

**NORTHWESTERN STATE UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF CREATIVE AND PERFORMING ARTS**

**GRADUATE MUSIC  
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2016 EDITION  
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The information in this handbook is unofficial and subject to change. Official Northwestern State University admissions and major requirements are published biennially in the printed version of the NSU Graduate Bulletin. If you have questions regarding the information in this handbook, please contact the School of Creative and Performing Arts.

## 1. Preface

This handbook addresses curriculum, policies, requirements, and general information regarding the graduate program in music. It is important that you use the information and checklists in this handbook; otherwise you may not be aware of deadlines, requirements, and procedures.

The following website provides information about the School of Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) at NSU:

<http://www.nsula.edu/capa/capa.html>

Questions concerning the Music graduate program may be addressed to:

Dr. Dennette McDermott, Coordinator of Graduate Studies  
School of Creative and Performing Arts  
CAPA, Rm. 110  
Northwestern State University  
Natchitoches, LA 71497

Telephone: (318)357-5761  
e-mail: [mcdermottd@nsula.edu](mailto:mcdermottd@nsula.edu)

The following website provides information about Graduate Studies at NSU:

<http://graduateschool.nsula.edu>

Requests for general information about graduate study at NSU may be addressed to:

Telephone: (318)357-5851

If you have disability-based accommodation needs, please contact the ADA/Disability Services Center, (318)357-6950; TDD, (318)357-4393.

## 2. Degree in Brief

All degree programs in music are fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Music, 11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21, Reston, Virginia 20196, telephone number (703) 437-0700. The Master of Music at Northwestern State University offers two concentrations to further prepare students for careers as educators and performers as well as for further advanced study. Students must choose and be accepted into one of the concentration areas: Music Education or Performance.

**Available Concentrations:** Music Education (542A) Performance (542B)

**32 hours each**

### **3. Admission to Graduate Study**

#### *Application for Admission*

Any student wishing to attend Northwestern as a Graduate Student must apply for admission. The application can be found on the graduate website. A student is admitted to the Graduate School only upon receipt of all application materials including:

1. Graduate application form
2. Undergraduate transcripts
3. Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores
4. Immunization forms
5. Application fee

The Graduate Office will mail a confirmation of the receipt of application materials and a request for any materials that have not been received. A total of 4 letters will be sent to the applicant following the initial application. It is the responsibility of the student to confirm with the graduate school, that all materials are received.

Provisional admission to a Master's degree program may be granted for one semester for students whose records, including GRE scores, have not been received. Failure to remove provisional status after one semester will result in suspension from any degree program and reclassification to non-degree status.

#### *Admission Requirements*

All graduate students must meet the following requirements for Regular Admission to the Graduate School.

1. Bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university
2. Application on file prior to registration
3. Official transcripts on file prior to registration
4. Graduate Record Examination (GRE) scores, as required, on file prior to registration

#### *Music Requirements*

All graduate students must meet the following requirements for admission to the Master of Music program.

1. Bachelor degree in Music or Music Education
2. Audition (for students in the performance concentration)

## **Diagnostic Examination**

Each student will take a **Diagnostic Exam** in music theory, aural skills, and music history and literature. This exam will be given during the week prior to the first day of class. The diagnostic exam is designed to ascertain levels of competency. A Deficiency Plan will be developed for those who score below minimum standards. MUS 5010/ 5050 Practical Review and other remedial courses do not satisfy minimum degree requirements. The Deficiency Plan must be completed prior to 1) enrollment in any advanced course in deficient areas, 2) the Comprehensive Exam, and 3) the Final Project.

## **Music Education (542A)**

**Admission Requirements** for Master of Music with a concentration in Music Education:

1. A bachelor's degree in music education with teacher certification is preferred for clear admission to the program. A bachelor's degree in music is required; however, the student must satisfy basic music education competencies prior to achieving candidacy. This may be established by a valid teacher's certificate. For those who do not possess a certificate, a score of 161 or higher on the PRAXIS II/ Principles of Learning and Teaching is required.
2. Two (2) letters of recommendation from music education professionals that attest to the candidate's preparedness for graduate study in music education.
3. A personal statement (500 words) that discusses the student's goals and reasons for pursuing the Master of Music with a concentration in Music Education Degree.
4. It is highly recommended that applicants have at least two (2) years of teaching experience (i.e.; public or private school, private instructor). Preference for Graduate
5. It is highly recommended that applicants without teaching certification pursue Alternate Certification concurrent with their master's program.

## **Music Performance (542B)**

### **Audition**

A live "in-person" audition is preferred, though a recording is permitted (video recording preferred) if a live audition would pose an undue hardship. At least two applied faculty members

must be present at the audition. All applicants must prepare an audition recital that demonstrates, through advanced repertoire, their highest technical and musical achievements. Choice is up to applicant, within guidelines.

If a recording is used, a live audition would be required in the first semester of enrollment to validate. The recording must be from a live performance and unedited. A recording may only permit provisional admission within the Music Area; it will not prevent Regular Admission status required by the Graduate School to be assigned a graduate assistantship.

## **4. Curriculum**

### **Music Education (542A)**

**A. MUED 5900** (3 hours). (required of all Master of Music students)

**B. Foundation Courses in Music Education** (12 hours). MUED 5010, 5020, and 6 hours from the following: MUED 5000, 5100, 5200, 5270, 5900, 5460, 5480, 5520,

**C. Supportive Courses in Music**(6hours). Music History:3 hours from the following: MUS 5300, 5310, 5320, 5330, 5360, 5340, 5350, 5370. Music Theory: 3 hours from the following: MUS 5020, 5040, 5060, 5530, MUED 5030.

**D. Applied Music Study** (2-4 hours). To be chosen from MUS 5700, 5710. Not more than 4 hours of applied study can be counted toward the music education concentration.

**E. Electives in Music, Music Education, and Education** (4- 6 hours). To be chosen from the following: MUED 5110, 5120, 5230, 5490, 5550, 5600, MUS 5230, 5150, 5390, 5400, 5430, 5440, 5120, or approved graduate courses from the College of Education.

**F. Final Project** (3 hours). Choose one of these research options:

1. Thesis: MUED 5980.
2. Two papers-in-lieu of thesis: MUED 5400.

This option allows a student to pick subjects that are of particular interest. Papers must be related to a course and must be an expansion upon any normal assignments for that course. MUED 5400 may be used as a course for writing a paper in lieu of thesis

3. Conducting lecture recital with supporting research document: MUS 5620, MUED

5620. The supporting research document must be approved by the committee no later than the lecture recital hearing.

### **G. Special Requirements for Degree**

1. MUS 5280 (Ensemble Performance): Students may apply up to two hours (i.e., two semesters) of MUS 5280 toward the degree.
2. MUS 5010 (Practical Review) may be required without degree credit on the basis of the diagnostic exam.

### **H. Comprehensive Exam**

All students will take a comprehensive written examination based on courses taken. There are two possible outcomes: (1) Pass (2) Fail. In the case of a Fail, the student will take an oral examination, which counts as the second attempt. The oral examination is graded as Pass or Fail. In the case of a Fail the student's committee may suggest the student take some additional courses for remediation and then take the written comprehensive examination for the final time. In case the final outcome is Fail, the student will be dismissed from the program. A student may not attempt the comprehensive examination more than three times.

### **Music Performance (542B)**

- A. Core** (12 hours). MUED 5900 (required of all Master of Music students); MUS 5150 Pedagogy; Music History: 3 hours from the following: MUS 5300, 5310, 5320, 5330, 5360, 5340, 5350, 5370; Music Theory: 3 hours from the following: MUS 5020, 5040, 5060, 5530, MUED 5030.
- B. Performance Studies** (17 hours). MUS 5710\* (9 hours),  
\*3 semesters @ 3 hours each. Continuous enrollment is expected until the graduate recital project is completed. Must enroll in Applied Music during the semester of the Graduate Recital.

**C. Electives** (3hours). Elective(s) will be selected from other graduate courses with MUS or MUED designation.

#### **D. Other requirements**

- 1. Ensembles.** MUS 5280 (Ensemble Performance): One large ensemble in each of two semesters is required. Piano and organ majors will enroll in MUS 5280 to satisfy accompanying requirements.
- 2. Applied Juries.** Must complete a successful applied jury exam in each semester (grade of A or B).
- 3.** If a recording is used, a live audition would be required in the first semester of enrollment to validate. The recording must be from a live performance and unedited. A recording may only permit provisional admission within the Music Area; it will not prevent Regular Admission status required by the Graduate School to be assigned a graduate assistantship.

#### **E. Graduate Recital**

Each student in the performance concentration must present a public performance, which serves as the thesis in the Master of Music with a concentration in Performance degree. The student's recital program must be approved by the Graduate Committee and filed in the Graduate School office by the end of semester prior to registration for MUS 5720 (2 hours) Graduate Recital. Degree candidacy must be attained prior to enrollment in the course and presentation of the recital. The program will be developed with the student's studio instructor, and must include a minimum of 45 minutes of music in which the student is the soloist. This time does not include time in between movements or works, setup time, or intermissions—only the sum of the total performance time. Total performance time for the recital will be at least 60 minutes in length.

#### **F. Written Project**

The Graduate Recital will be supplemented with a written descriptive or analytical paper that will be approved by the student's Graduate Committee and filed in the Graduate School office. Enrollment in MUS 5970 (1 hour) Performance Document is required. This paper must be completed no later than the hearing for the Graduate Recital. MUS 5720 Graduate Recital is a co-requisite for this course.



## **G. Comprehensive Exam**

All students will take a comprehensive written examination based on courses taken. There are two possible outcomes: (1) Pass (2) Fail. In the case of a Fail, the student will take an oral examination, which counts as the second attempt. The oral examination is graded as Pass or Fail. In the case of a Fail the student's committee may suggest the student take some additional courses for remediation and then take the written comprehensive examination for the final time. In case the final outcome is Fail, the student will be dismissed from the program. A student may not attempt the comprehensive examination more than three times.

## **5. Advisors**

**1. Coordinator of Graduate Studies.** Each incoming graduate student must visit with the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, who will assist in several matters. First, the Coordinator will assign a Major Professor, based upon the student's intended concentration. At the beginning of the first semester of enrollment, the Coordinator of Graduate Studies and the Major Professor are consulted to devise a course of study for completion of the degree, and at the beginning of the third semester to review and make any necessary revisions to the course of study. Also, the Coordinator assists in assigning other graduate faculty members to serve on the student's committees.

**2. Major Professor.** Assigned by the Coordinator of Graduate Studies, the Major Professor is the primary source of advice during the student's graduate studies. The Major Professor will assist in developing a course of study, and serve on the recital committee and performance document/ thesis committee. The Major Professor may serve as chair of these committees, provided the Professor has special expertise or qualification in those areas. The Major Professor must hold Member or Associate Member Status on the graduate faculty.

**3.** Each graduate student will be assigned a Graduate Committee comprised of the Major Professor and two additional music faculty members who hold some form of graduate faculty membership, and with the consent of the Coordinator of Graduate Studies in Music. This committee is formed during the student's first semester of graduate study through a formal process, and it provides general oversight of the student's program. This committee's membership should remain constant throughout the student's course of study. They will approve the Written Project, serve as members of a Graduate Recital Committee, and write and grade Comprehensive Examination questions. Per Graduate School guidelines, the chair of this committee must hold member status on the Graduate Faculty or possess unique qualifications to serve as such with the consent of the Graduate Dean.

**4. Recital Committee.** If the student is pursuing a performance emphasis, the applied studio teacher is assigned to be the Major Professor when possible, and a recital committee must be formed to evaluate the Graduate Recital (MUS 5720). The Major Professor serves as the chair of this committee, plus at least two additional graduate faculty members selected by the student based upon the recommendation of the Major Professor. All committee members must hold some form of graduate faculty status. If the applied studio teacher does not hold at least Associate Member status on the graduate faculty, then he may neither serve as the student's Major Professor nor chair the recital committee; he may only serve as a member. [The Graduate Committee and the Recital Committee may consist of different members.]

## **6. Graduate Assistantships**

If a student wishes to apply for a Graduate Assistantship, he or she must also submit the appropriate application. The Application for Graduate Assistantship is on the Graduate School website. Graduate Assistantships are awarded by the University to students with regular admission status and based upon an interview/audition. Assistantships of up to \$10,000 may be comprised of stipend, tuition waiver and additional music scholarships.

Graduate Assistants are relied upon for their musical knowledge/skills, for their ability to motivate students and for their administrative/managerial capabilities. In courses where Graduate Assistants have direct contact with students, student evaluations of their teaching will be kept in the CAPA office. These student evaluations may be considered, along with the evaluations by supervising faculty and by faculty asked to write letters of recommendation. Positive evaluations could prove very helpful to students in their search for a teaching position after completion of the degree.

For students desiring assistantships in applied areas, an audition is required. Auditions are heard by members of the Music Graduate Council.

### **Graduate Assistant Guidelines:**

- a. The minimum course load for Graduate Assistants in the fall/spring semesters is nine semester hours of which at least six semester hours must be for graduate credit. The maximum course load is twelve semester hours. In the summer session a Graduate Assistant must be enrolled for six semester hours of which at least three semester hours must be for graduate credit.
- b. To be eligible to retain a Graduate Assistantship, the student must maintain a B average in all graduate courses, receive a satisfactory performance evaluation, and meet all other stated requirements of the Graduate School.

- c. Graduate Assistants are expected to devote 10 hours per week for a half assistantship, and 20 hours per week for a full assistantship. In some weeks, Graduate Assistants may be asked to work more than the average number of hours per week. These somewhat heavier weeks will be balanced by correspondingly lighter weeks. The Graduate Assistant assignment may continue up to the day that course reports are due to the Registrar, which is slightly after the end of the semester.
- d. Faculty should outline the Graduate Assistant's duties at the beginning of the semester, identifying as many of the expected duties as are known at that point, which may include preparation of course materials, conducting labs, office hours, and reading and grading student papers. The Graduate Assistant should be given an approximation of the number of hours allocated to each activity each week, and of weeks that are expected to be particularly heavy.
- e. For Graduate Assistants assigned teaching duties: Graduate Assistants are not solely responsible for the instructional content of a course, for selection of student assignments, content of exams, or for determining student grades and writing narrative evaluations. The supervising faculty member will provide counsel and direction in these matters. All work assigned to the Graduate Assistant in this case must be directly related to the course to which he/she is assigned.
- f. Graduate Assistants must notify the supervising faculty member as soon as possible if they must miss a lab section (for health reasons or other emergency—even if the Graduate Assistant has arranged for another grad student to cover the lab). Such substitutions should be extremely rare and should be approved by the supervising faculty member in advance.
- g. Graduate Assistants must return in a timely way the assignments they have graded. Delays make lesson planning and the scheduling of examinations extremely difficult.
- h. BOTH the faculty member and the Graduate Assistant are responsible for regular communication and coordination of the course.
- i. If a Graduate Assistant believes that he/she is being asked to do work which is the faculty member's responsibility, to frequently work more than the weekly hours of her/his appointment, or is not adequately supervised, then he/she should raise this first with the faculty member. If the dispute is unresolved, the Graduate Assistant should consult the Director of the School of CAPA. If faculty feel that a Graduate Assistant is derelict in duty, the matter should be discussed first with the Graduate Assistant. If the Graduate Assistant is unresponsive, the Director of the School of CAPA should be consulted, and, if necessary, the Graduate Dean may be consulted.

## **7. Recital Support**

The School of CAPA may provide standard house and technical support, including a stage manager, lighting technician, house staff, audio recording, basic publicity for the recital—all services must be requested in advance with the appropriate staff. The student's major professor should be consulted far in advance of the recital regarding all services or equipment which will be needed for the recital.

Rehearsals in the Magale Recital Hall will be limited to the month preceding the recital, and should be scheduled through your studio professor. **A Recital Preview Jury must take place no less than two weeks in advance of the recital date.** The Recital Committee is expected to attend the hearing; any member of the committee not available for the hearing may be substituted *pro tempore* by another member of the graduate faculty.

## **8. Miscellaneous Information**

### **1. Academic Progress (Time Limit)**

All work applied toward the degree must have been earned in the six years immediately preceding the completion of the graduate program.

### **2. Financial Aid**

Information on financial aid such as grants and loans is available from the Office of Financial Aid at (318)357-5961.

### **3. Grades, Quality Points, Transcripts of Credit, Grade Appeal. and Semester Examinations**

#### *a. Grades*

Students are graded in their studies on the quality of work. Five grades are in use, as follows: A (excellent), B (good), C (average), D (below average), and F (failure). A course with a grade of Pass or a grade of D may not be used to satisfy a course requirement for a graduate degree.

A grade of I (Incomplete) means that course work is incomplete due to circumstances beyond the control of the student and that successful completion of this work could lead to a passing grade. A grade of IP means that work in a research or thesis course is incomplete, but in progress. Except for thesis courses or those courses in which the student is writing a formal research report in lieu of a thesis, incomplete grades must be removed within 60 calendar days after the end of the term in which the grade was assigned. If the work is not completed within the allotted time, the grade of I will be changed to F.

If a student earns more than six hours in thesis the student's transcript will provide only six hours of grades for thesis. All other IP grades will remain IP on the transcript. The student's thesis director, the Graduate Dean, and the Registrar will determine which six hours of IP will be changed to the letter grade assigned by the thesis director when the thesis is satisfactorily completed. If a student earns more than two hours of credit for the performance document, only two hours will count toward the degree.

## **Awarding of "C" and "F" Grades in Graduate School**

Only 2 grades of “C” may be applied toward completion of any graduate degree program.

A grade of “F” in any graduate level course will cause the student to be dismissed from said degree program; however, the student is not dismissed from the Graduate School. The student may opt to choose to apply to another degree program offered, or the student may appeal the dismissal to the head of the academic department offering the degree program. Readmission decisions, which are considered final, rest with the Dean of the Graduate School.

#### d. *Grade Appeal*

Graduate students who receive grades they believe do not reflect the quality of their work may appeal these grades within 120 calendar days following the academic period in which the grades were earned. The procedure for appeal is as follows:

1. The student should consult the instructor to see if an understanding can be reached. The student is entitled to an explanation as to how the grade was determined and to examine any tests, papers, or other information pertinent to the appeal.
2. If the conference is not satisfactory, the student should secure a Grade Appeal Form from the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The student may discuss the appeal informally with the Dean if the student so desires.
3. In filing a formal appeal, the student should complete the appeal form, stating the nature of the appeal, providing a detailed description of the justification, and requesting a specific action. Since the written appeal will be the basis for the ultimate decision, the student should ensure that it is clear, complete, and inclusive of all documentation the student wishes to have considered in the appeal process. It is the student’s responsibility to present written evidence that the instructor made an error or acted arbitrarily or capriciously in assigning the grade.
4. The student should submit the completed appeal form to the instructor for review. If a solution is not found, the instructor should provide a written response to the student’s appeal, providing documentation as to how the grade was determined. The instructor’s response should include a copy of the course outline or syllabus provided to the student’s class at the beginning of the semester or term.
5. After having met with the instructor and obtaining his or her written response to the appeal, the student may submit the form to the head of the department in which the course was offered (or to the dean of the college if the course was offered in the College of Business, Education, or Nursing). Following a review of the student’s appeal and the instructor’s response, the department head (or dean of

the college) should provide his or her written opinion of the appeal along with any additional, pertinent information.

6. If the student is unsatisfied with the opinion of the department head (or dean of the college), he or she may submit the appeal to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. The Dean may make a decision, which would be final in the matter, or refer the appeal to a subcommittee of the Council on Admission, Credits, and Graduation for review and recommendation. The subcommittee's report would be a recommendation to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, whose decision would be final. The Dean will notify the student of the decision.

e. *Semester Examinations*

Final examinations are scheduled at the end of each regular semester and summer session. Any departure from the published examination schedule requires the prior approval of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

No student may be excused from a final examination. Absence from a final examination, other than in a case of extreme emergency, is construed and recorded as failure in the course.

4. Mail

Graduate students are assigned a mailbox in the Faculty Workroom (CAPA, Rm. 110A) for university and academic business only. Please do not have personal mail (bank statements, credit card bills, news magazines, personal correspondence, etc.) sent to this address.

## 8.10. Academic Calendars

Academic calendars may be located at <http://www.nsula.edu/registrar/> under the "Site Menu" list. Summer calendars are not shown herein, as these are quite detailed. Please refer to the website.

**\* PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL GRADUATE SCHOOL DEADLINES ARE FINAL AND STUDENTS SHOULD CONSULT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL EACH SEMESTER FOR IMPORTANT DEADLINES.**

## 9. Format for Thesis and Performance Document *Proposals*

## **Length**

- For general research topics in music: 4-7 pages plus a working bibliography
- For projects concerning analysis or composition: determined by the student's committee

## **Submission Deadline**

Proposal must be APPROVED by the student's graduate committee before the end of the semester prior to which the student wishes to graduate and enroll in the appropriate research course. A copy of the proposal, along with a signature page including signatures of the student's committee members, must be submitted to the Graduate Office by the last day of class.

**Note:** Any changes to the topic after the initial approval must be made by the student's committee.

## **Cover Page**

Working Title

Name

Date

Estimated date of completion/Anticipated graduation date

Spaces for signatures of each member of student's committee

## **Narrative**

### **Introduction**

A narrative should state the purpose of the research (thesis statement). Items in the narrative should include, but are not limited to:

- A broad context for your field of study
- Reasons for choosing the topic
- Statement of particular interests in field of study
- Impact of research upon the field of study, personal and professional development

### **Research Methods**

An explanation of how the research will be completed:

- Analysis
- Interviews
- Recordings
- Sources

Note: If you select a topic employing human subjects, you must follow the procedures outlined by the University's Human Subject Committee.

### **Summary**

A summary is a fairly detailed outline of your study.

- Overview of chapter by chapter summary
- Discussion of specific problems confronted in the research

**Working Bibliography**

The working bibliography should represent in a broad sense the texts important to your study. The Chicago Manual of Style (Turabian) are the standard formats for bibliographical references as taught in the Graduate Research course MUED 5900. It is the graduate student's responsibility to refer to the Graduate School web site concerning the guidelines and format for all aspects of research projects.

**For additional information, please refer to the booklet *General Guidelines for Preparing Your Final Research Document at Northwestern State University*, available on the Graduate School website.**