



UNIVERSITY OF  
OREGON

School of Music and Dance

# Music Education Graduate Student Handbook



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**School of Music  
and Dance**

(Updated 14 September 2023)



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PLAGIARISM – EVERY STUDENT’S WORK IS EXPECTED TO REPRESENT PERSONAL EFFORTS. IN CASES INVOLVING ALLEGATIONS OF PLAGIARISM (SEE [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=ATRLG6IAGo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atRLG6IAGo) FOR AN INFORMATIVE VIDEO REGARDING PLAGIARISM) OR ANY OTHER FORM OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY, THE PROCEDURES SET OUT IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON “STUDENT CONDUCT CODE” ARE FOLLOWED. ALL UNRESOLVED DIFFERENCES (AS WELL AS REPEAT OFFENSES) ARE REFERRED TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES FOR HEARING IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CODE. .... 7

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## WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

*Dear Music Education Majors:*

*On behalf of the Music Education Faculty, I want to welcome you to the University of Oregon Music Education Program. With your acceptance into this program, you become part of a long and prestigious line of music educators who are known universally as the finest in the country. Many students apply, but you were selected – congratulations, as this is a major accomplishment.*

*Starting this fall, you will begin an academic journey designed to give you the skills, knowledge, and motivation necessary to become one of the highly sought University of Oregon music education alumni. We have many indicators of the quality of this program, but I would like to share just two with you in this welcome letter:*

- 1. Each year, we have many leaders in our profession who visit our campus. To my recollection, every one of them has left amazed at the quality of the students, curriculum, resources, and faculty. Many go so far as to say that University of Oregon is clearly the place to receive the finest music education instruction in the region.*
- 2. I often get phone calls and emails from schools and administrators looking to hire University of Oregon Music Education alumni. Many have even stated that they give priority to or will only hire University of Oregon Music Education graduates.*

*I am confident that you will find the music education faculty to be an amazing group of individuals (I appreciate all of them and love working with them). I am fully confident that this is the most talented, committed, knowledgeable, and caring music education faculty in the country. When combined with a terrific Theory, History, and Composition and Performance Studies faculty, you can be assured that you are in the most capable and best of hands.*

*When you need advice or additional help or just feel like chatting, faculty doors are always open. They might encourage you to attend a particular concert, meet a visiting artist, consider a different interpretation of a piece you're performing, or submit a proposal for presentation or publication. Your professors will make sure you have a capstone experience (i.e., project, thesis, dissertation) that's right for you and assist you in the committee selection process. Whatever the specifics, our faculty take an interest in you as an individual and personalize your instruction at every level.*

*It is our goal that you leave here being the best music educator, scholar, and musician possible. There will be times during your academic career that you may feel very*

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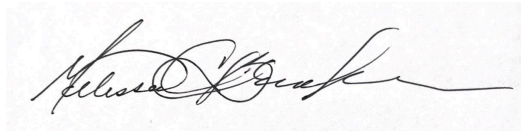
*much challenged by the rigor of this program, but I can assure you that the faculty, your advisor, and the many campus services are here to help you through those times.*

*As a music education faculty we are fully committed to:*

- 1. Staying active as performers, conductors, and researchers and doing our hands-on part to advance quality music education.*
- 2. Giving you the absolute finest education so you can do the same.*

*We (you and our faculty) are so fortunate to be in a profession that has the capability of making such a difference in the lives of so many. We hope that you join us in our vision of using quality music education to transform individuals and communities while advancing the art of music.*

*Sincerely,*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Melissa C. Brunkan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

*Dr. Melissa C. Brunkan  
Area Head of Music Education*

## Meet the Faculty

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The University of Oregon School of Music and Dance is the premier higher education institution of music and dance in the Pacific Northwest, one of eight distinct schools and colleges that compose Oregon's flagship university.

A comprehensive public institution, the UO School of Music and Dance offers courses in choreography-performance, dance education, dance history, dance science, liberal arts studies in dance, music education, music performance, pedagogy, composition, conducting, jazz studies, music theory, musicology, ethnomusicology, music history-literature, music technology, and liberal arts studies in music.

Four full-time music education faculty members and several part-time professionals guide music education students in a full and rich experience with major-area courses and opportunities for research and applied pedagogy. Music education faculty members are educator-practitioners and leading scholars in the field. They continue to work regularly with music students in public schools and remain current in contemporary practices, pedagogy, and research.

**Dr. Melissa Brunkan**, Associate Professor and Area Head of Music Education, Choral

**Dr. Jason M. Silveira**, Associate Professor of Music Education, Instrumental (Band)

**Dr. Beth Wheeler**, Assistant Professor of Music Education, Elementary/General

**Dr. Eric Wiltshire**, Associate Professor of Music Education, Instrumental (Band)

*Complete biographies for all faculty members can be found online at:*  
<https://musicanddance.uoregon.edu/directory/music-education>

## **General Expectations**

Academic Honesty  
University of Oregon Mission Statement  
Learning Outcomes  
Proficiencies/Prerequisites  
Programs of Study



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## General Expectations

### Academic Honesty

The University of Oregon and the School of Music and Dance have carefully outlined policies regarding academic honesty (see *Music Student Handbook*). You should review them and consider them applicable to every course and experience. Academic dishonesty includes forging signatures, turning in duplicate work, and submitting observation hours that you did not complete, etc. Consequences for violating academic honesty expectations include, but are not limited to, failure of the submitted work, failure of the class, and/or removal from the music education program.

Plagiarism – Every student’s work is expected to represent personal efforts. In cases involving allegations of plagiarism (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=atTRlg6iaGo> for an informative video regarding plagiarism) or any other form of academic dishonesty, the procedures set out in the University of Oregon “Student Conduct Code” are followed. All unresolved differences (as well as repeat offenses) are referred to the appropriate authorities for hearing in accordance with the code.

Preventing academic dishonesty is a cornerstone of the mission of the University. Unless it is otherwise stipulated, students may only submit for evaluation work that is their own and that is submitted originally for a specific course. According to traditions of higher education, forms of conduct that will be considered evidence of academic misconduct include but are not limited to the following: conversations between students during an examination; reviewing, without authorization, material during an examination (e.g., personal notes, another student’s exam); unauthorized collaboration; submission of a paper also submitted for credit in another course; reference to written material related to the course brought into an examination room during a closed-book, written examination; and submission without proper acknowledgment of work that is based partially or entirely on the ideas or writings of others. Only when a faculty member gives prior approval for such actions can they be acceptable.

### University of Oregon School of Music and Dance Mission Statement

We prepare students to lead enriching lives by providing comprehensive programs for professional arts-based careers, as well as those seeking to gain a fully realized liberal arts education.

## UNIVERSITY OF OREGON SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

### Learning Outcomes

#### *Overarching*

1. The School of Music and Dance Master of Music in Music Education (MME) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Music Education graduate demonstrates synthesis of all degree-related student learning outcomes (degree-specific, overall musicianship, knowledge, and skill) through expertise displayed in the degree capstone experience (i.e., project, thesis, dissertation).
2. The School of Music and Dance MME and PhD graduate demonstrates musical expertise by displaying musicianship expected for distinctive success in the professional field.
3. The School of Music and Dance MME and PhD graduate demonstrates competency in foundational musical knowledge related to music theory, analysis, and history.
4. The School of Music and Dance MME and PhD graduate demonstrates proficiency in scholarship in communicating original research to appropriate audiences.

#### *Music Education*

1. **Content Knowledge:** The MME and PhD graduate demonstrates a rich, thorough understanding of content and skill knowledge (processes of creating, performing, and describing), theories, and issues comprising the discipline (proficiency in performance/musicianship, conducting, rehearsing, and research), including an understanding of cognitive, physical, and social development.
2. **Planning and Instruction/Implementation:** The MME and PhD graduate plans and implements effective, developmentally appropriate (intellectually, physically, socially, and psychologically) lessons and curricula based upon sound principles of content knowledge, skill development, and pedagogy. The graduate implements the National Core Arts Standards and uses appropriate materials and strategies to develop students' critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.
3. **Positive Learning Environment:** The MME and PhD graduate creates safe, healthy, dynamic, and motivational learning environments that encourage every student to meet standards, to develop independence, to become actively involved, and to trust, take risks, and collaborate.
4. **Diversity:** The MME and PhD graduate understands and celebrates the unique nature, abilities, cultures, and characteristics of all learners, including literacy and second language acquisition, and is able to modify instruction so everyone can be successful. The graduate also believes that all students can and should have rich and diverse musical experiences and is committed to teach music in a diverse society to all people regardless of individual difference or ability
5. **Technology:** The MME and PhD graduate effectively utilizes technology to enhance students' learning and professional growth.
6. **Assessment:** The MME and PhD graduate develops and utilizes a variety of assessment approaches designed to evaluate student learning and performance,

encourages student reflection and self-evaluation, provides feedback, and shapes future lesson planning and curricula.

7. **Collaboration and Outreach:** The MME and PhD graduate fosters positive relationships and collaborates with a variety of target groups (e.g., students, colleagues, families, local community members, etc.) in order to promote and enhance partnerships within the learning environment.
8. **Professional Development:** The MME and PhD graduate continually seeks to expand knowledge and improve effectiveness as a teacher, to make positive professional contributions, and to exhibit the professional disposition of a teacher. The graduate reflects on teaching, students' performance, and developments in the field to extend knowledge and refine a personal philosophy of music education.

### **Proficiencies/Prerequisites**

Graduate students must successfully complete Graduate Entrance Exams (GEE) in Music History, Music Theory, and Aural Skills. Failure to pass the GEE requirements may result in students' enrolling in coursework to address remediation. See your graduate music advisor in the Graduate Music Office for more details about this process.

### **Programs of Study**

[Information for Graduate Music Students](#)

[MME Degree Checklist](#)

[PhD Degree Checklist](#)

# Exam/Capstone Study Guides

MME Project Option Capstone

MME Project Defense

MME Thesis Option Capstone

MME Thesis Defense

PhD Diagnostic Exam Study Guide

PhD Comprehensive Exam Study Guide

PhD Dissertation Defense



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## Exam/Capstone Study Guides

### MME Students

#### Choosing a Major Professor

MME students are encouraged to meet with all MUE faculty to determine who might be the best “fit” for them as a major professor/faculty advisor. When meeting with faculty, ask what their expectations are of students they mentor. Meeting with each faculty member will also give students the opportunity to determine faculty “load” (academic responsibilities and time commitment). Faculty “load” consists of their course load and their service commitments to the University and to the profession. MME students should **choose their major professor by the end of their first year** in the program and report this decision to the Head of Music Education. You may choose any music education faculty member to be your major advisor; they need not be in your “specialty area” (e.g., band vs. choral vs. string vs. elementary/general, etc.).

#### MME + Licensure

In some instances, Master’s candidates are also seeking licensure to teach in the public schools. In most cases, this degree program is three years in length. Before being allowed to student teach, candidates must have completed all licensure-related coursework (or equivalency from another institution). See Section III of the [Music Education major checklist](#) for details regarding prerequisite courses for student teaching placement. You should meet with the MUE Area Head to outline your course of study and determine when you will complete your student teaching and when to schedule your thesis or major project defense.

#### Choosing Your Capstone Option

MME students at the University of Oregon have a choice between two capstone options: (1) Major Project, or (2) Thesis. Students are encouraged to meet with various music education faculty members **during their first term on campus** to determine which path might best suit their needs. Each option is described in detail below.

The *major project* option consists of synthesizing curricular content and making transfers of knowledge within and between domains. The major project is centered around answering the following core question: How has this master’s program enhanced or altered my perceptions and approaches toward music teaching and learning? Students choosing the major project option will enroll in a total of six credits of MUE 601: Research (typically two credits per term of second year).

A *thesis* is an original research project that identifies and expands the knowledge base in music education. More details regarding theses in general can be found on the Division of Graduate Studies website (<https://gradschool.uoregon.edu/policies-procedures/masters/thesis-terminal-project>), and on the Graduate Music Advising Blog

(<https://blogs.uoregon.edu/gradmus/tag/project-proposal/>). Students choosing the thesis option will enroll in a total of nine credits of MUE 503: Thesis (typically three credits per term of second year).

### **MME Major Project Option Capstone**

As part of the process of the educational reform movement in the United States, teachers and students have approached the assessment of learning in a more authentic manner. The University of Oregon Music Education faculty is committed to this assessment philosophy. Instead of a traditional summative assessment such as a written multiple-choice comprehensive examination or a question and answer session, authentic assessment is formative and embedded in regular instructional practice. It takes place over time, and students play a seminal role in assessing their own learning.

This assessment approach, which is also called for in the National Core Arts Standards, is used to evaluate graduate students' understanding of music education in theory and practice (see *The School Music Program: A New Vision--The K-12 National Standards, PreK Standards, and What They Mean to Music Educators*. Reston, VA: MENC, 1994.)

The responsibility of the University of Oregon MME (project option) graduate student is two-fold—to develop a process-product “Processfolio” throughout tenure in the master’s degree program, and to prepare a public presentation demonstrating their understanding of the **core question**:

**How has this master's program enhanced or altered my perceptions and approaches toward music teaching and learning?**

#### **I. Guidelines for the Graduate Processfolio**

The *Processfolio* is an instrument of learning rather than just a “showpiece” of one’s final accomplishments. It is an aid **throughout the learning process** and what noted psychologist Howard Gardner called a “silent mentor” [Torff, B. (1997). *Multiple intelligences and assessment: A collection of articles*. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight.]. As the MME students proceed through the degree program, the Processfolio should be reviewed at least once per term by the student’s major professor or Area Head; ongoing reflection and monitoring of one’s own learning will take place. The Processfolio has intrinsic value and serves as a tangible record of one’s growth as a music educator. The Processfolio should be, “a structured documentary history of a (carefully selected) set of coached or mentored accomplishments substantiated by samples of student work and fully realized only through reflective writing, deliberation, and serious conversation” (Schulman, 1994).

The following points from Allan DeFina’s publication entitled *Processfolio Assessment: Getting Started* (New York: Scholastic, 1992, pp. 13–16) have been paraphrased to apply to this endeavor. The ideas should provide some valuable insight for the graduate student entering

into this assessment process as part of the MME graduate program in music education at the University of Oregon. Processfolios:

1. Are systematic, purposeful, and meaningful collections of students' work.
2. May be multimedia and be multidimensional.
3. Reflect the learning process and are compiled continuously.
4. Include student-selected artifacts based upon students' self-determined criteria.
5. May be influenced by input from professors, peers, and others.
6. Should reflect students' short- and long-term learning experiences.
7. Show students' efforts, progress, achievements, and synthesis.

Each student's Processfolio will be organized in a format determined by the student, in conjunction with the major professor. However, the Processfolio must be in electronic format (i.e., website).

In answering/addressing the core question and preparing the Processfolio, the student should collect and develop relevant materials and record reflections on the course content **during** each course. Artifacts from each class in the master's program should be included in the Processfolio. This includes applied lessons, ensembles, general education classes, and other electives/independent studies.

During EACH course, students may present their Processfolio to the professor and discuss the contribution of the course to their growing perceptions and approaches toward music teaching and learning. **The graduate student should be prepared to share and discuss the materials at any time requested by their major professor.** These conferences may help guide students in answering the core question.

Maintaining a Processfolio ideally will begin with the first day of the program, and end the day of the oral exam. Students will continually synthesize, clarify, and relate the course content to a teaching context. **The Processfolio will become the basis for the graduate public oral presentation, which constitutes a major portion of the graduate oral examination (public presentation followed by private examination by committee).**

Reflection is an essential component of academic growth inherent in the process of authentic assessment. Reflection is not the same as reaction; instead, the term "synthesis" more accurately describes this experience. In his influential work *How We Think* (1910/1933), educational philosopher John Dewey identified several modes of thought; however, he was most interested in reflection. Four distinct areas that characterized Dewey's views were:

1. Reflection is a meaning-making process that moves a learner from one experience into the next with deeper understanding of its **relationships** with and **connections** to other experiences and ideas. It is the thread that makes continuity of learning possible, and ensures the progress of the individual and, ultimately, society.
2. Reflection is a systematic, rigorous, disciplined way of thinking, with its roots in scientific inquiry.

3. Reflection needs to happen in community, in interaction with others.
4. Reflection requires attitudes that value the personal and intellectual growth of self and of others.

[See also: Rodgers, C. (2002). Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. *Teachers College Record*, 104(4), 842–866.]

All of this is given meaning by the **action** taken; that is, *knowing is doing*. Thus, reflective activity coupled with the application of ideas to teaching practice is a major component of effective teaching.

The following ideas, suggestions, and examples will be beneficial for developing the Processfolio:

**A. Synthesis**

1. Create a portion of the Processfolio that summarizes and addresses the **core question**.
2. The materials (i.e., evidence) you include in your Processfolio should be organized around your answering of the Core Question

**B. Reflections** (comprised of both on-campus and off-campus experiences)

1. Keep a journal. Make written reflections of daily classes, assignments, rehearsals, library and Internet research endeavors, and so on. The journal may include personal reactions and questions as well as memorable anecdotes and comments on objective test items that provoke a response. The journal is for the student's use and will not necessarily be seen by the professor.
2. **Synthesize journal entries/experiences.** For example, after a week's journaling, try to select seminal experiences. Is there a connection between/among them? What themes are emerging?
3. Contextualize reflections. Try to apply ideas to your current classroom experiences both as a student and as a teacher. Consider the context in which particular experiences took place. What happened? Why? What were the results? Was it positive? In what way(s) was it impactful?
4. Include questions that you might have during coursework and documentation of the journey toward closure or further refinement and focus.
5. There should be some sort of visible synthesis during and at the conclusion of each course.
6. How do your experiences in each course relate to each other (i.e., transfer)? Remember that reflections should not be a "Dear diary" approach. In other words, you should not simply describe what happened. You should make connections, synthesize, and apply to your coursework/teaching practice.

**C. Other materials** might include:



1. Video/audio files of teaching, of concerts as performer or conductor with comments as appropriate.
2. School projects such as interviews of students, professors, and/or supervisors.
3. Other relevant sources/experiences outside of the University of Oregon such as a workshop, OMEA conference, presentation, reading session, or literature perusal session.
4. Computer hardware or software appropriate for the music educator.
5. Relevant projects and papers from various coursework such as clinic or rehearsal critiques, inventory of performance skills learned/taught from private lessons, and/or lesson plans.

Because the Processfolio is an assessment tool (and not a resource notebook), all items placed in this document should be “significant,” and have a **rationale** for being included. In other words, other than reflections and journals, all other documents should have:

1. A written **rationale** as to their significance or why you have included them.
2. How have they enhanced, changed, or altered your thinking or teaching (i.e., answering the **Core Question**)?
3. You should use the Processfolio to show your understanding of course content, drawing connections (**transfer**) between/among your experiences and describing how they have enhanced or altered your perceptions and approaches to music teaching and learning.

### MME Project Defense

See the [Graduate Music Advising Blog](#) for specifics regarding the timeline for scheduling your defense. The defense will be scheduled during your last term in the program, as it represents the culmination of your experiences as an MME student at the University of Oregon. The graduate oral examination in music education is a capstone experience. This is a two-hour exam. The first hour is comprised of a public lecture-demonstration in which the student presents a summation of the topics, ideas, and issues presented in music classes with emphasis on the areas that have had the greatest impact on the student’s teaching philosophy and strategies. This lecture-demonstration should include knowledge, reflection, and synthesis regarding the major facts, issues, and figures covered in the core classes. You should also be prepared to discuss **practical applications** of your master’s degree coursework to your current/future teaching situation.

The oral presentation should include artifacts that illustrate how your teaching and thinking have been altered or enhanced during your graduate work (i.e., addressing the Core Question). The presentation should not be organized chronologically; **it should be organized thematically**.

We encourage the use of technology to enhance the presentation. Students must make arrangements in advance for all equipment. Students are expected to rehearse in advance to prevent unanticipated problems from occurring. As the capstone of your graduate program, the oral defense should demonstrate a high level of professionalism.

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The final hour of the exam is a closed-door session with the committee. Members will pose questions related to coursework, the presentation, and the core question.

EVALUATION: The successful presentation demonstrates excellent teaching skills. It is a synthesis of graduate course topics and experiences as they relate to the core question. (Think of the presentation as a *teaching recital*.) Therefore, the presentation must be engaging. Creativity is encouraged. DO NOT READ THE PRESENTATION. The oral examination will be evaluated on content, communication (i.e., organizational skills and delivery), and ability to knowledgeably respond to questions by the committee after the public presentation.

The oral examination is a “pass/fail” situation. However, it is feasible that the candidate may be asked to retake one or more portions of the examination at a later date.

**Processfolio and Presentation Assessment Rubric**

The following rubric applies to your 1) Processfolio and 2) oral examination as they relate to the Core Question: ***How has this master’s program enhanced or altered my perceptions and approaches toward music teaching and learning?***

<b>Synthesis of graduate course topics and experiences as they relate to the core question. (1, 2)</b>	0 Not discussed	1 Referred to topic in broad terms, suggesting lack of understanding.	2 Offered partial information suggesting a basic understanding	3 Incorporated specific responses suggesting fluency	4 Expressed original, critical and specific responses, suggesting synthesis.
<b>The content is appropriate to address the core question, and it represents graduate-level work. (1, 2)</b>	0 Not discussed	1 Referred to topic in broad terms, suggesting lack of understanding.	2 Offered partial information suggesting a basic understanding	3 Incorporated specific responses suggesting fluency	4 Expressed original, critical and specific responses, suggesting synthesis.
<b>A variety of teaching materials appropriate for your main area of specialization, which may include ensemble literature, general music resources, software, and more, suitable for your levels of authorization. (1, 2)</b>	0 Not discussed	1 Referred to topic in broad terms, suggesting lack of understanding.	2 Offered partial information suggesting a basic understanding	3 Incorporated specific responses suggesting fluency	4 Expressed original, critical and specific responses, suggesting synthesis.
<b>In-depth knowledge of the presentation topics. (2)</b>	0 Not discussed	1 Referred to topic in broad terms, suggesting lack of understanding.	2 Offered partial information suggesting a basic understanding	3 Incorporated specific responses suggesting fluency	4 Expressed original, critical and specific responses, suggesting synthesis.
<b>Delivery of the presentation (e.g., organization, structure, verbal communication, eye-contact, pacing) (2)</b>	0 Not discussed	1 Referred to topic in broad terms, suggesting lack of understanding.	2 Offered partial information suggesting a basic understanding	3 Incorporated specific responses suggesting fluency	4 Expressed original, critical and specific responses, suggesting synthesis.

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<b>Production of the presentation (e.g., audiovisual, handouts, technology) (2)</b>	0 Not discussed	1 Referred to topic in broad terms, suggesting lack of understanding.	2 Offered partial information suggesting a basic understanding	3 Incorporated specific responses suggesting fluency	4 Expressed original, critical and specific responses, suggesting synthesis.
<b>Ability to answer questions from the Faculty Committee (2)</b>	0 Not discussed	1 Referred to topic in broad terms, suggesting lack of understanding.	2 Offered partial information suggesting a basic understanding	3 Incorporated specific responses suggesting fluency	4 Expressed original, critical and specific responses, suggesting synthesis.

### Processfolio Resources

<https://sarahcgoff.wordpress.com>

<https://alecchaseprocessfolio.weebly.com>

<http://www.mrgregkane.net/Ithaca%20College%20-%20Process%20Folio/Home.html>

See *Journal of Music Teacher Education* article below for more details regarding the Processfolio as an instrument of student learning in higher education.



Article

# Development of the Processfolio: Promoting Preservice Music Teacher Reflection Through Authentic Assessment

Journal of Music Teacher Education  
1–13

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Jason M. Silveira<sup>1</sup>, Julie Beauregard<sup>2</sup>, and Tina Bull<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine what impact an authentic assessment tool (i.e., a processfolio) would have on our music education Master of Arts in Teaching degree program. We conducted a case study at our university with the music education Master of Arts in Teaching student cohort to detail the development and initial implementation of the processfolio as a means of reflection in preservice music teachers. Data included participant observation, individual and collaborative note taking, written artifacts from students and faculty, audio/video recordings, and semistructured interviews. Findings indicated (a) processfolios became a lens through which students focused their growth as reflective teachers; (b) a lack of examples and confusion over specific processfolio requirements was stress inducing; (c) the collaborative nature of working within a peer/faculty cohort was socially, emotionally, and academically valuable; (d) students effectively used the processfolio to demonstrate synthesis of the multiple facets of the graduate music education program.

## Keywords

authentic assessment, music teacher preparation, portfolios, reflection

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Researchers have repeatedly investigated reflection in teacher education given its purported benefits to aid preservice teachers' capacity to "think like a teacher" (e.g., Jay & Johnson, 2002; Kleinfeld, 1992; Zeichner & Liston, 1996). Dewey (1933) viewed reflection as, "the active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of grounds that support it" (p. 9); the requisite skills for reflective action included observation, reasoning, open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and responsibility. Schön's (1983) conceptualization of reflection centers on knowledge that is the direct result of practice and experience. Schön (1983) viewed an effective practitioner as one engaged in "knowing-in-action" and "reflection-in-action." Knowing-in-action includes using a repertoire of past experiences, examples, images, understandings, and actions to inform teaching. Reflection-in-action occurs when professionals encounter a unique or surprising experience.

The portfolio has been used in many teacher education programs to help preservice teachers engage in the reflective process (e.g., Bhattacharya & Hartnett, 2007; Çimer, 2011). In its most basic sense, a portfolio is a meaningful collection of student effort, progress, and achievement, with purposeful selection of material and deliberative student self-reflection (Lyons, 1998; Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991). There are four general portfolio categories (Robinson, 1995): (a) presentation/product portfolios that include student work of the highest quality, (b) product/performance portfolios that allow for comparison of the same samples of work across students, (c) program portfolios that function as a form of program evaluation by presenting exemplars of student work within a particular program, and (d) process portfolios that provide a collection of student products gathered at various stages of development. In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the portfolio as a means for teacher evaluation and professional development (e.g., Berrill & Addison, 2010; Learning Point, 2010; Tennessee Department of Education, 2012), as a graduation requirement (e.g., Lynch & Purnawarman, 2004), as well as teacher certification (Parkes & Powell, 2015) in general education, and in music education specifically.

Students and teachers have recognized portfolios as beneficial to developing reflective thinking, self-evaluation, analyzing strengths and weaknesses, and establishing goals for improvement (Bauer & Dunn, 2003; Berg & Lind, 2003; Richardson, 1995). Portfolios have been used as teaching tools in the music classroom for both preservice and in-service music teachers. Common portfolio elements ("artifacts") include statements of personal goals, videos of teaching, reflections, and rehearsal plans (Campbell & Brummett, 2002; Hill, 2008; Kerchner, 1997; Mitchell, 1997; Silveira, 2013).

Researchers have called for additional investigations into practices that incorporate reflective thinking, with particular focus on portfolios as a means of program reform (Breault, 2004; Evans, Daniel, Mikovch, Metze, & Antony, 2006; Imhof & Picard, 2009; McColgan & Blackwood, 2009). To address this call, we collaborated to improve the graduate music teacher education program at our institution through the use of a specific portfolio model. We implemented a year-long process-centered student portfolio (hereafter referred to as "processfolio"), encouraging several opportunities for faculty input, peer collaboration, and student self-reflection. Therefore, the question guiding this study was as follows: How would implementation of a new authentic

assessment tool (i.e., the processfolio) affect preservice music education students' learning in a Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree program? To address our study's guiding question, we conducted a case study of the 2013–2014 cohort of MAT music education students at our university. By improving faculty understanding of group functioning within this cohort, we hoped to inform long-range implementation of the proposed authentic assessment tool and serve as a possible model for other music teacher education programs.

### **Context**

The MAT was an intensive 1-year program that included four 10-week terms (fall, winter, spring, summer). It included both graduate coursework and student teaching, and the final capstone project had long been composed of a portfolio in lieu of a thesis. The program culminated in an oral examination during which each student gave a 1-hour presentation of their portfolio to an invited audience, followed by a 1-hour private oral defense with committee members (primarily music education faculty). On successful completion of all program requirements, students were granted the MAT degree and obtained a license to teach music in the public schools.

Shortcomings of the previous portfolio-based final capstone project were examined to inform parameters of our new processfolio. In the past, during their 1-hour portfolio presentations, students had often: (a) presented information chronologically, (b) shared few insights about their learning processes and syntheses, and (c) demonstrated inconsistent quality and depth of materials. We sought to bring greater consistency to students' learning in the MAT program by addressing these issues, explicitly encouraging transfers between learning contexts and domains, organizing around a central question, and emphasizing reflexive practice.

Toward these aims, we revised the music education graduate student handbook, and defined the processfolio as an instrument to document one's learning and development through the program rather than a collection of one's final accomplishments. We emphasized key components of the processfolio: reflection, synthesis, and rigor or depth of analysis. To help with accountability and focus on the long-term process, students were instructed to meet with a music education faculty member twice per term for support and guidance. Though no particular artifact was explicitly required, we suggested that students include a variety of items most meaningful to their personal and professional growth, such as journal entries, video and audio files of teaching, products they constructed during coursework, remnants of experiences outside of the curriculum, and teaching evaluations.

Ultimately, students used the following core question as their guide: "How has this master's program enhanced or altered my perceptions and approaches toward music teaching and learning?" We decided not to provide an example or template of a "finished product" in part because we wanted to see how individual processfolios would evolve, and since this was the first class of graduate students undergoing this assessment, there were no processfolios specific to our program that we could share as examples.

## Method

To address our guiding question, “How would implementation of a new authentic assessment tool (i.e., the processfolio) affect preservice music education students’ learning in an MAT degree program?” we conducted a case study using ethnographic methods to collect and analyze data. Ethnographic methods focus on human society and culture, with “culture” being broadly defined to encompass the beliefs, values, and attitudes that structure the behavior patterns of a specific group of people—the graduate music education cohort in this instance (Merriam, 2009). Data were collected through participant observation, individual and collaborative note taking, compiling written artifacts from students and faculty, audio and video recordings, and semistructured interviewing (see Table S1 in the online supplemental material).

All six students (five females, one male) in the cohort comprised the group studied, with a mix of choral, instrumental, and general music education students (see Table S2 in the online supplemental material). This cohort was generally reflective of students typical to our MAT program: middle class, Caucasian, in-state residents, most of whom had recently completed an undergraduate music degree at our institution. Pseudonyms are used for student participants throughout this report to maintain their anonymity. Of the six student participants, four completed the MAT program in summer of 2014 as anticipated. Alexis encountered personal and academic difficulties during the spring term and therefore postponed degree completion until summer of 2015 (at which time she successfully finished). Olivia did not complete the degree program due to a variety of academic and dispositional concerns; data collected through February 2014 include her input, but she was no longer a member of the cohort by the later stages of data collection.

Given the immersive and interactive nature of the ethnographic research methods employed, researchers were also considered faculty participants in the study. At the onset of the 2013–2014 academic year the third author, a choral music education specialist in her 50s, began her 18th year at our institution, where she held the position of Coordinator of Music Education. The first author, a male in his 30s, is an instrumental music education specialist who was hired in 2011, and the second author, a female in her 30s, is a general music education specialist who was hired in 2013. The processfolio model was initially proposed by the first author as a similar model was the capstone of his master’s degree program. The second and third authors agreed that a processfolio could be used to successfully envision the final assessment project of the music education MAT program at our institution. In adopting this specific, existing processfolio model from the first author’s master’s project, we maintained some of its primary components and made modifications to others. Modifications included the requested addition of themes to support answers to the core question and new activities embedded in full-cohort group meetings designed to suit our program’s student population and shared belief in the importance of a socially supported learning experiences.

We began by transcribing the audio and video files from individual and group discussions (including the end-of-year interviews), then proceeded to inductive coding

and analytic reading of all texts to generate emergent themes. As Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011) stated, “developing inductive codes involves reading the data to identify issues raised by participants themselves,” with a topic or theme emerging from a code when repetition proves them to be “valid, robust and useful” (p. 220). Analytic reading allowed us to consciously consider both what was and was not present in data, generating additional and more refined codes embedded in the data to ultimately contextualize issues more fully.

As faculty members of the case study’s cohort who wanted to be immersed in the research process as it unfolded without partiality about emergent themes, we determined it most appropriate to situate one faculty member as the primary data analyst. Though informal individual and collective data analysis was ongoing (e.g., discussions and brainstorming), this arrangement allowed two of the three authors to maintain largely uncompromised perspectives and helped avoid potential skewing of data collection as the year progressed. The second author assumed the primary analytic role, with the first and third authors providing member checks and evaluating the analysis-in-process at periodic checkpoints at which times the second author presented data and emergent themes. There were two instances in which lack of consensus occurred. We used analyst triangulation at those points; “having two or more persons independently analyze the same qualitative data and compare their findings” reduced the potential for bias and aided our resolution of interpretive dissonances (Patton, 2002, p. 560). Student participants were given the opportunity to provide input through member checking as authors solidified themes during summer of 2014. No disagreements were brought forth and authors’ interpretations were therefore verified.

## Findings

Analysis of all data revealed rich, multilayered findings addressing how implementation of a new authentic assessment tool affected students’ learning in our MAT program. Four major themes arose as findings.

**Finding 1:** The processfolio became a lens through which students focused their growth as reflective thinkers and practitioners.

Students mentioned reflection as part of their professional growth increasingly throughout their program of study. In the fall, students were almost exclusively focused on course content, rarely mentioning pedagogy or self-examination as a learner. Analysis of their own peer-teaching and microteaching (in the field) videos, for example, was perceived more as an opportunity to receive advice from external sources rather than to practice their own reflexivity.

The peer teachings have been huge for me. Being able to get instant feedback from both the professors and students, which helped me to analyze what I have been doing and what adjustments need to be made. (Fred journal, November 2013)



The transition from a focus on external feedback—from faculty, cooperating teachers, peers—to self-analysis was more broadly evident over the duration of the year. Participants became increasingly independent as a result of repeating reflective activities and embedding them in their practice. By February, students cited the concept of “reflection” as the most prominent area of growth in their graduate program to date with statements like, “Regularly reflecting helps me make connections . . . [There is] constant and meaningful reflection” (anonymous responses, group writing activity, February 11, 2014). While noting that being self-reflexive required an adjustment from a product- to process-oriented assessment of learning, students found this reorientation as supportive of their learning process and growth as preservice educators. For example, Alexis noted, “Practicing reflection is challenging but it helps to see how to incorporate new ideas into teaching” (in-class video recording, February 11, 2014).

Students were particularly cognizant of their move to greater reflexivity, and the resultant synthesis of learning experiences, during their student teaching placements, January through March, 2014. At that point in their degree program, students coupled applying what they learned in fall courses with reflection, contextualizing knowledge in the classroom. One student mentioned, “Student teaching has given me a practical real-life, real-time place to apply reflections from fall term classes—beginning to make those transfers. :)” (anonymous response, group writing activity, February 11, 2014).

By the time the end-of-year interviews were conducted in June 2014, it was evident that students had demonstrated growth as reflective thinkers and practitioners, and understood its importance to their learning processes:

Making yourself make the connections [helped me learn the most]. Which seemed weird at first. It’s like, wait, I have to connect these things together? But then the more you start doing it you realize that everything kind of does. (Fred interview, June 10, 2014)

**Finding 2:** A lack of concrete examples and confusion over specific [Processfolio] requirements was stress inducing.

Analysis of faculty- and student-generated data demonstrated that students’ concerns over processfolio structure diverted some focus away from synthesis in the learning process. In terms of providing examples, not only did we want to see how each student would individually develop their processfolio without a template, focusing on their own synthesis, but also logistically we did not have examples of previous work to share with them. Binders of past graduates’ product portfolios were available, as was the first author’s e-processfolio from his master’s degree program, but none of these were fully consistent with what we were asking this group of students to experience and produce.

We envisioned the processfolio as being a tool to chronicle student growth through synthesis of and reflection on completed artifacts and “works in progress.” However, questions consistently arose about “what it should look like,” and faculty’s open

responses to these questions elicited apprehension rather than creativity as we had hoped. When asked what questions or concerns they had about the processfolio in February, students' responses clearly revealed their concerns with comments like, "[I'm concerned about] not understanding the format. . . . What is the best way to organize all materials in a thoughtful way? I am afraid it won't be coherent" (anonymous responses, group writing activity, February 11, 2014).

Students also expounded on this topic forthrightly in individual interviews:

When [first author] showed us his [processfolio]—that was nice to see just 'cause we were the first kiddos through this. You guys can probably show future classes ours [processfolios], but that was like "what the heck is this? I literally have no idea." (Hannah interview, June 10, 2014)

These anxieties additionally caused students to avoid individual meetings with faculty to discuss their work in progress, in spite of our encouragement. To accommodate students' needs for guidance and ease perceived and expressed distress and confusion, we responded by scheduling multiple group meetings. Students were more willing to share concerns and ask clarifying questions in the perceived safety of the group context during full cohort meetings. For example, Fred mentioned,

I did not [meet with a faculty member twice per term]. And that's probably being more scared than . . . not like scared of you guys, but just feeling like I wanted to come with something instead of just 'I don't know' all the time. (Fred interview, June 10, 2014)

Hannah also made reference to individual meetings with the following, "I wish I would've asked more questions earlier to clarify, and made myself make deadlines with some teachers so I could hold myself to some sort of deadline at some point during the year" (Hannah interview, June 10, 2014).

**Finding 3:** Students valued, and noted increased learning as a result of, the collaborative nature of working within their cohort and with music education faculty.

Every student acknowledged the importance and impact of their year-long collaborative learning. The cohort quickly became a mutually valued, close-knit group who were academically, musically, and socially supportive:

I think something that really is valuable for learning experiences is having a cohort. I think the fact that the same group of us traveled from class to class to class all together, so we're sharing all the same experiences at the same time and able to talk with each other at the same time, everyone knows what's going on with each other. So that kind of sharing process through the learning has helped me a lot. (Fred interview, June 10, 2014)

All participants noted the benefit of group meetings. In Hannah's interview, she mentioned, "I personally liked meetings when it was the whole group more than I liked

meetings by just myself. I think my peers ask questions that I wouldn't have thought of that I'm glad were asked in front of me" (Hannah interview, June 10, 2014).

Students cited multiple faculty perspectives, knowledge bases, and ways of working as being valuable and validating or reassuring to their learning and processfolio development:

It's helpful to talk to all of you because you think differently . . . it's helpful to have a broader range of ideas. (Mary interview, June 10, 2014)

It's awesome because you guys [the music education faculty] have very different approaches to teaching and to learning, and to being instructors to us and to your areas of expertise. You guys are—it just seems like you're all on board together. It feels good to know that. (Alexis interview, June 10, 2014)

Students noticed the genuine collegiality between faculty members and efforts to align curricula across coursework, and shared that it positively affected their experience in the program. We modeled interdependence and transparency throughout this first year of implementing the processfolio, which led to students' trust in, and bonding with faculty. Ultimately, music education faculty members were integrated members of the cohort, as everyone worked together toward common goals and offered mutual support and guidance:

Even with the different classes and different professors, the same topic will be touched on. And so you're kind of getting the concept and then multiple views, whether they're similar or not. It gives me multiple ways . . . of looking at one thing. You know you had multiple resources to go and figure stuff out from, so that was nice and helped the learning. (Fred interview, June 10, 2014)

**Finding 4:** As a result of purposeful reflection, students effectively used the processfolio to demonstrate synthesis of the multiple facets of the graduate music education program.

Data generated specifically from final processfolio presentations demonstrated that all students successfully synthesized between courses, teaching, and other curricular experiences, and made excellent transfers and self-assessments, though demonstrated varying degrees of depth. Rather than using chronological formats, student presentations were thematic and focused on areas of growth that each found most personally relevant. Students organized their answers to the core question in unique ways. However, one concise narrative response explicitly answering the core question was present in only two processfolios. Two students addressed it in thematic subsections and one provided an abundant collage of artifacts in lieu of any narrative incorporating the core question. Students embedded multiple types of artifacts including journals, lesson plans, formal teaching evaluations, teaching videos, and course assignments as well as photos. All contents were based on thoughtful considerations of personal and

professional growth and demonstrated the use of strong self-reflexive skills. Presentations were unique, multidimensional, and dynamic:

Over the course of the 2013–2014 school year pursuing my MAT, I have reflected and grown as a music educator. My reflections on my growth are organized in the following areas: Purposes of Music Education; Equity in Education; Building Student Independence; Improving Objectives, Assessment, and Feedback; My Teaching Growth. (Mary processfolio, June 27, 2014)

## Conclusions

Returning to our guiding question, “How would implementation of a new authentic assessment tool (i.e., the processfolio) affect preservice music education students’ learning in an MAT program?” the data lead us to draw multiple conclusions. Consistent with previous research (Bauer & Dunn, 2003; Çimer, 2011; Jay & Johnson, 2002), the processfolio allowed reflection to be a central process of the MAT program, and students viewed their processfolios as tools to promote and better understand the reflective process, and as a means to document growth in knowledge, skills, and understanding. The systematic and more rigorous way of thinking (i.e., reflective practice) allowed student participants to discover deeper understandings of course content and the connections among course materials and informal learning experiences, which corresponds to a central criterion in Dewey’s (1933) conceptualization of reflection.

Additionally, consistent with Bhattacharya and Hartnett (2007) and Davis (2006), all program completers successfully synthesized learning gained through both coursework and teaching experiences, engaged successfully in reflection and self-assessment, and became increasingly aware of connections between theory and practice. Processfolios and students’ oral presentations centered on the issues of growth that each student found most meaningful; these themes were well supported by the quantity, quality, and variety of artifacts.

Students in this case study were less successful in using the processfolio as a learning tool as it related to organization and depth. While the processfolios generated were organized in unique ways to answer the core question, the core question itself was not always explicitly answered in a prose statement and was therefore unclear in some instances. As demonstrated in previous research, students need clarification as to whether the purpose of the processfolio is to document learning or serve as evidence of teaching competence (Berrill & Addison, 2010; Breault, 2004). Students’ stated reasons for confusion are also consistent with previous research indicating that students want precise instructions, rationales, and templates (Imhof & Picard, 2009; Lynch & Purnawarman, 2004). Although synthesis among courses and other program experiences was evident throughout, depth varied from one processfolio to the next. Some connections were organic and highly personalized, while others seemed somewhat superficial and less well supported.

Notably, implementing the processfolio as the MAT program’s capstone project included unexpected positive social outcomes. Students and faculty worked

collaboratively to solve problems as they arose and to hone the concept of the processfolio as it developed. This collaboration opened lines of communication and prompted multidirectional learning. Both Schön (1983) and Dewey (1933) mentioned the promotion of human interactions and community to spur creativity, critical commentary, and group learning through the exchange of ideas and viewpoints. This group-learning dynamic experienced by the student participants appears to support these frameworks. Processfolio development, particularly in its initial year of implementation, strengthened relationships as faculty supported each other through ongoing discourse and problem solving. This support facilitated a strong sense of faculty collegiality and fostered a unified means for program improvement.

### **Implications**

After completing this first year of the processfolio implementation and reflecting on our experiences, faculty agreed to continue using this model in subsequent years, but with the following changes:

- (1) Students need models of well-crafted processfolios so they do not become overwhelmed with format and structure, instead focusing on content and process.
- (2) All processfolios must begin with the core question, be clearly organized around a unique narrative answer to the core question, use multiple data points to support the answer, and be presented as a web page with multiple embedded layers that speak to individual areas of growth and change.
- (3) A schedule of checkpoints between students and faculty—both collective and individual—will be built into the calendar, and guided questions will be provided to students at each checkpoint.
- (4) Drafts of work in progress will be due at specified dates to ensure students' readiness for their final presentation and oral examination.

At the time of this writing, we can note that these changes were made in Year 2 of the processfolio's implementation in our institution's MAT program. Students' work exhibited the same positive outcomes as did the work from students in Year 1, and the majority of problems were either not encountered due to modifications made, or were more easily addressed.

Further evidence from future studies is needed to determine whether the processfolio can be beneficial in other contexts. Teacher education programs at both undergraduate and graduate levels may use this model to encourage students' reflections and self-assessments. While implementing a processfolio model at the undergraduate level is certainly feasible, some modifications would likely need to be made. Since preservice teachers' reflective skills are developed over time, we recommend including field-based observations and reflections on observed teaching under the guidance of university supervisors. Early reflective writing assignments may also facilitate

reflective skills and the professional growth process. These assignments could take the form of autobiographical essays, peer-teaching reviews, or self-reflection on one's individual applied music performance.

For success, faculty must work together with the common goal of encouraging regular student reflection and connection building. It is recommended that students set goals for weekly journal writing, and goals for organizing artifacts. During courses, teachers can directly encourage students to question, share, or brainstorm using their individual lenses exploring perceptions about their shared experiences. According to Barrett (2002),

If participants in a college or university classroom can function as a community of learners, preservice and practicing teachers will experience first-hand the benefits of group inquiry. The more minds set to work on important teaching and learning problems, the greater the possibility for interesting insights. (p. 221)

Maintaining a consistent schedule for checking in, hearing concerns, and refocusing energy may help students understand that faculty value analysis, synthesis, and growth. Extending the use of reflection and synthesis to improve teaching practice career-long is a plausible opportunity for continued professional growth and development.

The results of this study are promising in that faculty and student participants ultimately valued the processfolio as an effective tool for professional growth and reflective practice. Struggles and frustrations felt during the year gave way to satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment. As participants embarked on their new careers and kept in contact with us, they frequently commented that they had adopted the habits of questioning, self-assessment, and self-reflection. While results of this research were largely positive, it is important to note that, as a case study, results are context- and population-specific and therefore not broadly generalizable.

Last, our experiences with implementation of the processfolio positively affected our music teacher education curriculum. Members of the cohort learned to interact thoughtfully, supporting diverse ideas, and accepting challenges brought up by others. Students demonstrated thinking that required finding connections and transferring knowledge to new settings. Ultimately, students learned to independently question, consider, and self-evaluate, while demonstrating their unique lessons learned. Faculty also learned from each other and from the students. Through creating a supportive community of teaching and learning, steeped in regular reflection, the program as a whole improved. It is hoped that others may benefit from reading about our experiences and implement a similar reflective processfolio that may be useful in a variety of educational settings.

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**Supplemental Material**

Tables S1 and S2 are available in the online supplemental material.

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### MME Thesis Option Capstone

The thesis option necessitates students work closely with a music education faculty member to engage in a major research project investigating a gap in the research literature in music education. A thesis is not a large “term paper;” rather, it is original primary-source research that the MME student conducts to address specific research questions. It will contribute to new knowledge in the field, not simply be a “repackaging” of existing research/knowledge. Students who intend on pursuing a PhD are strongly encouraged to choose this option (as opposed to the Major Project option). A thesis adheres to a standard format, generally including five basic chapters: (1) an introduction and statement of the problem, (2) a review of the literature pertinent to the problem, (3) an explanation of the materials and methods used to address the problem, (4) presentation of results, and (5) a contextualization of the results. A formal bibliography of references cited in the thesis is also required. The thesis must be formatted to conform to APA Guidelines (<https://apastyle.apa.org/>). The thesis is presented to the Division of Graduate Studies, acknowledged on the student's transcript, and submitted to the Knight Library.

### MME Thesis Defense

See the [Graduate Music Advising Blog](#) for specifics regarding the timeline for scheduling your defense. The graduate oral examination in music education is a capstone experience. This is a two-hour exam. The first hour is comprised of a public lecture-demonstration in which the student presents an overview of and results of their thesis. This lecture-demonstration should include knowledge, reflection, and synthesis regarding the previous research conducted on the topic, the methodology selected (and rationale), a presentation of results, and a discussion of your results in the context of existing literature, including limitations for your study, and areas of future research. You should also be prepared to discuss **practical applications** of your master’s thesis and degree coursework to your current/future teaching situation.

We encourage the use of technology to enhance the presentation. Students must make arrangements in advance for all equipment. Students are expected to rehearse in advance to prevent unanticipated problems from occurring. As the capstone of your graduate program, the oral defense should demonstrate a high level of professionalism.

The final hour of the exam is a closed-door session with the committee. Members will pose questions related to coursework, the presentation, and the thesis.

The presentation must be engaging. Creativity is encouraged. **DO NOT READ THE PRESENTATION.** The oral examination will be evaluated on content, communication (i.e., organizational skills and delivery), and ability to knowledgeably respond to questions by the committee after the public presentation.

The oral examination is a “pass/fail” situation. However, it is feasible that the candidate may be asked to retake one or more portions of the examination at a later date.

**Thesis Resources**

[Writing Empirical Research Reports](#)

[American Psychological Association Manual \(7<sup>th</sup> Ed.\)](#)

[Understanding Research Methods \(10<sup>th</sup> Ed.\)](#)

[Discovering Statistics Using SPSS \(5<sup>th</sup> Ed.\)](#)

[Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design \(4<sup>th</sup> Ed.\)](#)

[The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers \(3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.\)](#)

[Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice \(4<sup>th</sup> Ed.\)](#)

Sample Outline and Template for Thesis/Dissertation Prospectus\*  
Prepared by J. Silveira

A research prospectus is a preliminary plan for conducting a study. This is not a detailed, technical research proposal, but rather a considered analysis of the issues you are likely to confront in such a study. In essence, it is a *preliminary* proposal. In completing this task, you should be sure to consider at least the following:

**Introduction** (1–2 pages)

1. Identification of researchable problem
2. Specification of hypotheses or articulation of foreshadowed issues
3. Importance of the study

**(Limited) Review of Key Literature** (4–5 pages)

1. Theoretical perspective(s)
2. Related research (thematically organized and synthesized)
3. Contributions of proposed study to knowledge base
4. This should **not** be a series of abstracts

**Method** (3–5 pages)

1. Statement of and rationale for overall research approach
2. Proposed design or framework
3. Site and participant/subject selection, rationale for selection criteria
4. Data collection
  - a. Techniques (and/or instrumentation)
  - b. Procedures
5. Ethical considerations (IRB review?)
6. Limitations
7. Quality assurance (validity & reliability; trustworthiness criteria)

**Analysis** (1–2 pages)

1. Proposed data analysis techniques
2. Descriptive data?
3. Statistics?
4. Coding qualitative data?

**Feasibility** (1 page or less)

1. Assess the feasibility of your project.
2. Can you do it here in Eugene?
3. Are the necessary materials available?
  - a. If not, how will you get access to what you need?
4. Can you do all that needs to be done in the time available to you?
5. Do you have the special tools (e.g., languages, computer skills, archival experience, etc.) required for the sort of project you are proposing?

**Other Relevant Information** (optional, length will vary)

Timeline including, but not limited to the following items:

1. Potential funding sources and respective deadlines (as applicable)
2. Graduate School deadlines (based on anticipated graduation date)
3. Approx. date for submitting Human Subjects Committee application
4. Thesis draft for committee review (as applicable)
5. Specified timeframe for data collection
6. Specified timeframe for data analysis (may overlap with above)
7. Specified timeframe for drafting and revising chapters
8. Approx. date for distributing drafts to committee members
9. Approximate date for final oral examination
10. Potential Outlets for Dissertation Research
  - a. Conferences, with approx. proposal deadlines and conference dates
  - b. Specific journals or other publications
  - c. Workshop, training, or teaching applications
  - d. Program development applications

\*Students should check with their major professor to tailor the above outline if necessary.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

[INSERT TITLE HERE]

By

[INSERT NAME HERE]

A prospectus submitted to the  
School of Music and Dance  
In partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Music in Music Education

[Insert anticipated term and year of graduation here]

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

The members of the committee approve the prospectus of [Insert your name here] submitted on [Insert approval date here].

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[Major Professor's Name]  
Professor Directing Thesis

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[Committee Member's Name]  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

[Committee Member's Name]  
Committee Member

## PhD Students

### Choosing a Major Professor

Encouraged to meet with all MUE faculty to determine who might be the best fit for you. When meeting with faculty, ask what their expectations are of students they mentor. Meeting with each faculty member will also give students the opportunity to determine faculty “load.” Faculty “load” consists of their course load and their service commitments to the University and to the profession. PhD students should choose their major professor **no later than the end of their first year** in the program **and report that choice to the Head of Music education in writing**. You may choose any music education faculty member to be your major advisor; they need not be in your “specialty area” (e.g., band vs. choral vs. string vs. elementary/general, etc.). The committee chair must be a faculty member of the SOMD. In some cases, co-chairs may serve. GradWeb has a faculty directory that lists all faculty who are eligible to serve on a doctoral committee and the specific positions for which they are eligible. Students should consult with the Music Graduate Office to verify eligibility before asking faculty to serve.

### PhD Diagnostic Exam Study Guide

A diagnostic examination is required of PhD students in music education. This diagnostic exam fulfills several functions:

- 1) to determine the student's strong and weak areas in music and to make recommendations in terms of course work or independent study
- 2) to offer suggestions to the student (upon passing the exam) on choosing a major professor who assists the student in developing a program of study.

Usually, a diagnostic exam is given at the end of the first term of a student’s admission to UO as a PhD student. Official approval to pursue a PhD degree in Music Education is not granted until a diagnostic exam is passed, thereby contracting the student to begin a doctoral program of studies. At this point one is a doctoral student and later, after successful completion of the Comprehensive Exam, may become a PhD candidate.

A Diagnostic Exam is typically presented in three sections:

- 1) Written Evaluation (take home): May consist of academic questions in the specific area, autobiography, and philosophy of music education essay.
- 2) Written Evaluation (on campus): The diagnostic examination will cover pedagogical information concerning either elementary or secondary music teaching (choral, band, or orchestra). Questions may concern philosophy of music education, pedagogy, methods, materials, and literature. Students are advised that the evaluation of writing skills is often a significant portion of a diagnostic examination. Failure to complete this exam component successfully may result in the assignment of remedial work in scholarly writing.
- 3) Interview: In conference with the music education faculty, the interview allows for a personal interaction between student and faculty. The student can expect to answer questions regarding career goals, background experience, reasons for seeking a doctoral degree, and specific questions regarding knowledge of music.

The “Diagnostic Exam Form,” will be updated and signed by the area coordinator, then placed in the student's permanent file (Graduate Music Office). If the student fails a diagnostic exam, the area faculty have the option of allowing the student to retake the exam or terminating the student from the program. The student has a right to confer with the major professor regarding specific comments notated on a doctoral diagnostic exam report or other forms connected with the diagnostic exam.

### **PhD Comprehensive Exam Study Guide**

See [Section C.12](#) of the SOMD Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual.

The Doctoral Comprehensive Examination consists of written and oral sections and is typically administered when the student has completed all coursework or in the final term of coursework. It is the responsibility of the student’s major professor to determine when a student must take the examination.

In scheduling your Comprehensive Exam date, you are encouraged to make use of an online scheduling program such as Doodle ([www.doodle.com](http://www.doodle.com)). This will help you in coordinating available dates and times between all of your committee members, in as efficient a manner as possible. Be sure to include at least five dates, with a variety of times. The University Institutional Representative need not attend the Comprehensive Exam.

Satisfactory completion of a comprehensive examination shall be required for admission to candidacy for the doctoral degree. No student may register for dissertation hours prior to the point in the term in which the comprehensive examination was passed.

If the student fails all or part of the comprehensive examination, the committee has the option of dismissing the student from the program or requiring the student to retake all or part of the examination at a later date. If the student fails the second examination, dismissal from the program will result.

The Comprehensive Exam is comprised of two parts: (1) written examination and (2) oral examination.

1. **Written Examination:** PhD in Music Education students will submit the following documents to the committee in consultation with their major professor:
  - a. Dissertation prospectus (see below) with Dissertation Proposal Title
  - b. Annotated bibliography related to proposed dissertation topic
  - c. Completed research reports (e.g., “journal ready”) based on manuscripts completed in the following classes:
    - i. Quantitative Research in Music Education
    - ii. Psychology of Music
    - iii. History of American Music Education
  - d. Additional research reports may be submitted including manuscripts completed in other courses (e.g., outside of SOMD) or completed outside of the PhD



curriculum (e.g., practitioner manuscript submitted to state/regional/national journal).

2. **Oral Examination:** (From the SOMD Graduate P & P Manual) Usually two hours in length, this examination covers the written portion and any other portions of the area examination, as well as other topics related to the specialized area (e.g., further explore the student's knowledge and skills in areas covered in the written examination, seek clarification where written responses were ambiguous or unsatisfactory, evaluate the student's knowledge in other relevant areas). The student's responses will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:
  - a. Each response demonstrates thorough knowledge of the topic and is of sufficient depth, breadth, and precision to answer the question fully and correctly.
  - b. Each response distinguishes between information of central importance and peripheral importance and focuses on the former.
  - c. Each response demonstrates the student's ability to organize and report information, analyze and evaluate that information, and draw conclusions intelligently.
  - d. Each response is written in good English prose style and follows accepted rules for grammar, punctuation, spelling, and sentence and paragraph structure. Each oral response is in good conversational English, is rationally organized, and is clearly presented.

### **PhD Dissertation Defense**

See [Section C.13](#) of the SOMD Graduate Policies and Procedures Manual.

See also: <https://gradschool.uoregon.edu/policies-procedures/doctoral/defense>

### **Dissertation Resources**

It is the student's responsibility to follow specific Graduate School timelines and procedures regarding completion and submission of the dissertation. Your major professor will be able to help you in this process, but the primary role of the major professor is to help guide you regarding content and formatting of the document.

<https://gradschool.uoregon.edu/policies-procedures/doctoral/dissertation>

Several online resources can be found on the Division of Graduate Studies site:

<https://gradschool.uoregon.edu/thesis-dissertation>

Dissertation template:

[https://graduatestudies.uoregon.edu/sites/graduatestudies1.uoregon.edu/files/dissertation\\_pr efatory\\_pages\\_template\\_april\\_2021.docx](https://graduatestudies.uoregon.edu/sites/graduatestudies1.uoregon.edu/files/dissertation_pr efatory_pages_template_april_2021.docx)

# Resources

National Core Arts Standards (NCAS)  
University of Oregon Facilities  
Professional Organizations  
Campus Academic Resource Links



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UNIVERSITY OF  
OREGON

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**School of Music  
and Dance**

## Resources

### National Core Arts Standards

The National Core Arts Standards (NCAS) were designed to represent a process that is meant to guide educators in providing a unified quality arts education for students in Pre-K through high school. There are four overarching areas represented in the NCAS: Creating, Performing, Responding, and Connecting. Each strand contains various “Anchor Standards.”

Creating	Performing	Responding	Connecting
<b>Anchor Standard #1:</b> Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.	<b>Anchor Standard #4:</b> Analyze, interpret, and select artistic work for presentation.	<b>Anchor Standard #7:</b> Perceive and analyze artistic work.	<b>Anchor Standard #10:</b> Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.
<b>Anchor Standard #2:</b> Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.	<b>Anchor Standard #5:</b> Develop and refine artistic works for presentation.	<b>Anchor Standard #8:</b> Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.	<b>Anchor Standard #11:</b> Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding.
<b>Anchor Standard #3:</b> Refine and complete artistic work.	<b>Anchor Standard #6:</b> Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.	<b>Anchor Standard #9:</b> Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.	

For more detailed information and a “matrix” for each music education strand (e.g., traditional ensembles, non-traditional ensembles, etc.), visit: <http://www.nationalartsstandards.org>

### University of Oregon Facilities

As part of our modern facility, the Frohnmayer Music Building houses several resources for students.

Frohnmayer is also home to the Cykler Music Education Library in Room 109. This library has various resources for music education majors including text books, reference materials, general music books, method books, band/orchestra/chorus scores and music, theses and dissertations, and computers for student use. Most of the materials can be checked out for student and faculty use. The hours for the library vary from term to term, but will be posted on the library door.

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Some instruments are available for rent. Instruments are available only for use in SOMD classes and ensembles or when taking private lessons through the university. The fees vary and instruments must be returned at a predetermined date decided upon at the time of rental. Information is available from the Production Office and Instrument Room, room 175.

The Kammerer Computer Laboratory offers students the opportunity to become familiar with a variety of mainstream software for music notation as well as instructional software in music theory and aural skills. Other resources in the lab include MIDI (musical instrument digital interface), sound-generating and sequencing software programs; access to the Internet; e-mail; Microsoft Office applications; and Adobe graphic editing programs for academic use, exploration, and development of computer skills. The lab is equipped for digital audio editing. Our current software listing is Max/MSP, Microsoft Office, Apple Logic Studio, Apple Final Cut, Finale, and Sibelius.

### Professional Organizations

#### **NAfME (<http://www.nafme.org>)**

*National Association for Music Education*, among the world's largest arts education organizations, is the only association that addresses all aspects of music education. NAfME advocates at the local, state, and national levels; provides resources for teachers, parents, and administrators; hosts professional development events; and offers a variety of opportunities for students and teachers. The Association orchestrates success for millions of students nationwide and has supported music educators at all teaching levels for more than a century.

Since 1907, NAfME has worked to ensure that every student has access to a well-balanced, comprehensive, and high-quality program of music instruction taught by qualified teachers. NAfME's activities and resources have been largely responsible for the establishment of music education as a profession, for the promotion and guidance of music study as an integral part of the school curriculum, and for the development of the National Core Arts Standards.

#### **OMEA (<https://www.oregonmusic.org>)**

The *Oregon Music Education Association* (OMEA) functions as a nonprofit educational association whose purpose is to provide professional in-service educational experiences through district and state conferences, clinics, and journals for music educators and music students in Oregon's schools. The association will provide leadership for district and state educational activities in music to serve the students of Oregon. Music education majors are expected to attend the conference.

#### **ACDA (<http://acda.org>)**

The *American Choral Directors Association* is a nonprofit music-education organization whose central purpose is to promote excellence in choral music through performance, composition, publication, research, and teaching. In addition, ACDA strives through arts advocacy to elevate choral music's position in American society.

#### **OBDA (<https://sites.google.com/site/oregonbanddirectorsassociation/home>)**

The *Oregon Band Directors Association* is dedicated to the prosperity of the concert band programs in the various middle and high schools across Oregon. The OBDA website also includes information about clinics and workshops, band festivals, and job openings.

**ASTA (<https://www.astaweb.com>)**

The *American String Teachers Association*, founded more than 60 years ago, is a membership organization for string and orchestra teachers and players, helping them to develop and refine their careers. ASTA's members range from budding student teachers to artist-status performers. The organization provides a vast array of services, including instrument insurance, an award-winning scholarly journal, discounts on publications and resources, annual professional development opportunities, and access to collegial network of colleagues throughout the string profession.

**SRME (<https://nafme.org/community/societies-and-councils/society-for-research-in-music-education-srme/>)**

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) Society for Research in Music Education (SRME) seeks to encourage and improve the quality of scholarship and research within the music education profession. The SRME consists of all subscribers of the *Journal of Research in Music Education* (JRME).

**SMTE (<https://nafme.org/community/societies-and-councils/society-for-music-teacher-education-smte/>)**

The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) Society for Music Teacher Education (SMTE) aspires to:

- a. Improve the quality of teaching and research in music teacher education.
- b. Provide leadership in the establishment of standards for certification of music teachers.
- c. Serve as an arm of NAfME in influencing developments in music teacher education and in the certification of music teachers.

**Campus Academic Resource Links**

UO DIVISION OF GRADUATE STUDIES

<https://gradschool.uoregon.edu>

MUSIC GRADUATE ADVISING

<http://blogs.uoregon.edu/gradmus>

GRADUATE EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

<https://gradschool.uoregon.edu/ge/ge-orientation>

CAREER SERVICES

<https://career.uoregon.edu>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES

## UNIVERSITY OF OREGON SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE

<http://counseling.uoregon.edu>

DUCKWEB

<https://duckweb.uoregon.edu>

DIVISION OF STUDENT LIFE

<https://studentlife.uoregon.edu>

ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION CENTER

<https://aec.uoregon.edu>

WRITING CENTER

<http://tlc.uoregon.edu/subjects/writing/>

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION SERVICES

<http://research.uoregon.edu>

### **Job Search Resources**

**Chronicle of Higher Education**

[https://chroniclevitae.com/job\\_search/new?cid=UCHETOPNAV](https://chroniclevitae.com/job_search/new?cid=UCHETOPNAV)

Job searches are free, but subscription is required to access “premium content.”

**College Music Society (CMS) Music Vacancy List**

[https://www.music.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1462&Itemid=1249](https://www.music.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1462&Itemid=1249)

\$35 subscription for full-time students

**Higher Ed Jobs**

<https://careers.insidehighered.com>

**Oregon Education Jobs**

<https://oregon.schoolspring.com>