Doctor of Philosophy in Music

Ph.D. in Music Admission

The Doctor of Philosophy degree in music is offered in musicology and music theory. The applicant is expected to hold a Master of Music degree with emphasis in musicology or music theory from KU or an equivalent master's degree from another accredited institution. In addition to the required transcripts, Graduate Record Examination scores, and letters of recommendation, the applicant for admission to the Ph.D. program should submit a resume or CV of professional training and experience and samples of original scholarly writing.

Graduate Admission to the School of Music

Application procedures and program requirements can change. Please visit the School of Music Admissions webpage for current information.

Graduate programs in the School of Music are open to students with acceptable baccalaureate degrees, as specified by the admitting areas, whose academic records indicate that they can do successful work at the graduate level. Regular admission requires a bachelor’s degree and a grade-point average of at least a B (3.0 on a 4.0 scale), from KU or from another regionally accredited institution or foreign university with substantially equivalent bachelor’s degree requirements.

Programs of study leading to the Master of Music (M.M.), Master of Music Education (M.M.E.), Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.), and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) are offered through the School of Music. Specific admission procedures and degree requirements for the M.M. and M.M.E. programs are described under division headings. Specific admission procedures and degree requirements for the D.M.A., Ph.D. (musicology/music theory), and Ph.D. (music education/music therapy) are listed in the appropriate sections.

Program Areas

Graduate study in the School of Music is organized into program areas within 2 units:

- Music includes programs in composition, conducting, musicology, music theory, and areas of performance.
- Music Education and Music Therapy (MEMT) includes programs in music education or music therapy.

At least a 3.0 grade-point average, overall and in the major area, is required for all course work counted toward any graduate degree in the School of Music. If the overall grade-point average falls below 3.0, the student is placed on probation for one semester; if the cumulative average is not 3.0 or higher after the next semester, the student is dismissed from the program. Students must also achieve at least a grade of B in thesis, lecture-recital, document or dissertation, and on each recital for satisfactory completion of degree requirements.

Diagnostic Examinations

All entering graduate students (except music education, music therapy, and opera performance majors) must take written diagnostic examinations in musicology and music theory. These are given the week before the start of classes in the Fall and Spring semesters to determine whether a need exists for remedial work in those areas prior to enrolling in graduate coursework. Students who show the need for remediation must complete the prescribed review courses or show mastery of the material by re-examination. Graduate students entering programs in piano must take additional tests in piano literature given before the start of classes. A student is exempt from all diagnostic exams if he or she received a bachelor's or master's degree in music from the University of Kansas within the previous 4 years.

Doctor of Philosophy in Music Degree Requirements

Foreign Language Requirements

Aspirants to the Ph.D. degree in music theory and musicology are expected to demonstrate reading knowledge of German and a Romance language chosen from French, Italian, Portuguese, or Spanish. Reading proficiency must be demonstrated before scheduling the oral comprehensive examination. The student also may be advised to develop reading proficiency in another language or languages in order to pursue research for the dissertation.

Course of Study

Specific course work for each student is arranged individually in consultation with the student’s advisor. The Ph.D. program normally requires 4 years of full-time study beyond the master’s degree, with the first 2 years devoted to course work. A minimum of 18 credit hours is devoted to the dissertation, an original contribution to knowledge in the student's research area.

Students in musicology must complete at least 2 semesters of MUSC 654 or MUSC 656 Collegium Musicum, and 2 semesters of MUSC 940 Seminar on Selected Topics in Musicology. In addition, students must complete at least 3 more 3-credit-hour courses in advanced musicology and at least 3 more 3-credit-hour courses in advanced music theory.

Although the Ph.D. program does not include a minor area, students are encouraged to continue their study of performance and/or composition, and may be advised to take nonmusic courses that are directly applicable to their fields of research for the dissertation.

For general information on academic requirements, residence, tenure, and enrollment, see the Graduate Studies section of the online catalog.

Research Skills and Responsible Scholarship

Doctoral students are required to have training in both responsible scholarship and research skills pertinent to the doctoral level of research in their field of study.

To satisfy both components, D.M.A. students in performance or composition and Ph.D. students in Musicology or Music Theory must complete MUSC 801 Music Bibliography and Research (or its equivalent) and, if available, participate in advanced performance seminars.
Scholarly Presentation
Each candidate for the Ph.D. degree in musicology and music theory must make a public presentation of no less than 20 minutes on a scholarly topic. This requirement may be fulfilled by reading a paper at a national or regional meeting of a society in the student’s discipline or in a colloquium at KU.

Written and Oral Comprehensive Examinations
Students must take written examinations in music theory and musicology when most of the course work has been completed and research skills/responsible scholarship requirements have been fulfilled. Some major divisions also may require a written examination in the major area. Upon successful completion of all written examinations, the student is eligible to schedule the oral comprehensive examination administered by the graduate advisory committee. With the satisfactory completion of both written and oral comprehensive examinations the aspirant is admitted to candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dissertation Proposal
No later than the end of the semester after successful completion of the written and oral comprehensive examinations, the candidate, in consultation with the faculty dissertation committee, must submit a dissertation proposal of several pages with a preliminary bibliography, outline, and description of the project and research plan.

Final Oral Examination
Following completion of the dissertation, a final oral examination is scheduled in which the candidate presents and defends the results of dissertation research and is expected to respond to questions from the faculty committee. A grade of at least B must be achieved on the dissertation for satisfactory completion of the degree requirements.