

## **Comprehensive Examination in Music Education For the Master of Music Degree**

### **Introduction**

Your graduate coursework provides an in-depth orientation to the music education profession, so that you are able to thoughtfully respond, in word and in action, to critical issues of music teaching and learning. Your coursework enables and encourages you to be an outstanding musician and articulate advocate for music education and to provide leadership in a professional community.

The Comprehensive Examination for the Master of Music degree in Music Education is intended to be a capstone of your coursework. The exam consists of two parts: a project and an oral defense. They will provide evidence of your

- Awareness of current essential questions in the profession
- Skill in surveying, reviewing, and synthesizing theoretical and professional literature
- Foresight in making recommendations to the profession on issues of practice
- Professional communication skills

These are the broad criteria upon which your project and oral defense will be evaluated.

### **Project Formats**

For the project, you must focus on one essential question (in some instances known as a “problem”) of the profession. The question worthy of your attention should be one that has practical significance in your current or anticipated teaching situation. You must exhibit your best work to the music education faculty in this project, and you should choose a format that allows you to do so. Content and effective writing are more important than technology! The following project formats are possible:

1. A 15-20 page discussion of recent research and its significance for practice (include appropriate citations).
2. A portfolio of your teaching and your students' learning as it relates to the essential question. Include videotape and other artifacts, as well as complete annotations and discussion.
3. An interactive website where other persons may retrieve critical information and see/hear examples of music teaching and learning related to your essential question. Your website should include your own discussion of the issue, as well as links to related sites.
4. Videotape of a session presented for a state or national music education organization that addresses your essential question. Accompanying this videotape should be a written rationale for this session and a critique of the session.

Formats not listed here are possible, but you must submit a one-page project proposal for approval by the music education faculty.

### **Master of Music in Music Education Program Advisors**

Although the responsibility for successful completion of the Comprehensive Examination rests with the student, the MM Advisor can help with many aspects of the exam. The MM advisor for full time students is Dr. Christopher Azzara; contact him at [cazzara@esm.rochester.edu](mailto:cazzara@esm.rochester.edu) or 585-274-1027. The MM advisor for summers-only students is Dr. Ann Marie Stanley; contact her at [amstanley@esm.rochester.edu](mailto:amstanley@esm.rochester.edu) or 585-274-1542.

## **Conditions for taking the Comprehensive Exam**

You are eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination only if you are within three credits of completion of the degree program.

You should have completed MUE 402, MUE 413, MUE 501, and MUE 502, or be enrolled in the last of these core music education courses.

You are **encouraged** to contact any and all faculty members as you are considering the essential question of the profession that you wish to address and the possible formats for your project.

## **Procedure for the Exam**

1. Contact the MM Advisor with your proposed project and a proposed date for its submission.
2. The MM advisor will choose two faculty members who are appropriate reviewers for your project, and s/he will coordinate the date and location for your oral defense with these two reviewers.
3. Submit your project to the MM Advisor by the agreed-upon date. Normally, there will be two weeks between the submission of the comprehensive exam project and the oral defense.
4. Arrive at the scheduled location about five minutes before your defense is scheduled to begin. The faculty members will take a few minutes to organize their questions before calling you into the room.
5. At the beginning of the oral defense, you will probably be asked a question about your professional history, or about the process of selecting the essential question that has guided your proposal. Prepare answers for these questions and rehearse answers aloud. This will help you adjust to the setting and the oral defense process.
6. In turn each faculty member will ask you questions about your project. You should refer to specific components of your project in answering questions.
7. Following the questioning, you will be asked to wait in the hallway while the faculty members confer. After a few minutes you will be notified about the results of your oral defense.

## **Results of the Oral Defense**

One of the following decisions will normally be rendered:

1. Both the project and the oral defense are passed. A memo from the MM Advisor will be sent to the Registrar and placed in your department file that you have passed the comprehensive exam.
2. During the oral defense, issues arose that suggested revisions to the comprehensive exam project were necessary. You should make those revisions and submit the revised project to the MM advisor. When the revised project is submitted, the comprehensive exam is passed and a memo from the MM Advisor will be sent to the Registrar and placed in your department file.
3. The project is passed, yet the oral defense was deficient. You will be asked to schedule a second oral defense on the same project.