Music Composition, MM

Develop advanced skills such as orchestration, electronic studio techniques, film and video scoring and jazz composition. In this master's degree program, you will work with renowned faculty with musical interests that represent a wide variety of genres, ranging from chamber to orchestral, acoustic to electronic.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: MM Composition

The MM program in composition focuses on the development of skills necessary to pursue a career in music composition. Student composers learn through experiential opportunities, including composing for instrumental and vocal colleagues in a variety of genres, leading to performances of their works in venues on campus and off. Project-based experiences including working with the Visiting Quartet Residency program, creating new works for student string quartets while coaching this repertoire with guest artists. Collaboration with music scholars, theorists, performers, educators and other composers under the guidance of renowned composition faculty provide students with a broad and well-rounded foundation for advanced careers in music.

At a Glance

- College/School: Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts
- Location: Tempe campus

Degree Requirements

32 credit hours, a thesis and a written comprehensive exam

The credit hour requirements for the degree are distributed as follows:
composition (9 credit hours)
electives (8 credit hours)
music theory and music history (9 credit hours)
thesis (6 credit hours)

The thesis is an original composition that demonstrates mastery of composing for the selected performance medium and the coherent organization of musical material.

Additional Curriculum Requirements
Completion of diagnostic exams in music history and music theory is required of all new graduate music students prior to enrollment in the ASU School of Music.

Additional information about degree requirements for all graduate music programs may be found on the check sheets. https://music.asu.edu/degree-programs/graduate/

Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a U.S. bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution or the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree from an institution in another country that is officially recognized by that country.

Applicants must have achieved a minimum of a 3.00 cumulative GPA (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of their first bachelor's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. School of Music application (including a resume and personal statement): https://music.asu.edu/admissions/graduate-steps-to-apply
3. official transcripts
4. prescreening portfolio
5. three letters of recommendation
6. proof of English proficiency: https://admission.asu.edu/international/graduate/english-proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English (regardless of current residency) must provide proof of English proficiency. The School of Music does not offer conditional admission under any circumstances.
order to meet English proficiency requirements, students must have a TOEFL score of at least 550 (PBT) or 80 (iBT), or an IELTS overall band score of at least 6.5, or a Pearson Test of English score of at least 60.

Although a bachelor's degree in music is not required to be eligible for admission, applicants who do not hold an undergraduate degree in music are required to complete the deficiency courses listed below, which are not a part of the coursework for this graduate degree in music. These courses (or the equivalents) may be taken at ASU, another accredited university or a community college before or after admission to this program, but they must be completed prior to commencement of graduate-level course requirements in music history and music theory.

MHL 140 Music as Culture
MHL 341 Music History I
MHL 342 Music History II
MTC 125 Basic Music Theory
MTC 221 Music Theory: 18th Century
MTC 222 Music Theory: 19th Century
MTC 223 Music Theory: 20th Century

Applicants should see the program website for application deadlines. After receipt of complete application materials (including recommendation letters, transcripts and English proficiency) and review of prescreening materials, an applicant may be invited for an interview. Information on the interview may be found at https://music.asu.edu/admissions/graduate-auditions.

Global Opportunities

PLuS Alliance
Global Experience
Global Degree

Career Opportunities

Contact Information

School of Music | MUSIC E167
MusicAdmissions@asu.edu | 480-965-5069
Admission Deadlines