

**WINTHROP UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS
DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE
ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Assessment of student learning outcomes in the Department of Theatre and Dance occurs within the context of the following general principles:

1. Much of the assessment that takes place in the classroom is evaluative, and faculty members employ assessment tools everyday in many ways.
2. The department's academic programs have a wide array of educational objectives, so the department does not have a "one-plan-fits-all" approach to assessment.
3. Academic assessment does not replace curricular, departmental, and other types of ongoing review for improvement: it supplements and improves it.
4. Faculty ownership of and participation in assessment activities is essential. Assessment is embedded in the culture of the entire teaching/learning enterprise of the department.
5. The department has a history of making programmatic changes based on assessment results.

Description of a few examples of assessment measures can demonstrate how the above general principles translate into concrete form at the broader, departmental level.

Accreditation Reviews and Annual HEADS Reports

Winthrop is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance and the National Association of Schools of Theatre. The Dance Program reviews were conducted in 1999 and 2009. The next review is scheduled for 2019. The Theatre Program reviews were conducted in 1994 and 2004. The next review is scheduled for 2014. In each case, program success is evaluated with consideration of accreditation standards and data compiled in HEADS reports.

Annual Faculty Review

The Chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance reviews each faculty member's goals and record of accomplishment in May for the previous calendar year. Evaluation criteria include teaching, creative/scholarly activity, and service that supports student learning. On the basis of this assessment, faculty members and the Chair collaboratively consider and design new goals and objectives.

Classroom Observation

The department Chair and senior faculty members observe the instruction of probationary and adjunct faculty every semester. They use a rubric for rating instructors' effectiveness, then a meeting occurs with the instructor to review the observation/evaluation and make plans for teaching improvements.

Administrative Evaluations

All faculty members in the department make written evaluations of the department Chair and the Director of Dance, a program director-level administrative position. The dean and chair, respectively, collect and analyze the faculty evaluations as one element in a larger, annual review of administrative effectiveness. Annual consultations between these two administrators and their respective superior occur to develop a plan for improving administrative skills.

Local, State, Regional and National Festival Adjudications and Professional Development

Student and faculty participation at discipline-specific festivals and competitions, such as the American College Dance Festival, the Kennedy Center/American College Theatre Festival, and the Charlotte Dance Festival. These events provide feedback and evaluation in areas of performance, production and choreography by experts, scholars and professional adjudicators. The success of our students and faculty is measured by their creativity and artistry, the number of peer-reviewed scholarly activities in which they engage annually, and by their honors and awards.

Placement

Placement of graduates from the school in professional companies, internships, and graduate programs is considered in the assessment of school goals.

Assessment measures in this department demonstrate:

- A. that we have an assessment plan that tracks the where, how and when learning occurs for students during their academic careers in the dance or theatre major at Winthrop. (The Assessment Map)
- B. that the learning that occurs in all aspects of the dance and theatre programs aligns with the broader learning goals of the department, college, university, and external accrediting organizations. (Vertical Alignment)
- C. that we always attain the important symbiotic connection between assessment and change. (Closing the Assessment Loop)
- D. that we regularly review all components of our department’s assessment plan (see fifth column of The Assessment Map)

A. The Assessment Map in the Department of Theatre and Dance:

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY	ASSESSMENT RESULTS	ASSESSMENT FREQUENCY	RESULTS USED TO MAKE CHANGES IN:	ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY/TOOL REVIEWED
Department Level				
Course Evaluations	Student feedback data on instruction	Every semester	Pedagogy; curriculum	Every five years
Post-Show Discussions	Minutes of sessions	After every production	Season Planning; curriculum	Every five years

			planning	
Post-Show Faculty Reviews	Minutes of sessions	After every production	Production Processes and Logistics	Every five years
Production reflection essays in THRA 370, DANA 444, 443	Student essays	Every semester	Pedagogy, production processes, curriculum	Every two years
Classroom observation	Observation data by chair and tenured faculty followed by individual meeting with faculty member	Every semester	Pedagogy and course content	Every five years
Chair's Advisory Council	Minutes of sessions	Every month	Production practices; Season Planning; curriculum; student services; advising	Every five years
Senior Exit Interview/Survey	Notes from interviews/survey data	Every semester	Curriculum; teaching assignments; season planning	Every ten years
Dance Program				
Placement Class	Initial proficiency evaluation data	At beginning of first semester	Curriculum; advising	Every two years
Fourth Semester Proficiency Evaluation	Proficiency evaluation data	Fourth semester	Advising; curriculum; teaching assignments	Every five years
Fourth Semester Portfolio Review	Student portfolio	Fourth semester	Curriculum; season planning	Every two years
Seventh Semester Proficiency Evaluation	Proficiency evaluation data	Seventh semester	Advising; curriculum; teaching assignments	Every five years
First and Final Semester Content Exam	Student exam papers	First and Seventh semesters	Curriculum; teaching assignments	Every ten years
Adjudication of	Oral response to	Sixth semester	Production	Every five years

DANT 301 Pieces	preview performance		practices; pedagogy and course content	
ACDF Regional adjudication	Oral response to performance	Every year	Production practices; course content	Every five years
SCADA adjudication	Oral response to performance	Alternate years	Production practices; course content	Every ten years
NASD recommendation	Revision of dance course descriptions and goals	Every ten years.	Course content, curriculum	Every ten years
Capstone Courses	Student portfolios, student projects, course evaluations	Student's Senior Year	Course content, curriculum	Every five years
Competency Review Committee (for Certification degree students)	Approval to complete next step in Teacher Education program	Every semester	Teaching assignments; curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Application to Teacher Education (for Certification degree students)	Student essay and portfolio	In fourth semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Praxis I (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In fourth semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Praxis II (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In final semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Theatre Program				
Third Semester Review	Faculty evaluation data	Third semester	Curriculum; teaching assignments	Every two years
Sixth Semester Review	Faculty evaluation data	Sixth semester	Curriculum; teaching assignments	Every two years
ACTF Respondent	Oral and written response to performance	Every semester	Production practices; season planning;	Every five years

			teaching assignments; advising	
NAST recommendation	Revision of dance course descriptions and goals	Every ten years.	Course content, curriculum	Every ten years
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Praxis I (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In fourth semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE
Praxis II (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In final semester	curriculum	Every seven years—review conducted by COE

The department's faculty members manage the above assessment tools consistently and regularly, as the third column in the chart indicates. The department's faculty members meet up to four times per month, and they review assessment data and implement change in those meetings. Many of the above assessment activities receive initial review in a faculty subcommittee (dance faculty, theatre faculty, curriculum committee, competency review committee) that makes a recommendation for action to the full departmental faculty. Several faculty members also will gather on an ad hoc basis to conduct certain assessment tools (proficiency evaluations, sophomore and junior reviews, classroom observation) and then provide the departmental faculty with the results for discussion and action.

B. Vertical alignment of learning goals:

The specific degree program missions and goals align with the department, CVPA, university, and accreditation organization missions and goals.

Theatre Program Mission Statement

The mission of the theatre program is to foster individual students' aesthetic, intellectual, and creative development within the context of a liberal arts education as they pursue a Bachelor of Arts degree.

Theatre Program Goals:

1. Students should demonstrate a fundamental understanding of and appreciation for the creative processes of theatre, the socio-historical contexts and the nature of the theatrical event.
2. Students will achieve basic skills in performance and production.
3. Students should demonstrate a sense of commitment and a positive attitude that will foster the creative process.
4. (Certification Emphasis): The student will be an effective decision maker in directing the education of students

Dance Program Mission Statement

The dance program at Winthrop University prepares students for careers and future study in dance by fostering their aesthetic, technical, intellectual, and creative development within the context of a liberal arts education. In order to achieve this mission, the program provides students with opportunities to participate in studio-based practices and explorations as well as performance and other relevant educational offerings. The program serves both the university and local community in enhancing their knowledge of the discipline of dance from a holistic perspective, including the political, historical, cultural, and technological events that have contributed to its evolution.

Dance Program Goals

1. To provide a developmentally sequenced curriculum of studio and theory courses that exposes dance majors and minors to a breadth of skills, knowledge, and critical thinking.
2. To nurture artistic leadership in students through opportunities to perform, choreograph, teach, design, stage manage, participate in internships, and be involved in professional organizations.
3. To promote collaborative experiences that develop students' communication skills, appreciation of diversity, and adaptability to change in all artistic and interdisciplinary endeavors.
4. (Certification Emphasis): To prepare students for successful careers as educational leaders in public and private K-12 education.

The theatre and dance program mission statements and program goals share a liberal arts-based vision of education and a commitment to developing students' collaborative and creative skills.

Department of Theatre and Dance Mission Statement

The mission of Winthrop University's Department of Theatre and Dance is to foster individual students' aesthetic, intellectual, and creative development within the context of a liberal arts education as they pursue a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre or in Dance. Through class instruction, private coaching, mentoring, and performance, the department advocates both theoretical and creative explorations to achieve an understanding of the social, political, historical, and technological aspects of theatre and dance. We strive to afford opportunities for students to develop a significant level of competency in one emphasis in theatre (performance, design/technical, K-12 teacher certification) or in dance (performance, K-12 teacher certification)

The department's mission statement affirms the commitment to students' aesthetic and intellectual development asserted in the dance and theatre program goals. The department mission statement echoes the "context of a liberal arts education" component of the dance and theatre mission statements.

CVPA Mission Statement

The College of Visual and Performing Arts at Winthrop University offers nationally accredited programs in art, design, theatre, dance, and music, and provides academically challenging instruction in an interdisciplinary environment that inspires and prepares the next generation of artists, educators, scholars, and audiences. We promote intellectual inquiry and collaborative opportunities that encourage each student to develop a uniquely creative vision cultivated through artistry, teaching, scholarship, public performance, and community engagement.

The college mission statement asserts that students receive “academically challenging instruction.” The department’s mission statement affirms that we achieve this through “class instruction, private coaching, mentoring, and performance” and through the expectation that every student develops a “significant level of competency in one emphasis in theatre . . . or in dance.” The department’s mission statement asserts that students acquire knowledge through public performances, echoing the language of the college mission statement concerning “public performance and community engagement.”

University Level Competencies

In 2010 the administration formed the UWAAC task force. It recommended the adoption of the four University Level Competencies to serve as a guide for all academic programs. These competencies were adopted in 2010. All programs are required to develop an assessment plan by February 2012 that demonstrates how students achieve these competencies.

Competency 1: Winthrop graduates think critically and solve problems.

Winthrop University graduates reason logically, evaluate and use evidence, and solve problems. They seek out and assess relevant information from multiple viewpoints to form well-reasoned conclusions. Winthrop graduates consider the full context and consequences of their decisions and continually reexamine their own critical thinking process, including the strengths and weaknesses of their arguments.

Competency 2: Winthrop graduates are personally and socially responsible.

Winthrop University graduates value integrity, perceive moral dimensions, and achieve excellence in their work. They take seriously the perspectives of others, practice ethical reasoning, and reflect on experiences. Winthrop graduates hold a sense of responsibility to the broader community and contribute to the greater good.

Competency 3: Winthrop graduates understand the interconnected nature of the world and the time in which they live.

Winthrop University graduates comprehend the historical, social, and global contexts of their disciplines and their lives. They also recognize how their chosen area of study is inextricably linked to other fields. Winthrop graduates collaborate with members of diverse academic, professional, and cultural communities as informed and engaged citizens.

Competency 4: Winthrop graduates communicate effectively.

Winthrop University graduates communicate in a manner appropriate to the subject, occasion, and audience. They create texts – including but not limited to written, oral, and visual presentations – that convey content effectively. Mindful of their voice and the impact of their communication, Winthrop graduates successfully express and exchange ideas.

The Department of Theatre and Dance has an assessment plan that documents how our programs fulfill these University Level Competencies. Discussion of this assessment plan comes at the end of this section that discusses vertical alignment of our learning goals.

Relevant Excerpt from the University Mission Statement

Winthrop University provides personalized and challenging undergraduate, graduate, and continuing professional education programs of national caliber within a context dedicated to public service to the nation and to the State of South Carolina. The values of service, excellence, diversity, community, and leadership provide the foundation for Winthrop's continuing development and shape [Winthrop's continuing success](#).

Winthrop enrolls an achievement-oriented, culturally diverse and socially responsible student body between 6,500 and 7,000 students. Winthrop prides itself on being an institution of choice for groups traditionally under-represented on many college campuses.

Winthrop students acquire and develop knowledge, skills, capabilities and values that enrich their lives and prepare them to meet the needs and challenges of the contemporary world, including the ability to communicate effectively, appreciate diversity, work collaboratively, synthesize knowledge, solve complex problems and adapt to change. Ongoing assessment of programs and services ensures both that all academic programs challenge students at their highest level of ability and that the library, instructional technology and other academic service areas support courses of study that are consonant with best practices. As a result, Winthrop graduates are eminently well prepared to enter the most competitive graduate or professional schools as well as to be leaders in their chosen professions and in their communities.

In the department mission statement, we assert that we offer students a "significant level of competency" in one area of theatre or dance. This links to the university mission statement's assertion that "academic programs challenge students at the highest level." The department mission statement speaks of the "context of a liberal arts education" that shapes the theatre and dance curricula. This reflects the identity of the university as a "comprehensive teaching university" in the university mission statement. The department's mission statement speaks of the various means of instruction provided to students with the words "Through class instruction, private coaching, mentoring, and performance." This echoes the language of the university's mission statement where it states "Winthrop University provides personalized and challenging undergraduate, . . . programs."

NAST Theatre Program Outcomes

Students holding undergraduate liberal arts degrees must have:

1. The ability to think conceptually and critically about text, performance, and production.
2. An understanding of playwriting and production processes, aesthetic properties of style, and the way these shape and are shaped by artistic and cultural forces.
3. An acquaintance with a wide selection of theatre repertory including the principal eras, genres, and cultural sources.
4. The ability to develop and defend informed judgments about theatre

NASD Dance Program Outcomes

Students holding undergraduate liberal arts degrees must have:

1. The ability to identify and work conceptually with the elements of dance.
2. An understanding of choreographic processes, aesthetic properties of style, and the ways these shape and are shaped by artistic and cultural ideas and contexts.
3. An acquaintance with a wide selection of dance repertory, the principal eras, genres, and cultural sources.
4. The ability to develop and defend critical evaluations.
5. Fundamental knowledge of the body and of kinesiology as applicable to work in dance.

The department mission statement asserts that students “achieve an understanding of the social, political, historical, and technological aspects of theatre and dance,” and this aligns with the accrediting organizations’ call for development of students’ understanding of artistic processes, “aesthetic properties of style and the ways these shape and are shaped by artistic and cultural ideas and contexts.” The accrediting organizations also expect theatre and dance programs to develop students’ skills broadly, and the mission statements for the dance and theatre programs speak of achieving “basic skills in performance and production” and “breadth of skills.”

The department has developed an assessment plan for the four University Level Outcomes (ULCs). The discussion below outlines the various assessment instruments that measure students’ progress towards attaining the ULCs. Highlighted text in the four competencies mark the language that most accurately describes the learning that occurs among students in this department. The chart below the four competencies presents the various assessment tools we use, the nature of the results, the frequency our use of the tools, and the ULC’s that they assess.

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ASSESSMENT ACTIVITY	ASSESSMENT RESULTS	ASSESSMENT FREQUENCY	COMPETENCY ASSESSED
Department Level			
Course Evaluations	Student feedback data on instruction	Every semester	2, 4

Post-Show Discussions	Minutes of sessions	After every production	2, 3, 4
Production reflection essays in THRA 370, DANA 444, 443	Student essays	Every semester	1, 2, 3, 4
Chair's Advisory Council	Minutes of sessions	Every month	4
Senior Exit Survey	Notes from survey data	Every semester	1, 2, 4
Placement Class	Initial proficiency evaluation data	At beginning of first semester	2
Fourth Semester Proficiency Evaluation	Proficiency evaluation data	Fourth semester	2
Fourth Semester Portfolio Review	Student portfolio	Fourth semester	1, 2, 4
Seventh Semester Proficiency Evaluation	Proficiency evaluation data	Seventh semester	2
First and Final Semester Content Exam	Student exam papers	First and Seventh semesters	1, 3, 4
Adjudication of DANT 301 Pieces	Oral response to preview performance	Sixth semester	2, 3, 4
ACDF Regional adjudication	Oral response to performance	Every year	2, 3
SCADA adjudication	Oral response to performance	Alternate years	2, 3
Capstone Courses	Student portfolios, student projects, course evaluations	Student's Senior Year	1, 2, 3, 4
Praxis I (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In fourth semester	1, 3
Praxis II (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In final semester	1, 3
Theatre Program			
Third Semester Review	Faculty evaluation data	Third semester	1, 2, 4
Sixth Semester Review	Faculty evaluation data	Sixth semester	1, 2, 4
ACTF Respondent	Oral and written response to performance	Every semester	2

Capstone Courses	Student portfolios, student projects, course evaluations	Student's Senior Year	1, 2, 3, 4
Praxis I (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In fourth semester	1, 3
Praxis II (for Certification degree students)	Student test scores	In final semester	1, 3

C. Closing the Assessment Loop

Specific Assessment Activity in 2012-13

- Dance faculty decided to remove the pre-major status and the major application process for new, entering students. The assessments that occurred in this process have been moved to specific courses in the curriculum (dance technique and DANT 110). Moreover, the pre-major process had not resulted in any admission “rejections.” Data from all past pre-major applications served as evidence for this decision.
- Dance faculty decided to drop DANT 190: Dance Forum as a requirement in the dance major. The university calendar now includes regular “free periods” to conduct meetings with students. Also, the department has created a Facebook page to communicate with all students. These changes in university calendars and department processes served as evidence for this decision.
- The faculty reviewed all assessment tools scheduled for assessment in 2012-13 . This included: post-show discussions; reflection essays in THRA 370, 372, THRT 395, DANA 443, 444; ACDF adjudication; SCADA adjudication; Theatre third semester review; theatre sixth semester review.
- The faculty reviewed a number of changes to the curriculum and the degree programs.