

MUSIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

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Handbook for Undergraduate Students

2025-2026

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The College of Music at the University of Colorado Boulder has a long and honored tradition in the field of music education. Since the 1930s, the college has prepared musicians to be teachers in the nation's public schools. The quality and reputation of music education program graduates have resulted in an extraordinarily high placement rate for K-12 music teaching positions (nearly 100% for the past 12 years).

Music Education majors complete a minimum of 126 semester hours of coursework in the liberal arts, music (theory, history, performance, conducting) and music teacher education. Students may specialize in choral music, instrumental music, or general music combined with one of the other areas (choral-general, instrumental-general). Graduates of the program earn a Bachelor of Music Education (BME) degree and a Colorado K-12 Music Teaching License.

Some courses in the music education program are offered on an alternate semester or alternate year basis. Some courses (for example, instrument techniques classes) have an enrollment maximum and therefore priority order for registration is determined by class rank. Beyond coursework, students must meet a number of related requirements (minimum GPA, keyboard and applied proficiencies, PRAXIS assessment, sophomore interview, supervised field experiences). Because of the complex and challenging nature of the music education program, students are advised to carefully read and follow this handbook as well as the degree sheets available on the undergraduate advising website (colorado.edu/music/academics/undergraduate-advising/degrees).

Website

We strongly recommend that you regularly consult the music education website for important up-to-date information and program-related documents. The department website URL is:

colorado.edu/music/academics/departments/music-education

Email

The undergraduate music education email list [musedundergrad] is used to communicate important music education program information. Whenever you see a message with that header in the subject line, it indicates it is being sent to the official student list and you should give it your attention. Only faculty are allowed to send messages to this list or approve messages from officers of our official student organizations (such as NAfME Collegiate), so these messages contain important information and opportunities that are relevant to you. All BME, Post-Bac and MME+ students are automatically included on the undergraduate list.

Calendar

With the link below, you can access a combined Google calendar that shows Music Education department events as well as events from our Middle School Ensembles (MSE) program and the student organizations CU Boulder NAfME, ASTA and ACDA. These calendars will be updated throughout the semester so you can always check to see what's coming up. Save this URL: <http://bit.ly/CUMusEdCalendar>

MUSIC EDUCATION FACULTY

[View the faculty directory online](#)

Margaret Berg, Professor, Instrumental Music—Orchestra/Strings

Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, College of Music

PhD, Northwestern University; MEd, University of Cincinnati; BM, Cleveland Institute of Music; BS, Case Western Reserve University

Matthew Dockendorf, Assistant Professor, Instrumental Music—Band

Associate Director of Bands

DMA, Michigan State University; MM, The Ohio State University; BME, University of Minnesota

Michelle Ewer, Lecturer in Music Education

Field Experiences Coordinator

MEd, University of Phoenix; BME, University of Northern Colorado

Renee Gilliland, Assistant Teaching Professor, Conducting + Instrumental Music—Orchestra/Strings

DMA, University of Colorado; MM, Indiana University; BM, University of Texas at Austin

Leila Heil, Associate Professor, Choral Music

PhD, University of Colorado; MM, Arizona State University; BM, Colorado State University

Martina Miranda, Associate Professor, General Music

DMA, Arizona State University; MA, San Francisco State University; BA, Trinity International University

Kelly Parkes, Associate Professor, Instrumental Music—Band

PhD, University of Miami, Florida; MM, Australian National University; MS, Florida International University; BA, Australian National University

David Rickels, Associate Professor, Instrumental Music—Band

DMA, MM and BM, Arizona State University

Matthew Roeder, Associate Professor, Conducting + Instrumental Music—Band

Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies, College of Music

DMA, University of Colorado; MM, Peabody Conservatory; BM, Miami University

Logan Sorey, Assistant Teaching Professor, Conducting + Instrumental Music—Band

Assistant Director of Bands

DMA, University of Colorado, Boulder; MM, University of South Florida; BS, University of South Florida



PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

ACADEMIC RECORD

Music Education students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.75 and a music grade point average of 3.0 to be accepted into and complete the Teacher Education Program. The School of Education will allow no pass-fail grades (except for K-12 student teaching) and no letter grade below a “C-” in a student’s degree program. EDUC-prefix classes must be passed with a B- at minimum. Any class with a grade below these minimums must be retaken or replaced.

PROFESSIONALISM

Students are expected to exhibit professionalism in their studies which extends to all field teaching experiences. At CU Boulder, professional behavior is tracked along 10 dimensions: advocacy, integrity, professional dress, work ethic and perseverance; responsibility for actions; collegial interactions and communications; timeliness and organization; diversity and community; respect for students; responsibility for learning. If concerns are present in the “Advocacy” or “Integrity” categories, the department chair and selected music education faculty will meet with the student, document the concerns and develop next steps as these concerns are potential grounds for dismissal from the program. Professionalism will be tracked throughout your music education coursework. Documented consistent lack of professionalism in two or more dimensions may delay student teaching.

The common attendance policy for all music education courses is designed to encourage professional behavior. Several student groups (CNAfME, ASTA, ACDA) and department-sponsored activities (MSE program) provide opportunities for students to demonstrate professional commitment and leadership through participation in scheduled events.

KEYBOARD PROFICIENCY

All students in the Music Education program must demonstrate appropriate piano skills. This requirement can be addressed either by passing a Piano Proficiency exam or by taking the Keyboard Musicianship classes (two semesters for students choosing the Instrumental or Instrumental-General emphasis, four semesters for students choosing the Choral or Choral-General emphasis). Piano Proficiency exams are administered during the first week of the fall and spring semesters. Students who wish to take the exam should contact Professor Cremaschi (Alejandro.Cremaschi@colorado.edu) for a list of materials to prepare. Following successful completion of the piano proficiency exam, a verification form is added to the students’ undergraduate file. Students who pass the piano proficiency exam must take substitute courses in music to account for the credits of the Keyboard Musicianship classes that are waived by passing the Piano Proficiency exam.

APPLIED PROFICIENCY

All BME students are required to pass the sophomore proficiency (i.e., passing grade on the Sophomore Applied Jury) and junior-level proficiency (i.e., passing grade on the Junior Recital) on their major instrument or voice prior to graduation. Studio faculty determine the proficiency requirements and standards for recitals/juries. Students should also be aware of the College of Music “Undergraduate Private Lesson Guidelines” that specify 50-minute weekly lessons for all students in professional music degrees (including BME students).

PRAXIS MUSIC ASSESSMENT

Prior to beginning student teaching, all BME students must pass the PRAXIS Subject Assessment for Music: Content Knowledge (**test #5113**). For **fall term student teachers**, the optimal time to take the test will be in December/January prior to student teaching. For **spring term student teachers**, the optimal time to take the test will be in April-May prior



student teaching. The PRAXIS test is offered continuously throughout the year in 2-3 week testing windows every month. You can re-test every 21 days and students are allowed to take the test three times. The passing score for the exam is currently 161. The exam currently costs \$120. Visit the PRAXIS website (ets.org/praxis/prepare/materials/5113) for more information.

Note: Be sure to keep a copy of your Score Report as this is needed when you apply for licensure. Currently, students have a calendar year from when they took the test to log back into their account with PRAXIS and access the "Score Report." After that, PRAXIS charges for a copy and, after five years, your score report is no longer available.

SOPHOMORE INTERVIEW

The Music Education faculty interviews all BME students during the sophomore year (or after 50 credits have been earned including approved transfer credits) to evaluate academic progress and to assess personal musicianship, professional commitment, teaching competency and communication skills. Typically, Sophomore Interviews are held during the end of the fall semester and are scheduled in conjunction with the MUSC 2103 Introduction to Music Education course. Prior to the interview, students must prepare an e-portfolio and a 20-minute video of teaching conducted in a K-12 public school music class.

Students receive one of three evaluations: "Formal Pass," "Provisional Pass" or "Recall." To be accepted into the Teacher Education Program, students must receive a Formal or Provisional Pass. Criteria for formal acceptance into the Teacher Education Program are as follows:

1. Cumulative GPA of 3.0 in music courses and 2.75 in all courses at CU Boulder;
2. Appropriate keyboard and applied proficiencies passed;
3. Introduction to Music Education (MUSC 2103) course completed with a grade of C- or better;
4. 25 hours of supervised field experience documented;
5. Satisfactory demonstration of professional traits, communication skills and teaching competencies.

A Provisional Pass will be granted to students who meet all of the requirements listed above, but who have not yet passed the appropriate keyboard proficiency or applied proficiency. Any such provisions must be addressed during the semester immediately following the interview (or as specified by the Music Education chair). Students who fail to address provisions will not be permitted to enroll in upper-division (4000-level) music education courses.

Students who cannot be recommended to the Teacher Education Program will be recalled for a second interview during a subsequent semester. Students who cannot meet the guidelines for a Formal/Provisional Pass after having completed a second interview or by the time they have completed 65 credits toward the BME degree (including approved transfer credits) will not be permitted to register for any further classes in music education and will be advised to transfer into another degree program. Individuals who can meet the guidelines for a Formal Pass at a later date may petition the Music Education faculty through the Music Education chair for re-admittance into the program.

APPLICATION TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Students who complete the Sophomore Interview and receive a Formal or Provisional Pass will apply to the School of Education through the IUT application process after March 1. Applications will be reviewed and processed by June 1. Application instructions are available online at colorado.edu/education/academics/teacher-licensure/secondary/music-education-k-12. Students must submit an official copy of a transcript if they've attended any other college or university. All transcripts must be mailed directly to Teacher Education Licensure, School of Education, 249 UCB, University of Colorado Boulder, Boulder, CO, 80309.

SUPERVISED FIELD EXPERIENCE

All BME students are required to complete a minimum of 160 hours of supervised field experience prior to student teaching as part of their licensure program. These 160 hours are a portion of the 800 field hours (including hours from student teaching) required by the State of Colorado prior to licensure. Per CU Boulder School of Education policy, for a field experience to count toward a candidate's licensure, it must meet the following criteria:

- The candidate is actively engaging with K-12 students and families in their licensure content area;
- The candidate is under the direct support of licensed, program-approved mentor teachers and building leadership;
- The field experience is associated with a Teacher Licensure program area course and mediated by course instructors, field coaches, and/or university supervisors.

See the School of Education policy on [Documenting Field Hours](#) for further information on what counts as documented time during field experiences.

Each experience must be documented by completing a Music Education Field Experience Form (available on the department website or in digital form as advised by your course instructor). These forms are to be signed by the field experience supervisor and a music education faculty member and then placed in the student's file in the Office of the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies. Field experience hours are accumulated in six phases:

1. Pre-Sophomore Interview/Introduction to Music Education—25 hours
Prior to the Sophomore Interview and acceptance into the Teacher Education Program, all students must satisfactorily complete 25 hours of Field Experience: 15 hours as part of the Introduction to Music Education course (MUSC 2103) plus 10 hours completed independently within the past five years. These hours can involve any type of experience working with school-age children. Many students complete the 10-hour requirement by working at summer camps, with youth groups or by assisting public school music teachers.
2. Teaching General Music 1—20 hours
Students will be assigned to an elementary music program during this course.
3. Differentiated Instruction in Music—25 hours
Students will be assigned to a music program during this course.
4. Educational Psychology—15-30 hours
The Ed Psych: Adolescent course requires 15 practicum hours while the Ed Psych-Elementary requires 30 hours. Students enrolled in an Ed Psych course during the same semester as the Music Methods Practicum OR the Introduction to Student Teaching course may have a reduced practicum requirement for Ed Psych at the discretion of the instructor as long as the total hours prior to student teaching will reach 160.
5. Music Methods Practicum—25 hours
The MUSC 4203 music methods practicum is taken during the same semester at the Teaching Instrumental Music or Teaching Choral Music courses. Students will be assigned to a secondary music program in their specialty area.
6. Introduction to Student Teaching—50 hours
This course is taken the semester immediately preceding student teaching. Students will orient to their student teaching sites by spending approximately 25 hours at each of the two sites over the semester in preparation for full-time work at the same sites the following semester during student teaching.



While the Music Education department can make some accommodations to assign field experience sites near public transportation options or with carpool partners during the first three phases above, students will be expected to provide their own transportation throughout the Denver-Boulder metro area as defined by the School of Education for all field placements in phases four through six. Due to the limited number of available sites and the importance of assuring a high-quality experience for the student, transportation will only be considered as a factor when assigning placements for Music Methods Practicum, Introduction to Student Teaching or Student Teaching in cases of documented financial hardship.

STUDENT TEACHING

Students wishing to receive student teaching assignments complete the School of Education application for student teaching as an assignment for the Introduction to Student Teaching course. Prerequisites for student teaching include:

1. Admission to the Teacher Education Program;
2. A minimum cumulative GPA of 2.75 and music GPA of 3.0;
3. Completion of all music education courses with a grade of C- or higher and School of Education (EDUC) courses with a B- or higher;
4. Satisfactory performance skills as demonstrated by meeting Junior-level applied proficiency requirements;
5. Passing score on the PRAXIS Music Assessment;
6. Recommendation of the Music Education faculty*;
7. Completed graduation checkout (by April 15 for December graduates; by Dec. 15 for May graduates).

*Recommendation of the Music Education faculty indicating the candidate is ready to student-teach will be based on several factors. These elements will be reviewed during the semester the student is enrolled in Introduction to Student Teaching. Factors considered that may trigger possible remediation during the student semester or delay of student teaching include:

- A grade lower than B- earned in the upper division methods course (Teaching Choral Music, Teaching Instrumental Music, Teaching General Music 2);
- A pattern of grades lower than B- earned across other music education coursework;
- A pattern of grades lower than B- earned in basic musicianship courses (conducting, music theory, aural skills);
- Concerns reported by course instructors related to professionalism standards;
- The combined results of the Student Teaching Assessment of Readiness Skills (STARS) conducted during the Introduction to Student Teaching course.

Student teaching placements are assigned by the School of Education in consultation with the Music Education chair and each student's primary advisor. At least two semesters prior to the student teaching semester, students should begin to identify possible assignments and mentor teachers. Student teaching assignments typically include eight weeks at the elementary level and eight weeks at the secondary level (middle school assignments may fulfill either the elementary or secondary level requirement). Student teachers are observed and assessed by a cooperating teacher (public school teacher) and university supervisor (music education faculty member, doctoral student or contract supervisor).

All student teachers must enroll in Student Teaching (EDUC 4732, 8 credits) and Student Teaching Seminar (MUSC 4193, 1 credit). Student teachers who need to maintain full-time status may also register for Student Teaching Practicum (MUSC 4133, 3 credits) to reach a 12-credit load. Students are not permitted to enroll in any other university courses and/or participate informally in applied lessons or ensembles during the student teaching semester without prior approval of the Music Education chair.

During the student teaching semester, students are required to complete a Student Learning Project (SLP) that will assess the candidate's ability to design and implement instruction with authentic assessment practices in a K-12 music classroom. As part of the project, candidates will assemble evidence such as a unit plan, assessment tools supporting

the learning goals in that unit plan, individual student assessment data and reflections on student growth. Candidates are required to pass all sections of the SLP to earn a passing grade for student teaching.

A limited (1-2 per calendar year) number of music student teachers will be considered to student teach in Colorado school districts beyond the greater Boulder-Denver area for one of their eight-week placements. Permission is contingent on Music Education faculty approval of the placement and availability of a suitable university supervisor who is able to complete the required number of student teacher observations and associated paperwork. In cases where a student teacher would like to petition to student-teach in a school in another state, approval must also be granted from the School of Education. The student teacher will be responsible for some of the costs associated with a long-distance student teaching placement. Please contact the department chair the semester prior to student teaching for more information on long-distance student teaching policies, procedures and application process. *Note: To list a prospective long-distance placement on the student teaching application, the student must submit a written request to the department chair (via email) no later than the last day of classes of the CU Boulder regular fall or spring academic term prior to the term in which the student will enroll in Introduction to Student Teaching.*

Successful completion of all portions of the student teaching semester (including receiving passing evaluations at both eight-week placements) is required to earn the BME degree. If—after the allowed number of attempts under School of Education policy—a student is unable to complete the requirements and earn a passing grade for student teaching for any reason (even in cases of medical documentation), the student will be required to withdraw from the BME program and transfer to a different major (BM/BME students may withdraw from BME and graduate as BM alone; students may also opt for the BA in music). The BME degree will not be granted without completion of student teaching under any circumstances.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ADVISING

All students must schedule an appointment with their academic advisor prior to registering for classes for the following semester to have the registration hold released. Your course schedule advising will be handled through Victoria Ibarra and Hannah Baker in the College of Music Undergraduate Studies Office. Visit the Buff Portal Advising to schedule your advising appointment (colorado.edu/buffportaladvising).

STUDY ABROAD

Students who wish to participate in the Study Abroad program are encouraged to do so. However, it is strongly advised that you work with your faculty advisor to identify the best time in your degree program to participate in Study Abroad. If you want to study abroad during the academic year, music education students have found spring semester of the sophomore year to have the least impact on progress toward degree completion. Please note that simply accumulating a large number of credits via AP exams or summer courses does not necessarily guarantee flexibility in taking a study abroad semester. Music education courses required for licensure are highly sequential and many are offered only once a year. In addition, classes with field experience requirements often cannot be stacked in the same semester since the number of hours required to be in schools during the 8:00-3:00 school day would become incompatible with your CU course schedule.

TEACHING IN ANOTHER STATE

Currently, 49 states/jurisdictions have an interstate agreement which makes it possible for an educator who holds a Colorado teaching license to earn a certificate or license in another state. Receiving states may have special requirements (e.g., an assessment, course, or teaching experience) which must be met in a reasonable period of time. For more information, visit nasdtec.net/?page=interstate as well as the department of education for the state in which

you would like to be hired for a full-time teaching position. For a current comparison, visit: ecs.org/50-state-comparison-teacher-license-reciprocity/ or, for a summary, visit ecs.org/50-state-comparison-teacher-license-reciprocity/.

TEACHING ABROAD

CU Boulder graduates have gained full-time employment at international schools, most recently in Western Europe and South America. For more information, visit iss.edu/international-teaching and <http://www.tieonline.com/>. There is an international teaching career fair every spring in Iowa (uni.edu/placement/overseas/fair).

ENSEMBLE REQUIREMENTS FOR MUSIC EDUCATION MAJORS

1. Each music education major is required to earn **seven semester hours** of ensemble credit. Students must be enrolled in an ensemble during any semester in which applied study toward the degree occurs. Students should not be enrolled in applied study or an ensemble during the student teaching semester unless prior approval has been granted by the Music Education chair.
2. All students must be enrolled in a *conducted concert ensemble* in the student's area of emphasis during the semesters in which they study conducting (see list below). Normally, students are expected to successfully audition into an upper-level ensemble (indicated with a * in the list below) by their fifth semester of study and maintain enrollment in an upper-level ensemble for the remainder of the degree. BME choral majors must participate in a mixed voice ensemble for at least one semester. Students unable to successfully audition into an upper-level ensemble by their fifth semester will complete an ensemble remediation assignment.

Conducted concert ensembles include:

Wind Symphony*	Symphonic Band*	Concert Band	Symphony Orchestra*	Campus Orchestra
Chamber Singers*	University Choir*	Treble Chorus*	Festival Chorus	Philharmonia Orchestra*

Elective ensembles include: Marching Band, Jazz Ensembles, Jazz Combos, Opera Chorus, Early Music Ensembles, New Music Ensembles, World Music Ensembles and Chamber Ensembles.

3. **Scholarship students:** All BME students on scholarship (tuition and/or foundation) including Choral-General and Instrumental-General track students, must plan to audition for and participate in a conducted concert ensemble related to their major applied area (e.g., strings in orchestra, wind/brass/percussion in band or orchestra, voice in choir, piano per advising) each semester other than the student teaching semester; enrollment in world music ensemble and/or choir (to meet choral-general and instrumental-general degree requirements) will be in addition to the ensemble that meets the scholarship requirement. Exceptions must be approved on a case-by-case basis by the Music Education faculty with input from the conducting faculty.

Non-scholarship students: BME students not on scholarship must meet the minimum degree requirement for conducted concert ensemble registration (five semesters, including semesters during which they are enrolled in conducting classes) and otherwise may enroll in elective ensembles (EMUS prefix only) of their choice or choral/world music ensembles required for the choral-general and instrumental-general degree tracks. Students may also choose to enroll in an ensemble outside of their major area (i.e., vocalist playing in band or orchestra, instrumentalist singing in choir).

4. All wind, brass and percussion majors must participate in Marching Band for at least one semester.
5. Ensemble requirements for piano majors choosing an instrumental or choral emphasis are as follows:
 - Piano accompanying may satisfy no more than two of the seven ensemble credit-hour requirement;
 - Campus Band, Marching Band, Campus Orchestra (where a student playing a minor wind/percussion/string instrument) and Festival Chorus may fulfill no more than three of the seven-hour requirement;



- 3 or more hours should be earned by participating in Concert Band, Symphonic Band, Wind Symphony, Symphony Orchestra, University Choir or Chamber Singers.
6. Given that students are required to earn seven semester hours of ensemble credit, listed below are the possible credit ranges by degree concentration for students not receiving a scholarship (however, wind/brass/percussion students, review #3 + #4 above):

Instrumental (Band)	Instrumental (Strings)	Choral	Instrumental-General	Choral-General
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-6 semesters conducted concert band ensemble • 1-2 semesters marching band • 0-1 semester other ensemble 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-7 semesters symphony or philharmonia orchestra • 0-4 semesters campus orchestra • 0-2 semesters other ensemble 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-7 semesters conducted choral ensemble • 0-2 semester other choral ensemble 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 semesters conducted concert instrumental ensemble • 1 semester conducted choral ensemble (male students may petition to register for men's chorus) • 1 semester world music ensemble 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 semesters conducted concert choral ensemble • 1 semester world music ensemble

Passed by the Music Education faculty on 11/17/09; Section 3 updated 9/6/12; Section 2 updated 9/12/16, 9/17/19 and 9/22/23.