

M Manhattan
School of Music

**DOCTORAL
STUDIES
HANDBOOK
2024–2025**

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This Handbook is published for informational purposes only. It does not represent a contractual agreement with students and is subject to change. While the Associate Dean is responsible for guiding each student through the various requirements of the program, it is the responsibility of the student themselves to make sure they have taken all appropriate courses, passed all performance requirements, and taken all required exams as outlined in this handbook.

*Prepared by DR. JEFFREY LANGFORD
Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies*

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the doctoral program at Manhattan School of Music. This handbook has been designed to answer the kinds of questions most often asked about requirements and procedures applying to the DMA program. If you do not find the answer to your question within these pages, please do not hesitate to contact the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies for help.

In addition to this handbook, DMA students will want to get a copy of the general Manhattan School of Music Student Handbook published by the Student Services Office. The Student Handbook details important facts about student life, activities, and services available to all students. Free concert tickets, various support groups, exercise classes, student trips, etc., are all available for the asking.

ADMISSION

Transfer Credits

If you are coming to Manhattan School of Music from another school where you began doctoral work or completed another degree, you may transfer up to nine credits of academic work completed with a grade of A or B, if those credits were not used to earn a degree, diploma, or certificate at that institution. If you are coming into the doctoral program directly from our own Professional Studies program, the same limitations apply (nine credits of academic courses above and beyond those required for the Professional Studies certificate, and grades of A or B). Credit for major lessons earned while in the Professional Studies program or at any other school may not be transferred to the doctoral program.

Deferment

Once accepted into the doctoral program, you may defer the start of your studies for one academic year if you are unable for any reason to begin work in September of the year you auditioned.

However, if you do so, your scholarship will be revised according to the money available in the following year.

MATRICULATION REQUIREMENTS

Usually doctoral students are “in residence” at Manhattan School for the two years required to complete the basic coursework of the curriculum. In special cases, the residency may be reduced to one year if the student can work out, in consultation with the Associate Dean, a curriculum that will allow for the completion of all remaining requirements from out of town.

All requirements for the degree must be completed within five years of the date of matriculation.

You may apply for a leave of absence for one or two semesters any time during your matriculation if circumstances demand that you suspend your work temporarily. This leave is not counted as time in the program, and you may not be registered for any courses or lessons during your leave. **Please note that international students who go on a leave of absence will lose their student visa and will not be able to remain in the country.**

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND PROGRESS

All students will be evaluated for academic progress at the end each year of study. If at any time a student gives an indication of not being able successfully to complete the remainder of the program or to pass all academic and performance requirements, the Associate Dean, in consultation with other faculty and the provost, may decide to terminate that student’s candidacy for the degree. Acceptable academic progress is defined as course grades of B or higher and recital grades of P or higher. In addition, all students will be monitored for progress toward the degree in the years after completion of coursework. A written report on the status of work toward completion of requirements, including the thesis, is required of every student at the end of each spring semester in

their third, fourth, and fifth year of study. Failure to maintain good academic progress will jeopardize your completion of the degree.

The completion of degree requirements is marked by several internal deadlines:

- 1. All performance requirements must be completed by the end of the third year. This includes recitals, concertos, and orchestral excerpts juries.**
- 2. All students must begin taking the Comprehensive Exam no later than the fall semester of their third year.**
- 3. No one will be allowed to submit a thesis or do the lecture-recital before completing the Comprehensive Exams.**

ASSISTANTSHIPS

A limited number of assistantships are available to doctoral students qualified to assist professors in various academic courses, to teach secondary piano, to accompany, to play in the orchestra, or to work in the opera, guitar, theory, history, humanities, orchestral studies and outreach departments. In addition, an administrative assistantship working as recital coordinator for the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies is available to a second- or third-year student. Every year a list of available assistantships will be published. While many of these assistantships are reserved for incoming students, some of them are intended only for third- and fourth-year students. All students are eligible for an assistantship, and awards will be determined in consultation with the chair of the department offering the position. Most assistantships may be renewed for a second year.

In addition to the available assistantships, we offer teaching fellowships in the theory and secondary piano departments for students in their 3rd or 4th year of study.

Jazz arts majors have the opportunity to teach in the Manhattan School of Music Precollege Division as a way of earning income and gaining teaching experience.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Students are awarded scholarships at the time of their audition to enter the doctoral program. These awards are based on the level of performance and academic achievement indicated during the admission examinations and audition, as well as on a student's financial need. **Scholarships are awarded for one year of full-time study and are usually renewed at the same level for a second year.** Each student's scholarship will be re-evaluated on the basis of academic and performance achievement at the end of the first year of study. Scholarships may be adjusted up or down according to this re-evaluation.

REGISTRATION

First-year doctoral students will register for courses in the summer before they begin the program. At the end of every semester thereafter, all students will register with the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies for the next semester's courses. The curriculum for each doctoral major is spelled out in detail in the Academic Catalog (<https://www.msmnyc.edu/about/offices-staff/registrar/academic-catalog/>), but alterations of the set curriculum are possible to make your course of study at Manhattan School of Music more relevant to your particular needs. Such deviations from the standard curriculum must be discussed with and approved by the Associate Dean.

In your first two years, all students must be registered for at least 12 credits to be considered "full-time" and to qualify for scholarships. No more than 18 credits may be taken in any semester without incurring a credit overload fee.

Following the two years of required coursework, students will register for a twelve-credit "Thesis Continuation" course (DM5200) in every semester until graduation. This course requires that you be actively involved in independent preparation for the comprehensive exams and in work on the thesis or lecture-recital. Progress toward the completion of the exams and the lecture-recital will be carefully monitored by the Associate Dean. The twelve-credit Thesis

Continuation course represents a registration status of “full-time equivalency” for purposes of loan applications and deferments.

LESSONS

All doctoral students receive two years of private instruction in their major field. This includes 14 lessons per semester. In some instances, teachers may be out of town for an extended period and will have to miss some of these lessons. In that case your teacher will owe you make-up lessons. **Note, however, that all 14 lessons must be taken in the semester for which you are registered.**

Lessons owed you cannot be carried over into a later semester. Please keep a careful record of the number of lessons you take in every semester. You paid for them, so make sure you get them.

You should also be aware that it is possible to change major teachers at the end of any semester if you feel it necessary. This is accomplished only with the approval of the Provost. Please report any problems with your major teacher or any classroom teacher directly to the Associate Dean.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

1. All Classical majors (except composition, collaborative piano, and organ majors) must give two solo recitals and a special recital called the Performance Project. The latter is a recital that usually consists of chamber music, but which may take other forms depending on your major. The only requirement is that this recital must consist of a collaboration with other musicians.
2. Composition majors give only one recital in which they publicly present their work.
3. Organ majors play **three** solo recitals but no Performance Project.
4. Collaborative Piano majors play three recitals of chamber music.

5. Jazz Arts majors present their work in a total of two recitals: One large ensemble performance recital and one lecture recital.
In addition, jazz majors write and conduct (or solo in) a performance of a thesis composition for large jazz orchestra.
6. Conducting majors present three concerts in which they direct an ensemble.

When to give your recitals

Normally you register for and play recitals in the four semesters during which you are taking lessons. You may take an “Incomplete” for any registered recital that you need to postpone for some legitimate reason. **In the Classical division, such Incompletes are valid for one semester only.** After that time, the “I” will become a permanent “F” on your transcript, and you will have to re-register for the postponed recital. If that re-registration occurs in a semester in which you are no longer paying tuition (3rd year and beyond), you will have to pay for the 2 credits that the recital represents. In addition, if you give a solo recital in any semester after your initial two years of study, you must also arrange with your instructor to take private lessons until the recital is played.

Note, however, that if the postponement of a recital results in your not playing in your first academic year, you must then play that recital within the first month of the following fall semester.

Because recitals in the Jazz division are somewhat different, an Incomplete recital can be made up any time within the following two semesters. Nor will recitals that fall in the third year of study require private lessons.

How to register

Recitals carry course numbers just like any other course in the curriculum. At the time of pre-registration in the semester prior to that in which you plan to give your recital, you simply register for the recital with the appropriate number.

You must then obtain a recital permission form from the Scheduling Office, have your teacher sign it, and then pass it along to your department chairperson for approval. The form is then forwarded to the Performance Office, which will print your programs. All recital programs must include a piece by an under-represented composer.

Scheduling

You will be given the opportunity to select recital dates in the spring semester ahead of the year in which you plan to play. This registration process is carried out through the Scheduling Office. Doctoral students have first pick of dates, times, and locations.

Please do not sign up for a date unless you really intend to present a recital. The Scheduling Office will levy a fine against anyone who cancels a recital within a certain number of weeks of the date selected. If you do cancel your recital date, you must notify the Doctoral Recital Coordinator, Ms. Georgia Lazaridou (GL7786@msmny.edu), no later than two days before the date so that the faculty adjudicator can be canceled. Cancellations of jazz recitals should be handled by contacting the Jazz Studies office.

Content

Classical recitals should contain approximately 70 minutes of music that is mostly new repertoire (approximately 2/3), and should represent a balance of styles, periods, and nationalities. All recitals must include a work by an underrepresented creator. Approval for more specialized recitals may be obtained upon consultation with the Associate Dean and the Chair of your department.

The content of all recitals must be approved as described above in “How to Register.”

The content of jazz recitals is prescribed in a separate bulletin available from the Jazz Studies office.

Performance Projects

The Performance Project (for classical majors) is nearly always a chamber music recital. If you elect this option to fulfill the requirement, you must present a program of varied musical styles. You may select any performance medium you like: duets, trios, quartets, etc. For pianists, an entire program two-piano works will also satisfy the requirement. Pianists may also perform with a soloist if the piano parts involved are of sufficient difficulty to represent a doctoral level of performance. You may also give a joint recital with another doctoral student in which you both get recital credit for the program.

In the semester in which you give this recital, you are entitled to two extra hours of chamber music coaching from your major teacher or any other member of the performance faculty you may select. **Once you have made this selection, you must notify the Associate Dean so that your coach can be paid.**

Occasionally the Performance Project takes a different form. For example, voice majors sometimes present a program of operatic scenes. Such alternative programs must be approved by the Associate Dean and your department chair or academic division dean.

Adjudication and Grading

All doctoral recitals are adjudicated by a faculty member from your department who will attend your recital. All recitals must be video-taped in case the adjudicator is ill and cannot attend in person. As soon as you select a date for your recital, you must notify the Doctoral Recital Coordinator, Ms. Georgia Lazaridou (GL7786@msmnyu.edu) who will then arrange with the Chairperson of your department for a faculty adjudicator. Because of the limited availability of woodwind and brass faculty, recitals in those departments will all be adjudicated via recording at a later date.

Jazz majors should arrange recital dates and faculty adjudicators with the Dean of Jazz Arts. Three weeks prior to the date of the recital, you should check to make sure a faculty adjudicator has

been arranged. All doctoral students may schedule their recitals around the known availability of specific faculty members whom they would like to adjudicate the recital. This should be discussed with the Doctoral Recital Coordinator. N.B.—your teacher cannot serve as your adjudicator.

Recitals are graded with the following letters:

PH=Pass with honors

P=Pass

LP=Low pass

E=Privilege of re-exam

F=Failed

“Pass with honors” is awarded only to those performances that, in the opinion of the juror, represent the highest level of artistic distinction.

“Pass” indicates that your recital was competent and satisfactory in every respect.

“Low pass” indicates a juror’s concern about a problem with some aspect of your performance. If any juror gives you such a grade, you will be notified that a lack of confidence has been expressed about your playing. If another recital also receives a grade of LP from any juror, you will be asked to play an additional recital at a “passing” level before being allowed to graduate.

“Re-exam” is usually awarded in circumstances where an obvious external problem (e.g., illness) interfered with the student’s ability to perform up to his or her true ability. In such cases you will be asked to replay the same recital before a different faculty member sometime during the following semester. No academic penalties are incurred with this grade. If, however, you cannot replay the recital within one semester, the grade of E will be changed to F and you will be placed on academic suspension until a new recital is successfully completed.

“Failed” is reserved only for cases of serious performance problems. This grade requires that you play a completely new recital in the following academic year. If this is not possible, you

will be placed on temporary academic suspension until the failed recital is successfully passed.

In cases where a juror awards a grade of LP, E, or F, the student may ask for a review of the recital by the Chair of his or her department.

Again, it is the student's responsibility to make sure that all recitals are recorded for possible adjudication at a later date.

Off-campus recitals

Except for organ majors, who nearly always give recitals off-campus, students generally give all recitals here at MSM. You may, however, give one of your three recitals off-campus. If the recital is elsewhere in New York City, a faculty adjudicator may be invited to attend. **If the recital is out of town, you must submit a program and a video recording for adjudication.**

Composition Recitals and Juries

Composition majors take an end-of-year jury in each of the two years in which they are registered for coursework. Registration and scheduling for these juries is handled by the Registrar's Office. Each jury carries 2 credits.

Composition majors give only one recital in which they present their works in live performance. This recital is the culmination of work for the degree and is a very important and formal concert. The program needs to be carefully planned, considering variety and pacing. Please be aware of the following guidelines for the program:

- a. The program must be approved by the student's major teacher and the Chair of the Composition Department.
- b. The recital must include a substantial chamber work.
- c. The entire program should consist of not less than 60 minutes of music.
- d. All the music on the program must have been written during the student's DMA candidacy at MSM.

The Concerto Requirement

Pianists, guitarists, and organists must also perform two concertos as part of the degree requirements. These are usually done with piano accompaniment before a faculty jury, although video and audio recordings of live performances of concertos with orchestra are encouraged. To schedule a jury, you simply contact a piano or guitar faculty member and ask if you can play your concerto for him or her. **Permission to play a concerto must be obtained from your teacher on a form available in the Doctoral Office.** Orchestral instrument majors play only one concerto in addition to an orchestral excerpts jury (see below). These concertos are graded like recitals (see above).

Orchestral Excerpts Jury

All Classical instrumental majors other than guitar, piano, and organ are expected to play a jury of orchestral excerpts before the end of their third year of study. Repertoire lists for these exams are available from the Associate Dean. Orchestral excerpts juries are usually scheduled during jury week at the end of each semester. You must arrange your date for these juries through the Registrar's office early in the semester in which you intend to play.

Lecture-Recital

Prior to graduation, Classical majors must present a lecture-recital on a topic of their choice. This lecture will be accompanied by the submission of a paper of approximately 40 pages, which will expand upon the subject of the lecture.

Once you select a topic, you will identify a faculty advisor who is willing to work with you on this subject. Your advisor will work with you for ten hours over two semesters with the following goals:

1. to guide you in writing a proposal that explains what you intend to talk about. This proposal must be signed by the advisor and submitted to the Associate Dean for approval.
2. to help you construct the lecture itself and coach you on its oral delivery.

3. to assist in the writing of the 40-page paper.

You will also get two lessons from your major teacher, who will coach you on the performance of the works you will be talking about. Generally, the lecture-recital consists of about 30 minutes of speaking and 30 minutes of playing, with no intermission.

The lecture-recital requirement is replaced for Jazz majors by the writing and performance of a large studio orchestra work that is accompanied by a written commentary and analysis. Support for this project will be provided by one semester of private Thesis Advisement (10 hrs.) with a member of the jazz faculty.

Advisement—Classical Majors

During two of the four semesters in which you are registered for coursework you will also register for thesis advisement. This advisement consists of a total of 10 hours of private work with a faculty advisor of your choice. Naturally you will want to select an advisor based on his or her interest in and knowledge of the subject of your lecture-recital.

Nearly every student postpones actual work on the thesis or lecture recital until the third year of doctoral studies. At that time the obligation of coursework and recitals is behind you, and you can devote your undivided attention to your lecture-recital and the comprehensive exams (see below).

Proposal

For Classical majors, your first responsibility after selecting an advisor is to make a formal proposal of your lecture-recital topic to the Associate Dean. This should take the following form:

- I. Title page with title of the lecture-recital
Student's name and signature
Advisor's name and signature
- II. Description of the project
Explain exactly what you plan to talk about, what your main goal is, and what you hope to prove or demonstrate.
Include a rationale explaining the practical or academic

value of your project. Also include a review of the current literature on your subject.

- III. Tentative outline of the organization of your paper.
- IV. Preliminary bibliography of materials applicable to your subject.

Once your proposal has been written and your advisor has approved it, the next step is to submit the proposal to the Associate Dean for final approval.

Final Paper

The lecture recital is usually given in the semester in which you intend to graduate. The accompanying paper must be submitted to the Associate Dean by April 15 for May graduation, or Dec. 1 for fall semester graduation. At that time, you will also email the Associate Dean a PDF copy of your paper to be put online in our library. Failure to meet the April 15 deadline will result in the postponement of your graduation until the following semester and the continuation of thesis research fees.

Alternative to the Lecture-Recital

An alternative to the standard lecture-recital is a full thesis of approximately 100-200 pages on an approved topic. This option is only available by petition to the Associate Dean. The full written thesis requires the selection of a second reader in addition to the advisor and will involve 20 hours of advisement. The thesis, like the lecture-recital is usually not undertaken before the third year of study.

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

For both Classical and Jazz Arts majors, the culmination of the doctoral program is the Comprehensive Exam. This is a two-part exam usually taken in the third or fourth year of study. Part I of this exam is the written section. This consists of three hours of history and three hours of theory exams of a broad, general nature. It is important to understand that these exams are not a measure of what you learned in the two years of coursework taken here at MSM, but are rather an evaluation of your total experience with the history, literature, and theory of music gained over many years of working as a musician. **We make no guarantee that successful completion of the coursework means that you will be able to pass the Comprehensive Exam.**

For Classical majors, the written history exam will cover all periods from early Baroque music to the present. You are expected to demonstrate a familiarity with major composers, forms, genres, styles, literature, etc. The theory exam is similar. Knowledge of basic skills in harmony and counterpoint as well as the ability to think analytically will be tested. For Jazz majors the written part of the exam requires knowledge of major performers and their contributions to evolving styles.

Part II of the comprehensive exam is the oral portion, which takes place a month after the written exam. You are only allowed to take this if you passed the written exam. In the oral exam you will meet with a small committee of faculty to answer questions relating to the literature of your major area for approximately an hour. For Jazz Arts majors the oral exam will measure specific performance abilities. More detailed information is available from the Associate Dean for Jazz Studies.

A study guide is available from the Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies to aid your preparation for the Comprehensive Exam.

Scheduling and registration

You must register for the Comprehensive Exam in your second year of study regardless of whether you intend to take the exam at that time or later. After registering, you should notify the Associate Dean when you actually intend to take the exam.

The Comprehensive Exam is given twice a year on the last Friday of September and the first Friday of February. You must begin taking the exam no later than your third year of study. You may take the history and theory portions of the exam in different semesters if you prefer. If you pass the written exam, you may take the oral exam the following month, or you may elect to postpone it until the following semester. You may take both parts of the exam as many as three times, but you must pass the exam by the end of your fifth year in the program. If after your third attempt to pass either the written or oral portion of the exam you still have not been successful, you will be withdrawn from the program and the degree will not be granted.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Language Exam

Prior to presenting the lecture-recital or thesis, Classical majors must pass a language exam in French, German, or Italian. This exam requires you to translate 500 words of musically related text in two hours with the aid of a dictionary. You may make a petition for the substitution of a different language if you feel mastery of that language is especially important to your future work in the field of music scholarship. However, you may not take the language exam in your native language if that language is something other than French, German, or Italian. The language exam may be scheduled through the Associate Dean at any time you feel ready to take it.

Voice and Vocal Collaborative Piano majors

Upon entrance into the program voice and vocal collaborative piano majors must demonstrate a familiarity with English, French, and German vocal diction, either by having taken courses in these subjects as part of an earlier degree program or by taking or auditing the same courses at MSM.

CHAMBER MUSIC

In your second year of study, you may elect to participate in the MSM chamber music program. To do so you must register for chamber music and inform the Assistant Dean for Artistic Operations of your intention to join an ensemble. You will then be placed in an appropriate ensemble.

If you play an orchestral instrument, you may also audition for one of the MSM orchestras in your second year of study. Participation in these ensembles is not required and is based exclusively upon the results of a placement audition that you must take at the beginning of the fall semester.

Jazz majors may audition for participation in any MSM jazz ensembles in either their first or second year of study.

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