



# Music Master of Arts (M.A.)/Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Graduate Guidebook

**UCLA**

Herb Alpert  
School of Music

## Note to Students

Welcome to the M.A. and Ph.D. Composition Programs at the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music! We are thrilled to have you join our vibrant community of composers, scholars, and musicians.

Our program is dedicated to fostering creativity, innovation, and artistic excellence in composition while providing you with the tools and mentorship to explore your unique musical voice. Throughout your journey at UCLA, you will have the opportunity to collaborate with world-class faculty, engage in groundbreaking research, and contribute to a diverse array of performances and projects. Whether your focus is on contemporary classical music, film scoring, or experimental sound, you will find a supportive and inspiring environment to develop your craft and challenge your artistic boundaries.

This guide, designed for M.A. and Ph.D. students, faculty, and staff, outlines the program's requirements and logistics. It is intended to support your success and address any questions you may have, so please take the time to read it thoroughly.

We wish you an exciting and transformative chapter in your musical journey!

- Department of Music, Composition

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## ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

Understanding the overall structure of graduate study at UCLA will help you navigate the program and utilize its resources.

**The UCLA Academic Senate** operates as a legislative body and a system of appointed, faculty-run committees for UCLA, one of which is the Graduate Council.

**The UCLA Graduate Council** creates policy for all graduate education at UCLA. It is composed of:

- Twenty faculty members
- Four graduate student representatives appointed by the Graduate Student Association
- Graduate Division deans, directors, and principal staff

This council recommends changing or creating degree programs and periodically reviews and evaluates all graduate programs of study.

**The Graduate Division** executes the policies set by the Graduate Council and oversees the quality and progress of graduate education on campus, including the program requirements on the following pages. Throughout your studies at UCLA, you may interact with the Graduate Division about funding, degree milestones, and the awarding of your degree.

Our Music Department program requirements are crafted at the department level and formalized through the Graduate Division and the Graduate Council. Our program is subject to the Graduate Division's Standards & Procedures, which are available here: <https://grad.ucla.edu>

As a graduate student at UCLA, you may regard the program requirements and the Graduate Division's Standards & Procedures as your contract with the university.

**The Chair of the Division of Composition**, alongside the Student Affairs Officer, oversees graduate students' degree progress, exam scheduling, and professional development. As the primary faculty advisor until a dissertation advisor is assigned, the Chair meets individually with students and participates in fall orientation. They can also approve student petitions with precedent and compelling rationale.

**The Office of Student Affairs** at UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music recruits, matriculates, and supports students, offering academic advising and services to promote success. The **Music Graduate Student Affairs Officer (SAO)** advises graduate students on degree progress, funding, and petitions, and collaborates with the Chair on academic matters.



## ACTION ITEMS FOR INCOMING STUDENTS

### Before School Starts

Plan to arrive in Los Angeles by mid-September if you are a California resident OR September 1 if you are a non-resident.

### Foreign Language Requirement

You will be required to demonstrate proficiency in a foreign language as the first formal step in the dissertation process. MA students must successfully complete one foreign language, while PhD students are required to complete two foreign languages. Begin thinking now about what would benefit your studies and how you may want to fulfill this requirement. Since there are different ways to fulfill this, each with their own timelines, it's important to strategize early.

### Residency

If you are a U.S. citizen and not a California resident, you must make an appointment to visit the Residency Deputy in 1105 Murphy and/or consult the [website](#) to prepare to establish California residency. You will need to begin establishing legal ties to California in order to attain residency, and the [Residence Deputy](#) will direct you on this process.

### Contact Information

When you arrive, make sure you update your mailing address, phone contact, and email address information on your MyUCLA. Our office will use these official contacts as the primary way of communication.

### Financial

Set up Bruin Direct to have the balance of your BruinBill account deposited directly into your checking account; see [here](#). Check your Billing and Accounts Receivable (BAR) account every month on BruinBill. Pay bills by the 20th of the month to avoid holds. Typical charges you might see will be Ashe Center charges and library fees.

### Orientation

You will be asked to attend an orientation meeting with the Department's Chair and the Music Graduate Student Affairs Officer (SAO) a few days before school starts. Bring your questions about any aspect of the graduate program, including immediate planning and registration issues.

### English as a Foreign Language (ESL)

If you are a non-native English speaker, please review the [guidelines for UCLA's English requirements](#).

If your graduate admissions checklist states you have to take the ESL Placement Exam (ESLPE), please do so in the fall or winter quarter of your first year.

In addition, please review the [guidelines for the Test of Oral Proficiency \(TOP\) exam](#).

## REMINDERS

### Teaching Assistantships

All students who will be a TA for our department are required to take Music 495A (Introductory Practicum for Teaching Apprentices), which lays the foundation for our history of teaching excellence.

If you plan to work more than 50% on campus, please contact your SAO to complete an Authorization to Work Over 50% form, which requires approval from the Department Chair. Additionally, students are generally limited to 12 quarters of TAing, but with an approved exception from the Graduate Division, this limit can be extended to 18 quarters..

### Research Mentorships

Students are strongly encouraged to apply for Research Mentorships in their second or third year. For information on this and other sources of continuing support, see the [Graduate Division continuing support webpage](#).

### Conferences

For those interested in attending a conference, there are funding resources available. Please apply for this funding opportunities in this order:

- The Graduate Division offers a **Doctoral Travel Grant**, which will reimburse up to \$1,000 related to conference participation through the student's 7th year in the doctoral program. More information [here](#).
- The Herb Alpert School of Music also provides a **Student Opportunity Fund** for reimbursement of expenses related to travel for research, performances, classes, camps, and conferences up to \$800 per academic year. More information [here](#).

### Copyright

Please be sure to protect your work. If you have any questions about copyrights, licensing, or anything related to the ownership and protection of your work, please contact the Copyright & Licensing Librarian, Martin J. Brennan at [martinjbrennan@library.ucla.edu](mailto:martinjbrennan@library.ucla.edu) or (310) 206-0039.

## AWARDS AND SUPPORT

### Departmental Awards

The following competitive scholarships are available to Composition students to apply for. Applications are usually sent out by the SAO to the students. Each scholarship will have its own set of requirements and request different additional materials, which are subject to change year to year.

- Elaine Krown Klein Scholarship
- Henry Mancini Scholarship
- Stanley Wilson Memorial Scholarship in Composition and Brass Performance

### Graduate Division Awards

A detailed list of awards can be found in the [Graduate Student Financial Support for Continuing Students page](#)

### Academic Senate's Distinguished Teaching Award

The Academic Senate Committee on Teaching names five TAs per year to receive the Distinguished Teaching Award, which provides \$2,500 to each TA and a \$20,000 Dissertation Year Fellowship to those who are eligible.

The department is allowed to nominate one TA for this award. The selection process for that award will take into consideration relevant factors, such as how far along in the program candidates may be, and other dimensions of their teaching profile that may position them well to win the Academic Senate's Award. For more information, visit the [Academic Senate website](#).

### Summer Support

The Graduate Division provides an opportunity for graduate student to apply for financial support during the summer, through the Graduate Summer Research Mentorship (GSRM).

Click [here](#) for more information on the GSRM.

### Other Support

There may also be opportunities for additional support through appointments as an Academic Student Employee (ASE) or Graduate Student Researcher (GSR). ASE appointments include TAs as well as Readers, Special Readers, and Tutors.

For more information, please visit [Graduate Division's page](#) on Working at UCLA.



# Program Checklist



## Composition Specialization vs. Composition Visual Media Specialization

The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music offers two distinct composition specializations: Composition and Composition for Visual Media.

**The Composition specialization** focuses on developing students' skills in writing original music for various contexts, emphasizing traditional and contemporary techniques in concert music. It encourages creativity across diverse genres and styles, preparing students for careers in composing for live performance, academia, or experimental music.

**The Composition for Visual Media specialization** provides students the opportunity to take film music courses and world music for film. Film music composers have the opportunity to broaden their horizons by being part of a true composition program, and this gives composers stylistic depth and breadth.

All students are expected to develop and master advanced skills through rigorous study in music theory, counterpoint, orchestration, analysis, technology, and performance. This includes deep engagement with the traditional Western canon and its history, alongside the exploration of popular, jazz, rock, folk, and non-Western musical traditions.

Upon entering the UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, all M.A./Ph.D. students begin in the Composition specialization. After their first quarter, they may choose to stay in the Composition Specialization or switch to the Composition for Visual Media specialization. To make this change, students must contact their SAO to obtain the Contract for Specialization Switch, which requires approval from the Composition Co-chairs and supporting faculty.

**NOTE:** M.A./Ph.D. Composition Specialization students will be required to complete a foreign language requirement. Additional coursework in French, German, Italian, Russian, or Spanish may be necessary.

# M.A. Composition Specialization

Coursework	Title	Total Units
Music 251:	Seminar: Orchestration	4
4 quarters of Music 266:	Graduate Instruction for Composition Specialists (4 units each)	16
Music 253:	Seminar: Special Topics in Composition and Theory	4
Music 254:	Advanced Music Analysis: Pre-Tonal Music	4
Music 255:	Advanced Music Analysis: Tonal Music	4
Music 256:	Advanced Music Analysis: Post-Tonal Music	4
3 quarters of Music 201/Musicology 201:	Repertory and Analysis (2 units each)	6
*Elective	1.	4
Music 290:	Composition Forum (taken in the Spring Quarter of the first year)	2
Recommended: 2 quarters of Music 598	Guidance of MA Thesis	8-24

\*Elective is chosen from upper division or graduate courses, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor

# M.A./Ph.D. Composition Specialization

MA Coursework	Title	Total Units
Music 251:	Seminar: Orchestration	4
4 quarters of Music 266:	Graduate Instruction for Composition Specialists (4 units each)	16
Music 253:	Seminar: Special Topics in Composition and Theory	4
Music 254:	Advanced Music Analysis: Pre-Tonal Music	4
Music 255:	Advanced Music Analysis: Tonal Music	4
Music 256:	Advanced Music Analysis: Post-Tonal Music	4
3 quarters of Music 201/Musicology 201:	Repertory and Analysis (2 units each)	6
*Elective	1.	4
Music 290:	Composition Forum (taken in the Spring Quarter of the first year)	2
Recommended: 2 quarters of Music 598:	Guidance of MA Thesis	8-24

\*Elective is chosen from upper division or graduate courses, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

Doctoral Coursework	Total Units
200-level Musicology course whose topic covers some aspect of music after 1900, excluding performance practice seminars	1.
Music 204:	Music Bibliography for Performers 4
3 quarters of Music 266:	Graduate Instruction for Composition Specialists (4 units each) 12
**2 additional graduate seminars from the Department of Musicology (not including performance practice seminars) or Ethnomusicology, or from another outside department,	1. 2.
Music 290:	Composition Forum (taken in the Spring Quarter of the third year) 2
Recommended: 4 quarters of Music 599:	Guidance of PhD Dissertation 16-48

\*\*Seminars are chosen in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

NOTE: Composition with a Cognate in Ethnomusicology students: Students are required to take Ethnomusicology 20A, B, and C. They may also substitute Ethnomusicology 201 for Music 204 and Ethnomusicology 282 or 283 for Music 253.

# Ph.D. Composition Specialization

Courses	Title	Total Units
200-level Musicology course whose topic covers some aspect of music after 1900, excluding performance practice seminars	1.	4
3 quarters of Music 201/Musicology 201:	Repertory and Analysis (2 units each)	6
Music 204:	Music Bibliography for Performers	4
Music 251:	Seminar: Orchestration	4
6 quarters of Music 266:	Graduate Instruction for Composition Specialists (4 units each)	24
Music 253:	Seminar: Special Topics in Composition and Theory	4
Music 254:	Advanced Music Analysis: Pre-Tonal Music	4
Music 255:	Advanced Music Analysis: Tonal Music	4
Music 256:	Advanced Music Analysis: Post-Tonal Music	4
*2 additional graduate research seminars from the Department of Musicology or Ethnomusicology to satisfy the breadth area requirement	1. 2.	8
Music 290:	Composition Forum (taken in the Spring Quarter of the first year)	2
Recommended: 4 quarters of Music 599	Guidance of the PhD Dissertation	16-48

\*\*Seminars are chosen in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

NOTE: Composition with a Cognate in Ethnomusicology students: Students are required to take Ethnomusicology 20A, B, and C. They may also substitute Ethnomusicology 201 for Music 204 and Ethnomusicology 282 or 283 for Music 253.



# M.A. Composition for Visual Media Specialization

Coursework	Title	Total Units
Music 251:	Seminar: Orchestration	4
3 quarters of Music 266:	Graduate Instruction for Composition Specialists (4 units each)	12
Music 253:	Seminar: Special Topics in Composition and Theory	4
Music C226:	Electronic Music Composition	4
Music 260A:	Seminar: Composition for Motion Pictures and Television	6
Music 260B:	Seminar: Composition for Motion Pictures and Television	6
*Electives	1. 2.	8
**Film, Television and Digital Media courses	1. 2.	8
Music 290:	Composition Forum (taken in the Spring Quarter of the first year)	2
Recommended: 2 quarters of Music 298:	Guidance of MA Thesis	8-24

\*Electives are chosen from upper division or graduate courses, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

\*\*Film, Television and Digital Media courses are chosen from graduate courses, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

# M.A./Ph.D. Composition for Visual Media Specialization

MA Coursework	Title	Total Units
Music 251:	Seminar: Orchestration	4
3 quarters of Music 266:	Graduate Instruction for Composition Specialists (4 units each)	12
Music 253:	Seminar: Special Topics in Composition and Theory	4
Music C226:	Electronic Music Composition	4
Music 260A:	Seminar: Composition for Motion Pictures and Television	6
Music 260B:	Seminar: Composition for Motion Pictures and Television	6
*Electives	1. 2.	8
**Film, Television and Digital Media courses	1. 2.	8
Music 290:	Composition Forum (taken in the Spring Quarter of the first year)	2

\*Elective is chosen from upper division or graduate courses, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

\*\*Film, Television and Digital Media courses are chosen from graduate courses, in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

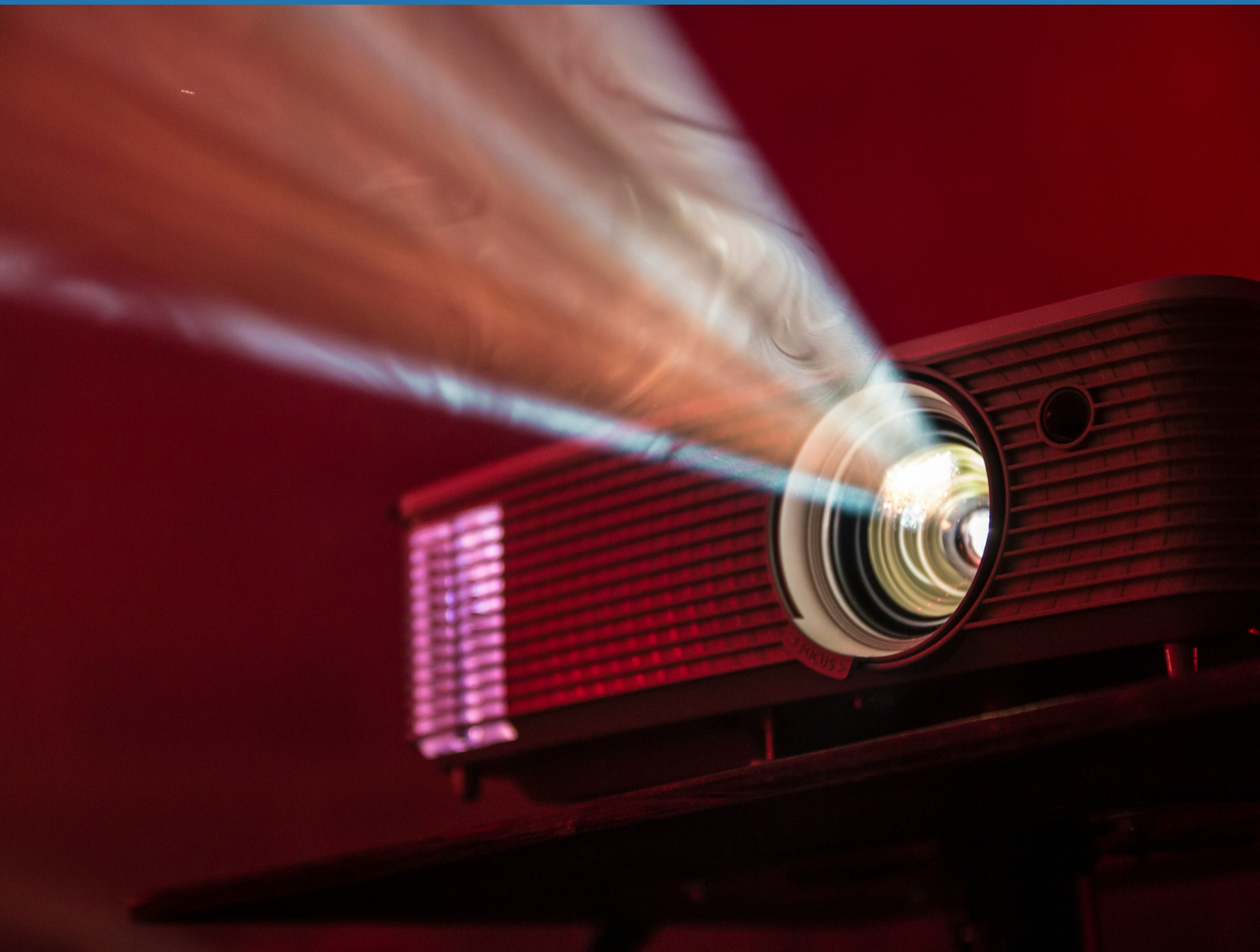
PhD Coursework	Title	Total Units
3 quarters of Music 201/Musicology 201:	Repertory and Analysis (2 units each)	6
Music 204:	Music Bibliography for Performers	4
3 quarters of Music 266:	Graduate Instruction for Composition Specialists (4 units each)	12
Music 255:	Advanced Music Analysis: Tonal Music	4
Music 256:	Advanced Music Analysis: Post-Tonal Music	4
*3 graduate seminars from the Department of Film, Television and Digital Media	1. 2. 3.	
*2 seminars in film studies from the Department of Film, Television and Digital Media	1. 2.	
Music 290:	Composition Forum (taken in the Spring Quarter of the third year)	2

\*Seminars are chosen in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.

# Ph.D. Composition for Visual Media Specialization

<b>Courses</b>		<b>Total Units</b>
3 quarters of Music 201/Musicology 201:	Repertory and Analysis (2 units each)	6
Music 204:	Music Bibliography for Performers	4
Music 226:	Electronic Music Composition	4
Music 251:	Seminar: Orchestration	4
5 quarters of Music 266:	Graduate Instruction for Composition Specialists (4 units each)	20
Music 253:	Seminar: Special Topics in Composition and Theory	4
Music 255:	Advanced Music Analysis: Tonal Music	4
Music 256:	Advanced Music Analysis: Post-Tonal Music	4
Music 260A:	Seminar: Composition for Motion Pictures and Television	6
Music 260B:	Seminar: Composition for Motion Pictures and Television	6
*3 graduate seminars from the Department of Film, Television and Digital Media	1. 2. 3.	12
*2 additional graduate seminars from the Department of Film, Television and Digital Media to satisfy the breadth area requirement	1. 2.	8
Music 290:	Composition Forum (taken in the Spring Quarter of the first year)	2
Recommended: 4 quarters of Music 599:	Guidance of PhD Dissertation	16-48

\*Seminars are chosen in consultation with the student's faculty advisor.



# Degree Milestones



## Degree Milestones Breakdown

In addition to the required coursework, students must complete a series of degree milestones on a timely basis:

### **MA in Composition Specialization and Composition of Visual Media Specialization:**

1. Foreign language requirement (if applicable)
2. File Form I (if applicable)
3. Constitution of the Masters Thesis Committee and ATC
4. MA Thesis and Filing
5. 1 performance every year of the program

### **PhD in Composition Specialization and Composition of Visual Media Specialization:**

1. Foreign language requirement
2. Departmental Written Qualifying Exam
3. Departmental Oral Exams #1 and #2
4. Dissertation Proposal Defense (University Oral Qualifying Exam)
5. University Final Defense of the Dissertation
6. Dissertation Filing
7. 1 performance every year of the program

### **MA/PhD in Composition Specialization and Composition of Visual Media Specialization:**

1. Foreign language requirement (2 total languages)
2. File Form I
3. Constitution of the Masters Thesis Committee and ATC
4. MA Thesis and Filing
5. Departmental Written Qualifying Exam
6. Departmental Oral Exams #1 and #2
7. Dissertation Proposal Defense (University Oral Qualifying Exam)
8. University Final Defense of the Dissertation
9. Dissertation Filing
10. 1 performance every year of the program

This is further outlined in the following Degree Milestone pages.

See the Program Requirements on the [Graduate Division website](#) for more information.

# Foreign Language

## Foreign Language Requirement

Students are required to demonstrate reading knowledge of two foreign language from German, French, Italian, Russian, or Spanish. Students are informed of the language requirement upon admission to the program, and should choose their language, in consultation with the Chair.

Program	# of Foreign Language required	Language options
MA Composition Specialization	1	French, German, Italian, or Spanish*
MA Composition for Visual Media	0	
PhD in Composition (all fields)	2	French, German, Italian, Latin, Russian, or Spanish**

Students whose native language is not English may petition to use English or their native language as one of the foreign languages. To petition, students must see the Departmental SAO.

Please see the next page for the methods to fulfill the foreign language requirement.

# Foreign Language

## Foreign Language Requirement

(Continued...)

The methods for fulfilling the requirement may include, but are not limited to:

- Completing three quarters of UCLA foreign language instruction in the same language. Levels 1 and 2 can be taken pass/no pass or for a letter grade. Level 3 of the language will need to be taken for a letter grade and completed with a minimum grade of B or higher.
- Passing a language examination administered by a UCLA foreign language department. Placement exams will need to be completed with a grade of Level Four or higher. The language exam options are listed below:

### Spanish:

- [Spanish Placement Exam](#)
- [Spanish Exemption Exam](#): For students that know they can pass at a level 4 or higher

#### NOTE:

- Spanish Exemption Exam has specific test dates within each quarter.
  - Students may complete Part 1 (Listening, Vocabulary, and Grammar) at any time during the academic year and the summer. Part 2 (Writing and Speaking) is only available during Fall, Winter and Spring Quarters during the specific dates – no exceptions. Part 2 is not available during the summer.

### French, Italian, German:

- [Placement exam link](#)

#### NOTE:

- For the German Placement Exam, students need to use the link for German 4-6 and place in at least a level 4.

### Latin (Ph.D. ONLY):

- **Latin Exemption Exam:** Need to know up to level 3 or higher to take the exam. It is offered on an as-needed basis in the first or second week of the fall and either winter or spring quarter. Please contact [Prof. Beckelhymer](#) if you are interested in taking the exam. The exam is comprised of a test of Latin forms, translation of sentences with questions about form and syntax, and translation of a paragraph of Latin or Greek text. The exam takes 3 hrs and no dictionaries or other aids are allowed.

### Russian (Ph.D. ONLY):

**The Russian Placement Exam** is only given once a year. To satisfy the language requirement you need to score higher than 78% on the exam. The Russian Placement Exam takes about 100 minutes to complete and consists of the following sections: grammar, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, speaking (you record yourself following prompts), and writing (a short essay).

- <https://web.international.ucla.edu/cwl/article/166822>

# M.A./Ph.D. Performances

## M.A./Ph.D. Performance

One requirement of the M.A., Ph.D., and M.A./Ph.D. programs is that students are expected to produce other works involving both instrumental and vocal music for both solo and ensemble forces. Students are responsible for the campus presentation of one original work during each year of residency.

Students must submit their program to the SAO within one week of holding their performance.

NOTE: For Ph.D. students only one performance total is expected in the third and fourth years. For M.A./Ph.D. students, only one performance total is expected in the fourth and fifth years.



# M.A. Timeline to Candidacy

This chart models optimal progress through the MA program. Satisfactory progress through the program is one of the requirements for continuing graduate student financial support.

## **MA Composition/Visual Media Specializations**

### **Year 1**

- Full-time coursework
- One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)

### **Year 2**

- Complete required coursework
- Complete foreign language (Composition specialization)
- Nominate Master's thesis committee
- Submit Nomination of Master's Committee Graduate Division Form
- Submit Graduate Division Master's Advancement to Candidacy Petition
- Defend and file thesis
- Submit Form I (if continuing to PhD program)
- One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)

# M.A. Committee

## Constitution of the M.A. Thesis Committee and Advancement to Candidacy

### MA Committee

It is the students' responsibility to put together a faculty committee to guide their thesis in consultation with the committee chair.

The committee is composed of **three** faculty members, consisting of:

1. The major teacher.
2. Two (2) members nominated by the student.

At least two (of the three) faculty must be members of the Academic Senate (the SAO will have a list of Senate faculty members).

The student must contact all of the committee members personally. Once the student has received confirmation that their three faculty members agree to be on their committee, the student must submit a [MA Committee Request Form](#). This form will list the proposed faculty members for the committee and must be approved by the Committee Chair and the Division Chair.

After the departmental form and dissertation is approved, the student must complete the [Nomination Master's Committee Form, Graduate Division](#). This form is turned in to the Academic Services Department in the Graduate Division for the student's Master's committee to be officially approved and recognized by the university. Before submitting this form to Academic Services, it must be signed by the Department Chair or Division Chair.

### Advancement to Candidacy

This is the process of certifying that the student either has or will have satisfied the degree requirements by the end of the quarter. The Graduate Division Master's Advancement to Candidacy Petition must be filed with the SAO no later than the second week of the quarter in which the student expects the award of the degree. Guidelines for completing this petition are available on the [Graduate Division website](#).



# M.A. Thesis

## MA Thesis and Filing

### MA Thesis

The thesis will normally be an original composition of significant length and or breadth. For Composition for Visual Media Specialization, that original composition will be cues for a work of visual media (which may be an original or a pre-existing work), or possibly cues for more than one work of visual media.

### Filing

For advice on preparing and filing your thesis, see the [Graduate Division website](#).

You are strongly encouraged to attend one of the quarterly [Dissertation Filing Workshops](#).



# M.A./Ph.D. Timeline to Candidacy

This chart models optimal progress through the program. Satisfactory progress through the program is one of the requirements for continuing graduate student financial support.

## MA/PhD Candidates (all specializations)

### Year 1 (MA)

- Full-time coursework
- One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)

### Year 2 (MA)

- Complete required coursework
- Nominate Master's thesis committee
- Submit Nomination of Master's Committee Graduate Division Form
- Submit Advancement to Candidacy form
- Complete foreign language (Composition specialization)
- File Form I (optional for MA students; mandatory for MA/PhD students)
- One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)
- Submit Form I

### Year 3 (PhD)

- Complete PhD coursework
- First foreign language requirement completed
- One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)

### Year 4 (PhD)

- Departmental Written Qualifying Exam
- Department Oral Exams
- Turn in Graduate Division Nomination of Committee form
- University Oral Qualifying Exam
- 2nd Foreign language requirement completed (MA Composition in Visual Media students)
- \*One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)

### Year 5 (PhD)

- University Final Defense of the Dissertation
- Dissertation Filing
- \*One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)

\*Only one performance total is expected in the fourth and fifth years.

# Ph.D. Timeline to Candidacy

This chart models optimal progress through the program. Satisfactory progress through the program is one of the requirements for continuing graduate student financial support.

## PhD Candidates (all specializations)

### Year 1

- Full-time coursework
- First foreign language requirement completed
- One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)

### Year 2

- Full-time coursework
- 2nd Foreign language requirement completed
- One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)

### Year 3

- Departmental Written Qualifying Exam
- Department Oral Exams
- Turn in Graduate Division Nomination of Committee form
- University Oral Qualifying Exam
- \*One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)

### Year 4

- University Final Defense of the Dissertation
- Dissertation Filing
- \*One performance (with program submitted to the Graduate SAO)

\*Only one performance total is expected in the third and fourth years.

# Ph.D. Departmental Written Qualifying Exam

## Ph.D. Departmental Qualifying Exam

Before taking the Written Qualifying Exam (WQE), students must have completed all coursework. The WQE normally takes place in the first two weeks of the winter quarter of the third year for entering Ph.D. students, and the fourth year for entering MA students. The exam consists of:

**Composition specialization students:** The Written Qualifying Examination consists of the following: "(1) analysis of pre-1900 music (based upon coursework in EITHER Music 254 OR 255); (2) analysis of post-1900 music (based upon coursework in Music 256); (3) topics in 20th-or 21st-century music (based upon their 20th-or 21st-century Musicology seminar); and (4) the breadth area (based upon coursework in ONE of their two breadth area courses)."

**Composition for visual media specialization:**

The Written Qualifying Examination consists of the following:

- (1) Analysis of pre-1900 music (based upon coursework in Music 255)
- (2) Analysis of post-1900 music (based upon coursework in Music 256)
- (3) Topics in music for visual media (based upon coursework in EITHER Music 260A OR 260B);
- (4) The breadth area (based upon coursework in ONE of their two breadth area courses).

## Ph.D. 4 Pieces Exam Committee

### Ph.D. 4 Pieces Exam Committee

The WQE is graded by a department exam committee. Each student's committee is made up of faculty members whose courses the student has taken. The exam committee consists of three ladder faculty.

**Composition Specialization** exam committee consists of:

- The faculty members who taught Music 254 or Music 255,
- The faculty members who taught Music 256
- The faculty members who taught the 200-level Musicology course whose topic covers some aspect of music after 1900
- The faculty members who is the student's principal breadth adviser.

**Composition Visual Media Specialization** exam committee consists of:

- The faculty members who taught Music 255
- The faculty members who taught Music 256
- The faculty members who taught Music 260A or Music 260B
- The faculty members who is the student's principal breadth adviser.

Exams are scheduled for all students in Winter Quarter of the appropriate year (after the student has completed all coursework). Normally the four written examinations are spread over a two-week period but should be completed within three weeks. Repeat examinations may be scheduled in consultation with the exam committee after a stipulated period of time (typically after one entire year).



# Ph.D. Departmental Oral Exams

## Departmental Oral Exams

Upon successful completion of the Departmental Written Qualifying Examination, Departmental Oral Examinations are scheduled.

### **Departmental Oral Exam #1**

The first Departmental Oral Examination consists of a defense of the Departmental Written Qualifying Examinations before the exam committee.

This exam is taken in the third or fourth week of winter quarter and is scheduled in consultation with the exam committee and the SAO.

### **Departmental Oral Exam #2**

The second Departmental Oral Exam (the “Four Pieces Exam”) is a presentation of all aspects of four compositions specified by the composition faculty in the previous year, including (but not limited to) the historical context, analyses, and significance of the works to other works in similar or identical genres. The Four Pieces Exam is given before the entire composition faculty.

This examination ordinarily is scheduled by the composition faculty for the fifth or sixth week of winter quarter.

# Ph.D. Constitution of Doctoral Committee and Dissertation Proposal

## Constitution of Doctoral Committee and Dissertation Proposal

On successful completion of the Departmental Oral Examinations and the second foreign language, the student must assemble and request the formation of their Doctoral Committee. The student must also submit their Dissertation Proposal for approval.

### **Constitution of the Doctoral Committee**

The must have at least four members and will be chaired by a member of the professorial faculty. The composition of the doctoral committee must adhere to these rules:

- The chair (or one of the co-chairs) must come from the home department and be a ladder faculty member of the Composition Division.
- A minimum of two of the four members need to be from one of the three UCLA School of Music Departments (Adjuncts may serve if they are certified and approved by the Committee on Degree Programs).
- A third member needs to be a UCLA faculty member, though need not be in the School of Music
- Two of the three UCLA-affiliated members must be at the Associate rank or higher.
- The fourth member can be either from UCLA or its academic equivalent at another accredited university or college (for non-UCLA, must have senate faculty appointment).

These four members of the committee must be in the professorial ranks. If the student's primary teacher is not in this category, they must be included as a fifth member of the committee. The student must contact all of their committee members personally.

### **Dissertation Proposal**

The dissertation proposal should include a detailed description of the expected length, instrumentation, and goals of the proposed dissertation composition, including the source of text, if applicable. It should also include a detailed description of the proposed monograph; the monograph must demonstrate the student's ability to perform original, independent research and constitutes a distinct contribution to knowledge in the principal field of study.

# Ph.D. Constitution of Doctoral Committee and Dissertation Proposal

## Constitution of Doctoral Committee and Dissertation Proposal

(Continued...)

### **Forms**

After selecting members for the doctoral committee and completing the dissertation proposal, the student will submit the [Music Ph.D. Doctoral Committee & Dissertation Topic Request](#) to be reviewed by the composition faculty.

After these departmental forms are approved, the student must complete the [Nomination Doctoral Committee Form, Graduate Division](#). This form is turned in to the Academic Services Department in the Graduate Division for the student's doctoral committee to be officially approved and recognized by the university. Before submitting this form to Academic Services, it must be signed by the Department Chair or Division Chair.

# Ph.D. University Oral Qualifying Exam

## Ph.D. University Oral Qualifying Exam

After the student's proposed doctoral committee and dissertation topic is approved by the composition faculty, and the student has received approval of their Doctoral Committee from the Graduate Division, the student may schedule the University Oral Qualifying Examination with their Doctoral Committee. This is the student's first meeting with their committee. This exam, ordinarily 60 to 90 minutes long requires the student to formally present their dissertation proposal.

Before the exam, the student is responsible for contacting their SAO to initiate the **Report on the Oral Qualifying Examination Graduate Division Form**. This form must be signed by members of the Doctoral Committee signifying if the student has passed the OQE or not, and is turned in to the Academic Services office in the Graduate Division. The passing of the OQE results in the student being formally Advanced to Candidacy.

**Due to faculty members' busy schedules, it is highly recommended that students start looking for a date and time to hold their OQE well in advance.** Students are responsible for finding a space to hold their exam and should schedule it for at least two hours. Students are also responsible for ensuring their committee members are able to attend the exam. Only one committee member (never the Chair or Co-Chair) may participate remotely in an OQE, and this must be a matter of necessity rather than convenience. The Committee Chair should work with the SAO to petition the Graduate Division in advance of the examination to allow one member to participate remotely. The technology required for remote participation must allow for the participant to see/be seen by and hear/be heard by all committee members and have access to visual materials simultaneously. The department/program must notify the Graduate Division of the remote participation within 14 business days of the examination.

**NOTE:** Students CANNOT take the OQE until their Doctoral committee is officially constituted by the Graduate Division.

# Ph.D. University Final Defense of the Dissertation and Filing

## University Final Defense of the Dissertation and Filing

The student may schedule their final defense after they have successfully advanced to candidacy. All dissertation materials —the completed original composition, the cues together with the relevant visual media (if appropriate), and the monograph —must be provided to all committee members a minimum of one week in advance of the final defense. This material must be printed out and delivered to the committee members if they so request, or may be provided electronically if the committee members agree.

All dissertation “signatures” and filing are done electronically. Please see the Graduate Division website, for important information on filing procedures and formatting requirements. You should plan on attending one of the Quarterly Dissertation Filing meetings given by the Graduate Division. Awareness of deadlines regarding filing is the student’s responsibility.

### Filing

For advice on preparing and filing your dissertation, see the [Graduate Division website](#).

You are strongly encouraged to attend one of the quarterly [Dissertation Filing Workshops](#).

Be aware you are not required to obtain any copyright permissions in order to file your dissertation. Even for later publication of your work as a book, Fair Use protects most uses of copyrighted materials provided that they are reproduced only in part, for academic purposes of commentary or criticism, so long as such use does not harm the economic value of the copyright. But in any case, university policy explicitly states that no copyright permissions of any kind are required in order to file the dissertation.

If you have any questions regarding copyright and/or embargoes for your work, please contact the Copyright & Licensing Librarian, Martin J. Brennan at [martinjbrennan@library.ucla.edu](mailto:martinjbrennan@library.ucla.edu) or (310) 206-0039



## Graduate Guidebook Closing

As you conclude your review of the graduate guidebook, we encourage you to keep in mind the action items, program checklists, performance, committee constitutions and exams information provided. These resources are designed to help you navigate your academic journey with clarity and confidence.

We wish you every success in your graduate studies and encourage you to reach out to your advisors and faculty members for guidance along the way. Stay engaged, stay organized, and embrace the opportunities ahead.

- Department of Music, Composition