

**Music Theory Department
The Hartt School
University of Hartford**

**Guidelines for the
Graduate Music Theory Placement Examinations**

Revised 06-13-11

These guidelines may be revised and will be dated accordingly.

There are five graduate music theory placement examinations: music theory, ear training, tonal counterpoint, keyboard harmony, and score reading. The information given in these guidelines summarizes the purpose and content for each examination. Suggested books for study are given for each examination. For information regarding required placement examinations for various graduate programs and majors, consult the The Hartt School graduate admissions website at www.hartford.edu

I. MUSIC THEORY

The Graduate Music Theory Placement Examination is a written examination covering three areas:

(1) tonal harmony, (2) tonal form, and (3) post-tonal theory. Each area is graded separately.

Entering students are to prepare for the examination by studying the following topics:

1. Tonal harmony: chords (diatonic and chromatic triads and seventh chords), harmonic progression (cadences, diatonic, chromatic), voice-leading (4-voice part writing), figured bass, non-chord tones, closely-related and remotely-related modulation. 2. Tonal form: forms (phrase, part, rondo, sonata), procedures (variation, contrapuntal, concerto). 3. Post-tonal theory: harmony (scales, modes, collections, sets), rhythm (meters, subdivisions, metric modulation), pitch-class set theory (neotonal, atonal, twelve-tone).

The following books are suggested for study.

- 1. *Tonal Harmony*, Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne, 6th edition, McGraw-Hill, 2009.**
- 2. *Form in Tonal Music*, Douglass M. Green, 2nd edition, Schirmer, 1979.**
- 3. *Materials and Techniques of Twentieth-Century Music*, Stefan Kostka, 3rd edition, Prentice Hall, 2006.**

Students not passing one or more parts of the Graduate Music Theory Placement Examination

must take and pass one or more of the following music theory review courses before being permitted to take graduate courses in music theory. Credits earned in the following review courses do not count toward any Hartt graduate degree.

TH 611 (Graduate Music Theory Review: Tonal Harmony)

TH 612 (Graduate Music Theory Review: Tonal Form)

TH 613 (Graduate Music Theory Review: Modern Techniques)

II. EAR TRAINING

The Graduate Ear Training Placement Examination is a sight-singing examination. Each graduate student will meet individually with an ear-training instructor and will be asked to sight sing solo for the instructor. Students may use the sight-singing method (movable /fixed syllables or numbers) according to their training.

Entering graduate students are to prepare for the examination by studying the following topics.

Clefs (treble, alto, tenor, bass), simple intervals (singing, recognition), diatonic triads and seventh chords (singing, recognition), melodies (modal, diatonic, chromatic), modulation (closely-related keys), meters (simple, compound).

The following book is suggested for study.

Music for Sight Singing, Robert W. Ottman and Nancy Rogers, 8th ed., Prentice Hall, 2011

The following websites are suggested for ear training practice.

www.good-ear.com , www.teoria.com , www.theory.net .

Students not passing the Graduate Ear Training Placement Examination must take and pass TH 614 (Graduate Ear Training Review) before being permitted to take graduate courses in music theory. Credits earned for TH 614 do not count toward any Hartt graduate degree.

III. TONAL COUNTERPOINT

The Graduate Tonal Counterpoint Placement Examination consists of writing and analyzing tonal counterpoint: two-voice and three-voice tonal counterpoint (non-imitative, imitative, invertible) in the eighteenth-century style of J. S. Bach.

The following book is suggested for study.

Counterpoint, Kent Kennan, 4th ed., Prentice Hall, 1999

Students not passing the Graduate Tonal Counterpoint Placement Examination must take and pass TH 511 (Tonal Counterpoint).

IV. KEYBOARD HARMONY

The Graduate Keyboard Harmony Placement Examination consists of performing at the piano diatonic and chromatic chord progressions, cadences, figured bass, and melody harmonization.

The following book is suggested for study.

A New Approach to Keyboard Harmony, Allen Brings and others, Norton, 1979

Students not passing the Graduate Keyboard Harmony Placement Examination must take and pass TH 627 (Graduate Keyboard Harmony).

V. SCORE READING

The Graduate Score Reading Placement Examination consists of playing at the piano transposing various instrumental parts, sight reading an excerpt from a Classical string quartet score, and sight reading an excerpt from a Classical symphonic score.

The following book is suggested for study.

Preparatory Exercises in Score-Reading, R. O. Morris and Howard Ferguson, Oxford, 1959

Students not passing the Graduate Score Reading Placement Examination must take and pass TH 628 (Graduate Score Reading).

HISTORY

**Music History Department
The Hartt School
University of Hartford**

**Guidelines for
Graduate Music History
Placement Examinations
Summer Term**

About the Graduate Music History Placement Examination

This examination is used both to recommend appropriate course work in Music History for incoming students pursuing master's degrees and, together with other factors, to determine the acceptability of nonmatriculated students into doctoral programs. The purpose of this exam is to evaluate the incoming student's knowledge of the principal events, ideas, genres, composers and styles important to the history of Western classical music. Without a sufficiently broad understanding of the history of music, a student cannot hope to successfully complete graduate course work which builds on such knowledge. The examination is broad-based, with as many comprehensive questions as specific ones. However, there is a sizeable random selection of specific questions concerning individual works, treatises, composers, etc. The examination covers all periods and follows the common division into Medieval, Renaissance, Baroque, Classic, Romantic, and Modern periods. A good starting point would be for the student to be certain that he/she knows these designations and their chronological limits, can define the features of music from each, and can cite outstanding composers and works.

This examination does not test music terminology, but knowledge of it is assumed and is, in fact, required to interpret some of the questions, as it is indeed used in graduate course work without explanation. Students who are deficient in their knowledge of musical terminology are at a distinct disadvantage, not only in taking this

exam but also in doing graduate course work in general. A good way to review basic music terminology is to browse the glossary of any recent edition of Grout's *History of Western Music* or similar text or to review the appropriate topics in any standard musical dictionary. (For a good sampling of such terms, see the description of Part III of this examination below).

Part I of the examination consists entirely of multiple-choice questions. The student is advised to review principles, forms, and major trends rather than to try to learn repertoire and isolated facts hurriedly. The questions in Part I all have this format:

- Which of the following is/was **NOT** concerned with the art of music criticism? (Choice e is the appropriate one.)
 - a. George Bernard Shaw
 - b. Virgil Thomson
 - c. Andrew Porter
 - d. Robert Schumann
 - e. Georg Solti
 - f. Hugo Wolf

- Joseph Haydn figures most prominently in the development of which of the following? (Choice c is the appropriate one.)
 - a. opera buffa
 - b. piano concerto
 - c. symphony
 - d. Singspiel
 - e. Lied
 - f. cantata

Part II is a listening identification section consisting of several excerpts. Some of these are taken from the standard concert repertoire. You will not be asked to distinguish Haydn from early Beethoven or Ravel from Debussy, for example, but will be asked to suggest a possible composer and an approximate year of composition for each excerpt.

Part III of the exam includes excerpts for score analysis. For each you must estimate the date of composition and suggest a possible composer. More importantly, you must give *reasons for your choices* by commenting on the score and citing features which make your choice a logical one. Features of style might include such aspects as atonality, Sprechstimme, symmetrical phrase lengths, bitextuality, stretto, polymeter, chromaticism, modality, homophony, imitative counterpoint, thematic development, ostinato rhythm, whole-tone scales, word-painting, etc.

Any of several general histories would be appropriate for study in preparation for the examination. Among those recommended are Mark Evan Bonds, *A History of Music in Western Culture* (Prentice Hall, 2003), Donald Grout, *A History of Western Music*, 6th ed. (Norton, 2001) and Douglas Seaton, *Ideas and Styles in the Western Musical Tradition* (Mayfield Pub. Co., 1991).

Among anthologies of music recommended for score study are Mark Evan Bonds, *Anthology of Scores to A History of Music in Western Culture*. 2 vols. (Prentice Hall, 2003); Claude Palisca, *Norton Anthology of Western Music*, 4th ed. 2 vols. (Norton, 2001) [this is designed to accompany Donald Grout, *A History Of Western Music*, 6th ed. (Norton, 2001)], and Sarah Fuller, *The European Musical Heritage 800-1750* (Knopf, 1987). All of these contain scores, translations, commentary, and stylistic analysis. Companion sets of recordings are also available for each.

Given below in random order is a highly selective list of musical topics representative of those appropriate for review.

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| program vs. absolute music | | |
| New Viennese school | | |
| Aleatoric music | prepared piano | tone poem |
| Schubert and the Lied | character piece | Leitmotiv |
| Nationalism in music | musical traits associated with impressionism | |
| Mendelssohn revival of J. S. Bach | Pythagoras | |
| Gregorian chant | Canonical Hours | |
| Mass Ordinary | Mass Proper | Church modes |
| Guido d'Arezzo | hexachord solmization | Leonin and Perotin |
| Reformation | Counter-reformation | Council of Trent |
| chorale | Florentine Camerata | French overture |
| continuo practice | Chorale cantata | |
| Ritornello principle | Tenor cantus firmus | Mass Cycle |
| Notre Dame de Paris | Ars nova | Fixed forms |
| Trecento | isorhythm | musica ficta |
| mensuration canon | Petrucchi | Shakespeare and |
| Lorenzo da Ponte | Ludwig Köchel | opera |

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| <i>Liber Usualis</i> | <i>Odhecaton</i> | <i>Le Nuove Musiche</i> |
| <i>stile brisé</i> | <i>style galant</i> | <i>Empfindsamkeit</i> |
| <i>The Beggar's Opera</i> | <i>Heiligenstadt Testament</i> | |
| <i>A Plaine and Easie</i> | <i>Introduction to Practicall Musicke</i> | |
| <i>Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen</i> | | |
| <i>Der Ring des Nibelungen</i> | | |
| <i>Eroica</i> | | |
| <i>Das Lied von der Erde</i> | | |