



University of Rochester

Eastman School of Music

GRADUATE PLACEMENT EXAM INFORMATION

MUSIC THEORY PLACEMENT EXAM

Students majoring in Composition, Conducting, Contemporary Media and Film Composition, Early Music, Ethnomusicology, Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media (*Doctoral students only*), Music Education, Musicology, Pedagogy of Music Theory, Performance and Literature, and Piano Accompanying and Chamber Music are required to take a placement examination in music theory in late August during orientation. A study guide provided by the Music Theory department is included later in this handout.

Students who have completed either an MM or MA degree at Eastman and matriculate into a DMA or PhD program will be required to take only Part 3 of the Graduate Placement Exam in Theory (Counterpoint/Style Composition), as distinct from Parts 1-2, which they previously took when entering the master's degree. **DMA degree students majoring in Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media must complete the full exam.**

MUSIC HISTORY ADVISING SURVEY

Students majoring in Composition, Conducting, Early Music, Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media (*Doctoral students only*), Music Education (*Doctoral students only*), Music Theory, Opera Stage Directing, Performance and Literature, and Piano Accompanying and Chamber Music are required to complete the Graduate Music History Advising Survey. The link to this survey will be sent by the Graduate Studies Office in early June.

JAZZ MUSIC HISTORY AND MUSIC THEORY EXAMS

MM students majoring in Jazz Performance (JCM) and Jazz Writing (JCW) take examinations in jazz history, jazz theory, and jazz piano. Students in these degree programs do not take the classical music theory exam or complete the Music History Advising Survey. The Jazz History Exam will be administered online in late July and the Jazz Theory and Piano exams will be administered during orientation in late August. Students who previously completed a degree in Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media (BM or MM) at Eastman are exempt from these exams.

DMA students majoring in Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media complete the classical music theory exam, the music history advising survey, and examinations in jazz history and jazz music theory.

Students will receive further instructions regarding the Jazz History Exam in early June.

CONTEMPORARY MEDIA/FILM COMPOSITION EXAM

MM students majoring in Contemporary Media/Film Composition (CMFC) complete an exam that will assess familiarity with the technology used in the field, administered by Mark Watters. MM CMFC students will receive further instructions directly from Prof. Watters.

Should you have any questions about graduate placement exams, please contact the Associate Director of Graduate Advising and Services, Zachary A. Peterson, at zpeterson@esm.rochester.edu.

GRADUATE PLACEMENT EXAMS IN MUSIC THEORY

Students majoring in Composition, Conducting, Contemporary Media and Film Composition, Early Music, Ethnomusicology, Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media (*Doctoral students only*), Music Education, Musicology, Pedagogy of Music Theory, Performance and Literature, and Piano Accompanying and Chamber Music are required to take a placement examination in music theory in late August during orientation. 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 MA or MM at Eastman and then continue on to a PhD or DMA 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 need support will be required to take one or both 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>.

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 Skills:

Melodic dictation. Notation of a four- to eight-measure melody from the literature.

Diatonic bass-line dictation. Notation of a bass line that completes a four-part keyboard progression.

Chromatic bass-line dictation. Notation of a bass line that completes a four-voice texture from the literature.

(over)

Written Skills:

Notation in treble, bass, and C clefs.

Identification of intervals, triads, and seventh chords. Sequence identification and completion.

Roman numeral analysis.

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

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.

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 (4th edition)

Laitz: The Complete Musician: An Integrated Approach to Tonal Theory, Analysis, and Listening (5th 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/>