

Degree Guidelines

Doctor of Philosophy: Music Education

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PhD Degree: General Description

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree, with music education as a field of specialization, is offered through the Graduate School for students who demonstrate superior commitment to the music education profession and scholarly promise. This degree program requires that individuals think abstractly, generalize knowledge, apply research results to areas of specialization, and communicate effectively in both oral and written forms. Course work emphasizes the study of historical, philosophical, psychological and sociological foundations of music education, the theoretical and pedagogical principles of music teaching and learning, curriculum development, and research techniques. Graduates typically will pursue careers in music education at the college level or supervisory positions in elementary and secondary schools.

Admission Criteria

Educational preparation equivalent to the Bachelor of Music Education and Master of Music Education degrees awarded by the University of Colorado Boulder and at least three years of successful K-12 public or private school teaching experience are prerequisites for admission to the PhD program in music education. In addition to the music education essay required for all music education graduate program degree applicants, PhD applicants must also submit an example of their scholarly writing (major research paper, thesis or a published article), and a video of their public school teaching (recorded within the past three years) as part of the application file. Prospective students must also schedule an interview with faculty (on-campus is preferred). Although the primary emphasis in the PhD program is on scholarship and research, applicants also are expected to have attained an acceptable level of musicianship.

GRE scores (verbal, quantitative, and analytical portions of the general test) are required for admission. PhD students applying for graduate awards must provide the College of Music Graduate Office with GRE scores prior to January 1st. GRE scores will be carefully considered by the Music Education Faculty, in conjunction with other admission criteria, when determining graduate awards and/or appropriate provisions for admission to the PhD program. While there are no minimum score requirements, students accepted into the PhD program typically receive scores at the 30th percentile or above on each of the tests.

Applications will not be considered by the Admissions Committee until all parts of the application have been received. December 1 is the application deadline; late applications may be considered after that date based on availability.

Admission to the PhD program in music education is competitive and selective. Meeting minimal admission requirements does not guarantee admission. More details about admissions requirements can be found on the College of Music website (<http://music.colorado.edu/departments/music-education/prospective-grad-students/doctor-of-philosophy-in-music-education/>).

Degree Requirements

A minimum of 45 semester hours of course work numbered 5000-level or above (including 15 hours of background courses in music education, which may be transferred from the master's degree upon approval of the Music Education faculty) and a minimum of 30 hours of doctoral dissertation credit are required for the PhD degree. A maximum of 15 graduate credit hours in any one semester (or 9 credit hours during a summer semester) may be applied toward degree requirements. Grades below B- will not be credited toward the PhD program.

Background Courses		15
Music Education Required Courses (Foundations, Research, Psych)	6	
Music Education Electives	7	
Bibliography	2	
Music Education Courses		15
MUSC7203 Doctoral Seminar in Music Education	3	
MUSC7138 Contemporary Issues in College Teaching	3	
MUSC7103 Historical Research in Music Education	3	
MUSC7113 Quantitative Research in Music Education	3	
MUSC7143 Qualitative Research in Music Education	3	
Statistics		3
RSEM7110 Intermediate Statistics	3	
Non-Music Electives		6
6 credits, minimum of one 6000-level course		
Music Electives		6
6 credits, 5000-level courses or above		
Dissertation		30
TOTAL		75

Background Courses

Required background courses (15 credit hours) include Foundations of Music Education, Psychology of Music Learning, Research in Music Teaching, and Introduction to Bibliography and Research. The remaining hours of required credit may be fulfilled by completing (or transferring) additional 5000- or 6000-level courses in music education.

Music Education Courses

The required course work in music education (15 credit hours) includes five 3-credit hour courses: Contemporary Issues in College Teaching, Historical Research in Music Education, Quantitative Research in Music Education, Qualitative Research in Music Education, and Doctoral Seminar in Music Education.

Intermediate Statistics

Students are required to take Intermediate Statistical Methods (EDUC 7316 or RSEM7110, 3 credit hours). This course is offered Spring semester of odd-numbered years in the School of Education, dependent on enrollment. The course is also offered every Fall semester at the University of Colorado Denver. Students taking the course at University of Colorado Denver must complete an intercampus enrollment form (available [on the registrar website](#)), check with the course professor that s/he has been added to their course roster, and gain access to CU Denver's online learning management system. (Note: Students should also consult with the College of Music graduate office to be sure the student is being credited for the course in order to receive their GA/GPTI stipend.)

Non-Music Electives

Non-Music Electives have a requirement of 6 credit hours. Coursework can be from any discipline outside of music, and must include at least one 6000-level course. Classes from the School of Education (education policy, social justice in education, etc.), the Cognitive Psychology department, or additional advanced statistics or research methods courses may be of interest. Students can choose to complete a cognate if they register for two 3-hour courses in the same discipline or sub-discipline. Students may also choose to register for two 3-hour courses from different disciplines.

Music Electives

Elective course work in music (6 credit hours in music theory, musicology, applied music and pedagogy, conducting, or arts administration) shall be determined by each student in consultation with the advisor and approved by the music education faculty. Students electing course work in applied music or conducting may first be required to pass an audition administered by the appropriate faculty, and may be subject to available studio space. Only one course in arts administration can be used to fulfill the music electives requirement.

Residency Requirement

The minimum residence requirement for PhD students is four semesters of full-time study (minimum enrollment of 5 graduate hours each semester) beyond the master's degree, including at least two consecutive semesters in one academic year. One-half semester of residence credit may be earned for each summer session (minimum enrollment of 3 graduate hours). Individuals may not be employed in public or private schools for more than three-fourths time during the consecutive semesters of residency. PhD students who receive a graduate part-time instructorship during the consecutive semesters of residency may not be employed in public or private schools for more than half-time. Individuals engaged in other forms of employment will earn residency credit on a prorated basis per Graduate School guidelines.

Colloquium

The music education faculty organize a colloquium series that runs throughout the Fall and Spring semesters. The faculty expects that all in-residence graduate students in the PhD program will attend all colloquia, regardless of the topic or academic rank of the speaker. Further, all PhD students in music education are expected to present at a colloquium at some point during their residency.

Degree Procedures

I. Preliminary Examinations

Students accepted into the PhD program in Music Education must complete preliminary exams in Music Theory, Aural Skills and Musicology or have completed equivalent coursework during their Masters degree program. The music education department chair will review incoming PhD student transcripts for preliminary exam course equivalency. Course equivalency will be considered separately for music theory, aural skills, musicology and ethnomusicology. Students need to have earned a B- or higher in a course in order for prior coursework to fulfill the preliminary exam requirement.

Students who fail sections of the preliminary exams must retake those sections the following semester or complete appropriate remedial course work. All required preliminary exams must be passed before students will be considered eligible to take the doctoral comprehensive exam.

II. Plan of Study

During the second semester of study, or no later than the semester during which the 18th graduate credit is earned, students must provide the music education faculty with a Plan of Study, which consists of a completed Advising Checklist with semester-by-semester planned courses to fulfill the degree requirements. Students are required to submit their Plan of Study/Advising Checklist and semester-by-semester calendar electronically to the department chair and program advisor by March 15 (or by October 15 if submitting in the fall). The PhD advising checklist and a sample completed checklist can be accessed at the [Graduate Advising >> Degrees page](#). Students should list the course number, course name, credits, and semester taken for each course listed as shown in the sample checklist. Please see Section III.

Comprehensive Examinations in this document for information on comprehensive examinations committee members who need to be listed on the advising checklist. The music education faculty, in cooperation with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, is responsible for approving the Plan of Study.

III. Comprehensive Examinations

During the final semester in which the final pre-dissertation coursework will be completed, students may apply for admission to candidacy and make arrangements to take the comprehensive examinations after coursework is complete. Doctoral comprehensive examinations consist of two components—one written and the other oral. The two components must be accomplished in succession (separated by at least three weeks).

PhD students must take their comprehensive exams after completion of course work, but prior to commencing work on the dissertation (see Section IV. Dissertation for sequencing of dissertation credits). Students typically take the written portion of the exam during the summer following the completion of coursework or during the fall semester of their third year of the program. Each student taking the comprehensive examinations will write for four days (up to 6 hours per day), including three days for Music Education, one half-day for music elective content and one half-day for non-music elective content. PhD comprehensive examinations in music education are closed-book/closed-resource (with possible reference materials being provided by the faculty member). Exam items from committee members outside of music education may be open- or closed-resource at the discretion of the individual member.

Comprehensive examination committee members include three music education faculty members (with the program advisor serving as chair); one College of Music faculty member (outside of music education) who has instructed the PhD student in at least one course; and one University of Colorado faculty member (outside of the College of Music) who has instructed the PhD student in at least one course. Students may petition the graduate music education faculty for an exception to the normal committee membership, such as inclusion of committee members who have not instructed the PhD student in a course.

The comprehensive oral examination may last as long as three hours. After committee members have had at least three weeks to read and evaluate the written component of the comprehensive exam, it is appropriate for students to consult directly with them over preparation for the oral component. At the conclusion of the oral examination, the student's committee will discuss in private the evaluation of both the written and oral examination, and each committee member will indicate a "pass" or "fail" on the evaluation form provided. Students must receive a "pass" from a majority of the committee. Students who fail the comprehensive examination may attempt it once more after a period of time determined by the committee. On occasion, the student's advisory committee will grant a "conditional pass," on the comprehensive exam. The student's committee chair, along with the advisory committee, will determine what conditions must be met before the exam will be considered "pass" or part or what parts of the written and oral examination are to be repeated, in the case of a "failure." If any part of the exam is to be retaken, students should not necessarily expect identical questions. In all cases, the student will be notified in writing by the comprehensive examination committee chair as to the requirements prescribed by the advisory committee.

After receiving a passing evaluation (including satisfactory completion of any conditions), the committee will sign off the appropriate Graduate School form. The date of signoff following the oral component is considered by the Graduate School as the official date of completion and admission to candidacy.

IV. Dissertation

A dissertation, based on an original investigation and demonstrating mature scholarship, must be completed by each candidate. Following successful completion of the comprehensive examination, the student will present two preliminary dissertation proposals (“mini-proposals”) to the music education graduate faculty. Each preliminary proposals consist of a literature review, research questions, methodology overview, and proposed timeline for a feasible study on a discrete topic. The two preliminary proposals should be on different topics, and should vary in methodology. The student will schedule a time to present these preliminary proposals to the music education graduate faculty for discussion. Following that presentation and in consultation with the graduate faculty, the student and their advisor will finalize the dissertation topic and dissertation advisor. The preliminary proposal presentation will also allow for discussion of the student’s dissertation committee membership. Dissertation committees include three music education faculty members (with the dissertation advisor serving as chair); one College of Music faculty member (outside of music education) who has served as a doctoral-level course instructor; and one University of Colorado faculty member (outside of the College of Music) who has served as a doctoral-level course instructor. Exceptions to the normal membership—

such as committee members from other universities—may be approved by the music education graduate faculty. While the comprehensive examinations and dissertation committees usually consist of the same faculty, it is possible to modify dissertation committee membership based on faculty expertise.

Following topic approval from the preliminary proposals, the student will then develop a full proposal which consists of chapters 1-3 of the dissertation, references, and appendices. Note: some Graduate School and other documents refer to this proposal as a “dissertation prospectus.” The full proposal must be presented to the dissertation committee for a defense, which will provide feedback on the study design, and must be submitted to the faculty committee no later than one year after passing the comprehensive exam. The proposal defense is closed to the public. After approval of the full proposal, the student will submit a protocol for IRB approval (if needed). The student may not begin data collection until the proposal is approved by the committee and the protocol is approved by the IRB (if required).

Following successful defense of the proposal with the students’ dissertation committee, the student will work closely with the dissertation advisor in planning and carrying out the research and in writing the dissertation. A final dissertation defense will be conducted by the student’s dissertation committee, where the student will present their completed study. The defense is typically 2.5 hours in length, and includes a short presentation by the student followed by questions from the committee members. This defense is open to the public up to the point of committee deliberation. It is expected that the dissertation will constitute a worthwhile contribution to the literature in a student’s field of specialization.

A student must complete a total of at least 30 credit hours of dissertation with not more than 10 of these hours in any one semester. Once candidacy has been achieved, students must register for a minimum of 5 and maximum of 10 dissertation credits per semester (3 credits, if inactive). PhD in music education students are allowed to register for a maximum of 10 dissertation credit hours during the last semester of coursework, provided they are in good standing. However, PhD students will typically be registered for less than 10 hours during the last semester of coursework, given that graduate students in the College of Music are allowed to register for a maximum of 15 hours prior to candidacy. Students registered for dissertation hours during the last semester of classes are expected to be working on preliminary dissertation proposals. Registration for dissertation hours prior to candidacy is based on the understanding that faculty are not obligated to chair or serve on a dissertation committee during the summer.

Listed below is the typical registration schedule for dissertation credit hours.

- 1) Spring, second year: 5-10 credits of dissertation during the semester when completing coursework, when working on preliminary proposals
- 2) Fall, third year: 10 credits of dissertation when working on dissertation proposal and defending the proposal
- 3) Spring, third year: 5-10 credits of dissertation when collecting and analyzing data
- 4) Fall, fourth year: 5 credits of dissertation when defending the final document*^

* In rare instances, when dissertation advisor and committee approval has been granted, a student may be able to defend the dissertation during the summer of the third year. Students may defend

the dissertation in the fall of the fourth year while employed as a full-time faculty member at a peer institution or in K-12 schools; most PhD students do not continue to receive assistantship support for a fourth year.

^Please note that students are considered a candidate by the graduate school the semester after the comprehensive exam is successfully completed (written AND oral). As a result, students registering for more than 5 credits of dissertation during the last semester of coursework will need to be sure the total dissertation credit registration during the fall of the third year does not exceed 15 credits when combined with the total dissertation credits registered during the last semester of coursework.

Students may petition to alter this typical dissertation credit registration schedule if the student and dissertation advisor determine a longer dissertation timeline will be necessary given the scope of the project.

Dissertation hours are graded as IP (“in progress”) until the completed dissertation is approved by the faculty committee. Upon completion, the IP grades are replaced by the letter grade (A, B, etc.) assigned by the dissertation committee. Doctoral students are required to complete all degree requirements within six years from the date they start course work in the program, but petitions approved by the dissertation advisor and Associate Dean may be filed in the Graduate School if an extension is needed and justifiable.

Further Information

PhD students are urged to consult the Appendix “PhD Student Checklist-Final Stages of the Degree Program”. This document contains more specific information on required paperwork to be submitted to the graduate office, preparation for comprehensive exams, and dissertation completion.

Appendix A: PhD Student Checklist for Final Stages of Degree Program

1. Preparing

- Finish addressing any preliminary exam deficiencies
- Complete all course work
- Complete Application for Candidacy
- Verify that Graduate Committee Form is on file
 - 3 members of music education faculty, 1 member of music faculty, 1 outside member

2. Written Comprehensive Exams

- Establish Written Comp Exam Dates and Notify Graduate Office at Least 2 weeks in advance
Example schedule:
 - Thurs – Questions from Music Ed Committee Rep #1
 - Fri – Questions from Music Ed Committee Rep #2
 - Mon – Questions from Committee Chair
 - Tues – Questions from Outside Committee Reps
- Consult with Committee Members Regarding Nature of Written Exam Questions
 - Committee members typically submit 2-4 questions per day of testing
 - Committee members typically do NOT give exact question in advance, but situate questions within a specific area or subarea of study
 - Committee members may choose to create a question that requires advance research and/or the use of reference material during testing
 - Committee Chair reviews questions to assess feasibility and check for overlap
- Create a Study Plan for Written Exams
 - Review course texts, materials, notes, etc., that are germane to areas of questioning
 - Analyze, synthesize, evaluate and internalize key concepts, but always be able to support big picture premises with specifics (theories, scholarship, scholars/thinkers)
 - Practice writing hypothetical responses within fixed timeframes
 - high quality (passable) written exam responses are characterized by good organization, depth and nuance of thinking, and familiarity with scholarship within the profession; they address the questions at hand rather than veering off onto tangents
- Review testing protocol with Graduate Office at least one week in advance of the exam date and Submit Graduate Comprehensive Examination Agreement
- Complete written exams
 - Committee members have a minimum of 3 weeks to review written exam responses
 - Seek feedback from individual committee members regarding written exam responses

3. Oral Comprehensive Exam

- Establish Oral Comp Exam Dates and Notify Graduate Office at Least 2 weeks in advance

- Create a preparation plan for oral exams (2.5 to 3 hr. window)
 - review committee feedback on written exams
 - practice producing hypothetical oral responses within fixed timeframes
- Complete oral exams
 - committee votes to pass, provisionally pass, or fail
 - students who pass or satisfactorily address provisions become degree candidates

4. Preliminary Dissertation Proposals

- Begin developing preliminary dissertation proposals (10 pages + references)
 - 2-3 topics
 - literature review
 - synthesis (frameworks, perspectives, lenses, methodologies)
 - researchable questions
 - appropriate methodologies and proposed timeline
- Schedule graduate music education faculty review of preliminary proposals
 - one topic recommended based on significance of topic, viability of design
 - dissertation advisor assigned based on methodology

5. Dissertation Proposal

- Develop dissertation proposal (Chapters 1-3, references, appendices)
 - meet/communicate at least bi-weekly with advisor to work through drafts
- Complete Dissertation Proposal Defense (typically 2 hrs. in length)
 - committee members approve, approve with minor revisions, or suggest major revisions with a second proposal defense scheduled

6. Dissertation

- Complete IRB/District Approval Process
- Complete Data Collection/Study Implementation
- Complete Data Analysis
- Complete Results and Discussion Chapters
- Revise other Chapters/Sections as needed
 - consult Graduate School formatting guidelines
- Submit Diploma Card to Graduate Studies Office (early in semester of graduation)
- Complete Dissertation Defense (typically 2 hrs. in length)
 - Advisor and second reader review all sections of dissertation
 - Other committee members review specific sections of dissertation
 - Committee votes to accept (or not accept) dissertation defense and document

- Dissertation defense is open to the public (major exams are not)
- Complete Dissertation Final Edits
 - Final version must be submitted to the Graduate School (a copy also is submitted to the Graduate Office to be forwarded to the Music Library)