



Graduate (MM) Placement Examinations and Assessments Fall 2024

Placement exams and assessments are only given during the orientation period of each semester.

Graduate Music Theory

Required for all incoming graduate students.

The exam determines whether or not you will need to take a one-semester refresher course in the basics of music theory (Theory Review MMT 604).

If you have very little prior experience with music theory, it is possible that the department will strongly recommend that you take an undergraduate music fundamentals course prior to taking the one-semester graduate refresher course.

You will be asked to write a four-voice setting from a figured bass line, provide a four-voice harmonization of a given melody, perform a harmonic analysis of a given chorale-like example, and analyze musical forms. The exam does not cover counterpoint or post-1900 practices.

[Study guide and more info](#)

For further questions or information, email Scott Foglesong (scott.foglesong@sfc.edu).

Dictation, Sightsinging, and Musicianship

Required for all incoming graduate students.

The exam determines whether or not you will need to take a one-semester refresher course in dictation, sightsinging, and musicianship (Musicianship Review MMT 602).

The **first component** consists of sight-singing a number of musical compositions, both melodies and single-voice rhythms, ranging in difficulty from very simple to extremely complex. The musical selections may be in any of four clefs (treble, bass, tenor, and alto), major and minor modes as well as the standard Church modes, and at the more difficult level may be selected from the 12-tone or atonal literature. The instructor administering the examination will determine which selections to ask you to sing, depending upon your prior experience with solfège. You may sing the examples in any solmization system. Conduct while performing, if at all possible.

The **second component** is a progressive dictation exam beginning with simple rhythms and melodies, and progressing through increasingly difficult examples, including intervals, chords, advanced melodic dictation, harmonic dictation, and chorale dictation. The dictation component does not include any atonal or 12-tone examples.

[Study guide and more info](#)

Graduate Music History

The Music History Placement exam will determine whether you are placed into the graduate refresher courses MHL 602 and/or MHL 603, or whether you may pass directly into upper-level seminars.

The exam lasts 1.5 hours, and includes three sections:

- I. General questions about the history of Western classical music from 1700 to 1900, and from 1900 to the present
- II. Listening and score identifications and discussion covering Western classical music repertoire from 1700 to the present
- III. Critical thinking skills: reading comprehension skills; reflective essays (2)

Because the exam is designed to test material learned at the undergraduate level, no advance preparation is necessary. It's a tool for placing you in the classes that will best serve your needs.

N.B.: If you did not take undergraduate music history courses that covered Western classical music from 1700-2000, we recommend that you consider skipping the test and enrolling for MHL 602 and MHL 603 (one per semester). These courses earn you credits that count toward your degree.

On the test, all of your answers and words must be your own. If you use phrases, sentences, or paragraphs from elsewhere (a textbook, any online source, etc.), or if your answers are the same as any other students', you will receive zero credit.

As a courtesy, we do offer some study tips, and make some materials available in advance (see below).

Section I: General Knowledge about the History of Music

This section includes roughly forty questions (fill in the blank, multiple choice, and short answer) that test your general knowledge of Western classical music history of the 18th-19th and of the 20th-21st centuries (with an equal number of questions for each era).

Section II: Score Identification and Discussion

In this section, you will be asked to identify no more than fifteen musical excerpts, roughly half from the 18th and 19th centuries and half from the 20th and 21st. Within the exam you will be given an audio clip, score excerpt, or both, for each question. For each excerpt, you will be asked to name the composer, genre (symphony, opera, string quartet, etc.), and date (within 25 years). In addition, you will be asked specific questions regarding musical features such as texture, form, text setting, etc. All excerpts will be taken from repertoire published in the *Oxford History of Western Music*, College Edition score anthologies, Volumes 2 and 3, plus the following composers from Volume 1: J. S. Bach, Buxtehude, Corelli, Handel, and Vivaldi.

Section III: Critical Thinking Skills

This section is divided into two parts:

- A. Part A tests reading comprehension by asking you to read one selection, then answer related multiple choice and fill in the blank questions. It is not necessary to do the reading in advance; however, as a courtesy to students who would like extra time to prepare, you can [find it here](#).
- B. Part B asks you to reflect on and write about your own experiences with music history (as a musician and/or a student), first for the period of early music through 1900, and secondarily for music from 1900 to the present.

If you have further questions, email Alex Stalarow (astalarow@sfcmm.edu). Students who have gotten their BM from SFCM in the last two years should contact Prof. Stalarow to check-in about their placement requirements.

Basic Phonetics

Optional for MM and Advanced Certificate vocalists who want to be excused from APP 210 Basic Phonetics. You should NOT take this exam if you have never studied phonetics and IPA.

The exam includes the following:

- *The International Phonetic Alphabet* - You will be asked to transcribe English words (real or invented) into IPA upon hearing them pronounced, and to identify simple English words written in IPA.
 - *Basic Articulatory Phonetics* - You will be asked to answer multiple choice questions regarding the physical formation of vowels and consonants.
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International Student English Assessment

Required for non-native English speakers only. This assessment will determine placement into or exemption from MHL 607 (graduate-level writing) and/or placement into remedial English courses. All non-native English speakers must take this exam.

Optional Placement Exams

Vocal Physiology

This course is a *mandatory prerequisite* to Vocal Pedagogy (APP-203).

The placement exam is open to *graduate students only*.

The exam is *closed book*: notes are not allowed during the test.

The Vocal Physiology placement exam will cover detailed structure and function of the vocal instrument. Those who pass will be able to enroll directly into Vocal Pedagogy (APP-203) for the Spring semester.

This course is created in conjunction with Vocal Pedagogy to provide a seamless, integrated program. References, texts, and articles will be shared across courses and the application of these concepts will be geared towards singing. The purpose is: 1) to gain a better understanding of your instrument, 2) to apply this understanding to your own vocal processes, 3) to acquire

tools to troubleshoot your instrument, 4) to maintain a healthy vocal life, and 5) to gain knowledge that can be applied to teaching other singers of all voice types and styles.

Topics to be tested include:

- **Alignment:** basic body posture and relevant structures
 - **Respiration:** anatomy and physiology; voluntary vs involuntary control
 - **Phonation:** anatomy and physiology of the larynx and vocal folds
 - **Resonance/Articulation:** anatomy and physiology of the vocal tract and articulators
 - **Acoustics:** source/filter interactions, sound, spectrographs, analysis
 - **Resonance/Registration:** corresponding changes of the vocal tract and articulators during registration events
 - **Auditory and Psychoacoustics:** anatomy and physiology of hearing and perception
 - **Neuroscience of Singing:** the control center, “why we sing?”: convergent and direct evolution
 - **Clinical Issues and Vocal Health:** common issues affecting singers and corresponding treatments
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Vocal Pedagogy

This exam is only open to Graduate Level students and may take up to 90 minutes to complete.

The Vocal Pedagogy placement exam covers both the theory of vocal pedagogy and its practical application. The exam is open to graduate students who have significant previous experience teaching voice or whose transcripts demonstrate significant coursework in vocal pedagogy at the undergraduate level. It determines whether those students may opt out of APP 603 Vocal Pedagogy.

The first two sections of the exam cover pedagogical theory.

In the first section (15 points), you will be asked to describe your teaching philosophy (best practices supporting effective teaching in general) as well as your pedagogical principles (aspects that correspond to efficient healthy vocal technique).

In the second section (30 points), you will be asked to list and discuss some of the resources available to voice teachers, such as collections of repertoire and exercises. You will also be asked to summarize the writings of a few important post-World War II pedagogues, or important books on vocal pedagogy. You may choose any pedagogues and/or books you wish, so long as the writings are available in English.

The third and fourth sections of the exam address the more practical aspects of teaching voice.

The third section (30 points) focuses on the repertoire and exercises you might use with particular students, and also gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge of specific vocal issues.

Finally, in the fourth section (25 points), you will be asked to evaluate a video clip of a young singer. These sections of the exam emphasize the questions you might ask students as well as the answers you would give.

Foreign Languages

Open to MM, PSC/AD students.

Students who may be proficient in French, Italian, and/or German may take the placement exam of those languages to receive advanced placement unless this is your native language.

Please contact the instructor below at least 24-hours before the scheduled test day to sign-up for a placement exam spot during Orientation:

Italian Language Optional Placement Test
Stefania Filigheddu (sfiligheddu@sfc.edu)

German Language Optional Placement Test
Mirjam Jooss (mjooss@sfc.edu)

French Language Optional Placement Test
Muriel Barton (mbarton@sfc.edu)