

The University of Texas
Rio Grande ValleyTM
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School of Music

Graduate Student Handbook
2026-2027

Last Revised September 2026

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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 2026, 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

<u>Dr. Kurt Martinez</u> , <i>Director</i> <u>Dr. Rebecca Coberly</u> , <i>Associate Director</i> <u>Ms. Norma Salinas</u> , <i>Admin. Manager</i> <u>Mr. Ethan Cuellar</u> , <i>Admin. Assistant II</i> <u>Ms. Dina Pena</u> , <i>Program Coordinator</i>	Cynthia Cripps, <i>Graduate Coordinator</i> Phone: (956) 665-3474 Office: Edinburg Campus, EPACB 2.116 E-Mail: <u>cynthia.cripps@utrgv.edu</u>
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Area Coordinators <u>Dr. Virginia Davis</u> , Music Education <u>Dr. Jonathan Guist</u> , Woodwinds <u>Dr. Susan Hurley-Glowa</u> , Ethnomus./Musicology <u>Dr. Kenneth Saxon</u> , Piano <u>Dr. Michael Quantz</u> , Guitar <u>Mr. Francisco Loera</u> , Mariachi	<u>Dr. Diana Seitz</u> , Strings <u>Dr. Francis Favis</u> , Percussion <u>Dr. Scott Roeder</u> , Brass <u>Dr. Sean Taylor</u> , Voice <u>Dr. Justin Writer</u> , Music Theory/Comp/Technology
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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: <u>music@utrgv.edu</u>	Webpage: <u>www.utrgv.edu/music</u>

Helpful Websites

[UTRGV Catalogs](#)

[UTRGV Graduate Catalog](#)

[UTRGV Graduate College](#)

- [Graduate Admissions](#)
- [Thesis and Dissertation Webpage](#)
- [Graduate Financial Aid](#)

[UTRGV Human Resources](#)

[UTRGV School of Music](#)

- [School of Music Graduate Webpage](#)
- [School of Music Student Resources](#)

[UTRGV College of Fine Arts](#)

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

[UTRGV Arts](#)

[UTRGV Arts Showpass](#)

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

To be admitted to a Master of Music graduate program, students must meet all requirements for admission to UTRGV as well as the MM concentration-specific requirements. Application for admission to UTRGV must be submitted online through the [Apply Now](#) portal on the [UTRGV Graduate College Application](#) webpage.

The UTRGV Graduate College Catalog provides a general description of admission requirements for [Graduate Degree-Seeking Student Admission](#), and more detailed admission requirements for each [MM Concentration](#) (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 on the [UTRGV Graduate College Application](#) webpage.

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 on the [Graduate College: Contact Us](#) webpage.

UTRGV Graduate College Application Deadlines

Please see the [Graduate Application Deadlines](#) webpage for the UTRGV deadlines for all Master of Music concentrations (also see [Application for School of Music Graduate Assistantships](#) below for deadlines to be considered for a Graduate Assistantship).

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

Once the applicant submits their application to the Graduate College, the Graduate College will review the application and, if accepted, forward it to the School of Music for review. The School of Music Graduate Admissions Committee will evaluate all materials received from the Graduate College plus

the required MM Concentration-specific materials (see below), and will make the final decision to admit or to deny admission. Every graduate applicant is responsible for ensuring that they meet all Graduate College and School of Music requirements. *Acceptance to the School of Music does not guarantee acceptance into the Graduate College and vice versa. Applicants must be accepted to both the School of Music and the Graduate College.*

Concentration Admission Requirements

(see the [UTRGV: Master of Music](#) webpage 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 – Applicants will need to submit an academic essay/paper with footnotes/citations as a writing sample representing the applicant's best writing and research skills (final papers or academic writing projects from a music/music education course are acceptable and appropriate submissions). The writing sample will be assessed for content, writing style, and research skills, and should be submitted as a PDF to the Graduate Coordinator.

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 on the [School of Music](#) website.

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 on the [School of Music](#) website.

Diagnostic Assessments

Incoming graduate students may be required to take diagnostic assessments if required by their concentration or graduate assistantship (GA) assignment. Discipline-specific assessments, and the processes for those assessments, are listed below. If any other assessments are needed prior to the student's first semester of enrollment due to GA duties or other concentration requirements, students will be notified and contacted to schedule the exams as needed at least a month prior to the start of the semester.

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, qualifications, and expectations for the particular concentration. For the MM Performance/Multiple Instrument performance concentrations, 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. For other concentrations, the Graduate Coordinator will coordinate with faculty in the area or discipline as appropriate to arrange an interview.

Admission Classification

As per the [UTRGV Graduate Catalog Student Policies](#), Applicants to UTRGV Graduate Programs may be admitted with Clear Admission, Conditional Admission or, if they do not successfully meet requirements, they may be Denied Admission. Applicants are responsible for being familiar with these requirements and definitions.

Application for School of Music Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of Graduate Assistantships are available for School of Music Graduate students. These assistantships will be awarded based on the applicant's skills and academic/artistic achievement and the needs of the School of Music. In addition to submitting their graduate application, applicants for Graduate Assistantships will also need to submit a [School of Music Graduate Assistant Application](#).

- To see the different types of Graduate Assistantships available, see the [Funding for Graduate Students](#) website and the [Graduate Assistantships Job Titles and Eligibility](#).
- Please note that Music Theory Graduate Assistant Instructors (instructors of record) must successfully complete Music Theory Pedagogy and have the recommendation of the instructor of that course.

School of Music Graduate Assistantship Deadlines

To be considered for a Graduate Assistantship for the 2026-2027 Academic year, applicants must have completed and submitted all application materials (including the School of Music Graduate Assistant Application) by the following dates:

- For consideration for the Fall 2027 semester: March 1, 2027
- For consideration for the Spring 2027 semester: October, 1 2026
 - (applicants will only be considered if assistantships are available).

To complete a Graduate Assistantship application, the applicant must have completed the following steps:

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

The School of Music Graduate Assistantship Application is available at [UTRGV School of Music Graduate Assistant Application 2027-2028](#). Priority for assistantships/fellowships will be given to students who meet the application deadlines on a competitive basis.

Master of Music Degree Requirements

1. All MM degrees require 36 credit hours
2. Students are responsible for:
 - a. Familiarity with all degree requirements for their concentration.
 - b. Ensuring that the proper forms have been submitted and approved throughout their admission process and progress through the degree.
 - c. Meeting all deadlines established by the School of Music and the University and keeping all personal records up to date.
 - d. If at any time an 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. However, 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 the [UTRGV Master of Music](#) webpage.

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 meet these requirements.

2. Designated Electives: Applicants selecting the non-thesis path have options for Designated Electives (6000 OR 7000-level courses) from the course listing in Music. Please note that students may only receive credit toward a degree from graduate-level courses.
 - a. For the MM in Ethnomusicology degree, the elective(s) cannot be musicology or ethnomusicology courses.
3. Transfer Credits: 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. See [Transfer of Graduate Credits](#) in the Graduate Catalog for more information.
4. Graduate students may have **full-time** or **part-time** status. Full-time graduate enrollment requires registering for nine (9) or more credit hours during the current semester.
 Note: 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.
5. Graduate Students must maintain a cumulative graduate GPA of **3.0 or higher**. See the UTRGV Graduate College's [Academic Probation and Suspension](#) policies for more information.
 - a. Graduate Assistants who drop below a cumulative 3.0 GPA will lose their award.

6. 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. All graduate students are expected to enroll and pay tuition and fees by the required deadline of each fall and spring semester of each academic year until graduation ([Graduate Catalog: Graduate Registration and Enrollment](#)). If a student must be absent for a fall or spring semester due to unusual health, family, financial, or other reasons, students must request a Leave of Absence (LOA). To request an LOA, students must submit a Leave of Absence form on the Graduate Colleges Forms website. Students who are absent for a fall or spring semester, and did not submit a leave of absence letter will be required to reapply and restart the admission process. This will place the student under a new catalog year, and they will be subject to those new degree plans and requirements. It is the student's responsibility to apply for a Leave of Absence in a timely fashion. A Leave of Absence will not be granted retroactively after the end of the semester or module. For more information, see the full UTRGV [Graduate Registration and Enrollment](#) policy in the Graduate Catalog.
7. Students can only receive a Graduate Assistantship (GA) in one discipline or degree at a time according to UTRGV policy.
8. **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 (1 week) selected by subject area upon the recommendation of the Primary Advisor and evaluated by an area-selected language exam expert; **OR**
 - c. Any combination or variation of the above is deemed appropriate for the student's research skills in consultation with the primary 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

Prior to completing their comprehensive exams, Final Project, Graduate Recital, or Thesis, students must select a Graduation Committee whose members will oversee the student's comprehensive exams as well as other end-of-degree requirements. Students on thesis tracks will choose this committee at the beginning of their penultimate semester, and students on non-thesis tracks will choose this committee at the beginning of their final semester. The Graduation Committee may also serve as the

Recital Committee for concentrations with this requirement, or a separate Recital Committee may be chosen at the discretion of the Chair.

1. Week 1: Graduation Committee Chair: Students must choose a committee chair during the first week of the semester in which they are required to form the Graduation Committee (see above). The Graduation Committee Chair must be the faculty member who has been the student's primary applied or academic teacher and/or advisor throughout the student's enrollment, and the Chair must be a professor in the area of concentration (exceptions to this must be approved by the Graduate Coordinator). 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. Students must ensure that they meet all UTRGV Graduate College deadlines for the formation of this committee as well as School of Music deadlines. Under most circumstances, the Thesis Committee will also serve as the Graduation Committee. See [Determining a Thesis Committee](#) below.
2. Census Date: Graduation Committee: Students, with guidance from their Graduation 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. The committee must be formed by the Census Date.
 - a. 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.
 - b. Faculty members chosen for the Graduation Committee must be instructors with whom the student has taken and passed a 2- or 3-credit hour graduate course, or (if the student's instructors for those courses are unavailable) with whom they have worked extensively in a research, performance, or advisory capacity.
 - c. Students must extend a personal invitation (email, in writing) to selected faculty members inviting them to serve on the Graduation Committee. In the email, the student must:
 - i. Inform each invited member who the Chair of the Graduation Committee will be.
 - ii. Ask the following question of each faculty member invited to serve on the Committee: “Would you be willing to serve as a Committee Member?”
 - iii. 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).

3. Week 4: Graduation Committee Meeting: Before or during Week 4, the Graduation Committee Chair will organize a meeting or communicate with the Graduation Committee and the student to determine preparation procedures for the exams, recital, thesis, and/or recital hearing and performance. Results from evaluations (exams, recitals, thesis defense, etc.) must be submitted to the Graduate Coordinator before the last day of class of the semester they are taken.
4. Graduate students must be enrolled for at least one credit hour in a graduate course each semester until they have completed all of the requirements of the degree. If the student has completed all thirty-six hours of degree plan coursework and still needs to complete their comprehensive exams, final project, thesis, or other degree requirement, they must enroll in MUSI 7100 (Thesis/Project/Exam Continuation) each semester until the requirements are complete. If this is not possible, the student must request a Leave of Absence using the appropriate [Leave of Absence Form](#). The student must be enrolled in a graduate level course during the semester they expect to graduate.

Comprehensive Examinations

General Information

1. Students for the Master of Music degree are required to pass Written and Oral Comprehensive Examinations. Students pursuing the Ethnomusicology concentration or Music Education thesis option will fulfill this requirement through the [Thesis Defense](#).
2. These examinations will be related to information, materials, and course work in the student's Degree Plan.
3. It is recommended that the candidate complete approximately 27 credit hours of graduate work (approximately 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. Please understand that some music faculty may not be available during the summer terms.
 - a. All written examinations must be completed by the end of Week 11.
 - b. All oral examinations must be completed by the end of Week 12.
 - c. It is recommended that Final Projects or Graduate Recitals be completed at least three weeks (no later than Week 8) prior to the student's comprehensive exams.

Guidelines for Written Examinations

1. The Graduation Committee Chair will be responsible for organizing and proctoring the Written Examination. Chairs are responsible for meeting with the committee prior to submitting their questions to discuss and clarify the focus of the questions and the parameters and process of the exams.
2. The Graduation Committee members will submit their questions and any prepared materials to the Graduation Committee Chair. The chair is responsible for receiving and approving the questions, and will provide a copy of the questions to the student, the Graduation Committee Members, and the Graduate Coordinator.
3. Questions will reflect the breadth of the degree with regard to appropriate theories, concepts, applied techniques, and/or research methodologies. Questions should specifically address the coursework completed in the individual student'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. The format of the exams will be decided by the Graduation Committee. The exams may be in-person, take-home, or a combination of the two depending on the parameters and process set by the committee (see item #1).
5. 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 student a minimum of two weeks to prepare for the written exam.
 - b. The student will be allowed approximately 2 hours to answer each question.
 - c. The committee is responsible for scheduling the examination time and reserving the exam location on a UTRGV campus.
 - d. The committee may 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 LockDown Browser or another appropriate tool (the committee chair is responsible for making technology arrangements in advance). The Committee Chair is responsible for ensuring that the exam is appropriately monitored.
 - e. The exam proctor is responsible for having the student must sign an honor code agreement prior to taking written exams (See sample honor code agreement in [Appendix B](#))
6. 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 as stated in #2 of "[Guidelines for Written Examinations](#)." 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 to have at least one week between the written exam and the oral exam to allow time for grading and feedback.

Grading Written Examinations

1. Once the student has completed all of the components of the written exams, the Graduation Committee Chair collects/retrieves the answers and distributes them to the entire committee for review. The committee members will grade their questions and return their response to the Chair within 5 business 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 the student, 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 student **MUST PASS ALL** content areas (Pass or Pass with Conditions) before they can take Oral Examinations.
 - b. Though all committee members should review **ALL** answers, each Committee member will provide a grade for **ONLY** their submitted question.
 - c. Grade(s) should be accompanied by sufficient feedback to inform the student regarding the quality of their performance
 - d. Each Content Area/Question will receive one of three Grades: Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Fail.
 - i. **Pass** – indicates that the student’s response(s) were evaluated, at minimum, as adequate and competent.
 - ii. **Pass with Conditions** - indicates that the student’s responses did not meet minimum expectations of graduate level work, but the committee deems that they are near expectations. The candidate must further demonstrate their mastery of the material through additional written work or by special attention and effort during the Oral Examination.
 1. **Note:** The committee must determine the conditions and timeline for passing the insufficient areas and communicate these to the student in writing with sufficient time to submit the work and/or prepare for the oral exam.

- iii. **Fail** – indicates that the student’s response(s) did NOT provide sufficient or adequate evidence of understanding, nor mastery of the material addressed.
 - 1. **Note:** Should a student FAIL one (1) or more Questions/Content Areas, the Committee will immediately prepare a course(s) of action for the student 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 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 [Graduate Comprehensive Exam Committee 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 student 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 student in ALL areas of the examination.
- 3. Each Committee member will award the student one of three possible labels: *Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Fail*.

- a. **Pass** – indicates that the student’s responses were judged, at minimum, as adequate and competent.
 - b. **Pass with Conditions** - The student demonstrates passing performance on some, but not all, parts of the examination. The Committee believes that the student should be afforded the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of those sections failed, and 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 label (Pass with Conditions) can only be employed once for any student (i.e., the student cannot be awarded Pass with Conditions on their second oral examination).
 - c. **Fail** – indicates that the student’s responses did NOT provide overall sufficient or adequate evidence of understanding, competency, or mastery of the examination material.
4. The committee must be unanimous regarding the oral exam evaluation (Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Fail). A majority is not sufficient – all members of the committee must confirm the evaluation result.
 - a. **Note:** students 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. Following a “Pass with Conditions” evaluation of the Oral Examination, a minimum of one (1) week is required before scheduling a reexamination cannot be scheduled for a minimum of one (1) week.
 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

Upon successfully completing ALL criteria for the Written and Oral Examinations committee members will sign the [Comprehensive Exam Form](#) and the chair will submit the form to Graduate Coordinator before the last day of classes. Committee Chairs must 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 student may request that their Graduation Committee serve as the Recital Evaluation Committee, or may choose a separate Recital Evaluation Committee in consultation with the student's Applied Instructor. This committee must be formed before the Census Date of the student's recital semester.
2. If the student chooses to form a separate Recital Evaluation committee, the composition of the committee will be dictated by applied area policies. It is recommended that the committee include at least three faculty who are knowledgeable in the student'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, student, and piano collaborator (if applicable) should schedule hearing and recital dates and locations via the appropriate scheduling forms and personnel (see the UTRGV-Music Faculty Handbook or the UTRGV-Music Student Handbook on the [School of Music Resources](#) website).
2. It is important that all members of the Committee attend the hearing and the recital (viewing a video of the live performance is permitted if extenuating circumstances prevent a committee member from attending).
3. The student must follow all recital policies set by their applied area and the Collaborative Piano policies (see the UTRGV-Music Faculty Handbook or the UTRGV-Music Student Handbook on the [School of Music Resources](#) website).
4. As stated under [Comprehensive Examinations](#), it is recommended that the graduate recital be completed three weeks before the written comprehensive examinations or, if the

examinations are not taking place during the recital semester, by the last class day of the semester. Scheduling graduation recitals in the summer is not recommended.

Recital Hearing Requirements and Evaluation

1. The student must pass a pre-recital assessment (hearing/jury) before giving their scheduled live performance. Specific hearing/jury procedures and timelines will be determined by applied area policies and by the Recital or Graduation Committee (as applicable), however it is recommended that the hearing take place a minimum of 10 days prior to the recital date to ensure time to address any deficiencies (see “Pass with Conditions” below).
2. The committee’s pre-recital assessment must be documented on the [Graduate Recital Committee Form](#). Grade(s) should be accompanied by sufficient feedback to inform the student regarding the quality of their performance.
 - a. **Pass** – indicates that the Committee evaluated the performance, at minimum, as adequate and competent.
 - b. **Pass with Conditions** – indicates that the Committee evaluated that the hearing was mostly adequate, but a particular component/piece did not fully demonstrate the necessary competence required. The student must demonstrate further mastery of the material through an additional hearing of that particular component/piece.
 - i. **Note:** The committee is responsible for determining conditions and a timeline for a second hearing of the material.
 - c. **Fail** – indicates that the student’s hearing did NOT provide sufficient mastery of the repertoire.
 - i. Should a student receive a fail evaluation, the Committee will immediately prepare a course of action for the student and agree upon a time frame and criteria to be met.
 - ii. Reexamination cannot be scheduled until the following semester.
 - iii. students 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 [Graduate Recital Committee 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 has as separate Recital Committee) must evaluate the recital hearing/jury and document a grade (Pass, Pass with Conditions, or Fail) as detailed above.
 - a. Please 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 methods and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator.

Final Project (Music Education Concentration non-thesis)

1. The 2026-2027 [UTRGV Graduate Catalog](#) states, “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.
6. Final projects must be archived via recording, written documents, or other methods depending on the project format and submitted to the Graduate Coordinator.
7. The Committee Chair must submit the [Master of Music \(Music Education\) Final Project Committee Form](#) to the Graduate Coordinator regardless of outcome (Pass or Fail), including notes and feedback on the performance and reasons for the decision of the committee.

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). Note that if the Graduation Committee also functions as the Thesis Committee, it must be formed earlier in the process (see point 2.a below).
2. If a student wishes to include a faculty member from outside that committee for their expertise and input, a fourth member (or additional members) may be added with the approval of the Committee Chair.

- a. The Thesis Committee must be formed prior to the student's enrollment in Thesis I (MUSI 7300), which is typically at the beginning of the third semester of study or sooner.
 - b. Prior to enrolling in MUSI 7300 and inviting faculty to serve on the Thesis committee, the student must develop a short abstract of their thesis topic to be distributed to potential committee members and subsequently reviewed by the committee.
 - c. It is recommended that at least one of the committee members has 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 student will provide each invited member with a short abstract of the proposed thesis.
 4. The student 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 using the [Application for Thesis Committee form](#).

Master's Thesis Requirements and Guidelines

1. Follow the guidelines on the [UTRGV Graduate College Thesis and Dissertation](#) webpage for timelines and appropriate forms.
2. **Human Subjects Committee** - Institutional Review Board (IRB). Email: irb@utrgv.edu
 - a. If the student intends 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.

4. Students embarking on this line of research should complete the ethics training protocols on the IRB website.

Enrolling for Thesis Credit

1. Once the faculty have reviewed the abstract, the student 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 student'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 under "[Thesis Prospectus Approval](#)").
4. If the student 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 student 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 student 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 student may begin collecting data. **WARNING:** The student **MUST NOT** initiate data collection for the research project until approval has been given by the IRB and the Thesis Graduation Committee. For guidance on IRB applications and policies, please see the [UTRGV Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) website.

Progress Drafts/Reading Copies

In conjunction with the committee, the student 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 student'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, 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 student will arrange a defense date that is acceptable to all members of the Committee, at least *ten (10)* days after the student's Committee receives the Proposed Final Draft of the Thesis.
2. Students must 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 student will orally present and defend the thesis in person, barring extenuating circumstances.
4. The student will give a short presentation on their thesis, and the Committee will question the student regarding the presentation and thesis.

Approval of Final Draft of Thesis

1. After the Committee members have completed their questioning of the student, the floor will be opened to questions from the faculty, students, and guests.
2. When the Committee members are satisfied that the student has sufficiently addressed any concerns (and audience questions have been exhausted), the Committee will excuse the student and meet in executive session to render a judgment on the student's performance.
3. Each Committee member can award the student an evaluation of Pass or Fail.
4. Given the individual Committee member's evaluations, an "Overall Evaluation" of the student's thesis will be made.
 - a. Consensus Evaluation - The final evaluation of the student'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 student should adequately address all concerns voiced by the Committee.
7. The Committee Chair is responsible for moderating all requested modifications.

Note: If the student 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 student 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 in the [Graduate Catalog](#))

Other Helpful Links:

[Graduate College Admissions](#)

[Graduate College Application Deadlines](#)

[Graduate College – International Admissions](#)

[UTRGV School of Music Audition Information](#)

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

To be followed in the student's final semester

Week 1

- Student selects Graduation Committee Chair. This should be their primary applied or academic instructor/advisor.

Census Day

- Student reaches out to additional faculty members in consultation with the Committee Chair to serve on their Graduation Committee. Committee must be formed by this date.

Week 4

- Graduation Committee Chair communicates with other committee members and student.
- Exam procedures and dates determined.
- Top part of Graduate Comprehensive Exam Committee Form filled out (p. 31 in the Handbook).

2 Weeks Prior to Written Exam Date (no later than Week 9)

- Send any take-home question(s) to student.
- Send any preparation materials for in-person question(s) to student.

1 Week Prior to Oral Exam (no later than Week 11)

- In-person exam date (if applicable).
- Take-home exam(s) due (if applicable).

By the end of Week 12

- Oral Exam completed.
- Committee completes Graduate Comprehensive Exam Committee Form (p. 31 in the Handbook), and the committee Chair submits this to Dr. Cripps.

****PLEASE NOTE:** Any extensions must be approved by Dr. Cindy Cripps.**

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: