

Graduate Placement Exams in Music Theory

All entering graduate students at the Eastman School are required to take aural and written theory placement examinations. Entering master's students will take Part 1 (Aural) and Part 2 (Written); entering doctoral students will take the same Parts 1 and 2, as well as Part 3 (Counterpoint/Style Composition). Students who earned their MM or MA at Eastman and then continue on to a DMA or PhD program will be required to take only Part 3 (since they previously took Parts 1-2 when entering the master's degree). These examinations serve two purposes. First, for all students, the exams assess students' preparation for graduate study and thus permit appropriate placement in theory courses. Second, for all DMA students, successful performance on the exam satisfies the musical skills requirement formerly tested on the DMA comprehensive examination (some DMA programs may have additional skills requirements).

Graduate students (both masters and doctoral) whose background in music theory is found to be in need of support will be required to take one or both of the remedial music theory courses, TH 117 and TH 118: Theory, Analysis and Musicianship Review I and II (1.5 credits each). These courses will not count toward the total credits of any degree program nor fulfill any degree requirement, and they may not be used as electives. However, credits earned in these courses will count toward the student's credit load during the semester that they are taken. Doctoral students must pass TH 118 with a minimum grade of B+ and masters students with a minimum grade of C. TH 117 must be passed with a minimum grade of C, which is the minimum passing grade in all graduate courses at Eastman.

To maintain satisfactory academic progress, doctoral students may not accumulate three or more credits of C or E and masters students may not accumulate six or more credits of C or E. Please see the following link for details on grading for graduate students:

<https://www.esm.rochester.edu/registrar/policy/05-00/#05.05>. Additionally, information on the Satisfactory Academic Progress policy for graduate students is found at the following link:

<https://www.esm.rochester.edu/registrar/policy/05-00/#05.06>.

Masters students whose BM degrees were earned at Eastman are advised to take TH 401 rather than 400 for their masters' theory requirement unless they place into the TH 117-118 sequence. If they are required to take TH 117-118, then they should take TH 400 after successful completion of TH 118.

Graduate students required to take TH 117 and/or 118 may not enroll for any 400- or 500-level music theory courses until TH 118 has been completed satisfactorily. Should a doctoral student not attain at least a grade of "B+" in TH 118, s/he will be required to retake TH 118 (preferably in the subsequent summer session) before s/he is allowed to register for any theory courses at the 400 or 500 level.

The exams contain the following:

Aural:

- I. Melodic dictation. Notation of a four- to eight-measure melody from the literature.
- II. Diatonic bass-line dictation. Notation of a bass line that completes a four-part keyboard progression.
- III. Chromatic bass-line dictation. Notation of a bass line that completes a four-voice texture from the literature.

Written:

- I. Notation in treble, bass, and C clefs.
- II. Identification of intervals, triads, and seventh chords.
- III. Sequence identification and completion.
- IV. Roman numeral analysis.
- V. Figured bass realization (SATB format plus roman-numeral analysis). The realization requires knowledge of non-harmonic tones, diatonic harmony, applied chords, mixture, and modulation.
- VI. Formal and stylistic analysis. A score, with accompanying questions regarding specific passages will be given. Questions concern harmonies or musical procedures (e.g., canon, invertible counterpoint, etc.), cadences, phrase and period structure, and key relations.
- VII. *DMA/PhD students only.* Counterpoint and Style Composition: students will have a choice to complete either a Baroque-style two-voice voice counterpoint or an early Classical-era two-voice counterpoint (about eight measures, based on a given incipit).

Recommended for Placement Exam Study:

Aldwell, Schachter, & Cadwallader: *Harmony and Voice Leading* (4th edition) Clendinning & Marvin: *The Musician's Guide to Theory & Analysis* (3rd edition) Laitz: *The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and*

Listening (3rd edition)

Laitz & Bartlette: *Graduate Review of Tonal Theory: A Recasting of Common-Practice Harmony, Form, and Counterpoint*

Online review course:

<https://iml.esm.rochester.edu/store/product-category/etheory/>

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