasm for accepting change and all the discussions of what would be ideal, what we must do, and what we must change, came the need to craft, in detail, the actual reality of what we were proposing. Details and implications had to be thrashed out, and for this time, energy and good humour were all essential.

The lesson learnt in this fellowship is that timing and time is indeed crucial: time is needed to discuss issues, to explore what is really needed and how change might be enacted; that the development of the materials needed to explain the changes requires twice as much time as is ever anticipated, that the amount of time required to discuss the planned changes must not be denied, and that the timing of when new processes are introduced to the current cohort of people who will be effected by the change or who must effect the change needs to be very carefully considered and managed.



4.0 Evaluation of the fellowship

The fellowship program included an evaluation process. Professor Brian Yates was asked to evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the program. His generosity and support was extremely valuable: knowing he was a phone call away for advice and encouragement gave me the courage to try new ideas and not be afraid of the unexpected. His opinions and suggestions when it became apparent that my fellowship could incorporate changes more fundamental than originally envisioned were particularly useful. I was also very fortunate to have the support and guidance of a colleague at the Conservatorium of Music, Dr Anne-Marie Forbes. Discussions with both colleagues not only helped to shape the progress and processes of the fellowship, but also clarified for me the reasons for the curriculum choices and structural design that this fellowship delivered.

5.0 Links with other ALTC Fellows and projects

During the fellowship, discussions and feedback with other ALTC Fellows as well the output of other Fellowships and projects provided some valuable perspectives, and a renewed understanding that good teaching practice is universal.

- ALTC Senior Fellow Professor David Boud (2007). 'Student assessment for learning in and after courses'. Professor Boud's fellowship considers the question: how can assessment enhance learning in and after courses? Learning through and with assessment is central to my fellowship's aim: Professor Boud's work has been enormously influential.
- ALTC Teaching Fellow Dr Sandy O'Sullivan (2008). Dr O'Sullivan's Fellowship program is titled 'Promoting strategies and creating opportunities for inter/multimedia practice as a culturally appropriate dissemination tool for Indigenous postgraduate research training'. Hearing her progress has highlighted some common challenges: acceptance of non-written output as research questions fundamental judgements as to what may be understood as research.
- ALTC Senior Fellow Professor Peter Goodyear (2007). 'Teaching, technology and educational design: the architecture of productive learning environments'. Professor Goodyear's focus is on good design and for me reflecting on the issues he dealt with in his fellowship helped me stay focussed and aware that for students and teachers time, space, technology and design, when well-balanced, may have great impact on effective learning
- Dr Maggi Phillips, Edith Cowan University (2006). 'Dancing Between Diversity and Consistency: Evaluating Assessment in Postgraduate Studies in Dance'. Dr Phillips' project provided me many valuable insights into the assessment required to evaluate work explored in time. Her project and the work I have undertaken has reinforced for me how different disciplines are effected by similar issues.
- Participation in ALTC Leadership for Excellence in Learning & Teaching Project, 'Create•Ed: strengthening learning and teaching in the creative arts disciplines'. Project leader Professor Barbara De La Harpe RMIT University (2009). The project is on-going and aims to strengthen learning and teaching across the creative arts disciplines. As a result of my fellowship I was invited to be a member of the Tasmanian Learning & Teaching Leadership team for this project.



6.0 Dissemination

Conference Papers

Monkhouse, H, 'Using assessment effectively: learning environments that work, for tertiary music performance students and staff'. Proceedings of the 7th Teaching Matters Annual Conference, Exploring possibilities for practice, 4 December 2008, Launceston, Tasmania (2008) [Refereed Conference]

Monkhouse, H, 'Assessing performance assessment: what do we want?' Proceedings of the Australian Society for Music Education XVII National Conference, 10-14 July 2009, Launceston Tasmania, pp. unknown. ISBN 978-0-9803792-1-1 (2009) [Refereed Conference]

Upcoming Conference activities

Monkhouse, H, 'Curriculum for a Bachelor of Music: balancing design and desire' Conference paper accepted for 29th ISME World Conference, 1-6 August 2010, Beijing, China [Refereed Conference]

Monkhouse, H, 'Performance assessment: What does okay mean?' Conference paper accepted for Joint conference of the Musicological Society of Australia and the New Zealand Musicological Society, *Re-Visions* 2010, December 2-4, Otago, New Zealand [Refereed Conference]

Website

ALTC Exchange: <http://www.altcexchange.edu.au/group/assessing-music-performance>



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