

# National Association of Schools of Music

## **DRAFT DOCUMENT**

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## STANDARDS FOR GRADUATE DEGREES

For current official curricular standards, see the  
NASM [Handbook 2014–15](#)

### **COMMENT PERIOD I**

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1 **X. GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN MUSIC**

2 **A. Fundamental Purposes and Principles**

3 **1. Purposes.** Each institution is responsible for developing and defining the specific  
4 purposes of its overall graduate program in music and of each graduate degree  
5 program it offers.

6 **2. Relationships: Purposes, Content, and Requirements**

7 a. For each graduate program offered, there must be logical and functioning  
8 relationships among the purposes, structure, and content. For each program, this  
9 includes decisions about:

10 (1) Specialization(s).

11 (2) The relationships between the specialization(s) and music or other music-  
12 related disciplines, other fields of study, and music or other professions.

13 (3) Requirements in such areas as composition and performance, research,  
14 scholarship, preparation for teaching in terms of (a) the specialization, (b)  
15 support for the specializations, and (c) breadth of competence.

16 b. For each graduate program, the curricular structure and the requirements for  
17 admission, continuation and graduation must be consistent with program purposes  
18 and content.

19 **3. Major Field(s) and Supportive Studies.** Each graduate student is expected to gain  
20 in-depth knowledge and competence in one or more fields of specialization. Graduate  
21 programs include requirements and opportunities for studies that support the chosen  
22 specialization(s).

23 **4. Creative Work, Inquiry, Research, and Scholarship**

24 a. Professional work in music specializations is produced through creative endeavor,  
25 inquiry, and investigation. Each type of work and each individual work exhibits  
26 specific intent, content, methodology, and product. Individual or group decisions  
27 about these four elements shape the ways that creativity, inquiry, and investigation  
28 are used to produce work in various artistic, scholarly, pedagogical, or other  
29 specializations. Competency to practice in one or more fields of specialization  
30 includes the ability to conduct the types of creative work, inquiry, and  
31 investigation normally associated with the specialization(s) chosen.

1           b. These types include, but are not limited to:

2           (1) Work in composition, performance, or production that results in contributions  
3           to the body of knowledge and practice in music.

4           (2) The development and application or incorporation of various types of  
5           inquiry and investigation, including formal research or scholarship the  
6           musician wishes to use in the composition, performance, or production of a  
7           work of music.

8           (3) Research and scholarship as defined and practiced by professional humanists,  
9           scientists, and social scientists. In musicology and ethnomusicology, music  
10          theory, music specialization, and other academic specializations, this includes,  
11          but is not limited to, such areas as music history, analysis, and criticism; the  
12          relationship of music to inquiry in the humanities, the sciences, and the social  
13          sciences; the influences of music in and on larger social, cultural, educational,  
14          economic, and technological contexts; and the nature and application of music  
15          thinking and pedagogy.

16          (4) The development, compilation, and application or incorporation of inquiry  
17          results, including those produced by formal research and scholarship, in  
18          decisions about pedagogy and teaching, applications of music therapy, and  
19          policy-making in various contexts.

20       **5. Types of Degree Programs.** Different specializations and different degree programs  
21       reflect specific goals with respect to relationships among fields of practice and  
22       approaches to inquiry, investigation, and to research and scholarship as presented  
23       above, whether broadly or narrowly defined. The basic degree frameworks are  
24       described below.

25       **a. Practice-Oriented Degrees.** These degrees focus on the preparation of artists,  
26       pedagogues, therapists, or other music professionals.

27           Degree titles reflect level of study and content, and normally include Master of  
28           Music, Master of Arts, Master of Science, Doctor of Musical Arts, Doctor of  
29           Music, and Doctor of Education.

30       **b. Research-Oriented Degrees.** These degrees focus on the preparation of scholars  
31       and researchers.

1 Degree titles reflect level of study and content and normally include Master of  
2 Arts, Master of Science, Master of Music, and Doctor of Philosophy.

3 **c. Degrees Combining Research and Practice Orientations.** These degrees focus  
4 on the simultaneous development of the ability to produce advanced research  
5 findings, often using the practices and protocols of the humanities, sciences, or  
6 social sciences, and the ability to utilize, combine, or integrate these findings  
7 with practice of the artistic, pedagogical, therapeutic, or other music-related  
8 professions.

9 Degree titles reflect level of study and content and are consistent with the character  
10 and requirements of the degree rubric chosen.

## 11 **6. Breadth of Competence**

12 **a. Components.** Breadth of competence is characterized by the ability to work in one  
13 or more fields of music with a broad range of knowledge, skills, and perspectives.  
14 As examples, breadth of competence includes the capacities to be engaged  
15 musically, artistically, intellectually, and operationally beyond the major  
16 specialization or field, connect music to other fields and issues, and apply  
17 appropriate techniques and technologies to work in and about music. The ability to  
18 speak and write cogently is critical for all professional musicians.

19 **b. Opportunities and Relationships.** Graduate programs in music should provide  
20 opportunities for individual students to enlarge their breadth of competence. This  
21 includes opportunities for deepening understanding of the relationships among  
22 musical specializations such as performance, historical and theoretical analysis,  
23 composition, pedagogy, musicology, and ethnomusicology. The development of  
24 breadth of competence normally includes studies beyond the undergraduate level.

## 25 **7. Preparation for the Professions**

26 **a. Career Development.** Many of those who earn graduate degrees in music will be  
27 engaged for several decades in a variety of music and music-related professions.  
28 Students should be encouraged to acquire the career development and  
29 entrepreneurial techniques necessary to advance themselves according to their area  
30 of specialization and their own career objectives.

31 **b. Teaching.** Most of those who are in graduate degrees in music are or will be  
32 engaged in music teaching of some type during the course of their professional

1 careers. Institutions are therefore strongly encouraged to give attention to the  
2 preparation of graduate students as teachers. Whenever possible, experiences  
3 should include teaching music to both music majors and non-music majors.  
4 Graduate students, particularly at the doctoral level, should have opportunities for  
5 direct teaching experiences appropriate to their major and minor areas under the  
6 supervision of master teachers. As appropriate to primary and secondary areas of  
7 concentration and to individual career objectives, preparation for teaching should  
8 include an introduction to the pedagogy of subject matter considered fundamental  
9 to curricula for undergraduate music majors, including composition and  
10 improvisation, music theory and history, music from a breadth of cultures,  
11 technology, and performance.

## 12 **B. Resources and Music Program Components**

- 13 **1.** Resources must be sufficient to support the purposes, goals, objectives, and content of  
14 graduate programs and must meet NASM operational requirements in this regard (see  
15 Standards II.). The relationships between the establishment of objectives and the  
16 development of program structure and resources are crucial to success. The process of  
17 establishing and maintaining these relationships should be characterized by the same  
18 rigorous pursuit of creative development and analytical excellence that are functions of  
19 graduate study itself.
- 20 **2.** Curricular components of graduate programs must meet NASM requirements in  
21 Standards III. (including, but not limited to Credit and Time Requirements; Time on  
22 Task, Curricular Proportions, and Competencies; Forms of Instruction, Requirements,  
23 and Electives; Individual Program Continuity; Residence).
- 24 **3.** The standards applicable to each graduate program are comprised of those referenced  
25 in Standards X.B.1. and 2., as well as those outlined for specific programs that  
26 follow.
- 27 **4. Community.** An institution's overall graduate program in music requires a traditional  
28 and/or virtual community of students and faculty to permit the formal and informal  
29 sharing of experience, ideas, and knowledge.
- 30 **5. Experiences.** Graduate education requires the provision of certain kinds of experiences  
31 that go beyond those typically provided in undergraduate programs. These include  
32 opportunities for active participation in small seminars and tutorials, extensive informal

1 contact with faculty, and consultation during preparation of a final project over an  
2 extended period of time.

### 3 **C. General Degree Requirements and Procedures**

#### 4 **1. Credits**

- 5 a. At least one-half of the credits required for graduate degrees must be in courses  
6 intended for graduate students only.
- 7 b. A single course that carries both an undergraduate and a graduate designation is  
8 not considered a course intended for graduate students only.
- 9 c. A course may enroll an undergraduate student and maintain its status as being  
10 intended for graduate students only if, in the context of that course, the  
11 undergraduate student is expected to meet the same standards, do the same work,  
12 and otherwise perform as a graduate student.
- 13 d. To obtain graduate credit, students enrolled in a single course that carries a  
14 separate undergraduate and graduate designation or number must complete  
15 specific published requirements that are at a graduate level. Distinctions between  
16 undergraduate and graduate expectations must be delineated for such courses.
- 17 e. Only courses taken after undergraduate courses that are prerequisite to a given  
18 graduate program may receive graduate degree credit in that program.

19 **2. Residence.** Residence policies are determined by the institution. Normally, a period of  
20 continuous concentrated study within the graduate community is required. Programs  
21 based on distance learning, or with a significant distance learning component, must  
22 fulfill the function of community by providing experiences that produce interaction  
23 among graduate students and faculty.

24 **3. Language Proficiencies and/or Other Required Skills.** Specific requirements are  
25 determined by the institution based on the objectives of the program.

26 **4. Coursework.** Institutions determine coursework requirements for each graduate  
27 program. Requirements for the master's degree are usually stated in terms of specific  
28 credits. At levels above the master's, institutions may not wish to specify course or  
29 credit requirements, other than the satisfactory completion of certain examinations,  
30 recitals, compositions, or a dissertation. Whatever the structure of these requirements,  
31 there should be a logical relationship between studies and experiences that develop  
32 knowledge and skills, and those that evaluate progress.

- 1       **5. Independent Study.** Programs that include or are based upon independent study must  
2       meet applicable requirements in Standards III.
- 3       **6. Programs Involving Distance Learning, Disciplines in Combination, or with a Focus**  
4       **on Electronic Media.** Program in these categories must meet applicable requirements in  
5       Standards III.
- 6       **7. Evaluations**
- 7       **a. Comprehensive Reviews.** Comprehensive reviews cover the major field of  
8       study, particularly as defined by the degree title, and any other associated or  
9       required fields specified by the institution. At the completion of coursework or  
10      during the development of proficiencies, the function of comprehensive review  
11      is achieved through mechanisms such as written or oral comprehensive  
12      examinations, seminars providing summary evaluation, or a cumulative series of  
13      reviews. At the master’s level, successful completion of this review is a  
14      requirement for graduation. At the doctoral level, successful completion of this  
15      review qualifies the student for degree candidacy.
- 16      **b. Final Examination.** At the doctoral level, the final examination may be given  
17      after all other degree requirements have been met, including the final project.  
18      This examination may be in defense of a dissertation; it may be concerned with  
19      the major performing medium and its repertory; or it may be concerned with  
20      compositions submitted for the degree.
- 21      **8. Final Project.** For degree programs in which a final project is required, the final  
22      project is undertaken in the area(s) of specialization. At the doctoral level, it is  
23      expected to be comparable to high-level work presented to the public by  
24      professionals in the field.

25   **XI. ADMISSION TO GRADUATE STUDY**

- 26   **A. Admission Policies.** Institutions are responsible for establishing specific admission  
27   requirements for graduate study in music. These policies must be consistent with the  
28   purposes and goals of the institution’s specific graduate programs. Admission standards  
29   must be sufficiently high to predict success in graduate study. Within the parameters set by  
30   the institution, admission policies should be flexible to permit acceptance of students  
31   specifically interested in pursuing one or more of the several functions of graduate study in

1 depth. The diversity of previous education, background, and interests of applicants should  
2 be considered in assessments of potential.

3 **B. Completion of Previous Degree Programs.** Completion of an appropriate  
4 undergraduate program or the equivalent is required for graduate study in music. Each  
5 institution determines the prerequisites for each graduate program it offers. Admission to  
6 doctoral programs may require completion of a master's degree, although a master's  
7 degree program or the formal awarding of the master's degree need not be a prerequisite.

8 **C. Evaluation of Creative, Scholarly, or Professional Work.** Admission to graduate study  
9 shall be based on critical examination of the academic record; the content of courses taken;  
10 and original compositions, papers, a performance audition and/or professional experience  
11 as appropriate.

12 **D. Institutional Entrance Examinations**

13 **1. Basic Music Competencies.** Through auditions, portfolio reviews, transcript  
14 documentation, music major degree completion, and/or other means determined by  
15 the institution, all students admitted initially to graduate study in music shall  
16 demonstrate prior achievement of baccalaureate-level competence in those areas  
17 considered common to all undergraduate study in music, particularly in terms of their  
18 readiness to undertake graduate studies in their major field. See Standards for  
19 Accreditation VII. or VIII.

20 **2. Basic Language Competencies.** All students admitted to graduate degree study in  
21 music shall demonstrate sufficient knowledge and skill in English to pursue the  
22 required studies.

23 **3. Audition and Examination Design.** Member institutions shall require entrance  
24 auditions and examinations appropriate to the goals and objectives of the graduate  
25 program as a whole and each graduate program, as applicable. These should be  
26 designed to test for present attainments at the entering level, rather than to demonstrate  
27 achievement at a more advanced graduate level. Students admitted with deficiencies  
28 should be required to remove them early in their programs.

29 **4. Faculty Involvement.** The competency levels examined, whether in general or for  
30 specific programs, should be determined by general agreement among the graduate  
31 faculty. Faculty consensus concerning the policies and procedures in this regard is  
32 considered essential since such examinations may be used as placement and/or  
33 entrance criteria.



1 **E. Standard Published Examinations.** The use of standard published examinations in the  
2 admission process is a prerogative of the institution. Any utilization should reflect the  
3 objectives of the graduate program.

## 4 **XII. MASTER'S DEGREES**

### 5 **A. Standards Common to All Master's Degrees**

6 **1. General Requirements.** Master's degree programs must meet the standards for all  
7 graduate degrees as outlined in Standards X. and XI.

8 **2. Major Field or Specialization, Supportive Studies in Music, Studies in Other**  
9 **Fields.** Each graduate student is engaged in concentrated, advanced post-baccalaureate  
10 study in a major field or specialization, and in studies beyond the major that support the  
11 major either directly or by developing breadth of competence.

12 **3. Specific Requirements.** Published materials about any master's degree program  
13 indicate:

- 14 a. Fields, specializations, issues, or problems to be addressed and the content,  
15 techniques, and disciplinary perspectives students are expected to use to address  
16 them.
- 17 b. Expectations for the development of depth and breadth in required subjects or  
18 areas of study.
- 19 c. Levels of knowledge and skill expected upon graduation, including the levels of  
20 artistic, intellectual, and disciplinary engagement with subject matter and projects.

#### 21 **4. Curricular Structure**

22 **a. Major Field or Specialization.** Normally occupies up to two-thirds or at least  
23 one-third of the total degree requirements. Specialization may be defined to  
24 include multiple aspects of music.

25 **b. Supportive Studies in Music.** Normally occupy up to one-half or at least one-  
26 third of the total degree requirements.

27 **c. Studies in Other Fields or Electives.** May or may not be required or available.  
28 However, the norms stated in Standards XII.A.4.a.-b. above indicate that up to  
29 one-third of the total degree requirements may be used for this purpose.

30 **5. Credits.** At least 30 semester hours or 45 quarter hours are required for master's  
31 degrees.

- 1       **6. Comprehensive Review.** A comprehensive review is required (see Standards  
2       X.C.7.[a]. above.) The format is the prerogative of the institution.
- 3       **7. Experimental or Unique Programs.** The requirements below address the most typical  
4       master’s degree formats. Experimental or unique programs will be reviewed using  
5       applicable standards for master’s degrees as guidelines for determining the extent to  
6       which the program is a master’s degree in music and is meeting its published goals for  
7       student achievement.

8       **B. Degree Formats and Titles**

- 9       **1. Specific Master’s Degrees.** These degrees focus on the development of professional  
10       competence in a music specialization or in a music-related field. The degree awarded is  
11       Master of Music, Master of Arts, or Master of Science with the specialization  
12       indicated, e.g., Master of Music in Performance.
- 13       **2. General Master’s Degrees.** These degrees provide a graduate-level overview of the  
14       field of music. The degree awarded is Master of Arts in Music or Master of Science in  
15       Music.
- 16       **3. Master’s Degrees in Teaching.** These degrees normally provide P-12 teacher  
17       preparation curricula following the completion of a baccalaureate degree with a major  
18       in another subject; however, these degrees have different purposes at different  
19       institutions. Degrees with titles such as Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Science  
20       in Teaching, and Master of Music in Teaching will be considered and listed by NASM  
21       as master’s degrees in music only when their requirements and degree structures are  
22       consistent with specific or general master’s degree formats. When the primary purpose  
23       is completion of undergraduate requirements for teacher certification, the program will  
24       be reviewed by the Commission on Accreditation, but not listed in publications of the  
25       Association.
- 26       **4. Extended Master’s Degrees.** Degrees with the titles Master of Fine Arts and Master  
27       of Musical Arts normally require at least 60 semester hours, are structured as specific  
28       master’s degrees, and require at least 50% of the total credits in the major field of  
29       specialization. The Master of Fine Arts in Music may connote multi-disciplinary arts  
30       study when music is the basis for such study and comprises at least 50% of the total  
31       curriculum. Standards for the extended master’s degree in opera performance are found  
32       in Appendix I.B., Section 7.B.

1 **XIII. THE GENERAL MASTER’S DEGREE**

2 A program requiring a variety of studies in the field of music normally occupies at least two-  
3 thirds of the total curriculum. Requirements must include studies in performance, music history  
4 or ethnomusicology, and music theory. Final project requirements are the prerogative of the  
5 institution. Graduates demonstrate a comprehensive knowledge of the field of music.

6 **XIV. SPECIFIC MASTER’S DEGREES**

7 **A. All Specific Master’s Degrees.** In addition to applicable requirements for all graduate  
8 programs and for all master’s degree programs, students in all specific master’s degrees:

- 9 1. Develop advanced capacities to work independently and make effective artistic and  
10 intellectual judgments and professional decisions in the area of specialization.
- 11 2. Demonstrate professional competence in the area of specialization before peers and  
12 faculty.
- 13 3. Produce a final project or some equivalent reviewed by more than one faculty member.  
14 Normally, a faculty committee monitors progress and certifies completion of degree  
15 requirements.

16 **B. Practice-Oriented Degrees**

17 **1. The Master’s Degree in Accompanying, Chamber Music, or Collaborative**  
18 **Keyboard**

- 19 a. Students demonstrate advanced competencies in vocal and/or instrumental  
20 collaboration. Studies in these areas comprise as much as two-thirds or at least  
21 one-third of the curriculum.
- 22 b. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the  
23 major such as theory, history, musicology, ethnomusicology, and performance.  
24 Such supportive studies in music that broaden and deepen musical competence  
25 comprise at least one-third of the curriculum.
- 26 c. All students gain knowledge of repertory and historical performance practices.
- 27 d. Students that emphasize vocal coaching must develop language diction  
28 competencies.
- 29 e. Students that emphasize instrumental collaboration must develop special  
30 competencies in chamber music.

- 1 f. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field, the  
2 student must present at least one full-length public performance.

3 **2. The Master's Degree in Composition**

- 4 a. Students demonstrate advanced competencies in composition. Studies in this area  
5 comprise as much as two-thirds or at least one-third of the total curriculum.
- 6 b. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the  
7 major such as history and literature, theory and analysis, musicology and  
8 ethnomusicology, performance, and pedagogy. Such supportive studies in music  
9 that broaden and deepen musical competence comprise at least one-third of the  
10 total curriculum.
- 11 c. Students must be afforded regular opportunities to hear their works performed.
- 12 d. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field, the  
13 student must submit at least one original composition appropriate as a final project.

14 **3. The Master's Degree in Conducting**

15 **NOTE:** For additional standards and guidelines for programs in choral, orchestral,  
16 and wind conducting, see Appendix I.D.

- 17 a. Students demonstrate advanced competencies in conducting. Conducting,  
18 analytical studies, score reading, and rehearsal techniques comprise as much as  
19 two-thirds or at least one-third of the total curriculum.
- 20 b. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the  
21 major such as orchestration, history and literature, musicology and  
22 ethnomusicology, performance, and composition. Such supportive studies in  
23 music that broaden and deepen musical competence comprise at least one-third  
24 of the total curriculum. Unless a high level of proficiency is determined by  
25 examination, advanced studies in ear training should continue throughout the  
26 degree program.
- 27 c. Choral conducting majors must be proficient in vocal pedagogy and in English,  
28 German, French, Italian, and Latin diction. They must have general phonetic  
29 knowledge and skills that can be related to other languages. They should have  
30 language competencies sufficient to understand texts in the repertory.

- 1 d. Students must be afforded the opportunity for regular conducting experience under  
2 faculty supervision and with an appropriate ensemble.
- 3 e. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field, the  
4 student must conduct a concert-length public performance or the equivalent.

5 **4. The Master's Degree in Jazz Studies**

- 6 a. Students demonstrate advanced competencies in jazz studies including areas such  
7 as jazz performance, improvisation, composition, and arranging. Studies in these  
8 areas comprise as much as two-thirds or at least one-third of the total curriculum.
- 9 b. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the  
10 major such as history and literature, theory and analysis, musicology and  
11 ethnomusicology, and recording and studio techniques. Such supportive studies in  
12 music that broaden and deepen musical competence comprise at least one-third of  
13 the total curriculum.
- 14 c. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field, the  
15 student must present either a public performance or submit at least one original  
16 composition as a thesis.

17 **5. The Master's Degree in Pedagogy**

- 18 a. Students demonstrate advanced competencies in pedagogy of a specific  
19 performance area and its repertory. Studies in these areas comprise as much as  
20 two-thirds or at least one-third of the curriculum.
- 21 b. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the  
22 major such as theory, history, musicology, ethnomusicology, and performance.  
23 Such supportive studies in music that broaden and deepen musical competence  
24 comprise at least one-third of the curriculum.
- 25 c. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field, the  
26 student must present a final project, research paper, and/or recital.

27 **6. The Master's Degree in Performance**

- 28 a. Students demonstrate advanced competencies in performance. Studies in this area  
29 comprise as much as two-thirds or at least one-third of the total curriculum.
- 30 b. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the  
31 major such as theory and analysis, history and literature, musicology and

1 ethnomusicology, and pedagogy. Such supportive studies in music that broaden  
2 and deepen musical competence comprise at least one-third of the total curriculum.

- 3 c. Voice majors are expected to be proficient in English, German, French, and Italian  
4 diction and to have general phonetic knowledge and skills that can be applied to  
5 other languages. They should have language competencies sufficient to understand  
6 texts in the repertory.
- 7 d. Early music or historical performance majors shall develop advanced knowledge  
8 of music history and performance practice.
- 9 e. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field, the  
10 student must present a public performance, which may serve as the thesis.  
11 Normally, the performance includes at least sixty (60) minutes of recital in which  
12 the performer is a soloist.

13 **NOTE:** Normally, conducting is an independent major and not a specialization  
14 under performance. All master's level majors in conducting are reviewed using  
15 standards XIV.B.3. and II.I.1.e.

- 16 **7. The Master's Degree in Opera Performance.** (*The 30-semester-hour master's*  
17 *degree in opera performance is distinct from the 30-semester-hour master's degree in*  
18 *voice performance and the 60-semester-hour Master of Fine Arts or Master of Musical*  
19 *Arts degree in opera performance.*)

20 **NOTE:** For additional standards and guidelines for opera/musical theatre programs,  
21 including 60-semester-hour Master of Fine Arts or Master of Musical Arts degrees in  
22 Opera Performance, see Appendix I.B.

- 23 a. Students demonstrate advanced competencies in voice and opera performance,  
24 including integration of the vocal, musical, theatrical, and diction skills required.  
25 Studies in these areas comprise as much as two-thirds and at least one-third of  
26 the curriculum.
- 27 b. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the  
28 major such as theory and analysis, history and literature, and sight-singing. Such  
29 supportive studies in music that broaden and deepen musical competence  
30 constitute at least one-third of the curriculum.
- 31 c. Students must develop advanced theatre skills.

- 1 d. Students must develop advanced competence in English, Italian, French, and  
2 German diction, and general phonetic knowledge and skills that can be applied to  
3 other languages. They should have language competencies sufficient to understand  
4 texts in the repertory.
- 5 e. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field, the  
6 student shall perform a significant role in at least one fully staged production with  
7 orchestra.

8 **8. The Master's Degree in Sacred Music.** (*Titles used to designate the degree may*  
9 *include, but are not limited to, Church Music, Music and Worship, Worship*  
10 *Leadership, Music Ministry, and Ministry Studies.*)

- 11 a. Depending on the area of specialization, students demonstrate advanced  
12 competencies in sacred music, including but not limited to areas such as  
13 leadership, conducting, and performance; literature and hymnology; worship  
14 practices; composition, improvisation, or arranging; and supervised apprenticeship.  
15 Studies in these areas comprise as much as two-thirds or at least one-third of the  
16 total curriculum.
- 17 b. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the  
18 major such as voice, service instruments, choral ensemble, music technology,  
19 music education, pedagogy, theory and analysis, musicology and  
20 ethnomusicology. Such supportive studies in music that broaden and deepen  
21 musical competence comprise at least one-third of the total curriculum.
- 22 c. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field of  
23 sacred music, the student must present a public recital or a comparable musical  
24 presentation or project as a demonstration of musical competence in performance  
25 or musical leadership. If consistent with program purposes, a Master's thesis may  
26 substitute for or supplement the culminating recital, project, or presentation.

27 **C. Research-Oriented Degrees**

28 **1. Master's Degrees in Music History and Literature, Musicology, or**  
29 **Ethnomusicology**

- 30 a. Students demonstrate advanced competencies in music history and literature  
31 and/or musicology and/or ethnomusicology. Studies in these areas comprise as  
32 much as two-thirds or at least one-third of the total curriculum.

- 1           b. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the  
2           major such as theory and analysis, pedagogy, and performance, including  
3           participation in ensembles appropriate to the major emphasis. Such supportive  
4           studies in music that broaden and deepen musical competence comprise at least  
5           one-third of the curriculum.
- 6           c. In addition to the General Requirements for Admission to Graduate Study (see  
7           Standards XI.), prospective students must have a reading ability in at least one  
8           foreign language.
- 9           d. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field, the  
10          student must submit a final project that demonstrates advanced competence in  
11          research and writing in music history, musicology, or ethnomusicology. The final  
12          project may be a thesis, a series of special papers, or a written work of equivalent  
13          scope and depth.

14          **2. The Master’s Degree in Music Theory**

- 15          a. Students demonstrate advanced competencies in music theory. Studies in this area  
16          comprise as much as two-thirds or at least one-third of the total curriculum.
- 17          b. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the  
18          major such as history and literature, composition, musicology and  
19          ethnomusicology, performance, and pedagogy. Such supportive studies in music  
20          that broaden and deepen musical competence comprise at least one-third of the  
21          total curriculum.
- 22          c. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field, the  
23          student must submit a final project that demonstrates advanced competence in  
24          theoretical research and writing.

25          **D. Degrees Combining Practice and Research Orientations**

26          **1. The Master’s Degree in Theory-Composition**

- 27          a. When the degree objectives are a double major in theory and composition, the  
28          development of advanced competencies in theory and in composition each  
29          comprise at least one-third of the curriculum. See Standards XIV.B.2. and  
30          XIV.C.2. for content.
- 31          b. When the degree objectives are an emphasis in one field, studies in that field  
32          comprise at least one-third of the total curriculum, and studies in both fields



1                   comprise at least one-half of the curriculum. See Standards XIV.B.2. and XIV.C.2.  
2                   for content.

3                   c. Supportive studies in music, such as history and literature, performance, pedagogy,  
4                   and musicology and ethnomusicology comprise at least one-third of the total  
5                   curriculum.

6                   d. As a culminating demonstration of professional capability in the major field, the  
7                   student must submit a theoretical document and/or an original composition.

8                   **2. Research and Practice Combinations**

9                   a. Students demonstrate advanced competencies to develop research studies and  
10                  utilize findings in fields of artistic or pedagogical practice.

11                  b. Essential competencies are advanced knowledge and skills in one or more research  
12                  methodologies, the ability to conceptualize problems generically, and the ability to  
13                  connect research to creative work and problem solving in a field of practice.

14                  c. Requirements for work in various disciplines must be correlated to the specific  
15                  goals and objectives of standardized or individual degree programs.

16                  d. As a culminating demonstration of master's level capability in relating or  
17                  integrating research and practice, the student must complete a final project  
18                  consistent with the goals of the program.

19                  **3. Unique Combinations and Formats.** Master's degree programs may be developed to  
20                  address specific combinations of artistic and intellectual goals that result in  
21                  combinations of fields, content, and processes. Such programs define the breadth,  
22                  depth and scope of the area(s) in which competencies will be developed at the master's  
23                  level. This definition is the basis for program structure, curricular requirements, and the  
24                  nature of the culminating demonstration of master's level capability in the field(s) of  
25                  study.

26                  **E. The Master's Degree in Music Education**

27                  1. Students demonstrate advanced competencies in music education. Studies in this area  
28                  comprise as much as two-thirds or at least one-third of the total curriculum.

29                  2. Students gain knowledge and skills in one or more fields of music outside the major  
30                  such as performance, conducting, theory and analysis, and history and literature. Such  
31                  supportive studies in music that broaden and deepen musical competence comprise at

1 least one-third of the total curriculum. To ensure breadth of competence, it is strongly  
2 recommended that institutions require at least one advanced course in music history,  
3 musicology, or ethnomusicology; one in performance; and one in music theory  
4 analysis.

5 3. Students develop graduate-level perspectives on contemporary issues and problems in  
6 music education. This may include a review of curriculum developments, teaching  
7 methodology, innovations, and multidisciplinary concepts in advanced seminars or by  
8 other means.

9 4. Some institutions make distinctions between practice-oriented and research-oriented  
10 programs. If an institution makes a distinction:

11 a. A practice-oriented program emphasizes the extension of specialized performance  
12 and pedagogy competencies for music teachers. Institutions making such a  
13 designation should require at least one-half of the curriculum to be in performance  
14 and/or pedagogy. A final project in performance and/or pedagogy is  
15 recommended.

16 b. A research-oriented program emphasizes theoretical studies and research projects  
17 in music education. If an institution uses such a designation, at least one-half of the  
18 curriculum should be required in music education research and the associated  
19 research areas. Normally, a research project or thesis is required.

## 20 **F. The Master's Degree in Music Therapy**

21 **1. Music Therapy Studies.** The master's degree shall impart further breadth and depth to  
22 entry-level competencies in music therapy.

23 a. The following advanced competencies shall be developed in all music therapy  
24 programs. Studies in such areas shall comprise at least one-third of the total  
25 curriculum.

26 (1) Music therapy theory, which may include principles, foundations, current  
27 theories of music therapy practice, supervision, education, implications for  
28 research.

29 (2) Advanced clinical specializations and skills, including knowledge of clinical  
30 and supervisory roles of the music therapist. These competencies must be  
31 developed through one or more supervised clinical components in music  
32 therapy that require post-internship, graduate training.

- 1           b. In addition to competencies for all music therapy graduate programs outlined  
2           above, the master’s degree is expected to develop advanced competencies in at  
3           least one of the following areas:
- 4           (1) Research (e.g., quantitative and qualitative research designs and their  
5           application to music therapy practice, supervision, administration, higher  
6           education).
- 7           (2) Musical development and personal growth (e.g., leadership skills, self-  
8           awareness, music skills, improvisation skills in various musical styles, music  
9           technology).
- 10          (3) Clinical administration (e.g., laws and regulations governing the provision of  
11          education and health services, the roles of a clinical administrator in  
12          institutions and clinical settings).
- 13          c. Competencies outlined in items a. and b. above may be developed through various  
14          requirements in music therapy, music, and other disciplines.

15       **2. Other Studies**

- 16          **a. Discipline-Centered Degrees.** For music therapy degrees focused primarily on  
17          practice and research in the field of music therapy:
- 18          (1) Studies in music, related to the objectives of the degree, shall comprise at least  
19          one-third of the curriculum. These studies may include coursework in diverse  
20          areas (e.g., performance, ethnomusicology, advanced musicianship, analysis).
- 21          (2) The remainder of the curriculum shall consist of supportive studies which bear  
22          directly on the specific educational objectives of the degree program and  
23          which facilitate successful completion of the final project. Institutions are  
24          encouraged to develop graduate-level specializations and courses based on  
25          faculty expertise and local resources.
- 26          **b. Multidisciplinary Degrees.** For music therapy degrees with published objectives  
27          for the development of specific disciplinary competence in addition to music  
28          therapy or music, programs must meet the following NASM standards:
- 29          (1) NASM Standards for Accreditation III,I., “Disciplines in Combination.”
- 30          (2) NASM Standards for Accreditation XIV.D.3., “Unique Combinations and  
31          Formats” (also D.2, “Research and Practice Combinations” as applicable to

- 1                    program objectives).
- 2                    (3) All standards for the master’s degree in music therapy listed here with the  
3                    exception of F.2.a. above. However, if the title Master of Music in Music  
4                    Therapy is used for a multidisciplinary degree, the program must meet  
5                    F.2.a.(1) above.
- 6                    3. A final thesis project, clinical paper, or demonstration project is required.
- 7                    4. Students entering the master’s degree without the baccalaureate degree in music  
8                    therapy and/or the MT-BC credential must take a minimum of 30 semester hours or 45  
9                    quarter hours of graduate credit toward advanced competence at the master’s level in  
10                   addition to and beyond any courses needed to demonstrate entry-level competencies  
11                   expected by students entering with a baccalaureate degree in music therapy or the MT-  
12                   BC credential. Students without the baccalaureate degree in music therapy and/or the  
13                   MT-BC credential must also complete a supervised clinical component beyond  
14                   completion of 1200 hours of clinical training required for entry-level competency  
15                   equivalency.
- 16                   5. A master’s degree in music therapy must include a minimum of 12 semester hours or  
17                   18 quarter hours of graduate credit in music therapy, irrespective of all other  
18                   requirements. Courses needed to demonstrate the entry-level competencies in music  
19                   therapy do not count in this regard.
- 20                   6. Master’s degree programs in music therapy may carry the title Master of Arts in Music  
21                   Therapy, Master of Science in Music Therapy, Master of Music in Music Therapy,  
22                   Master of Music Education in Music Therapy, or Master of Music Therapy.
- 23                   Degree programs titled Master of Music Therapy require that at least one-half of the  
24                   coursework be in music therapy studies.
- 25                   Degree programs titled the Master of Music in Music Therapy require that at least one-  
26                   third of the coursework be in music studies as indicated in F.2.a.(1) above., including  
27                   Master of Music in Music Therapy degrees with a multidisciplinary format (see  
28                   F.2.b.(3) above).
- 29                   NASM acknowledges that music therapy study at the graduate level can be placed  
30                   within various contexts, including music, research, music therapy practice, expressive  
31                   therapies, psychology, counseling, education, medicine, allied health, etc.

1           The context of study for the music therapy graduate degree must be clearly outlined in  
2           the program purposes, and must be reflected in the overall content, curricular structure,  
3           and degree title of the program.

4           7. Institutions are expected to state in their published materials any specific certification  
5           or licensure to which their curricula may lead.

## 6   **XV. SPECIALIST PROGRAMS**

7   The title *Specialist in Music* or *Specialist in Education* is also used to indicate advanced  
8   graduate study. To be consistent with standard academic practice, this program should require  
9   at least 30 semester hours beyond the Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master of Music, or  
10   Master of Music Education degrees, and should be structured to provide intensive study  
11   focused primarily on the area of specialization.

## 12   **XVI. DOCTORAL DEGREES IN MUSIC**

13   **A. Purpose.** Doctoral degrees in music are intended for those planning to work at the most  
14   advanced academic and professional levels of musical endeavor. Students admitted to  
15   doctoral study are expected to achieve competencies that enable them to function consistent  
16   with their specializations as musicians, as scholars, and as teachers who can communicate  
17   effectively both orally and in written form.

18           The artist diploma may be more appropriate than the doctoral degree for the student seeking  
19           total concentration in performance or composition at the post-master's level.

### 20   **B. Time, Previous Degree Relationships, Commonalities**

21           1. Doctoral programs require the equivalent of at least three years of full-time graduate  
22           work beyond the baccalaureate. The Master of Music, Master of Arts, or Master of  
23           Science degree may comprise part of this study; however, completion of a master's  
24           degree program or the awarding of a master's degree need not be a prerequisite for  
25           admission to doctoral study.

26           2. Programs leading to the doctorate utilize similar frameworks; the specifics of each  
27           framework and the policies and procedures associated with it are determined by each  
28           institution.

29   **C. Qualifying Prerequisites.** Whatever their area of specialization, candidates for the  
30   doctorate in music shall demonstrate the following as a prerequisite to qualifying for the  
31   degree:

- 1 1. Intellectual awareness and curiosity sufficient to predict continued growth and  
2 contribution to the discipline.
- 3 2. Significant advanced, professional-level accomplishment in performance, composition,  
4 scholarship, or conducting.
- 5 3. A knowledge of the techniques of music theory sufficient to perform advanced  
6 analysis.
- 7 4. A knowledge of representative literature and composers of each major period of music  
8 history.
- 9 5. A knowledge of general bibliographical resources in music.
- 10 6. Considerable depth of knowledge in some aspect of music, such as an historical  
11 period, an aspect of theory, performance practice, or compositional styles.
- 12 7. Sufficient writing and speaking skills to communicate clearly and effectively to  
13 members of the scholarly community and the wider community, and especially in  
14 teaching situations.
- 15 8. Research skills appropriate to the area of study as determined by the institution. At  
16 their discretion, institutions may add other prerequisites in areas such as, but not  
17 limited to, teaching, management, and policy.

#### 18 **D. Types of Degrees**

19 **1. Research-Oriented Degrees.** At the doctoral level, the basic orientation is scholarly or  
20 research activity that makes an original contribution to the chosen field. Advanced  
21 scholarship and research are intensely disciplined efforts; intuition and creativity are  
22 important in the gathering, processing, and interpretation of information.

23 The program most appropriately culminates in the awarding of the degree, Doctor of  
24 Philosophy. It is recognized that some institutions offer research-oriented degrees with  
25 other titles.

26 **2. Practice-Oriented Degrees.** At the doctoral level, the basic orientation is the highest  
27 level of professional practice emphasizing the creation or performance of musical  
28 works and the application and transmission of knowledge about musical works, or  
29 pedagogy, or the practice of music education in the elementary and secondary schools.  
30 Creation, performance, and teaching are highly disciplined efforts; inquiry and

1 investigation, and often research and scholarship, are components of performance  
2 practice.

3 The program most appropriately culminates in the awarding of the degree, Doctor of  
4 Musical Arts or Doctor of Music.

- 5 **3. Degrees with Unique Orientations.** Doctoral programs may be developed that  
6 address various combinations of goals and objectives for research and practice in music  
7 and in the combination of music with other fields.

8 The content of such degrees must be consistent with the degree rubric and any other  
9 designations used in their titles.

10 **4. Specializations**

11 **a. The Doctorate in Composition.** The doctoral degree program in composition  
12 stresses creative activity emphasizing the development of a personal aesthetic  
13 expressible in sound. Competencies also include a broad knowledge of historical and  
14 contemporary compositional practices, music theory, history and criticism, and  
15 creative approaches to relationships of these to the compositional process.

16 **b. The Doctorate in Conducting.** The doctoral degree program in conducting  
17 emphasizes the development of the full range of capabilities for leading ensembles  
18 at the highest musical levels. Conductors are able to conceptualize and realize  
19 artistic aspirations for the performance of musical works. Competencies include  
20 advanced knowledge and skills in musicianship, theoretical and historical analysis,  
21 repertory, rehearsal technique, performance practices, and languages.

22 Students must have the opportunity regularly to conduct rehearsals and  
23 performances under faculty supervision in settings that replicate collegiate-level  
24 and/or professional preparation and presentation.

25 **NOTE:** For additional standards and guidelines for programs in choral,  
26 orchestral, wind conducting, see Appendix I.D.

27 **c. The Doctorate in Jazz Studies.** The doctoral degree programs in jazz studies  
28 emphasizes the integration of performance, improvisation, composition, and  
29 arranging at the highest professional levels. Competencies also include a broad  
30 knowledge of jazz repertory, history, and practice; music theory; and technologies.

31 Students must have the opportunity to perform and hear their works performed.

- 1           **d. The Doctorate in Music Education.** The doctoral degree program in music  
2 education emphasizes the preparation of music administrators, teachers, and  
3 researchers who are able to think abstractly, generalize knowledge, carry on  
4 research and apply research results to their own areas of specialization, and  
5 communicate effectively both orally and in written form. The program involves the  
6 scholarly study of the philosophical and psychological foundations of music  
7 education and the processes of teaching and learning music. Additional studies are  
8 recommended in such areas as performance, aesthetics, ethnomusicology, history  
9 of the other arts, education, anthropology, and sociology.
- 10           **e. The Doctorate in Musicology or Ethnomusicology.** The doctoral degree  
11 program in musicology or ethnomusicology emphasizes the scholarly study of  
12 music and its relationship with other fields. Additional studies are recommended  
13 in such areas as aesthetics, social and political history, art history, anthropology,  
14 and psychology. Competencies include an understanding of the theories and  
15 methodologies of musicology and/or ethnomusicology; bibliography, research,  
16 and analytic techniques; reading ability in appropriate foreign languages; and  
17 writing skills.
- 18           **f. The Doctorate in Pedagogy.** The doctoral degree program in pedagogy  
19 emphasizes the preparation of music teachers and researchers who conduct  
20 inquiries and develop methodologies and repertoires for music study. Programs  
21 normally include comparative methodologies, research in music and music  
22 education, performance, and educational evaluation. Additional studies are  
23 recommended in such areas as psychology, sociology, aesthetics, and music  
24 history.
- 25           Programs with dual objectives in performance and pedagogy must require  
26 demonstration of a high level of professional competency in performance as a  
27 requirement for graduation.
- 28           **g. The Doctorate in Performance**
- 29           **(1) Instrumental or Vocal Performance.** The doctoral degree program in  
30 performance emphasizes presentation in a specific performing medium.  
31 Performance competence is at the highest professional level with historical and  
32 theoretical knowledge supportive of the development of individualized



1                   interpretations. Competencies also include a broad knowledge of repertory and  
2                   literature. Additional studies in pedagogy are recommended.

3                   **(2) Accompanying, Chamber Music, or Collaborative Piano/Keyboard.** The  
4                   doctoral degree program in accompanying, chamber music, or collaborative  
5                   piano/keyboard emphasizes the preparation of musicians who specialize in  
6                   small ensemble performance. Performance competence should be at the  
7                   highest professional level. Theoretical and historical knowledge is highly  
8                   developed to support the preparation of performances. Competencies also  
9                   include a comprehensive knowledge of repertory and literature in the area of  
10                  specialization.

11                  **(3) Early Music.** The doctoral degree program in early music emphasizes the  
12                  preparation of musicians who specialize in historic performance, including on  
13                  period instruments. Performance competence should be at the highest  
14                  professional level. Historical knowledge, especially performance practices,  
15                  and analytical skills in music theory are highly developed. Competencies also  
16                  include a comprehensive knowledge of repertory and literature in the area of  
17                  specialization.

18                  **h. The Doctorate in Sacred Music.** The doctoral program in sacred music  
19                  emphasizes the various applications of music and musical studies to religious  
20                  settings and/or religious thought. Programs vary in their specific objectives and  
21                  normally include studies to enhance musical and historical perspective, especially  
22                  with regard to the development of religion and church music practices.

23                  **i. The Doctorate in Music Theory.** The doctoral degree program in music theory  
24                  emphasizes studies in the organization, language, and grammar of music.  
25                  Competencies also include a broad knowledge of music history, aesthetics, acoustics,  
26                  technological means of research, and the ability to clarify issues of musical structure.