

Format and guidelines for the General Examination for the D.M.A.

(revised 5/2025)

Format: The General Examination for D.M.A. programs will assess a student in three areas/fields of expertise, to include both a qualifying written examination and an oral General Examination, as described below.

Fields of the examination: Students will develop deep expertise in three fields/areas, usually defined as [A] Repertory (a specific body of works, such as the French *mélodie* or the Romantic concerto); [B] Research (such as current scholarship on American musical theater or the Second Viennese School), and [C] Pedagogy (issues related to teaching in the student's primary area). The student will develop the fields in consultation with the supervisory committee, and will provide the committee with annotated bibliographies for review by the committee and to be used as the basis of the examinations (see below). Since there are only three areas, the committee will expect considerable breadth and depth of knowledge.

Note: areas A and B differ crucially in their focus and aims. The Repertory area tests students' ability to master a body of musical works, while the Scholarship area tests their ability to read, digest, and evaluate a body of scholarship. The principal sources of area A are musical works; the principal sources of area B are books, articles, and dissertations about musical works and topics.

The supervisory committee: The supervisory committee should be formed in the beginning of the second full year of doctoral study (it can be formed earlier), and the committee will participate in the definition of the areas of the General Examination. Graduate School link:

<https://grad.uw.edu/policies/4-2-supervisory-committee-for-graduate-students/>

The timing of the two parts of the examination:

A passing written qualifying examination will precede the General Examination by at least one quarter. A more compressed timeline may be approved by the committee.

The qualifying written examination: The preliminary written examination will be an essay examination on one or all three of the fields of expertise (see below). The written qualifying component consists of questions prepared and evaluated by at least two Graduate Faculty members of the supervisory committee, who must receive the annotated bibliography or bibliographies at least three weeks prior to the written exam. Each program area will determine the length of time allocated for the exam; these specifics are documented on the School of Music website and linked below*. Accommodations will be provided as needed, and as per UW Disability Resources for Students.

This written preliminary examination will focus attention on the need to be able to write clearly, and to write in the depth expected of doctoral study. This examination may be taken a

total of two times; failure to pass on the second attempt will result in the student's dismissal from their program.

Outcome of the qualifying written examination:

- (1) If the student passes the qualifying written examination, they may move on to the preparation for the General Examination, which will include all three fields.
- (2) If the student does *not* pass the written examination on the first attempt, the committee must decide whether the student needs to address issues of writing ability by taking additional coursework or tutoring; *or*, whether the student may re-take the written examination at the start of the next quarter, and then proceed to the General Examination in that same quarter (i.e., take the written examination of week one or two of Spring Quarter, and the General Examination no sooner than four weeks later). The specific recommendation will be communicated to the student within two weeks of taking the written examination.

The (oral) General Examination: will include an examination of all three fields, including material covered in the written qualification examination. The committee will receive the bibliographies and copies of the written preliminary examination at least three weeks in advance, in order to consider the types of questions that could be addressed to the student. The committee may allow the student to begin with a brief presentation, but most of the examination time will be devoted to questions directed to the student. The Graduate School clarifies the guidelines and scheduling for the General Examination here:

<https://grad.uw.edu/for-students-and-post-docs/mygrad-program/>

All other degree requirements must be completed before taking the General Examination. Upon successful completion of the General Examination and all other requirements, the student will have the status of Candidate for the Doctor of Musical Arts and will proceed to the dissertation.

Ideal timeline for the preparation of both components of the General Examination

(some programs may have requirements that will move the General Examination to Year Three):

Year One: Taking coursework, lessons, ensembles and becoming acquainted with faculty who might serve on the supervisory committee.

Year Two: Autumn: Continuing coursework and other requirements; formation of the Supervisory Committee and identification of the three fields of the General Examination in consultation with the committee

Year Two: Winter: Continuing coursework and other requirements; taking the qualifying written examination

Year Two: Spring: Completion of all degree requirements; taking the General Examination in all three fields of study

Specific program requirements:

***Choral Conducting:** In the choral conducting area, the written component will be a two hour proctored examination, written by hand or on a computer provided. Students will submit an annotated bibliography for one topic at least three weeks prior to the written exam.

Keyboard: In the keyboard area, the written component will be a 2-3 hour proctored examination, written by hand or on a computer provided for the examination. Students will submit annotated bibliographies for all three topics at least three weeks prior to the written exam

Orchestral Conducting: In the orchestral conducting area, the written component will be a 72-hour take-home examination. Students will submit annotated bibliographies for all three topics at least three weeks prior to the written exam.

Wind Conducting: In the orchestral conducting area, the written component will be a 72-hour take-home examination. Students will submit an annotated bibliography for one topic at least three weeks prior to the written exam.

Percussion: In the percussion area, the written component will be a 72-hour take-home examination. Students will submit annotated bibliographies for all three topics at least three weeks prior to the written exam.

Strings: In the strings area, the written component will be a 72-hour take-home examination. Students will submit annotated bibliographies for all three topics at least three weeks prior to the written exam.

Voice: In the voice area, the written component will be a 72-hour take-home examination. Students will submit an annotated bibliography for one topic at least three weeks prior to the written exam.

Woodwind/Brass: In the woodwind and brass area, the written component will be a 2-3 hour proctored examination, written by hand or on a computer provided for the examination. Students will submit annotated bibliographies for all three topics at least three weeks prior to the written examination.

Composition: Please see this degree sheet <https://music.washington.edu/doctor-musical-arts-composition>