

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO, BOULDER  
COLLEGE OF MUSIC

**GENERAL DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS  
DEGREE GUIDELINES**

The faculty of the College of Music has modeled the DMA degree programs at CU Boulder after the guiding principles outlined by the National Association of Schools of Music. As defined by the NASM, the Doctor of Musical Arts degree is intended for those seeking “the highest level of professional practice emphasizing the creation or performance of musical works and the application and transmission of knowledge about musical works, or pedagogy. . . . Creation, performance, and teaching are highly disciplined efforts; inquiry and investigation, and often research and scholarship, are components of performance practice” (*NASM Handbook*, 2009–10: 116). Each area of specialization has discipline-specific requirements, which are outlined in the individual Degree Plans: <http://www.colorado.edu/music/academics/graduate-advising/degrees> .

The policies set forth below and in related documents (University Catalog, College website, etc.) were determined by the faculty of College of Music, in accordance with the rules of the Graduate School and the University of Colorado. These formal written policies are used to guide all decisions made by the faculty and administration, and students are expected to refer to them often as they work toward earning their degrees. The faculty regularly reviews all Degree Plans and academic policies; *the most current versions are posted at the website*. When degree requirements change, students may choose, with the consent of their faculty advisory committee, either to follow the revised plan or to continue with the degree as it was defined when they began the program. Many College of Music policies are governed by the Graduate School Rules for the campus; the current version of this important document may be found at the following website: [http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/policies/\\_docs/GraduateSchoolRules.pdf](http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/policies/_docs/GraduateSchoolRules.pdf) .

**ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS**

In considering DMA applications, the music faculty evaluates each student’s previous background; the usual expectation is that a student will have earned a Master of Music degree before beginning doctoral study. In addition, the qualifying prerequisites detailed by the NASM are assessed: “(1) Intellectual awareness and curiosity sufficient to predict continued growth and contribution to the discipline; (2) Significant advanced, professional-level accomplishment in performance, composition, scholarship, or conducting; (3) A knowledge of the techniques of music theory sufficient to perform advanced analysis; (4) A knowledge of representative literature and composers of each major period of music history; (5) A knowledge of general bibliographical resources in music; (6) Considerable depth of knowledge in some aspect of music, such as an historical period, an aspect of theory, performance practice, or compositional styles; (7) Sufficient writing and speaking skills to communicate clearly and effectively to members of the scholarly community and wider community, and especially in teaching situations; (8) Research skills appropriate to the area of study” (*NASM Handbook*, 2012–13: 136).

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

Detailed information for graduate student applicants is shown at the “Prospective Graduate Students” webpage (<http://www.colorado.edu/music/admissions/prospective-graduate-students> ), which includes College-wide policies and deadlines, as well as links to area-specific information about auditions, campus interviews, and so on. Because academic transcripts provide only partial

documentation of one's background and aptitude for doctoral work, applicants should use the other components of the application dossier to provide the faculty with as complete a picture of their professional qualifications as possible. For DMA applicants, the audition and composition portfolio are of critical importance. In addition, applicants should use the Statement of Purpose (part of the on-line application) to address qualities such as those listed under (1) and (2) in the Entrance Requirements paragraph above. The scholarly Writing Sample is the place to demonstrate qualities (3) through (8). Although the GRE is not required for any of CU's DMA degrees, some students choose to submit scores as an additional means of demonstrating their academic preparation. Finally, detailed letters of recommendation that address specific accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses, work habits, and etc., are much more helpful than brief, overly general letters. When soliciting these letters, applicants should choose four people who can address different aspects of their professional background. At least one of the letters should come from an academic faculty member (theory, musicology, etc.) who knows the student's academic work directly. It is often helpful to provide each reference with a copy of one's resume, transcript/s, and a short list that reminds the writer of the particular qualities and accomplishments that could be addressed in the letter.

***Prospective students who submit plagiarized work as part of an application to the College of Music will not be admitted and are not permitted to reapply later.***

#### THE UNIVERSITY'S HONOR CODE

The College of Music expects all students to abide by the University of Colorado's Honor Code, which promotes "academic integrity, moral and ethical conduct, and pride of membership in a community that values academic achievement and individual responsibility." The Honor Code Pledge is posted across the campus and also appears on many course materials as a reminder that honor is a fundamental value at CU: "On my honor as a University of Colorado at Boulder student I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this work." The Honor Code system is comprised of various committees that support students and faculty in the implementation of the code. The Honor Code website includes essential information and links to numerous resources that help students to understand *plagiarism* and other violations. It also explains the formal processes in place for reporting suspected violations and imposing sanctions on students found guilty of violating the code. Because this information is readily available, the faculty assumes that students have studied it closely, and therefore students cannot claim ignorance as an excuse for violating the Honor Code.

All suspected violations of the Honor Code must be reported to the campus Honor Code office. The academic and non-academic sanctions for violating the Code can be severe; so please take the time to review the information at the website, especially the "Student Information" section: <http://honorcode.colorado.edu/student-information> .

#### PRELIMINARY & MAJOR FIELD EXAMINATIONS FOR INCOMING DMA STUDENTS

Immediately prior to beginning DMA degree work, students are required to take diagnostic Preliminary Examinations in music theory and musicology. The preliminary exams are offered two times a year, during the week prior to the beginning of Fall and Spring semesters. Specific dates are announced in advance by the music Graduate Program Assistant, and students are expected to plan accordingly. The required preliminary exams differ slightly depending on the major area of study; consult the **Preliminary Examinations** document for these and other important details.

Results for each exam are posted anonymously as Pass (equivalent to B- or higher) or Fail during the first week of classes. Any exam not passed on the first attempt may be taken a second

time. **IMPORTANT NOTE:** *Students who miss the scheduled mandatory preliminary examinations (for any reason) before their first semester of study **must** take the exam on the scheduled date during the week before their second semester and will forfeit their right to attempt the exam a second time.* Students with failing grades on any required preliminary exam must begin enrolling in remedial course work no later than their second semester of study, and are expected to address all deficiencies as soon as possible.

In all DMA programs except for Composition, students also must take the Major Field examination during orientation week. The scope and format of this examination vary by discipline, but the general aim is to evaluate the student's background in areas directly relevant to their chosen major. For example, voice majors are asked questions about music history and literature (with a focus on vocal and operatic repertoire), phonetics, and stylistic analysis/score identification of German and French Song examples. The area faculty uses the Major Field examination to advise students on coursework necessary for completing the degree requirements.

## RESIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

The required period of residence is four semesters of full-time study beyond the master's degree; at least two academic-year semesters must be consecutive; summer terms equal half semesters. For purposes of determining residency, a graduate student will be considered to be carrying a full load during a regular semester if registered for at least five semester hours in courses numbered 5000 or above or 1 or more credits of thesis (TMUSXXXX). A minimal full load during a Summer Session is three semester hours of work in courses numbered 5000 or above. Students with certain types of federal and state financial aid must register for more hours to be considered full-time; consult directly with a Counselor in CU's Office of Financial Aid to verify your own status.

The average time necessary to complete the degree ranges from three to five years, and the Graduate School mandates that all doctoral degrees be completed in six years. The length of time required to finish increases for students who must take additional coursework in preparation for the Advanced Studies courses in theory (MUSC 6801) and musicology (MUSC 6822), or when coursework is required as a result of the Preliminary or Major Field Examinations.

## DOCTORAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The student's main studio teacher usually serves as the major advisor (chair of the advisory committee) and is primarily responsible for advising the student toward completing all degree requirements. In consultation with the major advisor, the student should form the five-member faculty advisory committee by the third semester in residence. All five committee members must hold graduate faculty appointments, and at least one member must hold the Ph.D. in a research discipline (the research faculty are rostered in music education, musicology, and music theory). Some areas specify the minimum number of committee members from the major area. The members signify their commitment to serve on the committee by signing the **Graduate Advisory Committee** form, which then must be approved by the Associate Dean and placed in the student's file in the music graduate office.

In selecting committee members, students should consider faculty members with whom they have studied directly, as well as those whose areas of expertise are especially relevant to the TMUS performances and research projects. Sometimes a particular area of interest emerges after the committee has been formed, and the student may wish to involve a faculty member who was not a member of the original committee. In such cases, changes to the committee may be proposed by the student, who submits to the music graduate office the **Graduate Advisory Committee Substitution** form (signed by the affected committee members and the major advisor).

All TMUS recitals and projects require grades and signatures from at least three committee members. (In the case of sabbatical leaves and exceptional circumstances, other qualified graduate faculty members may be asked to substitute for a regular committee member.) Once students are engaged in the dissertation projects and recitals (TMUS 8xx9), it is critical to plan well in advance to ensure that committee members are available to attend recitals and lectures, and also to provide detailed guidance on research projects. Most College faculty members hold nine-month academic appointments that begin in mid-August and end in mid-May. Therefore, students should not expect faculty to do committee work during the summer unless special arrangements have been made directly with the faculty member.

## DEGREE PLAN

A *written degree plan* should be formulated under the guidance of the major professor and advisory committee during the first year in residence. The plan should be signed by the major advisor and submitted to the Associate Dean no later than the third week of the third semester of residence. The plan should include: a completed (signed) *Graduate Advisory Committee* form, a semester-by-semester schedule for all required course work, tentative dates for the written and oral Comprehensive Examinations, and a schedule of the TMUS recitals and projects (the latter should include a brief description of the topic whenever possible). Careful planning helps the student to anticipate required courses that are not offered annually, faculty leaves, and to complete the degree as efficiently and economically as possible.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students must take a minimum of thirty hours of course and dissertation work. Some areas of specialization require more than thirty hours, including specific course work prior to or in conjunction with work on dissertation projects. Some students may be advised to take course work in preparation for the Comprehensive Examination. Two 6000-level Advanced Studies courses, one in musicology (or ethnomusicology) and one in music theory, must be completed *prior* to scheduling the Comprehensive Examination (prerequisites for the seminars are six hours of graduate-level course work in each of the two fields). Please consult your own *Degree Plan* for a detailed list of requirements:

<http://www.colorado.edu/music/academics/graduate-advising/degrees>.

## TRANSFER CREDIT

Previous *graduate-level* coursework may be transferred toward the DMA degree requirements (up to a maximum of 21 semester hours for doctoral students), **after** completing 6 credits of graduate level coursework at CU. Students who wish to transfer previous credits should obtain the Request for Transfer of Credit form

(<http://www.colorado.edu/GraduateSchool/academics/docs/transfercredit.pdf>). Carefully follow the instructions before submitting it to your major advisor for their signature. The signed form, along with an original transcript, is then submitted to the Graduate Office for approval by the Associate Dean, who then forwards the paperwork on to the Graduate School for final approval.

Coursework taken (e.g., to complete a master's degree) at CU Boulder does not need to be transferred. The Graduate School does not allow courses counted toward another completed *doctoral* degree (at CU or elsewhere) to be transferred toward the requirements of the DMA. On the individual Degree Plans, courses listed as 0–x credit hours typically are background courses that do *not* need to be transferred toward the minimum 30 required hours for the DMA.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

All DMA students must be able to read and comprehend material related to the field of music in one foreign language; the choice of that language must be approved by the student's advisory committee. *Please note that this requirement must be fulfilled before the student will be allowed to schedule the doctoral Comprehensive Examination that determines whether or not one advances to candidate status.* Proficiency must be demonstrated by completing a fourth-semester undergraduate course within six years of admission to the DMA program *or* by passing the foreign language translation examination that is administered twice each semester (dates are announced by the Graduate Program Assistant and can be found at the "Graduate Advising" website <http://www.colorado.edu/music/academics/graduate-advising> under **Important Upcoming Dates**). Additional language work is required of voice and collaborative piano majors. The two-hour translation exam asks students to translate prose excerpts related to music, song or aria texts, and/or passages from opera libretti. Students are allowed to use dictionaries, grammar guides, and verb charts (e.g., *501 French Verbs*) during the examination.

Students may petition the Associate Dean to substitute a computer programming language for the foreign language requirement. Usually students must demonstrate proficiency equivalent to four semesters of coursework in music technology. The student's competency in computer music and technology is assessed by the music technology faculty (Drs. Drumheller and Theodore).

Because *international students* whose native language is not English have already demonstrated their proficiency in a second language before being admitted, they are exempt from this general DMA language requirement, but they must fulfill additional discipline-specific requirements where required.

## COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

A student is eligible to take the Comprehensive Examination when all course work (including the foreign-language requirement) has been completed, and with the permission of the student's advisory committee. The comprehensive exam is usually taken in the third year of study, but it must be taken *at least one* semester before completion of final degree requirements. Students should avoid scheduling the written Comprehensive any later than the tenth week of the semester. The student should complete no more than ten hours of dissertation (TMUS 8xx9) projects before taking the Comprehensive Examination, and they must be registered during the semester when they take the exam. Students must file an *Application for Admission to Candidacy* with the Associate Dean at least two weeks before taking the exam. Because the Graduate Program Assistant must coordinate the scheduling of exams and file official documents with the Graduate School, **students must communicate with their advisory committee and the GPA well in advance**. (If necessary documents are not filed in time to meet Graduate School deadlines, the exam is canceled and must be rescheduled.)

The Comprehensive Examination is designed to assess the student's breadth and depth of knowledge within the major area and beyond. The content is not limited to course work taken at CU Boulder. *Passing the written and oral portions of this pivotal examination determines whether or not the student advances officially to doctoral candidacy, and therefore the faculty expects thorough preparation.* A successful candidate must receive affirmative votes from a majority of the members of the examining committee. In case of failure, the examination may be attempted once more, after a period of time determined by the committee.

Each committee member submits material to the Graduate Program Assistant. The major advisor then reviews the questions from the other committee members and constructs the four-day written examination. The questions may pertain to the student's coursework or research interests,



or they may address broader topics or areas of expertise that are expected in the student's chosen discipline. Some committee members will provide *general* information about the nature of their question, but others may opt not to offer any details in advance of the examination. Students write for four consecutive weekdays, and are typically scheduled to write Thursday & Friday, rest on the weekend, and then finish the exam on the following Monday & Tuesday.

The oral portion of the Comprehensive lasts approximately two hours and should follow the written examination by a period of not less than two weeks nor more than thirty days. Because all five committee members must be present, the oral examination should be scheduled well in advance, *before* the end of classes for the semester. It is the student's responsibility to determine a mutually acceptable date and time with the committee members, and to reserve a room for the exam through the following website:

<http://www.colorado.edu/music/event-scheduling> . Comprehensive examinations shall not be scheduled during the summer (from May through August) or during holiday/semester breaks.

## CONTINUOUS REGISTRATION

Once a student has passed the written and oral portions of the Comprehensive Examination, he/she is reclassified by the Graduate School as a candidate (category D-DMA), beginning in the semester immediately following the exam. The student must then enroll and pay tuition for fall and spring semesters of each year until attaining the degree or formally resigning. After becoming a candidate, the student will enroll in TMUS 8029, Candidate for Doctor of Musical Arts degree, until the degree is completed. In the rare case that a student has enrolled in all required courses but has not yet passed the Comprehensive Examination, he or she will enroll in TMUS 8019, Pre-candidate for Doctor of Musical Arts degree, until attaining candidacy status. Please see the advice below in the Dissertation section regarding strategies for enrolling in TMUS recitals and projects.

## DISSERTATION

The DMA differs from the Ph.D. degree in that the dissertation is comprised of several performance, research, and/or composition projects rather than a single, extended dissertation. The DMA dissertation projects (numbered TMUS 8xx9) are listed in Category III of each *Degree Plan*, and there are different requirements depending on the major area. After successful completion of relevant course requirements, DMA students will be advised to begin work on dissertation projects concurrently with preparation for the Comprehensive Examination. Thus the student may earn dissertation hours throughout his/her entire program, while taking other coursework.

Though the TMUS projects are numbered sequentially, they may be completed in any order, according to the guidance of the major advisor and the student's committee. All TMUS courses are set up as variable credit. DO NOT register for more than the total number of credits required for each dissertation project. Most students schedule the first TMUS recital or concert during the second or third semester in residence, and proceed to other projects each semester thereafter. The faculty strongly recommends that one of the non-performance projects (e.g., pedagogy practicum, research lecture, etc.) be undertaken no later than the fourth semester in residence.

For each non-recital project, the student should select one member of the faculty advisory committee to serve as the main advisor (not necessarily the committee chair), who guides the student in preparing a written prospectus, which is then formally submitted to the faculty advisory committee for their suggestions and approval. A thoughtfully conceived prospectus is critical to launching a successful dissertation project. Students are encouraged to propose projects that

ultimately will have multiple future uses in the beginning stages of their professional careers: as publications, conference presentations, interview presentations, and so forth.

Before the student proceeds with the project, two members of the committee must agree to serve as first and second readers, who will guide the project to the final draft, which is then presented to the committee as a whole. Required documents should be in their final form *before* the public presentation of each lecture. *Most students underestimate the length of time it takes to work through successive revisions with the faculty committee, so it is imperative to plan very carefully and communicate regularly with the advisor and committee.*

*Enrollment Advice:* Because the TMUS projects collectively comprise the DMA Dissertation, and some take longer than one semester to complete, the Graduate School allows some flexibility as to when students enroll for each recital or project. All TMUS courses are set up as variable credit. DO NOT register for more than the total number of credits required for each dissertation project. If a recital or project is not completed during the same semester as registration, an IP (“In Progress”) grade is recorded. The IP grade is later replaced with the letter grade assigned by the faculty advisory committee, and the student does not need to register again for the same TMUS project. This means that when a student drafts a *degree plan* with the advisor, he/she may decide to enroll for TMUS hours one semester before or after the semester in which the project is actually completed. Because DMA candidates must be continuously enrolled until graduation, it is usually more sensible economically to maintain enrollment with TMUS projects each semester instead of TMUS 8029 (Candidate for the DMA), which does not otherwise count toward degree requirements.

## FINAL ORAL

The third major examination, in the final semester of registration, is a defense of all work done for the degree, with emphasis on the dissertation documents individually and collectively. All required documents should already have incorporated the final revisions suggested by the committee and be ready for official approval and signatures at least two weeks *before* the examination occurs. The final oral usually lasts one hour and is open to the public; students are encouraged to attend final orals of their peers in preparation for their own exam. As in the case of the oral Comprehensive, the student is responsible for arranging the date and time of the final oral with the five committee members and scheduling a room for the exam through the following website: <http://www.colorado.edu/music/event-scheduling> .

## CU’s GRADUATE TEACHER PROGRAM

Most students pursuing the DMA are planning on faculty careers in Higher Education. Some will already have experience as studio or classroom teachers, or have taken coursework in education (some DMA degrees at CU require coursework in pedagogy). Whatever the student’s previous experience, CU’s acclaimed Graduate Teacher Program is an especially valuable resource for refining one’s teaching skills. The GTP offers workshops and training throughout the year, and some graduate students decide to work toward obtaining the Graduate Teacher Certificate and or Professional Development Certificate. The College of Music has two or three Lead Graduate Teachers, who are current graduate students, and who act as liaisons with the campus GTP office. Workshops are offered throughout the year, within the College as well as on the campus at large. The GTP website provides current information and invaluable resources: <http://www.colorado.edu/gtp/> .