

Doctoral Comprehensive Examinations

All students who are enrolled in doctoral degree programs within the College of Music are required to pass comprehensive examinations. For details about those examinations, see the statements on those programs in the sections that follow. The comprehensive examinations are given during fall and spring semesters and the summer session.

Students must be registered for at least 1 credit during the semester(s) in which they take comprehensive examinations (see Maximum and Minimum Credits). This requirement is automatically waived if the examination is administered during the summer session immediately following a spring semester during which the student was registered and/or prior to a fall semester in which the student will be registered. Scheduling, composing, and evaluating the comprehensive examinations is done in accordance with college policy.

In the case of a comprehensive examination that consists of more than one part, the date that the student passes the examination is the date on which he or she passes the final component of the comprehensive examination. The college shall make available to doctoral students upon matriculation a written explanation of comprehensive examination procedures. The comprehensive examinations must be passed before an oral defense of the dissertation or document and /or lecture-recital(s) can be scheduled.

For the Doctor of Philosophy and the Doctor of Musical Arts degrees, all of the comprehensive examinations must be passed within 5 years, and all remaining requirements for the degree must be completed within 8 years from the time when a student begins the first class at Michigan State University that appears on his or her doctoral program of study.

Applications for extension of the eight-year period of time toward degree must be submitted by the student for approval by the dean of the college and the Dean of The Graduate School. Upon approval of the extension, doctoral comprehensive examinations must be passed again.

Students who are enrolled in the **Doctor of Philosophy degree program with a major in music education** are required to take a comprehensive examination in the field of music education. This involves four questions from the music education core curriculum and one question from the cognate area. Three of the questions must be written on campus; two are “take home” questions. For specific details a student should consult with their academic advisor in music education. The comprehensive examinations in Music Education may be given during summer at the discretion of the area faculty.

Students who are enrolled in the **Doctor of Musical Arts degree program in music composition** are required to take a comprehensive examination in the field of composition and the standard comprehensive examinations in music theory and music history. Please see below for an explanation of the format of the music history and music theory examinations. For specific details about the composition examination, please consult with the academic advisor in composition. The comprehensive examination in composition may be given during summer at the discretion of the area faculty.

A student who entered the DMA degree in composition prior to Fall 2017 and who has not passed the comprehensive examinations in music history or music theory is required to take the comprehensive examination as outlined below. A student who entered the DMA degree in composition prior to Fall 2017 and has passed Theory Part 1 of the previous format will be required to complete the music history and theory comprehensives as outlined below, but to satisfactorily answer only one question in music theory in order to pass that portion of the examination.

Students who are enrolled in the **Doctor of Musical Arts degree program in music conducting** are required to take four comprehensive examinations: the standard comprehensive examinations in music theory and music history; a question from the student's area in conducting to be written on campus; and a "take home" question from the student's area in conducting. Please see below for an explanation of the format of the music history and music theory examinations. For specific details about the conducting examinations, please consult with the academic advisor in conducting.

A student who entered the DMA degree in conducting prior to Fall 2017 and has not previously passed the comprehensive examination in music theory is required to take the comprehensive examination as outlined below.

A student who entered the DMA degree in conducting prior to Fall 2017 and has not previously passed the comprehensive examination in music history has the option to take the comprehensive examination as outlined below or prepare a "take home" question in music history in relation to conducting. (This latter option has been retained from the previous comprehensive procedure and applies only to those who entered the program prior to Fall 2017.)

Students who are enrolled in the **Doctor of Musical Arts degree program in music performance** are required to take the comprehensive examinations in music theory and music history. Please see below for an explanation of the format of this examination.

A student who entered the DMA degree in performance prior to Fall 2017 and who has not passed any portion of the comprehensive exam is required to take the comprehensive examination as outlined below. A student who entered the DMA degree in performance prior to Fall 2017 and has passed Theory Part 1 of the previous format will be required to complete the music history and theory comprehensives as outlined below, but to satisfactorily answer only one question in music theory in order to pass that portion of the examination.

Doctoral Comprehensive Examinations in Music Theory and Music History

The doctoral comprehensive examinations in music theory and music history are given during fall and spring semesters and the summer session. For specific dates, check with the Graduate Studies office. Students planning to take the comprehensive must contact Susan Hoekstra, Graduate Advisor, (shoekstr@msu.edu), at least four weeks prior to the exam date. No exceptions to this deadline will be allowed. Students who do not comply with this rule will not be allowed to take the comprehensive examination.

The comprehensive examination in music history takes place in the morning, typically from 9:00 a.m.–12 noon. Students will receive a list of questions, with one question drawn from each of the 800- and 900-level history courses taught during the past five years. A maximum of two questions may be attempted and at least one question must be answered satisfactorily in order to pass this portion of the examination. Students must provide their own pencils, erasers, and writing

and paper. Reference materials (in printed form, on computer media, or in any other form) are not permitted.

The comprehensive examination in music theory takes place in the afternoon, typically from 1:30–6:00 p.m. Students will receive a list of questions, with one question drawn from each of the 800- and 900-level theory courses taught during the past five years. A maximum of three questions may be attempted and at least two questions must be answered satisfactorily in order to pass this portion of the examination. Students must provide their own pencils, erasers, and writing and music paper. Reference materials (in printed form, on computer media, or in any other form) are not permitted.

A student becomes eligible to attempt each of the two exams when finished with or in the last semester of coursework in that area. An eligible student may attempt either one or both parts on a given testing date. If a student passes either the musicology or the music theory exam, but not both, the successfully completed exam does not need to be retaken.

Dissertation/Document/Lecture-recital(s) Proposal

Students in the PhD in music education and the DMA in composition should consult with their advisor for the format and timeframe of the dissertation proposal.

Students in the DMA in conducting and those in the DMA in performance who elect to do a document and lecture-recital must develop a topic with their advisor and submit a proposal for approval by each member of the guidance committee. The proposal must be approved by the committee no less than 6 months prior to the date of the final oral examination. The proposal should be 2-3 pages in length and should summarize the principal “argument” of the document and/or lecture-recital. Consult with the chair of your guidance committee for additional suggestions for the proposal’s format or see <http://music.msu.edu/information-for-students/for-graduate-students/doctoral-degrees-forms>.

A more specific timeline for this process is included in the ‘Advising Materials’ section and on our website.

Students in the DMA in performance who elect to do two lecture-recitals must develop each of the topics with their advisor and submit a separate proposal for each for approval by each member of the guidance committee. The proposal must be approved by the committee no less than 1 month prior to the “defense” of the lecture-recital. The proposal should be 2-3 pages in length and should summarize the principal “argument” of the lecture-recital. Consult with the chair of your guidance committee for additional suggestions for the proposal’s format or see <http://music.msu.edu/information-for-students/for-graduate-students/doctoral-degrees-forms/>.

A more specific timeline for this process is included in the ‘Advising Materials’ section and on our website.