

The University of Texas
Rio Grande ValleyTM
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School of Music

Graduate Student Handbook
2024-2025

Last Updated September 2024

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Introduction

Welcome, and thank you for your interest in graduate studies at the UTRGV School of Music! This document is intended to provide information to guide prospective and current graduate students and faculty through the admissions and degree requirements and processes for current MM degrees of all concentrations in music. All policies are current as of Fall 2024, and are subject to current UTRGV policies. Also note that policies specific to the School of Music may not be the policies of other schools or departments. Details on UTRGV regulations are published in official UTRGV catalogs, documents, and webpages (helpful links below).

School of Music Organization

Dr. Kurt Martinez, <i>Director</i> Dr. Rebecca Coberly, <i>Associate Director</i> Mrs. Norma Salinas, <i>Admin. Manager</i> Ms. Brenda Vela Roman, <i>Admin. Assistant II</i>	Cynthia Cripps, <i>Graduate Coordinator</i> Phone: (956) 665-3474 Office: Edinburg Campus, EPACB 2.116 E-Mail: cynthia.cripps@utrgv.edu
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Area Coordinators Dr. Virginia Davis , Music Education Dr. Jonathan Guist , Woodwinds Dr. Susan Hurley-Glowa , Ethnomus./Musicology Dr. Shoko Kinsella , Piano Dr. Michael Quantz , Guitar Mr. Francisco Loera , Mariachi	
	Dr. Diana Seitz , Strings Dr. Mark Ramirez , Percussion Dr. Scott Roeder , Brass Dr. David Sadlier , Voice Dr. Justin Writer , Music Theory/Comp/Technology

School of Music Office Locations and Contact Information

Music, Science, & Learning Center 1 West University Blvd Brownsville, TX 78520 (956) 882- 7768	Performing Arts Complex 1201 West University Dr. Edinburg, TX 78539 (956) 665-3471
Email: music@utrgv.edu	Webpage: www.utrgv.edu/music

Helpful Websites

[UTRGV 2024-2025 Catalogs](#)

[UTRGV Graduate College](#)

- [Graduate Admissions](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation Webpage](#)
- [Graduate Financial Aid](#)
- [School of Music Student Resources](#)

[UTRGV School of Music](#)

- [School of Music Graduate Webpage](#)

[UTRGV College of Fine Arts](#)

- [College of Fine Arts Student Resources](#)

[UTRGV Arts](#)

[UTRGV Arts Showpass](#)

[UTRGV Human Resources](#)

School of Music Graduate Admissions

Students applying to School of Music graduate programs must complete a two-step process:

1. Apply for admission to the UTRGV Graduate College
2. Complete an audition or submit application materials required for specific School of Music concentrations.

Graduate College Admissions Process

In order to be admitted to a graduate program, the student must meet all requirements for admission to UTRGV as well as the program-specific requirements. Application for admission to UTRGV must be submitted online, and the application is available at <https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/apply-now/index.htm>

The UTRGV Graduate College Catalog provides a general description of admission requirements for graduate study (available [here](#)), and more detailed admission requirements for each degree plan (available [here](#) – specific concentration links are also listed below), as well as official transcripts sent directly to UTRGV from each institution attended. Once submitted, Applicants can check the status of their applications through the self-service portal at <https://www.utrgv.edu/gradapply/>.

Graduate College Contact Information

Edinburg Campus: Marialice Shary Shivers Bldg. 1.158

Brownsville Campus: Sabel Hall 1.202

Email: gradcentral@utrgv.edu

Phone: 956-665-3661 or 956-882-6552

Text: 956-446-0403

Fax: 956-665-2863

Email addresses for specific concerns can be found at <https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/about-us/contact-us/index.htm>.

UTRGV Graduate College Application Deadlines

Application Deadlines for Master of Music degrees (all concentrations) can be found at <https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/for-future-students/traditional-application-deadlines/index.htm>.

School of Music Graduate Assistantship Deadlines

To be considered for a Graduate Assistantship for the 2025-2026 Academic year, students must have completed their application by the following dates:

- For admission to the Fall 2025 semester: March 1, 2025
- For admission to the Spring 2025 semester: October 1, 2024
 - (applicants will only be considered if assistantships are available).

To complete your application, you must have completed the following steps:

1. Apply to the UTRGV Graduate College (see above)
2. Complete the audition (MM in Conducting or Performance) or submit application materials as required for your specific MM concentration.

See [Application for School of Music Graduate Assistantships](#) below for more details about expectations and requirements. Priority for assistantships/fellowships will be given to students who meet the application deadlines on a competitive basis.

[Admission to the School of Music](#) (Use the checklist in [Appendix A](#) for guidance)

Every graduate applicant is responsible for ensuring that they meet all Graduate College and School of Music requirements.

The Graduate College will review applications and forward it to the School of Music. The Graduate Admissions Committee within the School of Music will read and evaluate all materials received plus those listed below to make a final decision to admit or deny the applicant's acceptance.

School of Music Admission Process and Requirements

After receiving these materials, Applicants may be admitted, admitted conditionally, or not admitted. *Approval of the audition or the concentration admissions requirement materials and acceptance to the School of Music does not guarantee acceptance into the Graduate College and vice versa.*

See <https://www.utrgv.edu/programs/mm-music.htm> for application requirements for the Graduate College and specific MM concentrations.

Concentration Admission Requirements

(see <https://www.utrgv.edu/programs/mm-music.htm> for a full list of MM Concentrations)

MM – Ethnomusicology – Submit a writing sample or research paper of a topic in music history/ethnomusicology. Applicants with specific questions should direct them to the Graduate Coordinator and ethnomusicology specialists within the School of Music.

MM – Theory-Composition Submit a portfolio of four or five original compositions in any style (one may be an arrangement). Demonstrate basic piano skills. Be able to play at sight the bass and soprano (no inner voices) from a Bach chorale.

MM – Conducting – Provide a current (recorded within 6 months of applying) video recording/link conducting large ensemble. Please contact the Graduate Coordinator or specialist in the area of band, choir, or orchestra for specific details.

MM – Music Education – Provide a live teaching sample/link of approximately 30 minutes (recorded within 6 months of applying to UTRGV) and include the corresponding lesson plan. This recording may be either a guest coaching of a UTRGV ensemble (to be arranged by the

Graduate Coordinator and/or the ensemble director), or video of classroom/private teaching. Please contact the Graduate Coordinator or specialist for details.

MM - Multiple Instrument Performance – Perform an audition (preferably live) on all (minimum 3) instruments for the relevant applied faculty. Check with the School of Music office or audition coordinator for a list of appropriate audition dates. Specific repertoire requirements are available from the applied teacher or on the music audition portion of the School of Music webpage. The auditioning committees may also ask for scales, and sight reading. Students must also request an audition via the audition request link. Audition requirement and the audition request link can be found at <https://www.utrgv.edu/music/academic/application-audition/index.htm>.

MM – Performance – Perform an audition (preferably live) for a music faculty committee organized by the appropriate applied teacher or Graduate Coordinator. Check with the School of Music office or audition coordinator for a list of appropriate audition dates. Specific repertoire requirements are available from the applied teacher or on the music audition portion of the School of Music webpage. String, guitar, and voice students are expected to perform the materials from memory. The auditioning committees may also ask for scales and sight reading. Students must also request an audition via the audition request link. Audition requirement and the audition request link can be found at <https://www.utrgv.edu/music/academic/application-audition/index.htm>

Diagnostic Exams

Prior to the first semester of enrollment, incoming graduate students may be required to take diagnostic exams in music theory and/or music history depending on their concentration or GA assignment. Students will be contacted to schedule the exams, which will be administered at least a month before the semester begins.

Discipline-specific Diagnostic Assessments: MM in Vocal Performance

Vocal Performance majors must meet prerequisites in both conversational language study and lyric diction in Italian, French, and German.

1. **Conversational Language Study:** The purpose of the conversational language study prerequisite is to ensure a grounding in vocabulary and grammar that will enable continued growth and independence at the professional level. The prerequisite will be considered met by one of the following conditions:
 - a. The Applicant has at least two semesters of prior university language study – this can be met either by taking two semesters of one language (i.e. two semesters of French) or by taking one semester each of two of the three languages (i.e. one semester of Italian and one of German).
 - b. The Applicant can show proof of equivalent language study as part of a professional training program such as a summer artist’s program or continuing studies language program (subject to faculty approval)

- c. The Applicant can show equivalent language proficiency via WebCAPE.
2. **Lyric Diction:** The applicant's lyric diction in French, German, Italian, and English will be assessed at the audition (if live) or in a separate interview as needed (see below).

If the audition panel determines that there are deficiencies in either the conversational language study or diction, this will be detailed in the audition form and the student's applied teacher will define the benchmarks needed to establish the expected competency, and establish a plan with the student to remediate the deficiency and achieve the benchmarks (this may include language study at UTRGV, taking a graduate-level lyric diction class, study at an artist program or other professional training, or independent work on the part of the applicant). Once the applied teacher has determined that the student has passed the required benchmark, the applied teacher must notify the graduate coordinator and archive any appropriate certification paperwork.

Discipline-specific diagnostic Assessments: MM in Ethnomusicology

Students pursuing the MM in Ethnomusicology are required to demonstrate reading ability in at least one foreign language in addition to English. The choice of language(s) and format of the exams must be appropriate for the student's planned research project. Students will be assessed during the admissions process for basic proficiency to ensure that students will have a plan to demonstrate competency for language ability by the completion of their degree.

See [Ethnomusicology Language Requirement](#) below for how this competency will be assessed. Language proficiency must be demonstrated before the student undertakes the Thesis Defense

Interview and Assessment

In addition to the above documents, the Applicant will meet with the Area Committee, Graduate Admissions Committee, and/or Graduate Coordinator for an interview to discuss goals and qualifications and expectations for the particular concentration. This will occur during the audition, or if that is not possible in the case of recorded auditions, the applied teacher will organize a meeting in person, via videoconferencing, or other means as necessary to ensure that the applicant meets all qualifications.

Admission Classification

1. **Clear Admission:** An Applicant who meets the following criteria is eligible for clear admission to a graduate degree program if they:
 - a. was awarded a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution and earned at least a 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) on the graduate admission GPA calculation.
 - b. earned a previous master's degree from an accredited university.
 - c. passed TOEFL exam/IELTS/DUOLINGO or UTRGV approved equivalent (international students)
 - d. has been approved by the School of Music Graduate Admissions Committee based on satisfactory completion and approval of the materials required by the School of Music:

- i. Satisfactory completion of the audition, writing sample, or video recording, or composition portfolio required by the concentration.
- ii. Applicants statement: reasons/consideration for degree selection etc.
- iii. Professional goals
- iv. Current resume
- v. Letters of Recommendation

2. **Conditional Admission:** Students not eligible for Clear Admission may be admitted conditionally. Once the conditions are satisfied, the admissions classification will be upgraded to “clear.” Based on Academic Record, an Applicant meeting the following criteria *may* be granted conditional admission:

- a. Earned less than 3.0 GPA (on a 4.0 scale) on the graduate admission GPA calculation.
- b. If the materials submitted to the School of Music or Graduate College are incomplete.
- c. If the School of Music Graduate Admissions Committee finds a specific deficiency that needs to be monitored and reevaluated upon completion of the first semester of graduate study.

An Applicant granted conditional admission based on academic standing may not enroll for more than 12 graduate hours total while on conditional admittance. A student on conditional status who earns any graduate grade less than a B will not be allowed to continue in UTRGV graduate programs. The student may appeal this decision to the Graduate Coordinator and School of Music Director who will each provide a recommendation to the Graduate College on the appeal. The student must appeal in writing to the Graduate Coordinator providing an explanation of any extenuating circumstances to be considered. The Graduate College Dean’s decision shall be final.

At the end of the semester in which a conditional student’s total earned graduate hours are six or more and the student’s graduate GPA is 3.0 or better with no grade less than B, the student’s admission classification will be changed to “clear.”

3. **Not admitted:** If the graduate application review committee does not think the student will be successful in the program, if the materials submitted are substandard, or if the materials are over a year old, the committee may decide not to admit. The committee will make comments on the application indicating why the student was not admitted. Applicants who are not admitted may re-apply at a later date.

Application for School of Music Graduate Assistantships

Upon submitting your graduate application, contact your Applied Area Professor and the Graduate Coordinator to be considered for a graduate assistantship/fellowship to the School of Music. Decisions will be made based on faculty recommendations and the student’s ability to fulfill all requirements of the position.

- For graduate assistants to serve as the Graduate Assistant Instructor (GAI), or instructor of record for a course, they must have 18 hours of music graduate work and the recommendation of the faculty who teach or supervise the course. Music Theory GAIs must also successfully complete Music Theory Pedagogy and have the recommendation of the instructor of that course.

As stated above, to be considered for a Graduate Assistantship for the 2025-2026 Academic Year, students must have completed their application by the following dates:

- For admission to the Fall 2025 semester: March 1, 2025
- For admission to the Spring 2025 semester: October 1, 2024
 - (applicants will only be considered if assistantships are available).

Priority for assistantships/fellowships will be given to students who meet the application deadlines on a competitive basis.

MM Degree Requirements

1. All MM degrees require 36 credit hours
2. The graduate Applicant is responsible for:
 - a. being familiar with all of the requirements for the degree sought
 - b. ensuring that the proper forms have been submitted to and approved Admissions and Records
 - c. keeping all deadlines established by the School of Music and the University and keeping all personal records up to date.
 - d. If at any time the applicant decides to switch concentrations, they must follow the previously mentioned [Concentration Admission Requirements](#) and be accepted into the new concentration by the area coordinator and appropriate professors. The applicant must understand that changing concentrations may extend the traditional 4-semester timeline to graduate. The School of Music is under no obligation to adjust the course rotation or otherwise accommodate the student under these circumstances.

Note: Applicants are strongly encouraged to work closely with the School of Music Graduate Coordinator and their applied instructor or area specialist to ensure that they meet all requirements for continued enrollment, and graduation.

B. Degree requirements for all UTRGV School of Music MM degrees can be found in the Graduate Catalog at the links below:

1. [MM with a Concentration in Conducting](#)
2. [MM with a Concentration in Ethnomusicology](#)

3. [MM with a Concentration in Multiple Instrument Performance](#)
4. [MM with a Concentration in Music Education \(Thesis and Non-Thesis Options\)](#)
5. [MM with a Concentration in Performance \(Thesis and Non-Thesis options\)](#)
6. [MM with a Concentration in Theory-Composition](#)

For a list of all School of Music MM degrees, go to <https://utrgv.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2024-2025/graduate-catalog/graduate-academic-programs-by-college/college-of-fine-arts/school-of-music>.

Academic Requirements

1. Core Requirements for MM in Theory-Composition, Conducting, Education, Performance, and Multiple Instrument
 - a. All Applicants in these concentrations are required to take a core of 15 credit hours of course work in Music Theory, Music History, and Research Methods:

Music Theory	6 credits
Music History	6 credits
Research Methods	3 credits
Total	15 credits

Students should consult their specific degree plan at the links above for the specific courses that may fill these requirements. Students should consult with their primary teacher and/or the Graduate Coordinator to determine if they should take MUSI 6334 Research Methods in Music or MUSI 6338 Music Fieldwork and Ethnography to fulfill their Research Methods requirement.

2. Designated Electives: Applicants selecting the non-thesis option will have options of Designated Electives (6000 OR 7000-level courses) from the course listing in Music. Applicants receive credit toward their graduate degree only from graduate courses.
 - a. For the MM in Ethnomusicology degree, the elective(s) cannot be musicology or ethnomusicology courses.
3. Alternative Course Credit: Students may only substitute nine (9) hours of required core courses with alternative course credits. Alternative course credits are defined as independent study courses, transfer credits, or any other substitutions. Students may only substitute these courses with approval from the graduate coordinator, the student's graduate committee, and the student's primary teacher.
4. Transfer Credits: (see the [Graduate Catalog](#)) A maximum of nine (9) credit hours of graduate-level course work may be transferred from another institution. Acceptance of these courses must have prior written approval by the School of Music Graduate

Admissions Committee, Graduate Coordinator, and School of Music Director. These credits must conform to ALL of the following:

- a. 1. The course is equivalent to a graduate-level course at UTRGV or is appropriate for elective credit at the graduate level within the student's degree program;
 - b. The grade for the course is not less than B;
 - c. The course was not taken at such a date that it would extend the student's time for achieving the degree beyond the approval limit for the graduate program (seven years for a master's program and 10 years for a doctoral program); and
 - d. The course(s) are not part of a previously awarded graduate degree.
5. Graduate Applicants may be enrolled either **full-time** or **part-time** each semester. Full-time graduate enrollment requires the Applicant to be registered for nine (9) or more credit hours during the current semester.
 Graduate Assistants (GAs)/Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)/Graduate Assistant Instructors (GAI) must be enrolled full-time (9 hours unless it is their last semester of study), and may NOT drop a course if it leaves them with too few hours to qualify for full-time status.
6. Graduate Students must maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher. For more information, see UTRGV Graduate Catalog: <https://utrgv.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2023-2024/student-policies/academic-policies-and-procedures/academic-standing-and-probation/graduate-student-standing-and-probation/>
 - a. Students who have been awarded the President Research Fellowship (PRF) must maintain a 3.25 GPA
 - b. Graduate Assistants who drop below a cumulative 3.0 GPA will lose their award.
7. All requirements for the Master of Music degree must be completed within seven (7) years from the semester/session of enrollment in the first graduate-level course. A student must enroll in at least 1 credit per academic year to remain active. If a student will be absent more than one year, the student should submit a formal written request to the Graduate Coordinator to request a "leave of absence." NOT requesting a *leave of absence* will result in the student needing to reapply and start the admission process again. This could place the student under a new catalog year and they will be subject to those new degree plans and requirements.
8. Students can only receive a Graduate Assistantship in one discipline or degree at a time according to UTRGV policy.
9. Ethnomusicology Language Requirement: Students pursuing the MM in Ethnomusicology are required to demonstrate reading ability in at least one foreign language in addition to English. The choice of language(s) and format of the exams must be appropriate for the

student's planned research project. Such demonstrations will most commonly consist of one of the following:

- a. 2-hour open-book translation of materials selected by the Area in consultation with Area-selected language exam expert by recommendation of Primary Advisor; **OR**
- b. Written translation of a work or set of works over a set period of time (1 week) selected by Area upon recommendation of Primary Advisor and evaluated by Area-selected language exam expert; **OR**
- c. Any combination or variation of the above which is deemed appropriate for the student's research skills in consultation with the student's advisor and as approved by the Area.

Language proficiency must be demonstrated through one of the options listed above before the student undertakes the Comprehensive Examination. Plans that diverge from those specified above must be submitted for approval by the Area.

Selecting a Graduation Committee

During the penultimate semester of study, the Candidate should select a committee whose members will serve as advisors during the comprehensive examination process and/or thesis. The Graduation Committee may also serve as the Recital Committee, or a separate Recital Committee may be chosen, at the discretion of the Chair.

1. The Graduation Committee Chair should be selected within the first week of the penultimate semester of graduate study or during the semester when the comprehensive exams will be administered, recital performed, and/or thesis defended. The Graduation Committee Chair will typically be the faculty member who has been the student's primary applied or academic teacher and/or advisor throughout the student's enrollment. The Committee Chair will then assist with the formation of the rest of the committee.
 - a. Note for students pursuing a degree requiring a Thesis – the Thesis committee must be formed when the student takes Thesis I, which will typically be at the beginning of the third semester of study or sooner. Under most circumstances, the Thesis Committee will also serve as the Graduation Committee. See [Determining a Thesis Committee](#) below.
2. Each Candidate, with guidance from their Graduate Committee Chair, will select a Graduation Committee comprised of a minimum of three (including the Chair) professors from the School of Music. Students pursuing ethnomusicology may choose one committee member outside of music, as approved by the Chair of the Graduation Committee and Graduate Coordinator.
3. The Graduation Committee must have at least two "academic faculty" (professors from areas such as music history, music theory, music education, or pedagogy). Any deviations from this configuration need to be approved by the Graduation Committee Chair and the Graduate Coordinator.

4. It is strongly recommended that the faculty members chosen for the Graduation Committee be instructors with whom the Candidate has taken and passed a 2- or 3-credit hour graduate course, or with whom they have worked extensively in a research, performance, or advisory capacity.
5. The Candidate must extend a personal invitation (email, in writing) to each of the faculty members being invited to serve on the Graduation Committee. In the email, the student must:
 - a. Inform each invited member who the Chair of the Graduation Committee will be.
 - b. Ask the following question of each faculty member invited to serve on the Committee: "Would you be willing to serve as Committee Member.....?"
 - c. Include a proposed timeline (developed in consultation with the Graduate Coordinator) for the committee's work during the final semester (see [Appendix C](#) for a sample timeline).
6. Within the first weeks of the semester, the Chair will organize a meeting or communicate with the Graduation Committee and the Candidate to determine preparation procedures for the exams, recital, thesis, and/or recital hearing and performance. Communication about all procedures and timelines are crucial. All materials (exam results, recital results, thesis defense, etc.) must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator before or on the last day of class.
7. A Candidate must be enrolled in a graduate course each semester while completing their thesis/degree, including the comprehensive exams and thesis or recital completion (MUSI 7100 Thesis/Project/Exam Continuation is suggested for students who are extending thesis work. Consult the Graduate Coordinator for other options). The student must be enrolled in a graduate level course during the semester they expect to graduate.

Comprehensive Examinations

General Information

1. Candidates for the Master of Music degree will be required to pass Written and Oral Comprehensive Examinations (students pursuing the Ethnomusicology concentration will fulfill this requirement through the [Thesis Defense](#)).
2. These examinations will be related to information, materials, and course work in the Candidate's Degree Plan.
3. It is recommended that the candidate complete approximately 27 credit hours of graduate work (about 75% of the degree plan) before scheduling and taking the Comprehensive Examinations.

4. Comprehensive Examinations should be completed during the fall or spring semesters. If this is not possible and the student is finishing the degree in the summer, the Graduation Committee Chair may organize an appropriate committee and administer the exams during the summer sessions. Note that some music faculty may not be available during the summer terms, and the examinations should take place during the regular fall or spring semester unless faculty are available and the committee approves.
 - a. It is recommended that all written and oral portions of examinations be completed by the 15th of November for the fall semester
 - b. It is recommended that all written and oral portions of examinations be completed by the 15th of April for the spring semester.
 - c. It is recommended to leave ample time (approximately a month) between final projects/recitals and the comprehensive exams.

Guidelines for Written Examinations

1. The Graduation Committee Chair will be responsible for organizing and proctoring the Written Examination.
2. The committee members will submit their questions and any prepared materials to the Graduation Committee Chair. Upon receiving and reviewing the questions, the Chair will provide a copy of the questions to the Candidate, the Graduation Committee Members, and the Graduate Coordinator.
3. Questions will reflect the breadth of the discipline with regard to theories, concepts, and research methodologies. Questions should specifically address the course work emphasized by an individual Candidate's degree program.
4. The administration of the written exams will vary depending on the examination type and the priorities of the committee. Examinations should be administered to ensure the integrity of the testing process. Please note that the format of the exams will be decided by the faculty on the committee.
5. The committee will decide if the written exams will be in-person, take-home, or a combination of the two depending on the types of questions asked and the expectations of the committee/faculty member.
6. The Chair and Candidate should set up an examination due date allowing the Candidate a minimum of two weeks to prepare for the in person written exam and/or to prepare a take-home question (follow the timelines prescribed below).

7. Guidelines for in-person written exam questions

- a. If a committee member assigns an in-person exam question, the chair and candidate must set up an examination date allowing the Candidate a minimum of two weeks to prepare for the written exam.
- b. It is recommended that the Candidate be allowed approximately 2 hours per each committee member's question.
- c. The committee will determine and reserve the date and location of the exam on a UTRGV campus. The committee may elect to require blue books, or allow typed answers stored on a USB drive or other digital means. For typed examinations, committees may choose to provide a computer that is not connected to the internet, or administer the exam using Respondus or another appropriate tool. The Committee Chair is responsible for ensuring that the exam is appropriately monitored.
- d. Students will be asked to sign an honor code agreement prior to taking their written exams (See sample honor code agreement in [Appendix B](#))

8. Guidelines for take-home questions.

- a. If a committee member prefers to require a take-home exam, the committee member must submit the question(s) and any supplemental materials to the Committee Chair and student. The deadline must allow the student a minimum of one week to complete the question and submit the results to the committee.
- b. It is recommended that the deadline allow for at least one week before the oral exam to allow time for grading.

Grading Written Examinations

1. Once all of the components of the written exams are complete, the answers must be forwarded to the entire committee for review. The committee members will grade their questions and return them to the Chair within 5 *working* days.
2. Once all components of the written exams have been graded, the committee members will send the results and feedback to the Committee Chair and the chair will ensure that the student is informed of the results (individual committee members may also communicate directly with students, but should do so after consulting with the Committee Chair). If the committee approves the written exam, then the student will be cleared to proceed to the oral exam. The Committee Chair will moderate between committee members if there are concerns about the written exams, or about the student moving forward to the oral examinations. The grading policies are as follows:
 - a. Each Candidate **MUST PASS ALL** content areas (Pass or Pass with Reservations) before she/he can take Oral Examinations.

- b. Though all committee members should review **ALL** answers, each Committee member will provide a grade for **ONLY** their area.
 - c. Grade(s) should be accompanied by sufficient criticism to inform the Candidate regarding the quality of their performance
 - d. Each Content Area/Question will receive one of three Grades: Pass, Pass with Conditions, Fail.
 - i. **Pass** – indicates that the Candidate’s response(s) were judged, at minimum, as adequate and competent.
 - ii. **Pass with Conditions** - indicates that the Candidate’s responses, though to some extent accurate, did not satisfactorily demonstrate the necessary completeness or competence required.
 - 1. **Note:** This grade highlights the Candidate’s need to further demonstrate their mastery of the material, either through additional written work or by special attention and effort during the Oral Examination. The committee must determine the conditions and timeline for passing the insufficient areas, and communicate these to the student in writing in ample time to submit the work and/or prepare for the oral exam.
 - iii. **Fail** – indicates that the Candidate’s response(s) did NOT provide sufficient or adequate evidence of understanding, nor mastery of the material addressed.
 - 1. **Note:** Should a Candidate FAIL one (1) or more Questions/Content Areas, the Committee will immediately prepare a course(s) of action for the Candidate to follow. The Committee must:
 - a. Agree upon a time frame and method to retake, resubmit, or otherwise address those failed portions of the examination.
 - b. Provide feedback and, if appropriate, assign Readings or other "make-up" work to be completed before failed portions of the examination can be re-administered.
 - c. If appropriate, require that additional course work be completed successfully before failed portions of the examination can be re-administered.
 - e. Committee members may also choose to address any questions or concerns in the oral examinations.
3. The Committee Chair must submit the appropriate form to the Graduate Coordinator for the written exams regardless of the result (Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Fail), including notes and feedback on the exams and reasons for the decision of the committee. Committee members should also alert students to any written exam topics that they wish to revisit in the oral examinations, and the Committee Chair should ensure that the student is aware of the committee’s expectations.

Guidelines for Oral Examination

1. All components of the Written Examination must be completed to the satisfaction of the Graduation Committee before the student can take the Oral Examinations.
 - a. These examinations may take place on campus, or via videoconferencing arranged by the Committee Chair.
 - b. The method and ordering of questioning will be determined by the Committee Chair.
 - c. Typically, oral examinations last between 60 and 90 minutes.
2. The procedure for questioning the Candidate during the Oral Examination will be moderated by the Chair. Each committee member will have equal time and opportunity to ask questions and discuss topics with the candidate. **Note:** All Committee Members are encouraged to participate in the questioning/examining of the Candidate in ALL areas of the examination.
3. Each Committee member will award the Candidate one of three possible evaluations: *Pass*, *Pass with Conditions*, or *Fail*.
 - a. **Pass** – indicates that the Candidate’s responses were judged, at minimum, as adequate and competent.
 - b. **Pass with Conditions** - The Candidate demonstrates passing performance on some parts of the Examination while failing other parts of the exam. The Committee believes that the Candidate should be afforded the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of those sections failed. The Committee member recommends scheduling a **SECOND** Oral Examination. The committee must determine the conditions and timeline for passing the insufficient areas, and communicate these to the student in ample time to prepare for the second Oral Examination
 - i. **Note:** This evaluation (Pass with Conditions) can only be employed once for any student (i.e., the Candidate cannot be awarded Pass with Conditions on their reexamination).
 - c. **Fail** – indicates that the Candidate’s responses did NOT provide sufficient or adequate evidence of understanding, competency, or mastery of the examination material.
4. The committee must come to a consensus regarding the final evaluation (Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Fail) of the Candidate’s oral exam. A majority is not sufficient – all members of the committee must confirm the evaluation result.
 - a. **Note:** Candidates who receive an evaluation of “Pass with Conditions” on either the written or oral Comprehensive Examinations may **NOT** reconstitute a new committee for the purpose of retaking the Examination. If a committee member wants or needs to remove themselves from the committee due to a conflict of time, interest, or other legitimate reason, an eligible replacement will be designated by the Committee Chair and the Graduate Coordinator.

5. Reexamination cannot be scheduled for a minimum of one (1) week following a Pass with Conditions evaluation of the Oral Examination.
6. The Committee Chair must submit the appropriate form to the Graduate Coordinator for each exam regardless of the result (Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Fail), including any notes and feedback on the evaluation and reasons for the decision of the committee.

Completion of Written and Oral Exams

1. Upon successfully completing ALL criteria for the Oral Examination (and by inclusion, criteria for the Written Examination), an email declaring the Candidate's achievement will be drafted by the Graduate Committee Chair, and all Committee members will sign either a hard copy or a digital copy (using DocuSign or another reliable platform) of the [Comprehensive Exam Form](#).
2. Upon completion of Written and Oral examinations, the Committee Chair will return the appropriate form(s) signed by all Committee members to Graduate Coordinator before or on the last day of classes. Committee Chairs should also archive the questions, responses, and other relevant materials of the written and, if applicable, oral exams. The Graduate Coordinator will add the appropriate notes in Degree Works indicating that the student has completed the requirements for graduation.

Master's Degree Recital Guidelines (Performance, Multiple Instrument Performance, Theory-Composition, and Conducting Concentrations)

A public recital of approximately 60 minutes of music (see area handbooks for specific requirements).

Determining a Recital Evaluation Committee

1. The Candidate may choose to have the Graduation Committee serve as the Recital Evaluation Committee, or may choose a separate Recital Evaluation Committee in consultation with the Candidate's Applied Instructor. This committee should be formed before the Candidate's final semester of study.
2. If the Candidate chooses to form a separate Recital Evaluation committee, the composition of the committee will be dictated by area policies. It is recommended that the committee include at least three faculty who are knowledgeable in the Candidate's area of performance and able to provide expert assessment and feedback, including the Applied Instructor as the Committee Chair.

3. In cases where the Graduation Committee will serve as the Recital Evaluation Committee, see the [Selecting a Graduation Committee](#) section above for committee selection requirements.

Scheduling a Recital

1. At the beginning of the semester in which the recital will be performed, the Committee Chair, Candidate, and Piano Collaborator (if applicable) should schedule a tentative hearing, recital dates, and locations with the appropriate campus Music Office.
2. It is important that all members of the Committee attend the hearing and the recital.
3. The Candidate must follow all recital policies set forth by the piano and corresponding applied area.
4. It is recommended that the graduate recital be completed before the last class day of the semester. Scheduling graduation recitals in the summer is not recommended.

Recital Hearing Requirements and Evaluation

1. A pre-recital hearing or evaluation must take place approximately 10 days before the scheduled recital date. Specific hearing/evaluation procedures will be determined by the Committee.
2. The committee's pre-recital assessment must be recorded on the [Graduate Recital Committee Form](#) and the School of Music Recital rubric. Grade(s) should be accompanied by sufficient criticism to inform the Candidate regarding the quality of their performance.
 - a. **Pass** – indicates that the Committee judged the performance, at minimum as adequate and competent.
 - b. **Pass with Conditions** indicates that the Committee judged that the hearing was mostly adequate, but a particular component/piece did not fully demonstrate the necessary competence required.
 - i. **Note:** The Committee highlights the Candidate's need to demonstrate further mastery of the material through an additional hearing of that particular component/piece. The committee must determine conditions and a timeline for a second hearing of the material.
 - c. **Fail** indicates that the Candidate's hearing performance did NOT provide sufficient mastery of the repertoire.
 - i. **Note:** Should a Candidate FAIL, the Committee will immediately prepare a course of action for the Candidate to follow. The Committee should agree upon a time frame and criteria to be met.
 - ii. **Note:** Reexamination cannot be scheduled until the following semester.

- iii. **Note:** Candidates who fail their recital hearing twice will be advised to change their concentration or be removed from the program by the Graduation Committee.
- 3. The Committee Chair must submit the appropriate form to the Graduate Coordinator for each hearing regardless of the result (Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Fail), including notes and feedback on the performance and reasons for the decision of the committee.
- 4. Graduate Recital Grading: The Graduation Committee or Recital Evaluation Committee (if the student is using as separate Recital Committee for this purpose) must evaluate the recital hearing/pre-recital jury and record a grade of Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Fail as detailed above. Note that how the recital hearing evaluation factors into the grade for the Solo Recital course (MUSI 6199), and whether the recital performance must be graded by the entire committee, is up to the applied professor's syllabus and/or area policies.
- 5. Graduate Recitals must be archived via recording or other method and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator.

Final Project (Music Education Concentration non-thesis)

- 1. The 2024-2025 [UTRGV Graduate Catalog](#) states that "For the non-thesis option a Final Project (MUSI 6390) will require preparation of an original project approved by an advisory committee in the School of Music. This final project can be completed by various means and should reflect the interests and expertise of each student."
- 2. The advisory committee will typically be the same as the student's Graduation Committee (see [Selecting a Graduation Committee](#) above).
- 3. **Final Project:** The Final Project must be on a current topic in Music Education which has been approved by the Committee.
- 4. The Student must enroll and complete MUSI 6390 Final Project.
- 5. Final projects must be archived via recording, written document, or other method depending on the project format and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator.

Master's Thesis (Ethnomusicology, Theory-Composition, Music Education w/thesis, Performance w/thesis)

Determining a Thesis Committee

1. Under most circumstances, the Thesis Committee will be the same as the Graduation/Examination Committee (see [Selecting a Graduation Committee](#) above).
2. If the Candidate wishes to include a faculty member from outside that committee for their expertise and input, a fourth member/additional members can be added with the approval of the Committee Chair.
 - a. Note that the Thesis committee must be formed when the student takes Thesis I, which will typically be at the beginning of the third semester of study or sooner.
 - b. It is recommended that at least one of the committee members have substantial experience with the UTRGV School of Music and Graduate College requirements and procedures. It may also be beneficial to have that committee member serve as a co-chair or chair.
3. When inviting faculty to serve on the committee, the Candidate will provide each invited member with a short abstract of the proposed thesis.
4. The Candidate will provide all committee members with a tentative timeline of the thesis process (i.e., anticipated completion date for proposal, date of first draft, date of defense, etc).
5. The Application for Thesis Committee must then be submitted to the University:
<https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/files/documents/Forms/utrgv-applications-for-thesis-committee.pdf>

Master's Thesis Requirements and Guidelines

1. Follow the guidelines on the UTRGV Graduate College Thesis and Dissertation webpage for timelines and appropriate forms: <https://www.utrgv.edu/graduate/for-new-and-current-students/thesis-and-dissertation/index.htm>
2. **Human Subjects Committee** - Institutional Review Board (IRB). Email: irb@utrgv.edu
 - a. If the Candidate is intending to use human subjects for research (as opposed to content analysis or rhetorical research), prior approval from the IRB on Protection of Human

Subjects is required. Students who are expecting to need this approval should plan at least two semesters ahead to ensure sufficient time.

- b. For more information concerning research regarding human subjects, contact the UTRGV's [IRB office](#):

Location: MRIOB 4.355 and BPOB2 1.103D

Email: irb@utrgv.edu

3. Depending on the nature of the research, one of three protocols will be required: Exempt, Expedited, or Full Committee Review.

Enrolling for Thesis Credit

1. Once the faculty have reviewed the abstract, the Candidate is eligible to enroll in thesis credit (e.g., 7300/7301).
2. The instructor of record for MUSI 7300 and MUSI 7301 will be the Chair of the Candidate's Thesis/Graduation Committee.
3. The student is required to enroll in Thesis credits until the Thesis is completed and successfully defended (see point number 3 below).
4. If the Candidate has completed MUSI 7301 but still needs additional time to finish the thesis, they must enroll in MUSI 7100 Thesis/Proj/Exam Continuation each semester until the thesis is complete.

Thesis Prospectus Approval

1. The Candidate will provide all Thesis Committee Members with a formal, detailed prospectus. Typically, this prospectus would include:
 - a. **Introduction** - providing a description of the focus and rationale for the research project.
 - b. **Research Question(s)/Research Hypothesis(es)** - providing a clearly stated Research Question(s) and/or Research Hypothesis(es) that the project is designed to answer and/or test.
 - c. **Review of Related Literature** - justifying the proposed research project on the basis of prior scholarship.
 - d. **Methodology** - providing a description and explanation of the procedures to be used for conducting the research project.
2. Project-specific deviations from this recommended prospectus format must be approved by the Thesis Committee Chair.

3. All Committee members will be given ten (10) working days to review the formal prospectus.
4. Committee members will provide constructive feedback regarding the conceptualization, research design, and methodology for the proposed project.
5. The Candidate must adequately address all concerns voiced by the Committee before the Thesis Prospectus is approved.

Data Collection

Having received approval from the IRB and the Thesis Graduation Committee, the Candidate may begin collecting data. **WARNING:** The Candidate **MUST NOT** initiate data collection for the research project until approval has been given by the IRB and the Thesis Graduation Committee.

Progress Drafts/Reading Copies

In conjunction with the committee, the Candidate should create a calendar of deadlines for drafts and reading copies of the thesis. These deadlines should be designed to encourage/promote efficient progress toward completion of the thesis.

Proposed Final Draft of Thesis

The Proposed Final Draft of the Candidate's thesis must be submitted to the Chair and members of the Committee **NO LATER** than fifteen (15) business days prior to the defense date. For specific dates for filing See the [UTRGV Graduate College Thesis and Dissertation Webpage](#).

Oral Defense of Thesis and Approval of Final Draft

Scheduling the Oral Defense

1. The Chair of the Graduation Committee and the Candidate will arrange a defense date that is acceptable to all members of the Committee, no earlier than ten (10) days after the Candidate's Committee receives the Proposed Final Draft of the Thesis.
2. Students will need to submit their defense date to the Graduate College at least 10 days before the scheduled defense. Students can find the link to the Thesis/Dissertation Defense Information form on the UTRGV Graduate College Thesis and Dissertation webpage.
3. Make sure to leave enough time between your defense and the final draft deadline in case your committee has feedback and you need to make changes to your draft.

Conducting the Oral Defense of the Thesis

1. All UTRGV faculty, students, and guests are permitted to attend the oral defense.
2. The Committee Chair will be responsible for moderating the defense.
3. The Candidate will orally present and defend the thesis in person, barring extenuating circumstances.
4. The Candidate will give a short presentation on their thesis, and the Committee will question the Candidate regarding the presentation and thesis.

Approval of Final Draft of Thesis

1. After the Committee members have completed their questioning of the Candidate, the floor will be opened to questions from the faculty, students, and guests.
2. When the Committee members are satisfied that the Candidate has sufficiently addressed any concerns (and audience questions have been exhausted), the Committee will excuse the Candidate and meet in executive session to render a judgment on the Candidate's performance.
3. Each Committee member can award the Candidate an evaluation of Pass or Fail.
4. Given the individual Committee member's evaluations, an "Overall Evaluation" of the Candidate's thesis will be made.
 - a. Consensus Evaluation - The final evaluation of the Candidate's Thesis will be based on a consensus of the Committee.
 - b. A majority IS NOT sufficient. All Committee members must agree on the final evaluation.
5. The Committee may recommend modifications and/or additions to the Final Draft.
6. The Candidate should adequately address all concerns voiced by the Committee.
7. The Committee Chair is responsible for policing all requested modifications.

Note: If the Candidate conscientiously seeks advisement from all Committee Members during the development of the thesis, little modification should be required at this stage in the thesis process.

Confirmation of Successful Completion

Upon successfully completing the oral defense of the thesis and all requested/required modification to the final draft of the thesis, all Committee members will sign “Certification of Completion of Thesis or Dissertation” (found on the [UTRGV Graduate College Thesis and Dissertation Page](#)) form and the Candidate will turn it in to the Graduate College office by the published deadline in order to fulfill graduation requirements. At this time the Graduation Committee Chair will notify the Graduate Coordinator of the final decision regarding successful completion of the requirements.

Graduate Student Handbook Updates and Revisions

Please note that the policies and procedures in this handbook are subject to UTRGV and Graduate College policy changes. The School of Music Graduate Student Handbook is a living document, and will be revised and updated throughout the year as needed to stay current with UTRGV, Graduate College, and School of Music policy and curriculum.

Appendix A: School of Music Graduate Admission Checklist

Admission Requirements

- ✓ Bachelor's degree (in Music) from a regionally accredited institution in the United States or a recognized international equivalent in a similar or related field.
- ✓ Undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0
- ✓ TOEFL/DUOLINGO Scores (international students only)
- ✓ Official transcripts from each institution attended (must be submitted directly to UTRGV).
- ✓ Submission of an essay detailing professional goals and intent detailing reasons for pursuing the graduate degree.
- ✓ Three letters of recommendation from professional or academic sources.
- ✓ Resume including educational background and work experience.
- ✓ Additional requirements specific to the MM Concentration (see all concentrations at <https://utrgv.smartcatalogiq.com/en/2024-2025/graduate-catalog/graduate-academic-programs-by-college/college-of-fine-arts/school-of-music>)

Other Helpful Links:

[Graduate College Admissions](#)

[Graduate College Application Deadlines](#)

[Graduate College – International Admissions](#)

[UTRGV School of Music Auditions](#)

Appendix B: Sample Honor Code

Sample Honor Code to be signed at the time of the written comprehensive exams:

HONOR CODE - Please read and sign below:

"I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this piece of work, nor have I knowingly tolerated any violation of the honor code."

NAME: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Suggested Timeline for Comprehensive Exams

Timeline: Written and Oral Exams (example) To be followed in the student's final semester

Week 1	Graduation Committee is formed
Week 7	Graduation Committee questions need to be given to the student (via the chair)
Week 8	The written exams will be scheduled (all in-person exams will be scheduled for a specific date, and all take-home written questions will be due by that date).
Week 9	Deadline for committee members to evaluate written exam questions and provide feedback for Oral Exams (note that committee members may choose to address questions from the written exams as well as introduce new material).
Week 10-12	Oral Exams are scheduled and completed.

Appendix D: Committee Forms
Comprehensive Examination, Master's Thesis, Graduate Recital Hearing, and
Final Project forms

Graduate Comprehensive Exam Committee Form

To be completed when 24 credit hours of course work have been completed
(usually during the semester of graduation)

Graduate Student: _____ ID#: _____
 Telephone Number: _____ Email Address: _____
 Expected Graduation Date: _____ Applied for Graduation: Yes/No

Comprehensive Exam Committee Members (acknowledgment):

Print:
(Chair)

Signature:

Date:

Changes:

Written Comprehensive Exam questions were given to candidate on (date): _____

Written Comprehensive Exam (date): _____

Oral Exam (date): _____

Committee Signatures:

Print:
(Chair)

Signature:

Date:

The committee agrees that the candidate has **PASSED/Did NOT Pass** the Written and Oral Comprehensive Exams

Additional Comments:

Master's Thesis Committee Form

(To be completed during MUSI 7300 & 7301)

Graduate Student: _____ ID#: _____
 Telephone Number: _____ Email Address: _____
 Expected Graduation Date: _____ Applied for Graduation: **Y / N**

 Thesis Committee Members: (acknowledgement)

Print:

Signature:

Date:

 Thesis proposal/topic approved: (chair signature) _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Thesis first draft submitted to committee members on (date): _____

Thesis defense (date): _____

Thesis Committee Members:

Signature:

Date:

The committee recommends that the candidate **Pass / Fail** the thesis defense and has permission to complete the thesis submission process.

Additional comments:

Graduate Recital Committee Form

To be completed one semester before graduation

Graduate Student: _____ ID#: _____
 Telephone Number: _____ Email Address: _____
 Expected Graduation Date: _____ Applied for Graduation: **Y / N**

 Committee Members' Signatures (acknowledgement):

Chair: _____

Date: _____

Recital Hearing _____ Date _____ Grade (Pass, Pw/R, F)

Chair: _____

The Recital Hearing was found to be **Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory** by the committee.

 Committee Members' Signatures:

Recital _____

Date _____

Grade (letter grade)

Chair: _____

The Recital was found to be **Satisfactory / Unsatisfactory** by the committee.

Final Grade MUSI 6199: _____

Additional Comments:

Master of Music (Music Education) Final Project Committee Form

(To be completed during MUSI 6390)

Graduate Student: _____ ID#: _____
 Telephone Number: _____ Email Address: _____
 Expected Graduation Date: _____ Applied for Graduation: **Y / N**

Final Project Committee Members: (acknowledgement)

Print:

Signature:

Date:

Final Project Proposal/Topic approved: (chair signature) _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Final Project first draft submitted to committee members on (date): _____

Defense/Presentation (date): _____

Final Project Committee Members:

Signature:

Date:

Chair:

The committee recommends that the candidate **Pass / Fail** the Final Project defense/presentation.

Additional Comments: