

MUSICAL ARTS, B.M.A.

Begin Campus: University Park

End Campus: University Park

Program Description

The Bachelor of Musical Arts degree is a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary program that is intended to prepare students for careers in performance, while developing a secondary area of emphasis outside of music, as determined for each student on the basis of an advising process. Completion of this program requires that the student achieve a high level of competence in order to begin professional work or pursue further studies at the graduate level.

What is Music?

Italian composer Ferruccio Busoni said “music is sonorous air.” A more scientific definition might be “sounds organized in time.” With a history that likely pre-dates language, music is an integral part of all societies for expression, communication, and the fostering of community. In the words of philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, “without music, life would be a mistake.”

You Might Like This Program If...

- You have achieved a high level of musical accomplishment from years of study, practice, and ensemble participation.
- Music is a driving force in your life but you also want to pursue a minor or a second degree outside of music.

Entrance to Major

Entrance into this program will be determined by departmental evaluation.

Entrance Procedures

Students interested in pursuing Music (B.M.A.) should follow the appropriate first year, change of major, or transfer application instructions found under Music Admission Information at <https://arts.psu.edu/how-to-apply/#specific>.

Degree Requirements

For the Bachelor of Musical Arts degree, a minimum of 120 credits is required:

Requirement	Credits
General Education	45
Requirements for the Major	87

0-12 of the 45 credits for General Education are included in the Requirements for the Major. This includes: 0-12 credits in the area of Supporting Courses and Related Areas.

Requirements for the Major

A grade of C or better is required for all courses in the major. To graduate, a student enrolled in the major must earn at least a C grade in each course designated by the major as a C-required course, as specified by Senate Policy 82-44 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>).

Code	Title	Credits
Prescribed Courses		
<i>Prescribed Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
MUSIC 40	First-Year Seminar in Music	1
MUSIC 101	Music Common Hour	1
MUSIC 121	Basic Musicianship I	1
MUSIC 122	Basic Musicianship II	1
MUSIC 131	Music Theory I	2
MUSIC 132	Music Theory II	2
MUSIC 162	Introduction to Music History	2
MUSIC 221	Basic Musicianship III	1
MUSIC 222	Basic Musicianship IV	1
MUSIC 231	Music Theory III	2
MUSIC 261	Survey of Music History I	3
MUSIC 262	Survey of Music History II	3
MUSIC 266	Basic Conducting	1
MUSIC 270	Keyboard Skills IV: Music Major	1
MUSIC 332	Analysis of Twentieth Century Music	2
Additional Courses		
<i>Additional Courses: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 3 credits from the following:		3
MUSIC 431	Advanced Tonal Analysis	
MUSIC 433	Advanced Analysis of Twentieth-Century Music	
MUSIC 461W	Studies in Music History: Antiquity to 1600	
MUSIC 462W	Studies in Music History: 1550-1750	
MUSIC 463W	Studies in Music History: 1700-1900	
MUSIC 464W	Studies in Music History: 1850-Present	
Supporting Courses and Related Areas		
<i>Supporting Courses and Related Areas: Require a grade of C or better</i>		
Select 20 credits in applied music through Level VIII of performance		20
Select 8 credits of approved ensembles (see School of Music Handbook for list of ensembles)		8
Select 8 credits of electives		8
Select 24 credits (at least 12 at the 400 level) in consultation with adviser in an area of study other than music ¹		24

¹ This list of courses must be approved by the College of Arts and Architecture's Dean of Undergraduate Studies. 0-12 of these 24 credits may be included in General Education.

General Education

Connecting career and curiosity, the General Education curriculum provides the opportunity for students to acquire transferable skills necessary to be successful in the future and to thrive while living in interconnected contexts. General Education aids students in developing intellectual curiosity, a strengthened ability to think, and a deeper sense of aesthetic appreciation. These are requirements for all baccalaureate students and are often partially incorporated into the requirements of a program. For additional information, see the General Education Requirements (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/general-education/baccalaureate-degree-general-education-program/>) section of the Bulletin and consult your academic adviser.

The keystone symbol appears next to the title of any course that is designated as a General Education course. Program requirements may also satisfy General Education requirements and vary for each program.

Foundations (grade of C or better is required and Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Quantification (GQ):** 6 credits
- **Writing and Speaking (GWS):** 9 credits

Breadth in the Knowledge Domains (Inter-Domain courses do not meet this requirement.)

- **Arts (GA):** 3 credits
- **Health and Wellness (GHW):** 3 credits
- **Humanities (GH):** 3 credits
- **Social and Behavioral Sciences (GS):** 3 credits
- **Natural Sciences (GN):** 3 credits

Integrative Studies

- **Inter-Domain Courses (Inter-Domain):** 6 credits

Exploration

- **GN**, may be completed with Inter-Domain courses: 3 credits
- **GA, GH, GN, GS, Inter-Domain courses.** This may include 3 credits of World Language course work beyond the 12th credit level or the requirements for the student's degree program, whichever is higher: 6 credits

University Degree Requirements

First Year Engagement

All students enrolled in a college or the Division of Undergraduate Studies at University Park, and the World Campus are required to take 1 to 3 credits of the First-Year Seminar, as specified by their college First-Year Engagement Plan.

Other Penn State colleges and campuses may require the First-Year Seminar; colleges and campuses that do not require a First-Year Seminar provide students with a first-year engagement experience.

First-year baccalaureate students entering Penn State should consult their academic adviser for these requirements.

Cultures Requirement

6 credits are required and may satisfy other requirements

- **United States Cultures:** 3 credits
- **International Cultures:** 3 credits

Writing Across the Curriculum

3 credits required from the college of graduation and likely prescribed as part of major requirements.

Total Minimum Credits

A minimum of 120 degree credits must be earned for a baccalaureate degree. The requirements for some programs may exceed 120 credits. Students should consult with their college or department adviser for information on specific credit requirements.

Quality of Work

Candidates must complete the degree requirements for their major and earn at least a 2.00 grade-point average for all courses completed within their degree program.

Limitations on Source and Time for Credit Acquisition

The college dean or campus chancellor and program faculty may require up to 24 credits of course work in the major to be taken at the location or in the college or program where the degree is earned. Credit used toward degree programs may need to be earned from a particular source or within time constraints (see Senate Policy 83-80 (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/82-00-and-83-00-degree-requirements/>)). For more information, check the Suggested Academic Plan for your intended program.

Learning Outcomes

- Comprehensive capabilities in the major performing medium including the ability to work independently to prepare performances at the highest possible level; knowledge of applicable solo and ensemble literature; and orientation to and experience with the fundamentals of pedagogy. For majors in Early Music, Historical Performance, or the equivalent, the ability to apply aural, improvisational, and language skills, knowledge of styles and performance practices, and general historical and cultural knowledge as required by the focus of the major is essential.
- An overview understanding of the repertoire in their major performance area and the ability to perform from a cross-section of that repertoire.
- The ability to read at sight with fluency, demonstrating both general musicianship and, in the major performance area, a level of skill relevant to professional standards appropriate for the particular music concentration.
- Knowledge and skills sufficient to work as a leader and in collaboration on matters of musical interpretation. Rehearsal and conducting skills are required as appropriate to the particular music concentration.
- Keyboard competency.
- Growth in artistry, technical skills, collaborative competence, and knowledge of repertoire through regular ensemble experiences. Ensembles should be varied both in size and nature.

Academic Advising

The objectives of the university's academic advising program are to help advisees identify and achieve their academic goals, to promote their intellectual discovery, and to encourage students to take advantage of both in-and out-of class educational opportunities in order that they become self-directed learners and decision makers.

Both advisers and advisees share responsibility for making the advising relationship succeed. By encouraging their advisees to become engaged in their education, to meet their educational goals, and to develop the habit of learning, advisers assume a significant educational role. The advisee's unit of enrollment will provide each advisee with a primary academic adviser, the information needed to plan the chosen program of study, and referrals to other specialized resources.

READ SENATE POLICY 32-00: ADVISING POLICY (<https://senate.psu.edu/students/policies-and-rules-for-undergraduate-students/32-00-advising-policy/>)

University Park

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Suggested Academic Plan

The suggested academic plan(s) listed on this page are the plan(s) that are in effect during the 2025-26 academic year. To access previous years' suggested academic plans, please visit the archive (<https://bulletins.psu.edu/undergraduate/archive/>) to view the appropriate Undergraduate Bulletin edition.

Musical Arts, B.M.A. at University Park Campus

The course series listed below provides **only one** of the many possible ways to move through this curriculum. The University may make changes in policies, procedures, educational offerings, and requirements at any time. This plan should be used in conjunction with your degree audit (accessible in LionPATH as either an **Academic Requirements** or **What If** report). Please consult with a Penn State academic adviser on a regular basis to develop and refine an academic plan that is appropriate for you.

First Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Applied Music – primary instrument (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	3 Applied Music – primary instrument (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	3
Ensemble (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	1 Ensemble (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	1
MUSIC 40 [*]	1 MUSIC 122 [*]	1
MUSIC 121 [*]	1 MUSIC 132 [*]	2
MUSIC 131 [*]	2 MUSIC 162 [*]	2
General Education Course (GQ) [‡]	3 ENGL 15, 15A, or 30H [‡]	3
General Education Course	3 General Education Course (GQ) [‡]	3
	14	15

Second Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Applied Music – primary instrument (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	3 Applied Music – primary instrument (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	3
Ensemble (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	1 Ensemble (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	1
MUSIC 221 [*]	1 MUSIC 222 [*]	1
MUSIC 231 [*]	2 MUSIC 261 [*]	3
MUSIC 262 [*]	3 MUSIC 270 [*]	1
General Education Course (GA)	3 MUSIC 332 [*]	2
General Education Course (GH)	3 General Education Course (GN)	3
	General Education Course (Inter-Domain)	3
	16	17

Third Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Applied Music – primary instrument (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	3 Applied Music – primary instrument (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	3

Ensemble (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	1 Ensemble (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	1
MUSIC 266 [*]	1 ENGL 202A, 202B, 202C, or 202D [‡]	3
CAS 100A, 100B, or 100C [‡]	3 Other Area of Study ^{*1}	6
General Education Course (GN)	3 Related Music (Supporting Course in consultation with adviser) ^{*1}	2
Other Area of Study ^{*1}	6 General Education Course (Inter-Domain)	3
	17	18

Fourth Year

Fall	Credits Spring	Credits
Applied Music – primary instrument (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	3 Applied Music – primary instrument (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	3
Ensemble (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	1 Ensemble (Supporting Course) ^{*1}	1
MUSIC 461W, 462W, 463W, or 464W (Additional Courses) [*]	3 MUSIC 101 [*]	1
General Education Course (Exploration)	3 General Education Course (GHW)	3
400-level courses in Other Area of Study ^{*1}	6 General Education Course (Exploration)	3
Related Music (Supporting Course in consultation with adviser) ^{*1}	2 400-level courses in Other Area of Study ^{*1}	6
	18	17

Total Credits 132

* Course requires a grade of C or better for the major

‡ Course requires a grade of C or better for General Education

Course is an Entrance to Major requirement

† Course satisfies General Education and degree requirement

¹ SUPPORTING COURSES AND RELATED AREAS (57 credits)

- Select 24 credits in applied music through Level VIII of performance (Sem: 1-8)
- Select 8 credits of approved ensembles (see School of Music Handbook for list of ensembles) (Sem: 1-8)
- Select 4 credits in music in consultation with an adviser (Sem: 1-8)
- Select 24 credits in consultation with adviser in an area of study other than music, at least 12 credits must be at the 400 level.

This list of courses must be approved by the College of Arts and Architecture's Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

(0-12 of these 24 credits may be included in GENERAL EDUCATION) (Sem: 1-8)

University Requirements and General Education Notes:

US and IL are abbreviations used to designate courses that satisfy Cultural Diversity Requirements (United States and International Cultures).

W, M, X, and Y are the suffixes at the end of a course number used to designate courses that satisfy University Writing Across the Curriculum requirement.

General Education includes Foundations (GWS and GQ), Knowledge Domains (GHW, GN, GA, GH, GS) and Integrative Studies (Inter-domain) requirements. N or Q (Honors) is the suffix at the end of a course number used to help identify an Inter-domain course, but the inter-domain attribute is used to fill audit requirements. Foundations courses (GWS and GQ) require a grade of 'C' or better.

All incoming Schreyer Honors College first-year students at University Park will take ENGL 137H/CAS 137H in the fall semester and ENGL 138T/CAS 138T in the spring semester. These courses carry the GWS designation and satisfy a portion of that General Education requirement. If the student's program prescribes GWS these courses will replace both ENGL 15/ENGL 30H and CAS 100A/CAS 100B/CAS 100C. Each course is 3 credits.

Program Notes:

- Entrance into this program will be determined by departmental evaluation. All students are required to pass a piano proficiency examination.

Career Paths

B.M.A. graduates are prepared to embark on careers in performance or to pursue graduate studies in music. If a degree outside of music was also earned, graduate study or a career in the non-music area is also possible

Careers

Graduates of the B.M.A. in music program enter the workforce with a unique skill set that reflects their accomplishment as a performer as well as knowledge in another field. Graduates may pursue careers that pair their musical knowledge with a secondary area. The possibilities are as extensive as the graduate's imagination.

Opportunities for Graduate Studies

The B.M.A. in music degree provides a comprehensive education in performance. Graduates are well prepared to pursue advanced or terminal degrees in many areas of music. Performance, conducting, theory, musicology, and composition are some of the areas where graduates can excel if they pursue graduate studies.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATE STUDIES (<https://arts.psu.edu/academics/school-of-music/>)

Accreditation

The Pennsylvania State University is accredited through the National Association of Schools of Music. NASM is an organization of schools, conservatories, colleges, and universities with approximately 650 accredited institutional members. It establishes national standards for undergraduate and graduate degrees and other credentials for music and music-related disciplines, and provides assistance to institutions and individuals engaged in artistic, scholarly, educational, and other music-related endeavors.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF MUSIC (<https://nasm.arts-accredit.org>)

Contact University Park

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