

# University of Miami Frost School of Music

## Ph.D. in Music Education

### Qualifying Examination and Doctoral Candidacy Procedures

#### Introduction

In order to be accepted into candidacy and to defend the dissertation proposal, all Ph.D. students must satisfactorily complete MED 695, Doctoral Research Project and the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination. The purpose is as follows:

1. To demonstrate application of fundamental and specialized knowledge related to music teaching or music therapy practice.
2. To demonstrate the ability to plan, conduct, and report research.

As a result of this process, students will be able to: (a) apply fundamental knowledge in teaching a wide variety of courses in their discipline, (b) write practitioner and research articles, and (c) independently conduct research in their field of study. Tangible products will be produced that demonstrate professional competence in these various domains. Students will be expected to work independently and engage in critical thinking, synthesizing existing knowledge and generating new understandings that contribute to their respective professions.

As part of Ph.D. coursework, the MED 695 Doctoral Research Project requires each student to produce a sole-authored, publishable-quality research project. While actual publication of the project is not required to satisfy degree requirements, students are strongly encouraged to pursue publication of their work.

The qualifying examination includes two components. The first component consists of three written papers. The second component is a one-hour, oral examination focusing on the written papers. This oral examination occurs approximately 1 to 2 weeks after the written portion of the exam is submitted. The oral exam will be in the Music Annex or another suitable site.

The written component of the qualifying examinations comprises three scholarly papers that are fully independent of, or are significant extensions of papers written as part of other coursework. These papers must be generated independently and must pertain to topics formally approved by MED/MTY faculty.

#### Written Qualifying Examination Paper Descriptions

**Project 1: Practice Article** - This paper will focus on practical issues in music teaching and learning or neurologic music therapy geared toward an audience of practitioners and scholars. The paper should be suitable for publication in a professional journal such as the *Music Educators Journal* (MEJ), *Music Therapy Perspectives*, or *Music Medicine*. It should be an original contribution that is based in research and scholarship, but written in an accessible and “straightforward...style that avoids unnecessary jargon, (overly) technical language, and excessive reliance on long quotations from other

sources.” The above quotes are from the MEJ submission guidelines. Students may wish to draw from their own professional experiences in the writing of this paper, and should include citations of previous work in the professional literature both in and outside of music education or music therapy to support their ideas. This paper should be between 12 to 15 double-spaced pages (12-point font), excluding references, and use the appropriate writing style as required for a specific journal.

**Project 2: Review of Literature** – This paper will consist of a comprehensive literature review. The topic must be focused and have a body of literature from which to draw in and/or outside of music education or music therapy. The topic for this review must be different in some way than topics covered in papers written in MED 663, MED 695, or in the MED 730 proposal, but may be related to other professional work. This paper should not only review relevant literature on a particular topic, but should also synthesize information from a variety of sources and demonstrate critical thinking by providing a fresh perspective or unique interpretation of previously published literature. The chapters in the various MENC *Handbooks of Music Teaching and Learning* (Oxford), the *Oxford Handbook of Music Psychology*, or *Handbook of Neurologic Music Therapy* can be used as models for comprehensive reviews of literature. We recommend the following article on how to write an effective review of literature: *Scholars Before Researchers: On the Centrality of the Dissertation Review in Research Preparation, Educational Researcher, 34*(6), 3-15. Music therapy students should consider utilizing the Rational Scientific-Mediating Model as a template by thoroughly discussing research at all levels of the model as appropriate to the topic. Use headings and subheadings as needed. This paper should be no longer than 20 double spaced pages (12-point font), excluding references. Manuscripts should follow the latest version of APA style guide.

**Project 3: Student-Initiated Project** – students will complete a third project in one of the following areas:

(3a) **Philosophy or Policy Paper** - This paper should address “philosophical or theoretical issues relevant to education, including reflections on current practice, research, issues, or questions; reform initiatives; philosophical writings; theories; the nature and scope of education and its goals and purposes; and cross-disciplinary dialogue relevant to the interests of music educators.” It could also discuss issues related to policy and other large-scale issues of importance and relevance to the field of music education. This paper should be no longer than 20 double spaced pages (12-point font), excluding references, and use the appropriate writing style for this type of article. Use the guidelines on the *Philosophy of Music Education Review* or the *Arts Education Policy Review* websites for more guidance. The above quote comes from the PMER website.

(3b) **Methodology/Statistics Paper** - This paper should demonstrate the student’s deep understanding of a given quantitative or qualitative methodology (e.g., ethnography, collective case study, grounded theory, oral history, experimental, descriptive, survey, causal-comparative/correlational, factor analysis, statistical modeling), preferably the one that is being considered for his or her dissertation.

(3c) **Assessment Project** - This paper should demonstrate the student’s ability to apply assessment principles in the development, piloting, and validating of a measure or measures to be used in music research. The article should describe the initial development, piloting, revision, and validation of an assessment tool or tools, and address questions of reliability, validity, item difficulty and item discrimination (if appropriate) that are related to this

assessment instrument or instruments.

**(3d) Student-Designed Project** – If the student does not elect to complete a policy/philosophy project, a methodology/statistics project, or an assessment project, another novel project of sufficient scope may be proposed by the Ph.D. student to the examination committee for their approval that demonstrates the student's ability to apply fundamental knowledge in the student's major field of study in another scholarly way. The format of this project would be developed with input from the members of the examination committee.

## Exam Timeline and Procedures

The procedure for the Qualifying Examination is as follows:

1. No later than the second semester of study, the student should formally select the topics for their qualifying examination papers and inform his or her graduate advisor in music education or music therapy. The student will then assemble a three-member qualifying examination committee. The student may request members from the music education and music therapy faculty (2 must be from the student's discipline) to serve as members of the committee, subject to approval of the chair of the department and faculty availability.
2. For each of the proposed examination papers, the student will submit a one-page prospectus to the examination committee that clearly explains the proposed project (including appropriate references). This prospectus must be submitted by the first Monday of November (Fall Semester) or the first Monday in April (Spring Semester), but may be submitted earlier in the semester. Once submitted and reviewed, the committee will approve or disapprove selected topics, and may require clarification or modification before giving final approval. Once formal approval has been granted, students may begin work on each examination project.
3. Completed papers must be submitted to the examination committee by the first Monday of April in your fourth semester but may be submitted earlier in the semester. An additional stipulation is that the Doctoral Research Project needs to have been successfully completed. Papers must be bound as a single document, and distributed to each member of the committee. Once submitted and reviewed, the committee will schedule the oral examination, usually with 7 to 14 days, subject to faculty availability.
4. On the day of the oral qualifying examination, the student will report to the Music Annex (or other designated examination site) at the scheduled time. Plan for a ninety-minute exam. The oral exam is an extension of the written papers and follow-up questions should be expected, which may lead to questions in areas of knowledge in the discipline or in research methods beyond the scope of the papers. During the oral exam, committee members will ask questions to test the depth of students' knowledge and understanding of the material presented in the three papers. This might include, but is not limited to, the content of the papers, the cited literature, related concepts, historical context, and implications.
5. At the end of the oral exam, students will wait outside the room while the committee reaches a decision. Two outcomes are possible:
  - a. Pass

- b. Fail
6. If a student fails any portion of the qualifying exam, a retake can be scheduled in the following semester. The student may be asked to revise or retake portions of the examination, including the oral portion or any of the written components. A student who fails the qualifying exam twice will be dismissed from the program.
  7. All parts of the qualifying examination (written papers and oral exam) should be successfully completed BEFORE dissertation proposal defense can occur. In the rare instance that this sequence is not possible, a student may defend the proposal and receive provisional approval pending the outcome of the qualifying exams. Additionally, the dissertation work will be suspended if a student does not pass the-qualifying exam. In this case, the qualifying exam MUST be completed by the semester after the proposal defense. A formal written request to the graduate student advisor in music education or music therapy stating the reasons for scheduling a proposal defense before the qualifying exams is required. MED faculty will review the appeal and make the final decision.
  8. The dissertation proposal defense will be scheduled while classes are in session in the fall or spring semesters and in consultation with the dissertation advisor. Students will submit the dissertation proposal to the dissertation committee two weeks prior to the scheduled defense.
  9. Any questions should be directed to the graduate student advisor who will also provide specific examples and guidelines for each written project related to the student's discipline.