

MUSIC, PHD: COMPOSITION

The Ph.D. program in Composition stresses training in the craft of composition, contemporary repertory, and theory and analysis. Instruction in composition comprises much of the course requirement; such instruction takes the form of private lessons. Participation in the concert life of the department and attendance at Composers' Forum events complement that instruction. Students are assigned to particular instructors for composition lessons by the Director of Graduate Studies on the advice of the composition faculty. Composition instructors are assigned on a rotating basis to assure that all students are exposed to a variety of approaches and have the opportunity to work with each member of the composition faculty during the period of coursework. The Department of Music at the University of Pennsylvania also offers a Ph.D. program in Music Studies, and composition students also take several courses with the music studies faculty during their coursework.

For more information: <https://music.sas.upenn.edu/>

University PhD Benchmarks

In addition to Program requirements, the following milestones must be completed:

Code	Title	Course Units
	Qualifying Evaluation	
	Candidacy Examination	
	Dissertation Defense/Oral Exam	
	Dissertation Deposit	

For more information view the University's Academic Rules for PhD Programs (<http://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/>).

Required Courses

Code	Title	Course Units
Core Requirement		
<i>Foundational Methods Core Courses</i>		
Must take two of the following:		2
MUSC 6200	Creative and Compositional Approaches	
MUSC 6300	Historical and Historiographic Approaches	
MUSC 6500	Ethnographic and Anthropological Approaches	
MUSC 6700	Analytical and Theoretical Approaches	
<i>Composition Methods</i>		2
MUSC 6220	Composing with Electronics	
MUSC 6230	Composing For Performers	
<i>Seminars</i>		6
MUSC 7210	Composition Studio and Forum (Complete 4 times)	
MUSC 7200	Seminar in Composition (Complete 2 times)	
<i>Elective Courses</i>		4
4 courses (5xxx, 6xxx, 7xxx, or 9xxx) selected in consultation with advisor and graduate chair, no more than 2 of which may be in MUSC 9999: Independent Study		
<i>Year 3: Preparation for Ph.D. Candidacy</i>		

MUSC 9941	Preparation for Ph.D. Candidacy in Composition (Taken twice) ¹	2-6
-----------	---	-----

Additional Requirements		
<i>Language Requirement</i>		
Students must demonstrate proficiency in two languages ²		
<i>Teaching Requirement</i>		
Three semesters of teaching are required		
<i>Forum and Lessons</i>		
During their third year, composition students will continue non-credit participation in both forum and lessons		
<i>Musicianship Requirement</i>		
The musicianship requirement may be fulfilled through demonstrating facility as a performer, or through an exam administered by faculty ³		
<i>First-year Exam</i>		
During the summer after year 1, composition students will write three short essays (5-6 pages each) that respond to the prompts in footnote four ⁴		
<i>Portfolio</i>		
During the fall of the third year of study, students will complete a Portfolio of Compositions ⁵		
<i>Portfolio Composition</i>		
Candidates will produce a major musical composition as a Ph.D. dissertation, the nature of which must be approved by the composition faculty, which serves as the dissertation committee ⁶		
<i>Composition Defense</i>		
At the conclusion of the Ph.D. program, students will prepare a final presentation on their compositional work ⁷		

Total Course Units	16-20
---------------------------	--------------

University PhD Benchmarks

In addition to Program requirements, the following milestones must be completed:

Code	Title	Course Units
	Qualifying Evaluation	
	Candidacy Examination	
	Dissertation Defense/Oral Exam	
	Dissertation Deposit	

For more information view the University's Academic Rules for PhD Programs (<http://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/academic-rules-phd/>).

¹ MUSC9941 registration spans both semesters, (Fall and Spring), of year three in the Ph.D. program. The Ph.D. Candidate in Composition will finalize their Portfolio of Compositions in consultation with faculty. They should also expect to continue participation in Composers' Forum and lessons (non credit), attend the colloquium series sponsored by the department, as well as complete remaining teaching pedagogy requirements.

² Reading knowledge of two languages is required for all students in music studies and composition. Students will select their language exams in consultation with the graduate chair faculty, with the understanding that their selections should relate clearly to their

projected plan of study and proposed dissertation topic. Students may request to do one of the exams in a computer language (subject to availability of faculty).

Students for whom English is not their native language may choose their native language as one of their two language exams if they plan to conduct significant research/fieldwork in that language or in cases where a major corpus of literature pertinent to the student's field of research exists in that language.

Language examinations are given once each semester and have flexible scheduling. Students must take an examination at each of these times until their language requirements have been met. Each language examination consists of a passage of approximately 500 words selected from a representative work of musical scholarship. The student is given 3 hours to write an English translation. Use of a dictionary is permitted.

Reading courses in French, Italian, and German are administered by the Graduate Division during the summer (May through June) and are available to Ph.D. students at no cost. Students may register for undergraduate language courses as a fourth course as 'auditors.' Graduate credit will not be granted for such undergraduate language courses.

- 3 Students should consult with faculty about what performance opportunities might be most appropriate for them. For instance, with faculty approval, this requirement could be met through performing at a sufficiently high level (including conducting) in a Penn Sound Collective, or similar, concert. It could also be met by participating for one academic year in a Department-sponsored ensemble. Alternatively, a student may, in consultation with the faculty, take an exam in which facility in sight-singing, dictation, and keyboard are demonstrated. This requirement must be fulfilled by the end of the second year of study.
- 4
 1. Reflect on a new piece you have composed and had performed during your first year or first summer of being in the program. Comment on your own work, citing its expressive goals, what worked and what didn't, the role of revision, etc. include mention of two other pieces or composers that you consider to be influences or models and comment on this work in relation to your own. The score and/or recording of the piece in questions should accompany the essay.
 2. Choose a composer or piece that you consider to be far away from your own work, either in technique or aesthetic. Write a short essay that involves some analysis of this work. (This should not be a biographical sketch but rather an engagement with the music.)
 3. Choose a composer of general interest to you for future study, and not yet mentioned in either of the above short essays. Write on that person's work. (This essay may involve a broader scope than the second essay, but again should not be merely a biographical sketch.)

The purpose of this project is to assess your ability to complete the Ph.D. in Composition as well as to consolidate a foundation for success. We care about the writing: your ability to be articulate when you write about music, both your own and that of others, is important. The music with which you engage here need not be only contemporary. In fact, we encourage consideration of geographic, historical, and stylistic breadth.

The essays should be submitted to the composition faculty by September 1 of year 2. The faculty will respond to them with comments and evaluation by the end of September.

Students will be made aware of this first-year exam at the start of the program and reminded that it may serve as preparation for the upcoming Portfolio and Dissertation Essay requirements. Composition faculty will handle its advising and assessment. Students may wish to

consult with Music Studies faculty where relevant in connection with their interests in advance of writing the essays.

First-year exams will be evaluated based on the following structure:

Pass: A Pass on all portion of the examination is required for admission to the Ph.D. program.

Partial Pass: The student must take some portion of the examination again before the question of admission to the doctoral program is decided. Failure to achieve a Pass during the second sitting may result in an offer of a terminal master's degree (see Annual Review).

- 5 In spring of year two students must, in consultation with their current composition instructor, establish concrete plans for the medium, number and scope of compositions that will comprise the portfolio. The portfolio in general consist of at least thirty (30) minutes of music and consists of multiple pieces of music. At least one of the works included in the portfolio should be a significant revision. The portfolio must be submitted for review to the composition faculty by March of year 3. Students will meet with the composition faculty to discuss the materials in April of year 3. Topics of discussion will include the Portfolio of Compositions, the creative trajectory it implies, the quality of the work, and the opportunities it suggests.
- 6 Candidates will produce a major musical composition as a Ph.D. dissertation, the nature of which must be approved by the composition faculty, which serves as the dissertation committee. It is understood that during the two semesters leading up to the completion of the dissertation the student and advisor will be in regular contact regarding the progress of the dissertation. A final draft of the Ph.D. dissertation must be submitted for review to the composition faculty by March 1 of the last semester of study, and the completed, approved composition, incorporating any changes recommended by the faculty, must be submitted to the dissertation committee by April 1 of the graduation term.
Ph.D. candidates prepare a dissertation essay about their own work. This essay is about 10 pages and places their work in a boarder cultural and historical context, citing influences, identities, and process, as relevant. The essay is submitted to the committee, DGS, and Grad Coordinator alongside the dissertation piece. The finalized essay is kept on record in the department and is not required to be uploaded when submitting the approved dissertation to ProQuest ETD Administrator (The University's electronic thesis and dissertation database).
- 7 At the conclusion of the Ph.D. program, students will prepare a final presentation on their compositional work, with special emphasis on the dissertation, that is held in the Music Department. The dissertation committee and DGS are present. The defense is open to the public. Dissertation defenses should be held in person when possible, but may be presented via remote conferencing when deemed appropriate. If a hybrid or remote defense is requested, it must be approved by the DGS. It is the student's responsibility to schedule the defense in consultation with the dissertation committee, DGS and with deference to the yearly deadlines for dissertation submission set by the Provost's Office. The defense must be scheduled and held prior to the selected deposit date for the dissertation. Students are responsible for ensuring they have submitted their dissertation and essay to the composition faculty by a date agreed upon by the advisor and committee prior to the defense.

The degree and major requirements displayed are intended as a guide for students entering in the Fall of 2025 and later. Students should

consult with their academic program regarding final certifications and requirements for graduation.
