

Graduate Placement Exams in Music Theory

All entering graduate students at the Eastman School are required to take a written and aural theory placement examination (total time: 3 hours). Students must sit for these exams upon entry to all MA/MM and DMA/Ph.D. degree programs. Students may take these exams only once.

The exams contain the following:

Aural:

I. Melodic dictation. Notation of a four- to eight-measure melody from the literature. Roman numeral analysis required.

II. Bass-line dictation. Notation of a bass line that completes a four-voice texture from the literature. Roman-numeral analysis required.

III. Two-voice dictation. Notation of a two-voice example.

Written:

I: figured bass realization (SATB format plus roman-numeral analysis). The realization requires knowledge of non-harmonic tones, diatonic harmony, applied chords, mixture, and modulation.

II: melody harmonization (adding a bass line only or adding three lower voices in SATB format. Roman-numeral analysis required). You will be required to set a melody in common-practice chorale style using appropriate harmonies and voice leading. You will also be required to insert specific compositional devices (for example, non-harmonic tones, six-four chords, applied chords (secondary dominants), modal mixture harmonies, and Neapolitan and augmented sixth chords).

III: formal and stylistic analysis. You will be given a score, for which you will be asked various questions and required to analyze specific passages. Questions concern specific harmonies or musical procedures (e.g., canon, invertible counterpoint, etc.), cadences, phrase and period structure, and key relations.

IV: *DMA/Ph.D. students only*. You will be given a bass line and figures as well as the opening motive in the upper-voice. Based on the given material, you will complete a two-voice counterpoint in eighteenth-century Baroque-style.

Individual Interview (DMA/Ph.D. students only):

You will interview with a faculty member from the theory department for fifteen-minutes, during which time you will discuss analytical issues in a given piece from the literature.

Books Recommended for Placement Exam Study:

Aldwell & Schachter: "Harmony and Voice Leading" (3rd edition)

Jane Piper Clendinning & Elizabeth West Marvin: "The Musician's Guide to Theory & Analysis"

Robert Gauldin: "Harmonic Practice in Tonal Music" (2nd edition)

Steven Laitz: "The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening" (2nd edition)