

University of Miami Frost School of Music

Ph.D. in Music Education

Qualifying Examination and Doctoral Candidacy Procedures

Introduction

In order to attain Doctoral Candidacy and permission to defend the dissertation proposal, all Ph.D. students must satisfactorily complete (a) the Doctoral Research Project and (b) the Ph.D. Qualifying Examination. The rationale for these requirements is:

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.

From fulfilling these requirements, students should be able to: (a) apply fundamental knowledge in teaching a wide variety of courses in their discipline and (b) write practitioner and research articles, and 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.

Doctoral Research Project

As part of Ph.D. coursework (MED 795, 796), the Doctoral Research Project requires that each student 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.

Qualifying Examination

The qualifying examination includes two components. The first component consists of three written papers. The second component is an 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 may be held in a faculty member studio 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.

Qualifying Examination Paper Descriptions

Paper 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.

Paper 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 763, MED 795, or in the MED 830 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.

Paper 3: Student-Initiated Paper – 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 paper 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.

Guidelines for Timely Completion of the Qualifying Examination

To finish a Ph.D. program within three years, students ought to achieve Doctoral Candidacy (completing the Doctoral Research Project and the Qualifying Examination) before the start of their third year. The procedures for the Qualifying Examination are as follows:

1. The student should select the topics for the papers and inform the graduate advisor in music education or music therapy by the end of the second semester of study. The student should then solicit a three-member qualifying examination committee. The student may solicit members from the music education and music therapy faculty to serve as members of the committee; 2 members should be from the student's discipline and the committee's membership is subject to approval of the chair of the department and faculty availability.
2. The student will submit a one-page proposal to the committee for each paper. These proposals should be submitted by the end of the third semester of study but may be submitted earlier. Each proposal should clearly explain the rationale and plan for the paper; appropriate references are required but not included in the page count. After reviewing the proposals, the committee will approve or disapprove the proposed topics and may require clarification or modification before giving approval. Once formal approval has been granted, students may begin work on each paper.
3. Completed papers should be submitted to the committee by the last week of the fourth semester of study but may be submitted earlier. Papers should be submitted as separate electronic document files and distributed to each member of the committee. Once submitted and reviewed, the committee will schedule the oral examination, usually within 7 to 14 days, subject to faculty availability.
4. On the day of the oral qualifying examination, the student will report 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. Three outcomes are possible:

- a. Pass. No further revisions required.
 - b. Conditional pass. The student needs to resubmit some form of written remediation, according to the instructions of the committee.
 - c. Fail. The student needs to substantially revise the essays and reschedule an oral defense. If a student fails the qualifying exam, a retake can be scheduled in the following semester. A student who fails the qualifying exam twice will be dismissed from the program
6. All parts of the qualifying examination (written papers and oral exam) must be successfully completed before the dissertation proposal defense can occur.
 7. Any questions should be directed to the graduate advisor who will also provide specific examples and guidelines for each written project related to the student's discipline. -