

Degree Guidelines

Master of Music Education

Revised 28 January 2025

Contents

MME Degree: General Description.....	2
Degree Tracks.....	2
Academic Year Track.....	2
Summer Track	2
MME+Licensure Track	2
Degree Requirements	2
Music Education Courses (12 credit hours)	3
Music Courses (12 credit hours)	3
Cognate Courses: Academic Year and MME+Licensure Tracks.....	4
Cognate Courses: Summer Track.....	5
Open Electives (6 credit hours).....	5
Transfer Credits	5
Course Load	6
Academic Year Track Load.....	6
Summer Track Load	6
MME+Licensure Track Load	7
Degree Procedures.....	7
I. Preliminary Examinations and Advisory Interview.....	7
II. Graduate Committee and Plan of Study	8
IIa. Academic Year and MME+Licensure Tracks.....	8
IIb. Summer Track.....	8
III. Master’s Qualifying Examination (MQE).....	8
IV. Application for Admission to Candidacy.....	8
V. Comprehensive Final Oral Examination	9
Va. Academic Year and MME+Licensure Tracks	9
Vb. Summer Track	9
VI. Thesis Project (optional)	11

MME Degree: General Description

The Master of Music Education (MME) degree at the University of Colorado is designed to address a variety of interests, needs, and areas of expertise for music educators ready for the next stage of their professional growth. Students working toward an MME degree complete 12 hours of study in music education, 12 hours of study in music and 6 hours of open electives. MME students are challenged to develop a greater understanding and mastery of music teaching-learning processes, to improve personal musicianship, to engage in a critical examination of pedagogy, and to become committed leaders within the profession.

Degree Tracks

The MME degree may be pursued in one of three tracks. All tracks have the same framework of requirements at the graduate level, with differences in sequencing. A bachelor's degree in music education (BME or the equivalent) is a prerequisite for the regular MME degree in either the academic year or summer tracks. Students who have an undergraduate degree in music (e.g., BA, BM) may apply to the Master of Music Education plus Licensure track.

Academic Year Track

The academic year track represents traditional graduate study as a full-time student during fall and spring academic terms. Summer courses may optionally be taken in addition to courses in the academic year. Time to completion is typically two years (four semesters).

Summer Track

The summer track is oriented toward teachers who want to maintain full-time employment in a K-12 teaching position during the academic year, and pursue graduate studies during the summer. Students enroll in courses during the summer academic term, organized primarily during a four-week session in June, with additional options as short pre- and post-session electives. Students will also complete a small number of course credits remotely online during the academic year. Time to completion is typically three summers, with the online coursework completed usually in the spring of year one or two between those summers.

MME+Licensure Track

The master's plus licensure is designed for students who have a degree in music, but did not pursue teacher certification at the undergraduate level. This program combines graduate study with selected coursework from the undergraduate curriculum in order to meet state licensure requirements. Students receive a master's degree and a recommendation for licensure from the School of Education at the completion of the program, including student teaching. Coursework is offered during the academic year (fall and spring terms) with some optional summer study, and time to completion is typically three years (six semesters).

Degree Requirements

The Master of Music Education degree requires a minimum of thirty credit hours. Normally, all 30 credit hours are at the 5000-level or above. MME students may elect to apply up to six credits of 4000-level coursework in Music Education, Music Theory, and Musicology toward the open electives portion of their degree plans if those courses do not exist at the 5000-level and the courses are not taken to remediate a deficiency revealed by a preliminary exam. Applied study on secondary instruments or voice also may be taken at the 4000-level as part of the open electives

portion of the degree plan. Open elective courses taken outside of the College of Music must be at the 4000-level or above.

Music Education Courses	12
Foundations of Music Education (MUSC 6113)	2
Research in Music Teaching (MUSC 5183)	2
Psychology of Music Learning (MUSC 6203)	2
Electives in Music Education	6
Pedagogy of Music Teaching & Learning (MUSC 6113; 2 cr.)*	
Additional Music Courses	12
Introduction to Bibliography and Research (MUSC 5708)	2
Cognate Courses	6
Electives in Music	4
Open Electives/Specialization	6
TOTAL	30

* *Required elective for Summer MME students.*

Blank fillable degree checklists and sample filled-in degree checklists (for use as a guide) are available at the College of Music website, under Academics >> Graduate Advising >> Degrees, at the link below. Look for the Master of Music Education section.

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

A maximum of six credits of one-hour intensives and six credits of special studies may be applied to the MME degree if approved by the music education faculty.

Music Education Courses (12 credit hours)

Required courses include: Foundations of Music Education (MUSC 6113), Research in Music Teaching (MUSC 5183), and Psychology of Music Learning (MUSC 6203). Students must complete a minimum of two additional elective credits at the 6000 level (MUSC 6113 Pedagogy of Music Teaching & Learning is a required elective for Summer MME students). One-credit intensives, special studies, or an additional music education course (5000-level or above) may be used to fulfill the remaining two credits of the music education elective requirement. NOTE: Coursework is typically delivered in 2- or 3-credit courses that engage topics in depth.

Music Courses (12 credit hours)

One specific course is required and should be completed during the first available semester: Introduction to Bibliography and Research (MUSC 5708). Six semester hours of course work must be taken in a cognate (see detailed information below). Students also must complete four hours of music electives. Music electives are defined as any non-music education classes in music, applied lessons, or ensembles. All music courses must be taken at the 5000-level or above.

Cognate Courses: Academic Year and MME+Licensure Tracks

Cognates include Music Theory, Music Technology, Musicology, Ethnomusicology, Jazz Studies, Performance, Performance and Pedagogy, Piano Pedagogy, Vocal Pedagogy and Conducting. An audition (live or taped) is required for individuals who wish to pursue performance, performance & pedagogy, or conducting as their cognate. Students interested in pursuing a cognate in jazz studies, vocal pedagogy, or ethnomusicology should meet with the area coordinator at the beginning of their degree program to determine specific courses the student should register for to complete the cognate as well as the cognate area faculty member who will serve on the student's graduate committee. One member of the student's committee will be from the cognate area; it is assumed that at least some part of the student's cognate area of study will be with that professor.

MME+Licensure students have the same cognate options as regular academic year track students, but eligibility for some cognate areas may depend on previously completed background study. For example, an MME+Licensure student who has not completed an equivalent sequence of conducting study in their undergraduate degree would not generally be able to pursue a graduate conducting cognate.

Listed below are possible courses and/or applied study that count toward each cognate:

Theory. Advanced Orchestration (MUSC 5041 [Fall]), Advanced Tonal Analysis (MUSC 5061 [Fall]), Post-Tonal Theory & Analysis 1 (MUSC 5071 [Spring]), Contemporary Jazz Theory (MUSC 5091 [Spring]), Topics in Music Analysis (MUSC 5151), Pedagogy of Music Theory (MUSC 6051)

Technology. Applications of Music Technology (MUSC 5081 [Spring or Summer]), Advanced Music Technology (MUSC 5121 [Spring or Summer]), independent study in music technology (maximum of 3 hours)

Musicology. Any musicology course at the 5000 level or above

Ethnomusicology. Any ethnomusicology course or courses at the 5000 level or above; maximum of 3 credits of world music ensembles count toward this cognate

Jazz Studies. Students selecting this cognate need to enroll in Jazz Administration and Pedagogy (MUSC 5256 [Fall]). In consultation with the jazz studies area coordinator, students will also enroll in Jazz History and Analysis (MUSC 5642 [Spring]) or Contemporary Jazz Theory (MUSC 5091 [Spring])

Performance. applied study at the graduate level

Performance and Pedagogy. a combination of at least 1 pedagogy course and at least 2 credits of applied study

Piano Pedagogy. Piano Pedagogy-Group Techniques (MUSC 5305-Fall, odd years), Piano Pedagogy-Intermediate Literature (MUSC 5315, Spring even years), Research: Piano Pedagogy (MUSC 5345-Spring, odd years), Studies in Piano Teaching (MUSC 5215)

Vocal Pedagogy. Vocal Pedagogy (MUSC 5444 [every Fall]), Graduate Seminar in Vocal Pedagogy (Spring- 5484 [every Spring]), Graduate Studies in Alexander Technique (MUSC 5608 [Fall]), Graduate Voice Class (TMUS 5574)

Conducting. Students first meet with the primary music education faculty member (instrumental or choral), to determine eligibility for a conducting cognate. Once conducting cognate is confirmed, students register for the following courses. Students must consult with individual conducting faculty to secure enrollment in a conducting course.

Choral. Choral Symposium (MUSC 5156) and/or conducting lessons

Instrumental. Students select from the following courses:

- Intermediate Conducting (PMUS 5536-XXX), 2 credits – taken with any instrumental conducting faculty member (thus the offering of multiple sections)
- Advanced Conducting (PMUS 6536-XXX), 2 credits – taken with any instrumental conducting faculty
- CU Conducting Symposium, 1 credit – offered summers, typically the second week of June
- Instrumental Music: Conducting, Rehearsal Strategies and Literature (IMUS 5093-571), 2 credits – 2-week class offered during the summer

Cognate Courses: Summer Track

Cognates include Ethnomusicology and Conducting (additional cognate areas are available during the academic year as scheduling permits). Students also must complete four hours of music electives. Music electives are defined as any non-music education classes, applied lessons, or ensembles. All music courses must be taken at the 5000-level or above.

Musicology. Any musicology/ethnomusicology course at the 5000 level or above.

Conducting (Choral or Instrumental). In consultation with the conducting faculty identified by the Summer Program Coordinator for the student's specific cohort, students enroll in Conducting courses and lessons offered on a rotating basis. Students can also request additional coursework related to literature or techniques during the Fall/Spring semesters through the MUSC 6243 Application of Music Pedagogy course.

Open Electives (6 credit hours)

Based on the student's abilities and interests, and in consultation with his/her advisor, a variety of open electives may be identified. Students may choose among electives in the traditional fields of general, choral, and instrumental music education, in other music areas (including ensemble, private study), or in areas outside of the College of Music such as coursework from the School of Education. Students also may complete several related electives, special studies, and/or a thesis to create an additional area of specialization.

Transfer Credits

A maximum of six graduate transfer credits completed within the past five years (at the time of admission to the MME) from an accredited music institution and approved by the music education faculty may be applied to the MME degree. Only two graduate transfer credits can be applied to a category other than open electives.

Students must submit materials for transfer credit evaluation to their program advisor by the end of their first academic term of study in the MME degree for coursework already completed from other institutions. For coursework completed at other institutions concurrently while in the CU MME program, students must submit transfer requests immediately upon completion of the external course. Requests for transfer of concurrent work will only be considered up to the time

of completion of the MQEs (see section III under Degree Procedures). Transfer request materials must include a transcript showing letter grades (pass/fail credit is not acceptable for transfer) and a detailed syllabus for each course being requested for transfer. The advisor will review the materials and then make a recommendation to the department chair, who will bring the request to a vote by the music education faculty.

Following transfer credit approval by the department faculty AND approval of the student's Plan of Study by the department (see section II under Degree Procedures), the student must initiate the transfer request with the College of Music graduate office. The student must submit the transfer request form with the top portion completed, along with the transcript showing the transfer coursework. The graduate office staff will route the form for approval by the department (which should already have voted on the transfer credit approval), the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, and then to the Graduate school, before final submission to the Registrar to be added to the student's academic record. Please note that these steps can take some time, so it is very important that the student initiate the transfer credit request immediately after receiving approval of their Plan of Study (and assuming the student has met the deadline for transfer approval by the department by the end of the first academic term of study).

In general, and within the maximum transfer guidelines above, the music education faculty will consider transfer requests for graduate-level coursework that a) is from accredited institutions, b) is designed for teachers following initial teacher licensure, and c) focuses on extending the thinking of teachers as professional educators. Credits must be converted to semester hours (quarter credits convert at a 3:2 ratio) on a general scale that accounts for at least 15 contact hours for every 1 credit. Commonly approved transfer credits may include courses such as:

- Orff/Kodaly/Dalcroze/Gordon levels taken for graduate credit
- Special topics summer workshops for teachers
- Courses similar to CU MME requirements taken at other institutions

Transfer requests of the following types will generally NOT be approved:

- Courses taken for pass/fail credit (e.g., AP summer institute)
- Credits acquired for teacher licensure renewal units/professional development units (i.e., GRTE credits), such as student teacher supervision or conference attendance
- Courses that do not include a syllabus that specifies content topics, student learning goals, and assessment/evaluation of those goals

Course Load

Depending on MME degree track, students have differing requirements for what is considered a full time load. The time to degree completion also varies. For all degrees, all degree work must be completed within four years of the first semester during which a student registers for credit. A one year extension may be approved by the music education faculty, Associate Dean, and Graduate School.

Academic Year Track Load

The minimum full-time course load is five graduate credit hours or eight credits of combined graduate and undergraduate coursework per semester. To complete the residency requirement of the degree, students must register as a full-time student for at least two semesters, three summer semesters, or a combination of one semester and two summer semesters.

Summer Track Load

The minimum full-time course load is six to eight graduate credit hours per summer semester. To complete the residency requirement of the degree, students must register as a full-time student for at least two summer semesters, or a combination of one fall/spring semester and two summer semesters.

MME+Licensure Track Load

The minimum full-time course load is five graduate credit hours or eight credits of combined graduate and undergraduate coursework per semester. To complete the residency requirement of the degree, students must register as a full-time student for at least two semesters, three summer semesters, or a combination of one semester and two summer semesters. MME plus licensure students must complete licensure requirements prior to or concurrent with graduate degree requirements. Please note that the MME will not be granted until the licensure requirements (including student teaching) are fulfilled. In other words, students may not finish the graduate work and receive the degree, and then pursue the licensure work. MME plus licensure students need to be registered for at least one graduate-level course each semester in order to maintain graduate student status.

Degree Procedures

I. Preliminary Examinations and Advisory Interview

Preliminary exams are diagnostic and are used to advise students in pursuit of their degree program requirements. Because the exams measure a student's preparedness for graduate-level work, students accepted into the MME program in Music Education must address background course expectations either through completing preliminary exams in Music Theory, Aural Skills and Musicology/Ethnomusicology or through equivalent course work completed during their undergraduate degree program or as part of prior graduate study.

The music education department chair, in consultation with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, will review incoming MME student transcripts for preliminary exam course equivalency and report this evaluation to the student during orientation. Course equivalency will be considered separately for music theory, aural skills, and historical musicology. Preliminary exam requirements may be considered fulfilled for students who have earned a grade average of "B-" or higher in prior equivalent course work (i.e., a 2.7 GPA or better in that coursework area). During the first two semesters or summers of study, master's degree students should address any conditions imposed at the time of admission and/or remove any deficiencies revealed by the preliminary examinations (based on a transcript review).

Students seeking a cognate in Ethnomusicology must demonstrate preparedness by passing the Ethnomusicology section of the preliminary exam, or by passing a 5000-level Ethnomusicology course at CU-Boulder with a grade of B- or higher. If the latter option is used, course credits also may fulfill graduate degree requirements. Students seeking a cognate in Music Theory (music technology excluded) or Historical Musicology must demonstrate preparedness by passing the appropriate section of the preliminary exam or providing evidence of background course equivalency. Students unable to meet the preliminary exam requirements for these cognate areas must choose another cognate area for graduate study.

In lieu of a preliminary exam in Music Education, MME students must complete an advisory interview. An orientation meeting for all new graduate students serves as the advisory interview. This orientation will be scheduled the week prior to Fall semester classes for academic year track and MME+licensure track students, and the week prior to the start of summer session for summer track students. If the student is unable to attend the meeting, s/he must meet with their assigned program advisor during the first week of classes. New students are advised to schedule an appointment with the department chair at least two weeks before their first semester of study to determine their first semester class schedule and program advisor assignment.

II. Graduate Committee and Plan of Study

During the second semester of study, or no later than the semester during which the 10th graduate credit is earned, students must identify the three members of their graduate committee and provide the music education faculty with a Plan of Study. The Plan of Study is simply the official degree checklist filled out showing the planned courses to be taken by semester toward degree completion. The music education faculty, in cooperation with the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, is responsible for approving the Plan of Study. Committee members must include a primary advisor (within music education), a second faculty member within music education, and the cognate area professor. Committee members are responsible for submitting questions for and evaluating the Written Qualifying Exam, and conducting the Oral Comprehensive Final Exam.

Ila. Academic Year and MME+Licensure Tracks

Students are required to submit their Plan of Study (degree checklist) electronically to the department chair by March 15 of the second semester of study, or no later than the semester during which the 10th graduate credit is earned. Students must meet with their program advisor to review the checklist prior to submitting the plan to the department chair. In consultation with their advisor, students may recommend/request the three faculty to serve on their committee representing the areas described above. Committee membership will be approved by the music education faculty as part of approving the Plan of Study.

Ilb. Summer Track

Students are required to submit their Plan of Study (degree checklist) electronically to the summer program coordinator by August 15 following the second summer of study. Students must meet with their program advisor to review the checklist prior to submitting the plan to the summer coordinator, who will review and pass the Plan of Study to the department chair. Committee members will be assigned by the music education faculty as part of approving the Plan of Study, in the fall semester prior to taking the written portion of the Master's Qualifying Examination.

III. Master's Qualifying Examination (MQE)

This written exam is typically taken during the semester/term prior to the semester of graduation. The exam is scheduled to be given on a Saturday at approximately the middle of each semester or term; exact dates are available on the [graduate advising website](#). Students must arrange to take this examination by notifying the Graduate Studies Coordinator, who then requests exam questions from the student's committee members. Students write responses to four questions (2 questions from the chair, 1 each from the other committee members). Questions in the major area take approximately 3-4 hours to complete; cognate area questions typically are answered in one hour. Students should consult with their committee members about preparation for the qualifying exam. Depending on the quality of responses, students might be asked to rewrite a portion of the exam prior to scheduling the final oral examination.

MME+licensure track students please note: the MQE written exam must be taken the semester before student teaching, prior to the oral exam being completed in the semester of student teaching. Due to the nature of topics being studied in the dual focus of this track, the MQE written exam may not be taken early (regardless of planned student teaching in either the fall or spring term).

IV. Application for Admission to Candidacy

Before taking the comprehensive-final oral examination, master's degree students in all tracks should file an application for admission to candidacy in the graduate office. Forms and information are available on the [graduate advising website](#). The application form lists all courses and other requirements for the degree. This information should be listed on the official Graduate College form in a way that exactly matches the Plan of Study approved by the music

education faculty using the degree advising checklist. The student's committee chair and the Associate Dean must approve the application before it is sent to the Graduate School for final approval. The application for admission to candidacy must be filed with the Graduate School ten weeks prior to the comprehensive-final exam. In order to meet this ten-week deadline, academic year and MME+licensure track students who plan to complete oral exams early in a spring term (i.e., February or March) usually need to apply for candidacy by the FALL College of Music deadline the semester prior. Students should plan to submit their candidacy application forms to their committee chair at least two weeks before the College of Music deadline to give the chair time to review the form and check it against the previously approved Plan of Study.

V. Comprehensive Final Oral Examination

The final oral examination functions as a follow-up to the responses on the written examination. A secondary goal of the oral exam is to provide Master's candidates the opportunity to make connections among courses, reflect on their educational experiences and make applications to future music teaching. For all MME candidates, the music education faculty utilize the following three guiding questions when evaluating students' growth in their graduate studies:

- 1) Provide specific examples of how the topics covered in two or more courses taken as part of the degree are related or complementary.
- 2) Using your music education application essay or an assignment completed for a course (and approved by your advisor) as a point of comparison, provide specific evidence of how your thinking has developed as a result of graduate study.
- 3) Discuss and/or demonstrate (through reference to a DVD of your teaching) three ways you plan to apply concepts and ideas learned during graduate study to future teaching.

Students who write a thesis must schedule a separate oral defense for the thesis.

Va. Academic Year and MME+Licensure Tracks

An individual oral exam is required by the student's committee during the final semester of enrollment. It is typically 60-90 minutes in length. Normally, one-third of the oral examination is spent on clarifying and elaborating on exam responses. In consultation with the student's committee chair, two questions from the list above will be chosen for discussion during the oral examination.

This exam should be scheduled according to deadlines posted on the graduate advising website. Students are responsible to arrange the time and place of the exam with their committee members, and are required notify the Graduate Studies Coordinator at least three weeks in advance of the intended examination date. The Associate Dean's office then notifies the Graduate School to prepare the form on which the committee certifies the student for graduation.

Students in the MME+licensure track are excused for up to a half-day of student teaching to complete the oral exam.

Vb. Summer Track

In lieu of an individual oral exam with their committee, Summer MME students take the Capstone Portfolio course (spring semester prior to graduation). During that course, students will develop a portfolio project that will be presented during a "Pedagogy Poster Session" during the final summer session of study. As a part of that portfolio, you will choose to present a project related to each of the three guiding questions above.

The poster session will be scheduled by the Music Education area according to deadlines posted on the graduate office website, and in coordination with the summer course schedule. The Summer MME Coordinator will confirm committee member representation, and will notify the Graduate Studies Coordinator three weeks in advance of the

poster session event. The Associate Dean's office then notifies the Graduate School to prepare the form on which the committee certifies the student for graduation.

VI. Thesis Project (optional)

The MME degree does not require a thesis project (in any track); however, students may choose to pursue a thesis project as an optional capstone.

The purpose of a music education thesis project is to pursue original work in pedagogy or research on a specific topic. The thesis may extend from and expand upon projects completed as assignments in other coursework, but it should be primarily based on new work. For example, a student may use the research project from MUSC 5183 as a pilot, which is then extended, replicated with a different/larger sample, or otherwise followed up for the thesis project. The thesis project should result in a significant written manuscript, which would typically include divisions into multiple chapters. A project may include additional materials such as recordings, online resources, or pedagogical materials, as appropriate to the topic. As a rough guideline, an original research project thesis would generally be 50-60 pages in length (double spaced, including header materials and reference list).

To pursue a thesis, students must observe the following procedures:

- Notify the primary advisor at the time of submitting the student's Plan of Study of the intent to pursue a thesis project. This notification should include a 1-2 page summary of the topic, committee members (as described below), and timeline for the proposed project.
- Include 2 credits of TMUS 6956 under the Open Electives portion of the plan of study. In general, students will register for those credits during their final semester of study, but in some circumstances these credits may be taken in an earlier semester if warranted by the project timeline. The actual thesis work may span more than the semester enrolled in TMUS 6956.
- The student must choose a music education faculty member to serve as thesis advisor, and two other committee members to serve as thesis graders. One of the additional members should be a music education faculty member, and the other member should be from outside music education (either from other areas of the College of Music or from outside the College). The thesis committee may include the same members as the MQE committee, but is not required to have the same members or in the same roles (i.e., the MQE chair may be different from the thesis advisor). Be sure to obtain written consent from all committee members that they are willing to serve on the committee.
- The student will work in consultation with the thesis advisor to conduct their work as per the proposed topic and timeline. While a thesis project is based on student-led independent work, the student should work in close communication with the thesis advisor. The advisor will be the primary resource for issues such as topic approval, human subjects review, and observance of style guide (e.g., APA style).
- Prior to the start of the semester in which enrolling in TMUS 6956, the student will prepare a more detailed thesis proposal (5-10 pages) that describes the need for the study, the research question, the proposed method, a detailed timeline, and list of references. This document will be submitted to the thesis committee for approval.
- In the final semester of MME study, schedule an oral defense of the thesis with all committee members. This is also open to the public, so there is an opportunity to share the new work with the music education community. The presentation version of the thesis must be given to the committee no later than two weeks prior to the oral defense date.
- Following the oral defense, it is the student's responsibility (in consultation with the thesis advisor) to make final edits and submit the finished version of the document to CU Scholar per Graduate School rules.