

# Music MM

## Comprehensive Music Knowledge Base

**Goal Description:**

MM students should obtain a comprehensive knowledge of music beyond their primary area of focus/concentration, building on undergraduate foundations and increasing the *breadth* of their knowledge and abilities. This should include but is not limited to music performance, pedagogy, or therapy; music theory; and music history.

**Providing Department:** Music MM

**Progress:** Completed

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Breadth Of Knowledge**

**Learning Objective Description:**

MM students need to obtain an appropriate level of musical knowledge beyond their primary area of focus/concentration. This should include but is not limited to music performance, pedagogy, or therapy; music theory; and music history.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Comprehensive Exam**

**Indicator Description:**

Students will take an oral comprehensive exam in their final semester of study. This test will be relevant to all aspects of study that the student has experienced in the program, including performance, pedagogy, or therapy; music theory; and music history. The test will be administered by a minimum of three School of Music faculty from the designated fields of study.

**Criterion Description:**

Students are scored in three different categories: their applied area, music history, and music theory. A “Pass” on the exam indicates that all three categories were completed successfully. *Students will be allowed to retake a portion or all of their oral exam one time.* The School of Music considers a first-time pass rate of 75% of students to be successful.

**Findings Description:**

The School of Music had six MM students attempt their comprehensive exams in the spring 2024 semester. Of the six, five passed all three sections with a result of "pass" or "high pass" in each area. We did have one student that did not pass any section of the exam and will have to retake the entire exam. The pass rate for the comprehensive exam this year was 83.3%, thereby meeting the goal.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Comprehensive Exam**

**Action Description:**

While our students that take the comprehensive exam immediately following their coursework have consistently done well on the exam, the student that did not pass this year did have a gap between completing coursework and taking the exam. There can be more intervention to ensure that all students take the exam in their final semester of coursework, and/or provide more study

materials in the interim. In addition, it is important to communicate to the student the standard of knowledge expected of the exam, to ensure that they fully understand the depth of music and content knowledge needed to pass.

**Music Performance**

**Goal Description:**

Students studying music performance will perform at a level considered professionally competitive in all types of music literature, including solo works, chamber music, and those pieces written for large ensembles. Through their performance, students will be able to demonstrate a fundamental understanding of all musical stylistic periods by making historically-informed choices regarding specific musical elements (i.e. phrasing, articulation, ornamentation, etc.). This degree plan culminates in a recital, which adheres to the guidelines in the School of Music Student Handbook and is tailored to the student’s principle vocal or instrumental concentration.

**Providing Department:** Music MM

**Progress:** Completed

**RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS** -----

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1**

**High Quality Performance Of Standard Literature**

**Learning Objective Description:**

Master's students with a performance emphasis will perform standard literature for their instrument/voice. The music selections will be appropriate to the masters degree level and performance practices at the professional level.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2**

**Pre-Recital Hearing**

**Indicator Description:**

Graduate students studying performance or pedagogy must pass a pre-recital hearing indicating the music required for their recital has been prepared to a professional performance-ready level. Students will present at least one graduate recital which indicates they have attained the appropriate level of mastery of their instrument/voice at a level which must be consistent with the national standards of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM).

**Masters of Music Pre-Recital Hearing Performance Standards:**

The application of performance standards used for each instrument or voice will vary widely based upon composers, periods and styles; nevertheless, the following standard performance qualities are checked by all faculty and assessed in the specific context of the particular performance piece:

- Intonation
- Rhythmic accuracy
- Tone quality

Students must sing/play in turn, with the proper/appropriate intonation and tone quality and within the prescribed rhythmic patters for the periods and composers and styles of their performance pieces.

**Criterion Description:**

The ideal is for each student to pass the pre-recital hearing at the first attempt; however, due to the rigorous application of indicator standards that are common to the SHSU Masters Music Program faculty, a high, yet realistically attainable criterion is that Students should pass the pre-recital hearing

with no more than three (3) attempts. 100% of students will pass the pre-recital hearing within three attempts and be judged "recital ready." The School of Music considers 95% of the students passing the recital jury on the first attempt to be a success.

### **Findings Description:**

The School of Music had seven (7) students register to complete a recital in the 2023-2024 academic year. Of the seven, six passed their pre-recital hearing on the first attempt. The seventh student was unable to complete the preparation, but did not attempt a pre-recital hearing. Instead, they have taken an incomplete which will be fulfilled in the fall semester. Therefore, 100% of the pre-recital hearing attempts were passed.

#### **RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3**

### **Pre-Recital Hearing**

#### **Action Description:**

The School of Music faculty is doing excellent work in ensuring that graduate level students are prepared for their pre-recital hearing. Faculty will continue to ensure that students are preparing with adequate time appropriate to the difficulty level of the music to allow the students to be successful in their recital hearings.

## **Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

### **Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):**

#### **Closing Summary**

The School of Music will continue to work to find more effective ways to communicate the comprehensive exam requirements and expectations. We just hired a new music theory faculty, who will also contribute to the graduate theory curriculum and will likely serve on exam committees.

We are currently looking at course offerings to see if there is a better sequence in which to offer the MM core courses, so that students can have the core requirements completed before the semester of the comprehensive exam.

While the Recital Hearing will continue to be a benchmark for performance assessment, we will start tracking data on recital postponements to see if there are any consistent trends or patterns, or if the few that have occurred are simply anomalies.

### **Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:**

There seems to be a big improvement in the communication of expectations of comprehensive exams, and the students are overall doing well and are understanding the process and preparation. We haven't yet changed the course offerings, but this has been discussed and we are still working on a solution.

Regarding recital postponements, the one this year was not related to past postponements, and should be considered an anomaly.

## **New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item**

### **Closing Summary:**

The School of Music will continue to review pre-recital hearings and recital postponements as the benchmarks for skill level progress through the degree. In addition, continued communication with the students will help them be better prepared for the comprehensive exams. The School of Music will consider putting a place a requirement to complete the comprehensive exam in the final semester of coursework to prevent future unsuccessful comprehensive exam results that to likely due to too much time passing between taking courses and taking the exam.