

School of Music
College of Creative Arts
West Virginia University
Graduate Theory Entrance Exam
Purpose, Description, Administration, Policies

Purpose of the Graduate Theory Entrance Exam (GTEE)

To evaluate the incoming graduate student's preparation and skills in basic musicianship and analysis necessary to professional growth and performance.

To determine the student's readiness for advanced work as measured by the undergraduate level of skills and knowledge expected in Music 262 (Written Theory 3), Music 263 (Aural Theory 4), and Music 264 (Written Theory 4) in the School of Music, West Virginia University.

Who Should Take this Exam?

All newly admitted graduate students, including graduates of West Virginia University, are required to take the GTEE. Students at West Virginia University continuing from a master's into a doctoral program who have already taken the GTEE as a master's student are not required to take the GTEE.

Preparation

The Area of Music Theory/Composition strongly recommends that all incoming graduate students review prior to the exam their skills and understanding of the material and topics listed below. A poor performance in any of these areas will constitute evidence of one or more deficiencies which must be addressed before the student will be permitted to enroll in advanced analysis courses in music theory.

Currently, the Freshman sequence of basic musicianship courses at WVU use Benward/White, *Music in Theory and Practice*, vol. 1, 6 ed. for written theory. In aural theory, three texts are used: Benward *Ear Training: A Technique for Listening*, 5 ed., Ottman, *Music for Sight Singing*, 4 ed., and Froseth and Blaser, *The MLR Aural Skills Training Series: Verbal Association Skills Program. Part B: Melody* (G. I. A. Publications, 1983), Practice CD.

The sophomore sequence in aural and written theory employs locally generated materials. The curriculum in written theory is drawn from Forte, *Tonal Harmony in Concept and Practice*, 3 ed., and Aldwell and Schachter, *Harmony and Voice Leading*, 2 ed. Aural theory continues with Benward and Ottman.

Selection of text and/or curriculum is subject to change. Substantial changes which affect the content of the GTEE will be posted on the Division of Music's web site.

Students with particular questions regarding either their previous training and/or the content of any of the questions on the GTEE should contact the Director of Graduate Studies by letter, phone, or email. Questions will be directed to the proper faculty for prompt response and study suggestions.

Description of Content and Skills

Aural (Ear Training)

Melodic Dictation. Correct notation of pitch and rhythm in treble or bass clef of a tonal melody no more than 25 beats in length.

Harmonic Dictation. Correct notation of the outer voices (soprano and bass), figured bass numbers, and roman numeral chord functions of a tonal choral composition 7–9 chords in length. Chord vocabulary can consist of

diatonic and chromatic harmonies, including secondary (applied) dominants and leading tone chords, borrowed chords, Neapolitan sixth, augmented sixths, and enharmonic modulation.

Sight Singing. Students should be able to sing a moderately chromatic and/or modulatory melody at sight, demonstrating expertise in some system of verbal-association (movable *do*, fixed *do*, numbers, etc.). Possible exceptions can be made for individuals with perfect pitch.

Written (Composition)

Students should be able to spell and resolve dissonant and/or chromatic chords in a four-voice choral texture, following generally accepted rules of spacing, doubling, and voice leading.

Students should be able to realize in a four-voice choral texture a tonal figured bass, following generally accepted rules of spacing, doubling, and voice leading. Chord vocabulary can consist of diatonic and chromatic harmonies, including secondary (applied) dominants and leading tone chords, Neapolitan sixth, augmented sixths, and various diatonic and chromatic modulation techniques. Conventional non-chord tone patterns (e. g., passing tone, neighbor tone, suspension, etc.) are included. In addition, the student should be able to give a plausible interpretation of the chord functions, using Roman numeral harmonic theory.

Pop Chords.

Students should be able to demonstrate an acquaintance with a system of pop chord symbols by identifying and labeling the harmonies in a 4–5 measure segment from an excerpt realized in five voices taken from the repertoire of the America Popular Ballad (c. 1920–1964).

Analysis

Students should be able to identify and discuss in clear and coherent English the compositional processes contributing to the articulation of the intelligible form in representative styles of Western art music between 1700 and c. 1911. These styles include: High Baroque, Classical, Romantic, early Modern. Students may choose whatever analytic tools or techniques they wish. Responses will be evaluated according to the appropriateness of the chosen technique and the extent to which the analysis is consistent with the content of the piece as represented in the score.

Special Area Exams for Graduate Students in Theory and Composition

Exams in more specialized areas of sixteenth- and eighteenth-century counterpoint, orchestration, and electronic music are available for students wishing to demonstrate proficiency in subject areas which are undergraduate prerequisites for graduate study in Theory and Composition.

Procedures and Policies

The GTEE is given during registration week on the Thursday afternoon prior to the Monday beginning classes, the day the University reserves for diagnostic testing prior to advising. (Other testing times can be made with prior arrangement through the office of the Director of Graduate Studies in Music.) The standard exam (ear training, written, analysis, pop chords) will be two (2) hours in duration. The sight singing portion will consist of a one-on-one five-minute session outside the regular exam room with an evaluator during the regular exam period. The special area exams will be 30 minutes in duration and will be given immediately following the standard exam.

All newly admitted graduate students are required to take the GTEE the first semester they enter the University. Failure to do so could jeopardize the student's progress through the degree.

The GTEE results, scored in percentage correct and broken down by category (ear training, written, analysis, sight singing, pop chords), will be available to the Director of Graduate Studies the following Friday morning at 9 a.m. The Director will then distribute these results to other area advisors, where appropriate.

A score of 70 or better on any portion of the GTEE is considered passing. A score of 69 or below will constitute a deficiency for that portion of the exam.

A deficiency can be addressed in the following ways:

- 1) A deficiency in any of the specialized subjects will be fulfilled either by taking the course in that area or retaking the relevant portion of the proficiency exam at the next regularly scheduled exam period.
- 2) The student may retake the entire exam at the next regularly scheduled time.
- 3) For an aural and/or written deficiency, enrollment and successful completion of Music 561, Graduate Theory Review.
- 4) For a deficiency in analysis alone, enrollment and successful completion of Music 264.

Since the identification of a deficiency represents a current lack of readiness for more advanced work, students with one or more deficiencies will not be permitted to enroll in any upper level analysis course (Music 463 or 464) or any 700-level analysis or theory pedagogy course until all deficiencies are addressed. Simultaneous enrollment in a course addressing a deficiency and an advanced course in theory is not permitted.

Failure to pass after two attempts all portions of the GTEE or the course(s) addressing the student's deficiencies will constitute grounds for dismissal from the graduate program in music. Final determination of the status of a student in this situation will be made by the Committee on Graduate Studies of the School of Music, West Virginia University.