

Comprehensive Examination in Music Education For the Master of Music Degree

Description

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(updated 10/04/21)

Introduction

Your graduate coursework provides an in-depth orientation to the professional field of music education. This preparation allows you to respond thoughtfully, in word and action, to critical issues of music teaching and learning. Your program of study prepares you to be an outstanding musician, articulate advocate for music education, and a leader in the professional community.

The Comprehensive Examination for the Master of Music degree in Music Education serves as the capstone of your coursework. Through this process, faculty will evaluate evidence you provide to meet these criteria:

- 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
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Master of Music in Music Education Program Advisors

Although the student's MM Advisor can help with many aspects of the exam, the responsibility for successful preparation and completion of the Comprehensive Examination rests with the student.

Completing the Comprehensive Exam

The exam consists of two parts: **I. Project** and **II. Oral Defense**. Two faculty members in the Department of Music Teaching and Learning will serve as committee members who formally review and evaluate these elements.

1. You become eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination when:
 1. You enter the semester that, by its end, puts you within three credits of completing the degree program. You may also opt to complete the exam in the semester before you student teach, if applicable.
 2. You have completed MUE 402, MUE 413, MUE 501, and MUE 502, or are enrolled in the
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last of these core music education courses.

2. You must submit your written exam and complete your oral defense by the last day of classes of the semester in which you began the exam.
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Project Guidelines

For the project, you must focus on one essential question (in some instances known as a “problem”) within the profession. A question worthy of your attention will have practical significance in your current or anticipated teaching situation. Choose a format that allows you to exhibit your best work to the department faculty. In your project proposal, clearly describe and justify your chosen format. Possible formats include:

1. A 15- to 20-page discussion of recent research and its significance for practice following APA guidelines (include appropriate citations)
 2. A portfolio of your teaching and your students’ learning as it relates to the essential question, including video and other artifacts, as well as complete annotations and discussion
 3. An interactive website where others may retrieve critical information and see/hear examples of music teaching and learning related to your essential question, including your own discussion of the issue, as well as links to related sites
 4. Video of a session presented for a state or national organization in music education that addresses your essential question, accompanied by a written rationale for and a critique of the session
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Oral Defense Guidelines

After submitting your project to your committee members, you will complete an oral defense. There you will have the opportunity to explain your project and address your committee member’s questions. You may prepare presentation slides if you like. Relevancy and accuracy of content, as well as depth of thought, carry more importance than your use of technology during the defense.

At the beginning of the oral defense, committee members will probably ask you 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 procedures of the oral defense. In turn, each committee member will ask you questions about your project. You should refer to specific components of your project to answer these questions.

Procedure for the Exam

1. **Prior to the semester in which you are eligible to take the exam**, we encourage you to meet with faculty to discuss essential questions and possible project formats (see format descriptions above). You may also explore options through discussions held during departmental gatherings.
 2. **By your second year in the program**, the administrative assistant for the department will notify you which faculty members the department has designated as appropriate committee members for your project.
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3. **At the beginning of the semester in which you are eligible to complete the exam**, you must schedule a meeting with both committee members to discuss:

- the essential question of the profession you wish to address
- the practical significance of your question to your current or anticipated teaching situation
- the format of your project
- the date by which you will submit your project for initial review (approximately two weeks before your oral defense)
- the date and location for your oral defense (to be completed by the last day of classes)

You may meet in the office of one of your committee members for your oral exam, or you can work with your committee members to book a room (e.g., M9, Ouzer Room). Normally, you must allow for two weeks between the submission of the comprehensive exam project and the oral defense.

Deadlines by which to meet to discuss these details:

- Fall completion: Third Friday of fall semester
 - Spring completion: Second Friday of spring semester
 - Summer completion: First day of Summer Session I
4. After this meeting, submit a 350-word proposal (see guidelines for the proposal above) to your committee members by the designated deadline (two weeks after initial meeting):
- Fall completion: First Friday of October
 - Spring completion: First Friday in February
 - Summer completion: Friday of first week of Summer Session I

Your committee members will share your proposals with the full faculty to make them aware of your plans. You will be notified if the department faculty have any concerns.

- 5. Submit your project to your committee members by the agreed-upon date (typically, two weeks prior to the oral defense).
- 6. On the day of your oral defense, dress professionally and arrive at the location at least five minutes before the scheduled time of the defense. The committee members will take a few minutes to organize their questions before calling you into the room.
- 7. Following your defense, you will be asked to wait in the hallway while the committee members confer. After a few minutes, committee members will inform you of the results of your oral defense.

Results of the Comprehensive Exam

Upon submitting the final project and completing the oral defense, the committee members will render one of the following decisions:

- 1. Student did not successfully complete the project and did not successfully complete the oral defense.
- 2. Student did not successfully complete either the project or the oral defense of the comprehensive

exam.

3. Student successfully completed both the project and the oral defense.

If you do not successfully complete one or more parts of the comprehensive exam, one of your committee members will notify your MM advisor, the department chair, and the administrative assistant for the department. In order to complete the exam, you must submit revisions to the committee members by an agreed-upon date. When you submit the revisions and the committee members approve it, you have passed the comprehensive exam.

Upon successful completion of both parts of the oral exam, one of your committee members will then send the result of your oral examination to the Registrar, the department chair (who enters your “S” grade for passing), your MM advisor, and the administrative assistant for the department. The administrative assistant will document that you have passed the comprehensive exam in departmental records. **NOTE:** The department chair must be able to enter your grade by the registrar’s deadline (*discuss this date with the registrar and your committee as you plan*) in order for you to participate in the spring commencement ceremony.

Date

2024/05/03