

Sample Patterns for Graduate Study in Music Education

Music Teacher Preparation Working Group

National Association of Schools of Music

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Introduction

This paper explores sample patterns for graduate degrees in music education.

The document:

- has been structured to open and facilitate conversations among local faculties and administrators about new possibilities with regard to curriculum and program design.
- is not related to the accreditation function of NASM, nor does it represent any sort of NASM mandate.
- is a springboard for discussion and creativity, not detailed proposals or plans for action.
- is intended to provoke thoughtful discussions within and about an institution's graduate music program – its goals, its structures, and its resources.
- is based on the premise that a great range of possible patterns exists.
- acknowledges that any potential changes to institutional programs regarding content or curricular structure will reflect the resources available to that particular program now or in the future.
- is part of an online “tool kit” for music faculty and administrators. Users find and use the tools that assist the project or inquiry they are undertaking.

Within the various models, elements can be mixed in new combinations. The ideas here are a set of tools, not pieces of single models that only fit together in one way.

All patterns outlined could provide a structural framework for meeting NASM standards for graduate music education degrees. The NASM standards primarily focus on competency in content – knowledge and skills, not specific curriculum or course plans or delivery models. These are primarily the responsibility of each institution.

This document is in no way a revision of the NASM standards for graduate degrees in music education. Its purpose is to encourage readers to think in new ways about how their programs can best deliver the content specified in the standards. The patterns listed represent potential springboards for innovation and creativity. Some may already be used or be under consideration by some institutions. They demonstrate the flexibility inherent in the NASM standards.

There is no one “right” way to use this resource. It may be used to examine individual components of a curriculum or the curriculum as a whole. It may lead to patterns or curricula approaches not mentioned here.

By presenting possible new patterns, no one is sending a message that the traditional patterns are without value. After careful review, institutions may reaffirm many current practices, or make changes, or create alternatives.

There are many ways to begin looking at new patterns. For example, new patterns may be created by retaining traditional content but using new processes and procedures, or by using traditional processes and procedures to address new content, or by developing new content and new processes and procedures. Within each of these possibilities, there is room for tremendous variation. These three approaches are more conceptual frameworks than new patterns themselves.

Whatever patterns are developed, the issues of internal integrity remain. That is, all of the parts of a program must fit together in a balanced and mutually supportive way. For example, if a program relies heavily on tutorial approaches, it must develop an admission process that determines an applicant's potential to work under tutorial auspices. Another example: consistency of treatment among students in the same degree program remains an issue whatever patterns and procedures are used.

However you choose to use this document, we hope that it will be useful in facilitating discussions within your institution.

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PURPOSES FOR GRADUATE STUDY IN MUSIC EDUCATION

The purposes of most graduate programs or graduate-level study include **one or more** of the following:

1. To develop additional skills in music and music education which build on or further develop those skills acquired in the undergraduate curriculum
2. To expand and refine teaching practices, and to examine and deepen beliefs about teaching in order to more closely align practices and beliefs
3. To prepare for leadership roles in school settings, or other professional venues (musical roles such as guest conductor or clinician, teaching roles as clinician, or professional service in associations)
4. To assume responsibilities for mentoring new teachers, or supervising student teachers
5. To expand areas of knowledge and skill as teaching responsibilities or opportunities call for versatility in career development
6. To develop advanced skills in a specific specialization within music education (such as middle school wind band conducting, Suzuki pedagogy as applied to the K-12 model, teaching jazz for beginners in small combo settings, etc.)
7. To provide students with the necessary credentials for advancement in their current position while acquiring useful knowledge and skills for teaching music
8. To develop advanced knowledge and skills in some aspect of music for use or application in teaching situations
9. To build on competence in music and music education while also developing knowledge in an outside field in order to be able to integrate knowledge across fields comprehensively
10. To develop skills and knowledge to conduct various types of research in the field of music education, both to enhance systematic inquiry in classrooms and to contribute to the overall knowledge base in the profession
11. To synthesize various types and levels of music knowledge and teaching skills and deliver this content in a music curriculum which helps students develop and synthesize music skills including performance, history, theory, musicianship, composition, improvisation, etc.

12. To build knowledge of policy that affects music education and to develop skill in analyzing, creating, and responding to policy that influences arts education, education in general, and other sectors related to music education
13. To explore and pursue personal interest in single or multiple areas
14. To develop the basis for further graduate study and potential roles as future music education faculty members in higher education
15. To develop knowledge of and skills in finding and developing new resources for continued professional growth

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NOTES ON THE SAMPLE PATTERNS

NOTE 1

- The purposes listed in the section above can be fulfilled in the following patterns; however, each pattern will not accommodate all purposes. Some patterns naturally fit some purposes better than others.
- The patterns are written to be consistent with NASM standards for graduate education.
- The patterns presented here may fit more naturally into master's level education, but the concepts are applicable at the doctoral level as well.

NOTE 2

- Admission to graduate study in music is often dependent upon the admission criteria of both the graduate school and the music school or department. General admission considerations may include, but are not limited to:
 - A minimum grade level achieved during undergraduate studies
 - Graduate entrance examinations
 - Writing sample and/or personal statement
 - Letters of recommendation
- Some of the models listed below include *additional* admission requirements. In such cases, these additional requirements should be considered along with those listed above and others required by the institution.

NOTE 3

- For students interested in entering graduate programs in music education, a standard set of **admission criteria and/or diagnostic evaluations** is often required. Types of diagnostic evaluations may include, but are not limited to:
 - A teaching portfolio, including a video of classroom teaching
 - A musicianship audition
 - Entrance examinations demonstrating fundamental competencies required by the institution and/or department or school
 - A 500-word personal statement of goals
 - Three letters of recommendation from former teachers
 - If applicable, a TOEFL score sufficient to assure competency to do graduate-level academic work in English
 - An interview with a faculty member or faculty committee to assess (1) readiness of the student compared with his/her goals and (2) the student's goals and readiness in relation to the objectives and capacities of the institution
- Some of the models listed below include *additional* entrance requirements. In such cases, these requirements are listed under the heading “**Knowledge and Skills Required to Enter.**” They are to be considered along with the types of diagnostic evaluations listed above and any others required by the institution.

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THE SAMPLE PATTERNS

MODEL 1: CURRENT TRADITIONAL MODEL

Goal Advanced skills in music teaching and supportive skills in musicianship

Curricular Structure/Requirements

- Students choose area or areas of specialization.
- Musicianship (e.g. performance, history, theory, etc.) and music education classes as related to areas of focus.
- Regular evaluation of student progress related to both knowledge and skills in musicianship and in pedagogy
- Opportunities for student teaching at the primary, secondary, or postsecondary level, if appropriate
- Studies in music pedagogy – practice- or research-oriented
- Studies in related fields
- Final independent project and/or research project or thesis demonstrating student's knowledge and skills in either performance or music education

Basic Operational Issues

- Areas of faculty expertise
- Evaluation mechanisms
- Practice-oriented programs versus research-oriented programs

MODEL 2: SUMMER INTENSIVE

Goal Advanced skills in music education obtained during an intensive program that meets on campus for two or more summers

Curricular Structure/Requirements

- Students and faculty match student's interests to course offerings.
- Students choose area or areas of specialization.
- Musicianship and music education classes as related to areas of focus.
- Regular evaluation of student progress related to both knowledge and skills in musicianship and in teaching
- Opportunities for student teaching
- Studies in music pedagogy and related disciplines
- Final independent project demonstrating student's knowledge and skills in the field of music education

Basic Operational Issues

- Availability of faculty and institutional resources during the summer
- Completion of supportive non-music classes, as appropriate
- Scheduling and coordination of teaching experiences, if appropriate
- Advising of year-long students versus summer-only students

MODEL 3: ONE STRONG CONNECTION

Goal To develop in-depth competence in music education and to make one interdisciplinary connection with a field beyond music

Admission Requirements

- Rationale for study in outside field
- A list of recent studies and experiences in the outside field
- Evidence of readiness to study in the outside field at an advanced level

Knowledge and Skills Needed to Enter

- Examinations associated with the major field or supportive areas
- Evaluation of readiness or potential to work in an outside field, and placement as appropriate in that field

Curricular Structure/Requirements

- One-third work in music
- One-third work in music education
- One-third work in the outside field (for example, an internship or other field experience)
- Final project based on connections between music, music education, and the outside field

Basic Operational Issues

- Faculty or faculty teams to oversee work and projects connecting major area to an outside field
- Assuring that at least 50% of the work is accomplished at the graduate level
- Students may encounter issues related to prerequisites for courses in other departments.

MODEL 4: COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATION

Goal Advanced integration of knowledge and skill areas addressed in the undergraduate music education degree, including general music knowledge and skills.

Admission Requirements

- A 2000-word paper or a videotape equivalent demonstrating capacity to integrate work in music education with knowledge and skills in two other major areas

Knowledge and Skills Needed to Enter

- Fundamental level of ability to synthesize and integrate within and across musical competency areas

Curricular Structure/Requirements

- One-third credits in music education
- Completion of course work or projects demonstrating abilities to integrate two areas in depth
- Completion of course work or projects demonstrating abilities to integrate across multiple areas
- Two final oral and/or written and/or project-based comprehensive examinations demonstrating basic mastery and ability to integrate—for example, public lecture, take-home examinations based on a piece of music or writing, an impromptu lesson or rehearsal demonstrating competence with issues of background and musical structures, etc.

Basic Operational Issues

- Admission
- Diagnostic evaluations
- Common definitions about the level of competency in separate areas and their integration expected for graduation
- Choices of integration topics must be based on availability of faculty expertise
- Cooperation among faculty specialists
- Mentorship for individual students
- Some classes/tutorials based on integration techniques more than knowledge acquisition in the areas being integrated
- Little to no time for remediation because of challenging curricular structure

MODEL 5: ISSUES BASED

Goal Graduate course work in music education and related areas that prepare for work on a set of problems in music education. Examples include but are not limited to teaching composition in high school band, the sociological impacts of music programs in public schools, the influence of education policy on music education, and so forth.

Knowledge and Skills Needed to Enter

- Ability to work independently in the major area encompassed by the issue chosen (also upon completion of course work)

Curricular Structure/Requirements

- Successful completion of 15 semester hours of graduate course work in music education and related areas and a comprehensive examination
- Successful completion of four major problems in the major and associated areas, one or two to be completed by teams and at least two to be completed independently. Problem may be completed as part of coursework where work by teams or individuals is discussed on a weekly basis. One of the individual projects is considered the final project, and thus has the characteristics of a final project.
- An oral examination based on work done in the four projects

Basic Operational Issues

- Agreement on acceptance levels
- Diagnosing the ability to work independently upon entrance
- Agreement on criteria for passing the project requirements and the oral examination based on them
- Developing abilities to identify the natures of and connections among problems, and to create comprehensive, valid formulations of problems that replicate professional work in the field
- Developing abilities to work with and solve, or make progress with problems identified and formulated
- Organization of faculty to mentor problem solving projects

MODEL 6: FIELD-BASED EDUCATION

Goal Utilize student's teaching as a laboratory for concepts learned through distance education program

Admission Requirements

- 1000 word essay/proposal on pertinent issues the student is encountering in the profession and, based on this, several general goals he/she seeks to attain through graduate study
- A personal interview with a faculty committee to determine the student's goals and his/her understanding of what is needed to achieve them in the context of the graduate program

Knowledge and Skills Needed to Enter

- Determination of basic skills in distance learning technologies and independent work

Curricular Structure/Requirements

- Students must choose an area of specialization.
- Graduate music and music education classes comprise one-half of the curriculum.
- Remainder of the curriculum is designed by the student and a committee of three faculty. Following review of the student's admission proposal, faculty meet with the student (through Skype and other appropriate technologies) to gather further information about present issues or challenges the student is encountering.
- A set of goals are developed and agreed upon by the student and faculty, which includes two substantial projects to assist in developing knowledge and displaying achievement of goals.
- Student utilizes distance education resources, including online databases, periodicals, video and audio recordings, etc. to gain knowledge in the project areas.
- In-person, weekend visits to campus may be important at various stages in the program.
- Projects must include the use of student's own classroom as a laboratory for developing the projects. Some of the classroom experiences must be videotaped.
- Student meets remotely or in person with one faculty mentor as needed, but at least monthly. The meeting includes discussion of progress on the projects and review of footage from classroom laboratory experiences.
- An oral examination with three faculty committee members based on work done in the two projects

Basic Operational Issues

- Organization of weekly and/or monthly meetings with faculty mentor
- Predictable and unpredictable technology issues
- Agreement on criteria for passing the project requirements and the oral examination based on them
- Developing skills in faculty to assist student by reviewing classroom laboratory footage. Must be able to discern from general classroom issues and the specific issues being addressed through projects
- Organization of faculty to mentor problem solving projects

MODEL 7: PROJECT-BASED, SELF-DIRECTED

Goal High-level skills in music teaching, plus fluency in at least two fields associated with the major, perhaps chosen from a pre-selected list

Admission Considerations

- Grades of B+ (3.5) or higher in undergraduate basic theory and history courses
- Through faculty evaluation of student's experience, readiness to undertake academic aspects in the proposed area of study, and capability to complete the program

Curricular Structure/Requirements

- Students choose areas of specialization. Two examples are history or orchestral pedagogy.
- Student must successfully complete three large projects related to a single theme—for example, in a student choosing to seek history and orchestral pedagogy as second areas:
 1. Project – develop a curriculum which is intended to develop comprehensive knowledge of a specific historic musical issue (acquiring knowledge)
 2. Project – develop a curriculum which teaches the development of the orchestra and includes a lecture concert of historical music which tracks this development (representing knowledge through application)
 3. Performance – serve as a guest clinician for a day to a local string program. Provide both master classes and individual lessons (applying knowledge in the field)

- Build and develop student knowledge necessary to complete projects. Students are assigned to and/or choose courses and other offerings that relate to and help them complete projects; however, a student may have few or no courses required.
- Projects chosen and agreed to by committee that includes major teacher, academic evaluator, and a third faculty member
- Projects are overseen by a project director; a student must have at least two different project directors.
- Evaluations are conducted like juries, by an appropriate body of faculty.

Basic Operational Issues

- Admitting students, particularly matching specific students with the capabilities, orientations, and resources of the program
- Awarding standard academic credit—i.e., each project equals at least 6 credits
- Tutorial time, organization, and student evaluation systems
- Ensuring that projects replicate or lead to greater proficiency in professional responsibilities
- Appropriate assignments and criteria for academic diagnosticians and project directors

MODEL 8: SUMMMER TUTORIAL

Goal Further develop general teaching and music skills and identify and develop knowledge and skills in one specific area

Admission Requirements

- 1000 word essay discussing the specific area where student would like to gain knowledge and skill, including an assessment of present conditions, goals for the future, a proposed plan of action to reach the goals, and ways that the university and its faculty can assist the student
- A personal interview with a faculty committee to determine the student's goals and his/her understanding of what is needed to achieve them

Knowledge and Skills Required to Enter

- Determination of basic skills in distance learning technologies and the ability to do independent work

Curricular Structure/Requirements

- Following acceptance, music education faculty reviews essay and works with other music department faculty to locate an appropriate tutor based on the specific area to be addressed by the student.
- Student, music education faculty member, and faculty tutor meet via distance technology to decide on a workable course of action to develop specific skills and a method for assessing achievement of skills, mostly in the form of juries or projects.
- Student attends summer intensives that address graduate-level music education and music topics. Summer classes span two year's summer terms with multiple intensives each summer.
- Student works independently throughout the school year with their faculty tutor to address skill development. Long-term assignments are given by the tutor. Progress is checked through regular computer/online meetings with the tutor and student.
- Student meets toward end of the collegiate school year in person with their faculty tutor for juries and/or project review.

Basic Operational Issues

- Admission qualifications and procedure
- Evaluation of ability for independent study
- Criteria for assuring an equivalent completion standard for disparate programs
- Faculty development to enable operation of such programs
- Mentorship and tutorial guidance
- Checkpoints to assure the student is maintaining momentum toward completion
- Evaluation mechanisms

MODEL 9: GUIDED INDEPENDENT PROGRAM

Goal In-depth study of a specific area after demonstration of general competencies

Admission Requirements

- Present aspirations and credentials to enter proposed area of study
- Present outside recommendations concerning capacity for independent work
- Pass an evaluation to determine capacity to work independently

Curricular Structure/Requirements

- Student identifies area of focus.
- Student, in consultation with faculty, determines a plan of action and sets levels of expected achievement.
- Preset for student in terms of knowledge and skills as well as in terms of course levels required (applies to music education, music, and other supportive fields)
- Work under the guidance of one or two mentors or tutors to prepare for a series of in-depth examinations in music education
- Complete a short independent project on an assigned or agreed upon topic without assistance in a three-week period
- Tutors may assign or recommend course work, but it may or may not be required.
- In-depth examinations and final projects in music and music education must be passed to graduate.

Basic Operational Issues

- Admission criteria
- Admission evaluations
- In-depth examinations assuring sufficient breadth
- Tutoring/mentorship systems
- Criteria for accepting final projects
- Progress checkpoints throughout the program

MODEL 10: CONTRACT PROGRAM

Goal Use of institutional resources to help a student achieve what he/she wants to achieve professionally. The range may be broad or narrow. The goal for the student is expanded proficiency.

Admission Requirements

- A personal interview with a faculty committee to determine the student's goals and his/her understanding of what is needed to achieve them
- Statement indicating student's understanding of the rigorous nature of the program
- Proposal concerning area of focus

Curricular Structure/Requirements

- Determined by a faculty committee in consultation with the student drawing from the range of resources and evaluation mechanisms available at the institution—a contract
- Completion of the contract, i.e., “you must complete the following and be able to demonstrate the following knowledge, skills, and capacities to graduate from this program.”

Basic Operational Issues

- Admission
- Guidelines for the establishment of contracts that assure attention to breadth/depth issues in music and music education
- Criteria for assuring an comparable completion standard for disparate programs
- Faculty development to enable operation of such programs
- Organization of content, scheduling of instruction and evaluation
- Mentorship and tutorial guidance
- Checkpoints to assure the student is maintaining momentum toward completion
- Evaluation mechanisms

Note: This resource is derived from and is a variation of the NASM document *New Patterns for Masters Degrees*.