

Wells School of Music Graduate Assessment Tests Guidelines

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Introduction

Two (2) weeks prior to the first semester of study, each incoming graduate student must have completed the Graduate Assessment Tests. These tests comprise the Music History Assessment Test and the Music Theory Assessment Test. They are administered online through the University's learning management system, D2L, and can be taken anytime once access is granted by the graduate coordinator. A minimum score of 70% on the required Music History Assessment Test waives the MHL 501 course requirement. Students scoring below 70% on the Music History Assessment Test are required to take MHL 501 (Style, Form, & Genre) prior to enrolling in other Music History course(s). A minimum score of 70% on the required Music Theory Assessment Test waives the MTC 591 course requirement. Students scoring below 70% on the Music Theory Assessment Test are required to take MTC 591 (Music Theory Review) prior to enrolling in other Music Theory course(s). Students that do not complete the required Graduate Assessment Tests by the specified date are required to take MHL 501 and MTC 591.

Required Technology

The assessment tests are administered online with an automated test proctoring software called Proctorio that requires use of a Google Chrome browser with a special extension. All answers will be input online, and students may not access other aspects of their computer (the screen, microphone and camera will be recorded).

Instructions for installing the extension are provided in the quiz, and some students encounter a problem that requires deleting the Proctorio extension in Chrome settings, refreshing the browser page, and reinstalling the Proctorio extension. There is no password required to take the test: if one is requested, this indicates that the extension is not installed properly. Proctorio support and resources are available [here](#).

Format of the Assessment Test in Music History

The first section of the test consists of multiple-choice questions that cover topics from Western music history from the medieval period through the twentieth century. Most ask about formal types, genre, and general stylistic traits rather than detailed questions about a given composer, although some composer-specific and date-specific questions may also appear.

The second section concerns score analysis of two short musical scores from different periods of

music history. Each component comprises approximately 12 questions in multiple-choice format that cover such topics as form, genre, harmony, key relationships, and compositional techniques.

For the final section, two recorded examples from different historical periods will be played. Students will be asked to identify the stylistic period and a probable composer for each. These answers must be justified by making at least three specific and historically informed observations about the musical style of the selection.

Preparing for the Assessment Test in Music History

The test covers a full span of Western music history, so any detailed collegiate textbook of general musical history (such as *A History of Western Music* by Donald Jay Grout and Claude Palisca or *Music in Western Civilization* by Craig Wright and Bryan R. Simms) should be adequate for preparation. Please note that textbooks commonly used in courses for “music appreciation” (such as Kerman & Tomlinson’s *Listen*) will likely not be sufficient.

The following questions are examples of the types of questions on the test:

1. Which of the following was NOT a member of the group of French composers known as *Les Six*?
 - A. Gabriel Fauré
 - B. Arthur Honegger
 - C. Darius Milhaud
 - D. Germaine Tailleferre
2. Mozart’s *Die Zauberflöte* (the Magic Flute) is what type of dramatic stage piece?
 - A. opera seria
 - B. opera buffa
 - C. Singspiel
 - D. opera giacoso
3. Which of the following formal types is most commonly encountered in the opening movement of an eighteenth-century symphony?
 - A. rondo
 - B. A B A
 - C. sonata form
 - D. fugue
4. This type of stately Polish processional dance by Chopin and other composers is characterized by triple meter, and a rhythmic pattern that accents the second beat of the measure:
 - A. waltz
 - B. etude
 - C. polonaise
 - D. mazurka
5. The term “atonality” refers to compositions that:
 - A. use combinatoriality
 - B. employ “tonal” cadences
 - C. include “12-tone rows”
 - D. lack a tonal center
6. *Notes inégales* is a French Baroque performance practice that concerns which of the following elements of music:
 - A. counterpoint
 - C. dynamics

- B. rhythm D. instrumentation
7. Liszt's *Orpheus* and *Les Preludes* are examples of:
- A. opera C. symphonic poems
B. absolute music D. oratorios
8. A contemporary composer using an intentionally limited musical vocabulary, often called "minimalism," is
- A. Anton Webern C. Jean Sibelius
B. Pierre Boulez D. Philip Glass
9. The prayers of the Mass and Offices whose texts are invariable and do not change from day to day within the liturgical year are termed
- A. Coptic C. Ordinary
B. Byzantine D. Proper
10. Of the following, which does NOT characterize a concerto cadenza in the Classical era?
- A. It was usually improvised.
B. A prominent orchestral 6/4 chord introduced the cadenza.
C. It was frequently based on the thematic material from the movement in which it appeared.
D. It was usually placed at the mid-point of the movement.
11. With whom did many American composers study with in Paris during the 1920s and 1930s:
- A. Igor Stravinsky C. Pierre Boulez
B. Claude Debussy D. Nadia Boulanger
12. Who was the 20th century English composer of the operas *Peter Grimes* and *Turn of the Screw*?
- A. Guastav Holst C. Benjamin Britten
B. Ralph Vaughan Williams D. Thomas Tallis
13. In addition to his work as a composer, Mahler was also a
- A. professor at Harvard University C. conductor
B. music publisher D. instrument maker
14. Which of the following is characteristic of the instrumental music of Beethoven's late period?
- A. fugues C. sonata-rondos
B. ostinatos D. cantus-firmi
15. The terms "prima prattica" and "seconda prattica" were most associated with the style of

- A. Caccini
- B. Monteverdi
- C. Landini
- D. Respighi

16. Schubert's first movement sonata forms are known for their

- A. 3-key expositions
- B. long waiting passages
- C. bipolarity
- D. lack of development sections

17. Which of the following is NOT part of a typical polyphonic setting of the Mass?

- A. Gloria
- B. Alleluia
- C. Sanctus
- D. Agnus Dei

18. Which of the following is an anthology of madrigals by various English composers and associated with Queen Elizabeth I?

- A. Musica transalpina
- B. Magnus Liber
- C. Triumphs of Oriana
- D. Odhecaton A

19. Which of the following musical developments is NOT associated with the Enlightenment?

- A. emergence of public concerts
- B. publishers and piano builders market to the middle class
- C. decline of the symphony
- D. rise of comic opera

20. Which of the following is NOT true of a Baroque opera seria?

- A. has a *lieto fine* (happy ending)
- B. both recitativo secco/semplce and recitativo accompagnato/obbligato were employed
- C. plots characteristically dealt with contemporary social issues of the day
- D. da capo arias were frequently employed

Format of the Assessment Test in Music Theory

The test assesses a students' ability to do the following:

- 1) List pitches of chromatic chords given a key and chord function symbol, including secondary function, augmented sixth and Neapolitan chords.
- 2) Examine passages of music and identify elements that correspond to music theory terminology, such as those related to:
 - a) non-chord tones (*appoggiatura, suspension, etc.*)
 - b) motive (*tonal transposition, inversion, etc.*)
 - c) harmony (*secondary dominant and leading-tone chord, secondary pre-dominant, mode mixture, sus, whole-tone, tonic expansion, circle of fifths progression, retrogression, etc.*)
 - d) modulation (*direct, common-chord pivot, enharmonic, etc.*)

- e) cadences (*authentic, turnaround chords, elision, etc.*)
- f) rhythm (*syncopation, hemiola, compound meter, hypermeter, etc.*)
- g) contrapuntal motion (*similar, oblique, etc.*)
- h) texture (*homophony, non-imitative polyphony, etc.*)

- 3) Use a chord symbol (C7/E, etc.) to label harmony based on a figured bass
- 4) Examine a musical passage that exhibits modulation and identify modulation methods (*direct, common-chord pivot, enharmonic, etc.*)

Students may use a blank sheet of staff paper and a piano or keyboard for assistance taking the exam.

Preparing for the Assessment Test in Music Theory

The content of the test is common to undergraduate curricula in harmony that cover the content listed above (counterpoint and voice-leading is not covered aside from the most basic principles). Good textbooks for preparation would include *Tonal Harmony* by Kostka and Payne or *The Complete Musician* by Laitz.

The following questions are examples of the types of questions on the test:

Writing chromatic chords

- 1) Spell V^4_2/ii in F major, listing the bass tone first.
- 2) Spell Neap.⁶ in B minor, listing the bass tone first.
- 3) Spell Fr^{+6} in G minor, listing the bass tone first.

Terminology

Locate occurrences in this musical passage that corresponds to each of these terms; [audio is online here](#), beginning at 0 minutes, 35 seconds.

- 4) A secondary pre-dominant
- 5) A third inversion chord
- 6) A chromatic neighbor-tone
- 7) A motive transformed through ornamented transposition
- 8) A half cadence
- 9) A circle of fifths progression
- 10) An anacrusis

The image shows a musical score for the song "The Ocean's Near the Shore". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is on a single staff. Chord symbols are placed above and below the staff to indicate the harmonic accompaniment. The lyrics are written below the staff.

Chord symbols above the staff: G, F#m7, Bm7, Em7, A7, D

Chord symbols below the staff: C#m7(b5), F#7, Bm, Bm/A, E7/G#, A7

Lyrics: Oh, I, could tell you why The o - cean's near the shore I could think of things I'd ne-ver think be - fore, And then I'd sit and think some more

Analysis. Use this musical excerpt to answer questions that follow; [audio is online here](#).

1. Allegro

6 *Mit tiefer Empfindung* *p*

10 *f* *dim.*

- 11) What texture type is exhibited in bars 1-5?
 - a) Heterophony
 - b) Homophony
 - c) Non-imitative polyphony
 - d) Imitative polyphony
 - e) Monophony
 - f) Imitative monophony
 - g) Non-imitative polyphony
- 12) What texture type is exhibited in bars 7-13? (*use the same choices as above*)
- 13) What harmony is found on the downbeat of bar 2 (use a Roman numeral)?
- 14) What harmony is found on the third beat of bar 5 (use a Roman numeral)?
- 15) Locate an instance of a *pedal tone*.
- 16) Locate one or more *appoggiaturas*.

Analysis. Use this musical excerpt to answer questions; [audio is online here](#).

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Allegro molto, ♩ = 180

- 17) What type of harmony is prominent?
 - a) Major/minor
 - b) Sus
 - c) Octatonic
 - d) Whole-tone
 - e) Meridian

- 18) What term best describes this music's approach to meter?
 - a) Simple
 - b) Compound
 - c) Mixed

- 19) What polyphonic motion type is represented in the left-hand dyads?
 - a) Contrary
 - b) Parallel
 - c) Oblique
 - d) Similar

- 20) Which compositional approaches/techniques are evident here?
 - a) Imitative polyphony
 - b) Ground bass
 - c) Additive rhythm
 - d) Atonality
 - e) Dodecaphony
 - f) Whole-tone
 - g) Metric modulation

Modulation. Use this musical excerpt to answer questions; [audio is online here](#).

The musical score is for a piano piece in 2/4 time, marked 'Andante.'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system (bars 1-5) begins in B-flat major. In bar 1, there is a piano (*p*) dynamic and a first fingering (*1*) on the right hand. A modulation occurs between bars 1 and 6. The second system (bars 6-8) begins in D minor. In bar 6, there is a piano (*p*) dynamic and a first fingering (*1*) on the right hand. A modulation occurs between bars 6 and 8. The score includes performance markings such as *cresc.* (crescendo) and *sempre staccato*. Fingerings and articulation marks are present throughout.

- 21) The modulation that occurs between bars 1 and 6 occurs via what technique?
- a) Direct modulation
 - b) Pivot modulation by common-chord
 - c) Pivot modulation by enharmonic common-chord
 - d) Common-tone modulation
- 22) The modulation that occurs between bars 6 and 8 occurs via what technique? (*use the same choices as above*)

An answer key is found on the next page

Answer Key — Music History

- 1) A. Gabriel Fauré
- 2) C. Singspiel
- 3) C. sonata form
- 4) C. polonaise
- 5) D. lack a tonal center
- 6) B. rhythm
- 7) C. symphonic poems
- 8) D. Philip Glass
- 9) C. Ordinary
- 10) D. It was usually placed at the mid-point of the movement.
- 11) D. Nadia Boulanger
- 12) C. Benjamin Britten
- 13) C. conductor
- 14) A. fugues
- 15) B. Monteverdi
- 16) A. 3-key expositions
- 17) B. Alleluia
- 18) C. Triumphs of Oriana
- 19) C. decline of the symphony
- 20) C. plots characteristically dealt with contemporary social issues of the day

Answer Key — Music Theory

- 1) C (and D, F#, and A in any order)
- 2) E (and C and G in any order)
- 3) Eb (and G, A and C# in any order)
- 4) C#m7(b5) – in the fifth bar (at the lyric “think of things I’d”)
- 5) Bm/A – in the sixth bar (at the lyric “and then I’d”)
- 6) A# with the lyric “could” and the D#s in “think of things I’d never thunk”
- 7) The music over “think of things I’d never thunk before,” as compared to “ocean’s near the shore.”
- 8) In the last bar of the example
- 9) Starting in the second complete bar on F#m7 through the D chord at the end of the first system.
- 10) The “pick-up” note (D) at the beginning
- 11) Homophony
- 12) Imitative polyphony
- 13) iv (F is a non-chord tone)
- 14) vii^{o7}/iv
- 15) The long D beginning in bar 7 is a pedal tone when it is not part of the harmony (bars 9 and 13). The left-hand G in bar 4 is also a pedal tone on the first beat of the bar.
- 16) The F that begins bar 7, the C that begins bar 8, the G# that begins bar 10... there are more.
- 17) Octatonic
- 18) Mixed

- 19) Oblique
- 20) Additive rhythm; atonality
- 21) Direct modulation
- 22) Pivot modulation by common-chord