

**DOCTORAL
STUDIES
HANDBOOK
2025–2026**

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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. Lisa Yui
Interim Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies*

WELCOME

Welcome to the Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) program at Manhattan School of Music. This handbook outlines the academic, artistic, and administrative policies that govern your degree. It is intended as a practical guide to help you navigate requirements and procedures throughout your doctoral studies. This document is a guide and does not constitute a contract. Updates may be issued throughout the academic year.

For additional information on student life, services, and campus resources, please consult the MSM Student Handbook.

If you have questions not addressed here, contact the Interim Associate Dean for Doctoral Studies.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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All forms (Performance Project Permission, Lecture-Recital Permission, Lecture-Recital Video Submission, Thesis Progress) will be sent to doctoral@msmnyc.edu

ADMISSION

Transfer Credits

Students may transfer up to six credits of academic coursework (graded B or higher) not applied toward another degree, diploma, or certificate. Applied credits (e.g., private lessons) are not eligible for transfer.

Credits earned in MSM's Professional Studies (PS) program may be transferred if they meet these same criteria. Students may not transfer credits from the PS program if those credits were utilized to confer the Professional Studies program certificate.

Collaborative Piano and Vocal Arts Majors Language Proficiency

Students applying to the Collaborative Piano Department must elect a concentration in either vocal or instrumental accompanying and audition with repertoire appropriate to that focus.

Applicants to the Collaborative Piano Department (vocal concentration) or the Vocal Arts Department must demonstrate proficiency in Italian, French, and German diction. This requirement may be fulfilled by passing departmental proficiency exams in each language. If deficiencies are identified, students must address them by auditing one or more of the following courses: Graduate Italian Diction (IT2101-2102), Graduate French Diction (FR2101-2102), or Graduate German Diction (GR2101-2102).

Deferment

Once admitted, students may defer enrollment for one academic year. Scholarship awards will be recalculated based on the following year's budget.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND ASSISTANTSHIPS IN THE CLASSICAL DIVISION

Scholarships

Scholarships are awarded upon admission based on audition, academic record, and financial need. Each award covers one year of full-time study and is typically renewed at the same level for a second year, pending satisfactory academic and artistic progress.

Assistantships

A limited number of assistantships are available to qualified doctoral students each year. Some positions are reserved for incoming students; others are meant for returning students. Appointments are made in consultation with the department chair and typically last one year, with a chance of renewal depending on satisfactory performance and departmental need.

REGISTRATION

Incoming doctoral students are automatically registered by the Office of the Registrar for their first-semester coursework during the summer before the start of the program. Students who are required to complete an elective will be given the opportunity to register for an elective(s) during the open registration period. Thereafter, students are automatically enrolled each term in accordance with the Academic Catalog sequence. Registration for written examinations must be completed in the semester preceding the term in which the examinations will be taken.

If a student is unable to complete a required course—including required performances—during a given semester, they must officially drop the course during the add/drop period, withdraw from the course with grade of W by the published deadline, or petition to receive a grade of Incomplete (I).

During Years 1 and 2, students must enroll in at least 12 credits per semester to maintain full-time status and scholarship eligibility. Taking more than 18 credits in a semester requires prior approval and will result in an over credit fee charge per each additional credit.

Beginning in Year 3, students are automatically enrolled each semester in Thesis Continuation (DM5200), which maintains full-time enrollment status. While this course carries a Thesis Continuation Fee, the amount is significantly lower than regular course tuition, reflecting the reduced instructional load during the thesis-writing stage. During this phase, students must make steady progress toward completing all degree requirements—including the comprehensive exams, thesis, or lecture-recital—under the supervision of the Associate Dean.

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Academic Standards

Students must maintain a grade of B or higher in all coursework and a Pass or higher in all recitals. Academic progress is reviewed annually.

In Years 3–5, students must submit a spring progress report outlining their remaining requirements, including the thesis. Failure to make satisfactory academic or artistic progress may result in dismissal from the program.

Key internal deadlines:

- Complete the theory, history, oral comprehensive exams, and all performance requirements (recitals, concertos, orchestral excerpts, juries) by Spring of Year 3.
- Students may not begin the thesis or lecture-recital until they have passed the comprehensive exams.

Suggested Timeline:

YEAR	FALL	SPRING
Year 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coursework• Private lessons• Fulfill required performances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coursework• Private lessons• Fulfill required performances
Year 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coursework• Private lessons• Fulfill required performances• Take theory comprehensive exam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coursework• Private lessons• Fulfill required performances• Orchestral excerpts jury for orchestral instruments majors• Attend history study session
Year 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take history comprehensive exam• Fulfill required performances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Send repertoire list for oral exam to Doctoral Office (if required)• Take oral comprehensive exam• Final semester to complete performance requirements
Year 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thesis or final paper proposal due	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thesis or final paper progress report due
Year 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final thesis or paper draft due	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final thesis or paper copy due• Thesis defense

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Students must complete a minimum of two years in residence. All coursework and performance requirements must be finished within five years of matriculation.

CLASSICAL PERFORMANCE MAJORS

Private Lessons

All doctoral students receive four semesters of private instruction in their major field, with 14 lessons per semester. If a teacher is unavailable during the term, they must arrange make-up lessons. All 14 lessons must be completed within the registered semester; lessons may not be deferred. Students are encouraged to track their lessons.

Students with concerns about instruction should contact the Associate Dean of Doctoral Studies. Requests to change major teachers may be submitted at the end of a semester and require approval by the Office of the Provost. Students may initiate the request as early as the preceding semester and must submit the required online form no later than end of the add/drop period of the term in which the change is to take place. Changes must be requested before the end of the Add/Drop period, and will only be accepted through completion of the online form. The Change of Teacher Request Form is available on the [student portal](#). After a student changes teachers, the former teacher is excluded from grading the student at subsequent juries and auditions. In general, teacher assignments are subject to change based on teacher availability.

Performance Requirements

10 Students are automatically enrolled in required recitals, concerto performances, juries, and performance projects during the semesters indicated in the Academic Catalog. If a student cannot perform during the assigned term, they must withdraw from the requirement during the add/drop period, withdraw with grade of W by the published deadline, or petition to receive an Incomplete (I) grade. All performance requirements must be completed by Spring of Year 3.

Students in the Classical Division must fulfill specific performance or presentation requirements depending on their major. Requirements for each major appear below, followed by general information about recital formats, the concerto requirement, orchestral excerpts (where applicable), and the DMA Performance Project. All students should also review the logistical policies regarding recital registration, cancellations or postponements, and grading—see “Administrative Policies and Procedures” on pg. 33.

Major–Specific Requirements

PIANO

- Two solo recitals
- One performance project
- Two solo concertos

COLLABORATIVE PIANO

- Three chamber music recitals

GUITAR

- Two solo recitals
- One performance project
- Two solo concertos

VOICE

- Two solo recitals
- One performance project

All music must be memorized. If a chamber music work using more than two instruments is programmed, a score may be used in performance.

OTHER PERFORMANCE MAJORS

- Two solo recitals
- One performance project
- One concerto
- Orchestral instrument majors must also complete a jury of orchestral excerpts

Recital Content and Policies

DMA recitals should include about 70 minutes of music, with at least two-thirds consisting of newly prepared repertoire. Programs must show stylistic, historical, and national diversity, and include at least one work by an underrepresented composer or creator. Proposals for specialized or non-standard programs require prior approval from the Associate Dean and department chair.

All recital content must be approved by the student's teacher and department chair during the registration process. Students must also follow their department's specific policies regarding memorization and other performance requirements.

See "Recital and Performance Project Scheduling" on p. 13 for details on scheduling your recitals

Performance Project

The Performance Project is typically a chamber music recital that involves collaboration and stylistic variety. Acceptable formats (although not limited to) include duets, trios, quartets, two-piano works, or partnering with a soloist (with piano parts of doctoral-level difficulty). Joint recitals with other DMA students are allowed, with both participants receiving recital credit.

Students are eligible for two hours of chamber coaching with a member of the performance faculty. The coach must be reported to the Associate Dean for payment.

For conducting majors, the Performance Project may include a complete program or substantial preparation and performance within a larger concert. Alternative formats (such as operatic scenes for voice majors) require advance approval from the Associate Dean and department chair.

RECITALS AND PERFORMANCE PROJECTS SCHEDULING

DMA students are automatically registered in the appropriate semester, as outlined in the Academic Catalog. They receive first priority in the scheduling process.

Note: All DMA recitals and performance projects must be professionally recorded in case the adjudicator is unable to attend.

In the case of Performance Projects, students must also complete a Performance Project Permission Form at the time they book the hall.

To receive credit in a given semester, the performance must be completed and all required forms submitted at least four weeks before the end of the semester to allow sufficient time for adjudication and processing.

RECITAL SCHEDULING TIMELINE:

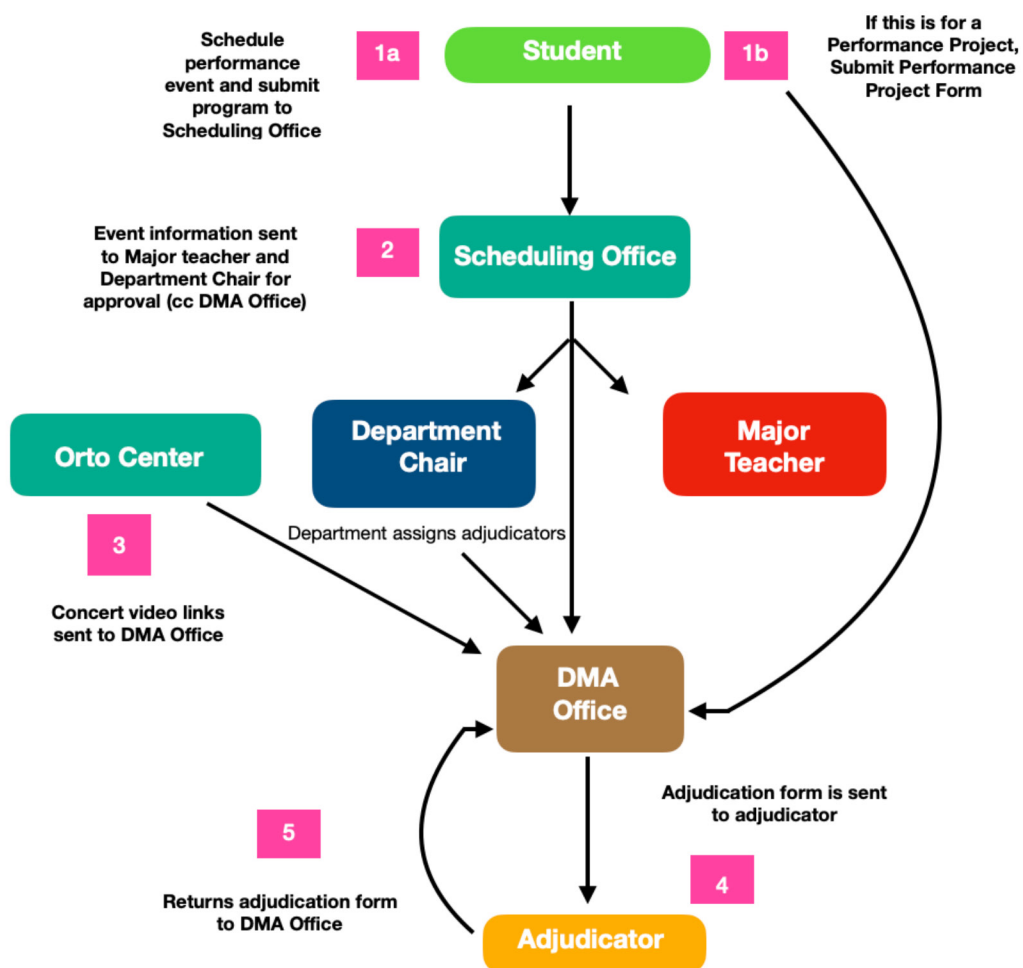
- Fall Recitals
 - Scheduling opens: At the start of fall semester
 - Scheduling Deadline: September 30
- Spring Recitals
 - Scheduling opens: December 1
 - Scheduling Deadline: December 16 (or last day of fall semester, whichever comes first)

STEPS TO SCHEDULE A DMA RECITAL OR PERFORMANCE PROJECT:

1. Log into the Student Portal and complete the Recital Date Request Form
 - Submit your proposed date, time, and program to the Scheduling Office.
 - If this is a Performance Project, also complete a Performance Project Permission Form.
 - If the recital is off-campus, complete the DMA Off-Campus Performance Video Submission Form.
2. The Scheduling Office will route the form for approval to:
 - Your major teacher
 - Your department chair
 - The DMA Office
3. Once approved:
 - Your recital/project date will be confirmed and scheduled.
 - The department chair will assign a faculty adjudicator.
 - The DMA Office will send an adjudication form to the assigned adjudicator.
4. Perform the recital or project:
 - If the adjudicator is present, they will evaluate it live.
 - If not, they will use your professional recording.
5. Adjudicator submits the completed adjudication form to the DMA Office.

OFF-CAMPUS RECITALS/PERFORMANCE PROJECTS

All required DMA recitals and performance projects must be presented as public events. One recital may take place off campus. If the performance is off campus and the adjudicator cannot attend in person, students are responsible for sending a copy or link of the video to the DMA Office at least three weeks before the end of the semester.



***The student must notify the DMA Office at least one week in advance if the event is cancelled.**

Concerto Requirement

Pianists and guitarists must perform two concertos as part of their degree requirements. These are typically presented with piano accompaniment before a faculty jury, although recordings of live performances with orchestra are also encouraged. If submitting a live performance, the video must be unedited. The performance must have been studied and performed or recorded during the student's tenure in the DMA program. Orchestral instrument majors are required to perform one concerto and complete the orchestral excerpts jury.

The performance must be adjudicated by a faculty member chosen by the student and teacher. The DMA Office does not assign adjudicators. Concertos are graded on the same scale as recitals.

CONCERTO SUBMISSION PROCESS

Note: All steps below—performance, submission of the form, teacher's signature, and adjudication—must be completed at least two weeks before the commencement of Finals Week. Students are strongly encouraged to submit the form at least four weeks before Finals Week.

1. Reach out to the adjudicator at least four weeks before the concerto performance (or within two weeks after a recorded performance) and confirm that he/she will be available to adjudicate; Complete and submit the DMA Concerto Permission Form (available in the DMA section of the Student Portal).

- ☐ Indicate whether the performance will be live or recorded.
- ☐ Enter the name and email of your faculty adjudicator.
- ☐ If already performed, include a link to the video.

2. The DMA Office will send the adjudication form to the designated adjudicator.

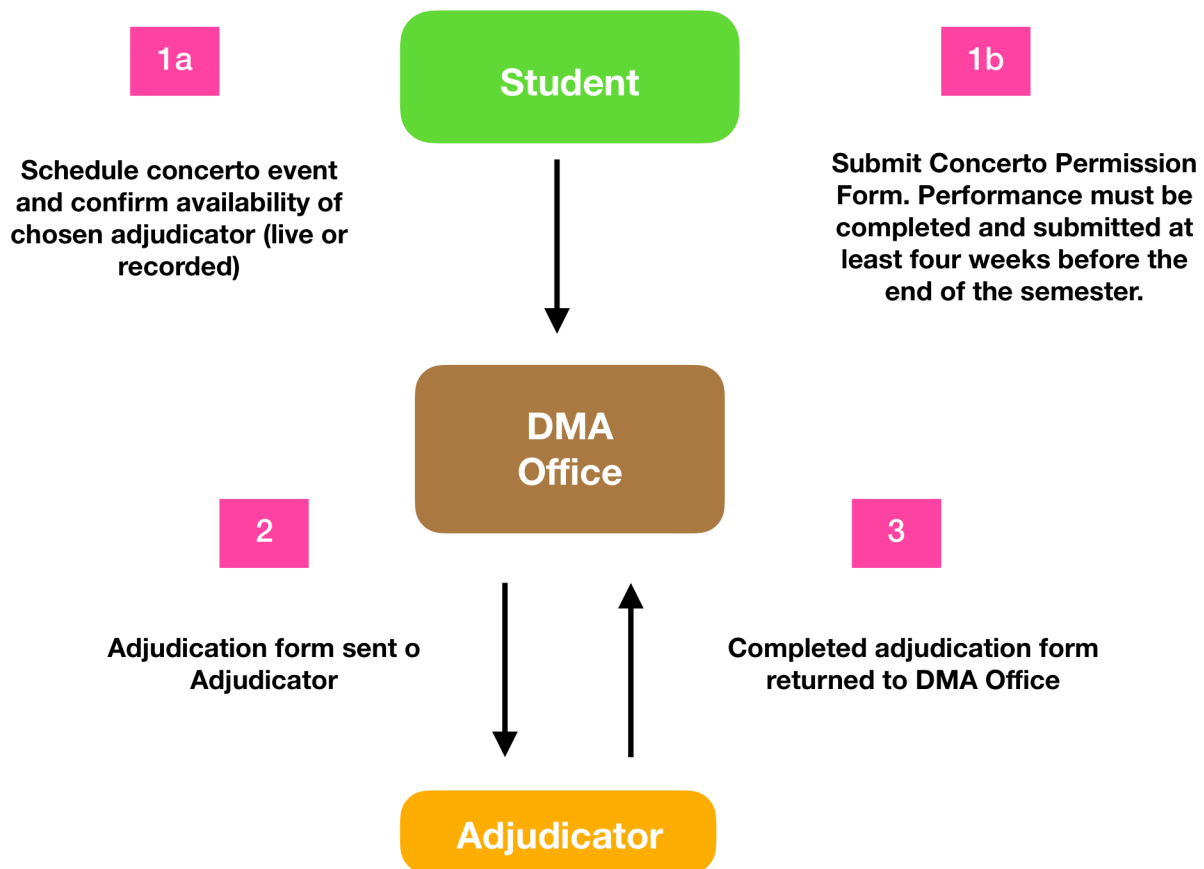
3. Perform the concerto:

- If live, ensure your adjudicator is present at the performance.
- If recorded, you must have included the video link in the form

in step 2.

4. Adjudicator completes and submits the adjudication form directly to the DMA Office.

Required Concerto Flow



Orchestral Excerpts Jury

All orchestral instrument majors are registered for the Orchestral Excerpts Jury in Spring of Year 2. Students may defer this requirement by dropping the course during Add/Drop and completing it in Spring of Year 3. The jury is scheduled through the Office of the Registrar and takes place during jury week each semester.

The repertoire lists are available in the DMA section of the Student Portal.

Grading and Adjudication

A faculty member from the student's department adjudicates each doctoral performance, excluding the student's private teacher or chamber music coach. All recitals must be video recorded in case the adjudicator is unable to attend.

Jazz Arts students must schedule recital dates and adjudicators through the Dean of Jazz Arts. They are responsible for confirming adjudicator arrangements at least three weeks in advance.

GRADING SCALE:

- PH – Pass with Honors: exceptional artistic distinction
- P – Pass: competent and satisfactory
- LP – Low Pass: concern over some aspect; a second LP requires an additional recital before graduation
- F – Fail: requires a new recital in the next academic year; failure to complete it will result in academic suspension
- I – Incomplete: Incomplete grades are granted only under extraordinary circumstances, via the Request for Incomplete Grade Form. Approval is required from the course instructor, Dean of Academic Affairs, and International Student Services (if applicable). Incompletes must be resolved by the end of the following semester or they convert to an F. They are not available to students on leave or who withdraw.

Students who receive an LP or F may request a review by the department chair. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that recitals are recorded and properly documented.

Cancellations, Postponements, and Incompletes

If you cancel your recital, you must notify the Doctoral Recital Coordinator, the Scheduling Office, and must submit a General Petition Form - Performance Related immediately. A cancellation fee may be charged by the Scheduling Office. Please review the full recital policies on the Student Portal.

Recitals postponed for legitimate reasons will be marked as Incomplete (I).

- For Classical students, an Incomplete is valid for one semester. After that, it becomes an F and the recital must be re-registered.
- If postponed beyond the second year, students must pay for both recital credits and private lessons until the recital is completed.
- A postponed first-year recital must be completed within the first month of the following fall semester.

Jazz students may complete an Incomplete recital within two semesters and are not required to register for additional lessons in Year 3.

Chamber Music and Ensembles

Participation in ensembles is optional but encouraged in the second year of study. Students may enroll in chamber music by petitioning to register for the course and notifying the Assistant Dean for Artistic Operations. Placements depend on instrumentation and availability.

Orchestral instrument majors may audition for MSM ensembles in Year 2. Auditions are held at the beginning of the fall semester.

Jazz Arts students may audition for ensembles during Year 1 or Year 2.

Comprehensive Examinations

Students must pass comprehensive exams in both music history and music theory before graduation. The process includes two three-hour written exams and a 90-minute oral exam conducted before a faculty committee. Students must pass both written and oral exams before beginning the lecture-recital or thesis.

PART I: WRITTEN EXAMINATION

The written exam assesses the student's cumulative knowledge beyond coursework and includes two parts:

- Theory (3 hours) – to be taken in Fall of Year 2 (refer to the study guide in the DMA section of the Student Portal)
- History (3 hours) – to be taken in Fall of Year 3; covers music from the Baroque to the present (refer to the study guide in the DMA section of the Student Portal)
 - Students may take the History Exam in Year 2 in addition to the Theory Exam

Written Exams are offered twice per year through 2025–26. Beginning in 2026–27, they will be offered only in the fall semester. Both exams must be passed by Spring of Year 3. Students who fail a comprehensive exam three times will be dismissed from the program.

PART II: ORAL EXAMINATION

Students who pass the written exams must take a one-hour oral exam conducted by a faculty committee. The exam focuses on the literature and repertoire of the student's major field.

Students must complete this oral exam by spring of Year 3 but may request to take it earlier.

Oral exams are offered twice per year until further notice. A PDF study guide is available in the DMA section of the Student Portal. For departments that require students to submit repertoire, all selections must be sent to the Associate Dean of Doctoral Studies at least four weeks before the scheduled exam date.

Culminating Research Options

After completing two years of coursework, DMA students will select a faculty advisor with whom they will design a proposal and hold regular advising meetings. This process culminates in the completion of one of the following final projects:

- Lecture-Recital with Final Paper
- Full Thesis Option

LECTURE-RECITAL WITH FINAL PAPER

The Lecture-Recital with Final Paper consists of two components:

LECTURE-RECITAL:

A 60-minute public presentation divided into:

- 30 minutes of spoken commentary
- 30 minutes of live performance

The topic is selected by the student in consultation with their advisor.

FINAL PAPER:

- A 40-60 page research paper that expands on the lecture-recital content. This paper demonstrates advanced skills in scholarly writing and critical analysis.

ADVISING AND LESSON REQUIREMENTS:

- Proposal must be approved by the Associate Dean
- Students must select a faculty advisor with relevant expertise
- Involves 10 hours of advisement with the advisor, who mentors the student throughout the research and writing process
- Students also receive two lessons with their major teacher to prepare the performance portion of the lecture-recital

FINAL PAPER TIMELINE AND REQUIREMENTS:

YEAR 3

- March 15: Submit Final Paper Proposal to advisor and Interim Associate Dean

YEAR 4

- March 15: Submit a written annual Thesis Progress Report to your advisor (who will forward it to the Interim Associate Dean)

YEAR 5 (OR ANY GRADUATING YEAR)

- Oct. 15: Submit First Draft to advisor
- Dec. 15: Submit Final Draft to your advisor and Interim Associate Dean (as PDF document)
- March 15: Revised Final Paper submitted to advisor (as PDF document) and Interim Associate Dean (as PDF document and hard copy in 3-ring binder), and the library (PDF only)
- April date TBA: Thesis Defense—document will be returned after a successful defense

Refer to the DMA Academic Calendar for exact deadlines. Late submission may delay graduation and result in continuation fees.

SCHEDULING AND SUBMISSION

- Schedule your lecture-recital using the same process as other DMA recitals and performance projects
- Submit the Lecture-Recital Permission Form at least four weeks prior to your scheduled date
- Submit the DMA Lecture-Recital Video Submission Form by 5:00 p.m. on April 15

EVALUATION

Once the advisor approves the final version of the paper, students are enrolled in Thesis Examination (DM4550). The completed Final Paper is reviewed by one or two faculty readers, depending on the scope.

RESOURCES

Guidelines for writing your proposal, thesis/final paper, and thesis progress report—as well as the link for submitting your thesis to the library—are available in the DMA section of the Student Portal.

FULL THESIS OPTION

As an alternative to the lecture-recital, Classical majors may petition to complete a full written thesis.

The Full Thesis Option consists of a 100–200 page scholarly thesis on a topic approved by the Associate Dean. This option allows students to focus entirely on in-depth academic research and writing.

ADVISING:

Same as the Lecture-Recital with Final Paper, except for the following additions:

- Proposal must be approved by the Associate Dean
- Students must select a faculty advisor with relevant expertise
- Involves 20 hours of advisement with the advisor, who mentors the student throughout the research and writing process
- Includes 3 hours of advisement from a second reader, who offers independent feedback and participates in the final evaluation

THESIS TIMELINE AND REQUIREMENTS

YEAR 3

- March 15: Submit Thesis Proposal to advisor and Interim Associate Dean

YEAR 4

- March 15: Submit a written annual Thesis Progress Report to your advisor (who will forward it to the Interim Associate Dean)

YEAR 5 (OR ANY GRADUATING YEAR)

- Oct. 15: Submit First Draft to advisor
- Dec. 15: Submit Final Draft to your advisor and Interim Associate Dean (as PDF document)
- March 15: Revised Thesis submitted to advisor (as PDF document) and Interim Associate Dean (as PDF document and hard copy in 3-ring binder), and the library (PDF only)
- April date TBA: Thesis Defense—document will be returned after a successful defense.

EVALUATION

Once the advisor approves the final version of the thesis, students are enrolled in Thesis Examination (DM4550). The completed Thesis is reviewed by one or two faculty readers, depending on the scope.

Because there is no public performance component, students completing the Full Thesis Option do not need to schedule through the recital/performance project process and are not required to submit a video or Lecture-Recital Submission Form.

RESOURCES

Guidelines for writing your proposal, thesis/final paper, and thesis progress report—as well as the link for submitting your thesis to the library—are available in the DMA section of the Student Portal.

THESIS DEFENSE

The thesis defense is the final step in the completion of the DMA project. It is an oral examination in which the candidate presents their research and responds to questions from a faculty committee.

Purpose of the Defense

- To demonstrate the candidate's mastery of the subject
- To confirm that the work constitutes original research and makes a significant contribution to the field
- To provide an opportunity for scholarly discussion, clarification, and final recommendations

Format

- A formal presentation by the candidate
- A question-and-answer session with the committee
- A private committee deliberation, followed by one of the following outcomes:
 - Approval
 - Conditional approval pending revisions
 - Rejection

A successful defense is required for graduation.

LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

The translation exam assesses the ability to work with non-English musical texts. The exam consists of a 500-word passage in French, German, Italian, or another approved language (excluding the student's native language). The allotted time is 90 minutes, and only a print dictionary may be used. Following the translation, a short paragraph (4–6 sentences) must be written summarizing the text and its potential relevance to music research or performance.

This requirement must be completed no later than the spring semester of Year 5.

COMPOSITION MAJORS

Note: Composition majors do not perform in degree recitals. Their requirements are listed here for consistency, as they are juried and fulfill equivalent degree milestones. Contact the Dean of Composition for deadline information.

Degree Requirements:

- Two juries
- One composition recital
- One graduation thesis composition for large ensemble

Composition Juries

Students take a year-end jury during each of their two years of coursework. Each jury is worth 2 credits and scheduled through the Office of the Registrar.

Doctoral Composition Recital Content and Policies

As a culminating degree requirement, each student must present a full-length recital of original works composed primarily during their DMA studies at MSM.

The recital must:

- Be given in either Year 3 or Year 4
- Include at least 60 minutes of music
- Feature a substantial chamber work
- Consist only of works composed during the DMA period
- Be approved by the major teacher and the Dean of Academic Core

Students are responsible for securing performers and are encouraged to participate in at least one piece, either as a performer or conductor.

The recital is graded on a pass/fail basis by at least two composition faculty

members, based on:

- Technical command
- Program pacing and variety
- Challenge level for performers
- Artistic presentation and professionalism

Programs should be cohesive, varied in instrumentation, and suited for public performance.

Graduation Thesis Composition

The Graduation Thesis Composition—distinct from the written final thesis—is a major work for large ensemble and marks the culmination of the student’s creative work at MSM.

Students choose one of two options:

- Orchestral Thesis (default and strongly encouraged)

A work for standard concert orchestra, reviewed by the faculty in the fall of the graduation year.

If approved, it is rehearsed by a staff or guest conductor and publicly performed by the MSM Symphony Orchestra in the spring.

- Alternate Thesis Project

A work for large ensemble (minimum of eight performers), 15–20 minutes in length. This option requires approval from both the major teacher and the Department Chair. The student is responsible for scheduling the performance, securing performers, and booking the venue.

²⁸ While public performance is encouraged, it is not required.

Comprehensive Exams and Thesis

Like all DMA students, composition majors must also complete the comprehensive exams in music theory and history. See the Comprehensive Examinations section above for full details. Composition majors will also write a full thesis as their final degree requirement.

See Doctoral Thesis and Lecture-Recital Options above for details.

JAZZ ARTS MAJORS

Jazz Arts DMA candidates must complete requirements in the following order: coursework, recitals, research document, and comprehensive exams. (See “Cancellations, Postponements, and Incompletes” in the Classical Division for related policies.)

Performance and Research Requirements

Jazz recital content is detailed in a separate bulletin available from the Jazz Studies Office.

Jazz Arts Advancement majors must complete four culminating projects:

1. LARGE ENSEMBLE RECITAL

A 90–120 minute program of jazz chamber music, including intermission. Students must conduct and/or solo in the performance

2. LECTURE-RECITAL

A 50-minute lecture-recital on a topic of the student’s choice, approved by the Dean of Jazz Arts, combining performance and scholarly analysis.

3. RESEARCH DOCUMENT

A 60–80 page paper on a jazz-related topic, approved by the Dean. The document should demonstrate strong research and writing skills and offer value to the jazz field. Acceptable formats include historical studies, analytical essays, or critical editions of lesser-known works.

4. RECORDING PROJECT

A professionally produced audio and video recording of original works
30 composed during the student’s residency. The project must feature at least a quintet (rhythm section plus two horns).

Comprehensive Examinations

The Jazz Arts comprehensive exam serves as the program's final capstone, assessing the depth and breadth of a student's musical experience. It is designed not to test only MSM coursework but to evaluate a student's accumulated expertise in jazz theory, history, literature, and performance.

Before graduation, students must pass the following three exams:

1. HISTORY/STYLES/ANALYSIS (HSA)

A three-hour written exam combining listening and written analysis. It tests knowledge of stylistic development, major artists and recordings, and broad trends in jazz history.

2. THEORY/ANALYSIS (TA)

A four-hour written exam covering score analysis, transcription, and short composition exercises. It evaluates harmonic fluency, voice leading, and compositional command in a jazz idiom.

3. IMPROVISATION EXAM (IMPROV)

A one-hour exam including performance and written components. Students must:

- Provide their own trio and perform at a professional level
- Memorize 60 required tunes from Years 5 and 6 of the departmental handbook (Green Book); most in all 12 keys*
- Perform selections chosen by the panel
- Compose and perform a melody over a given chord progression
- Sight-read and improvise on an unfamiliar piece

**Exempt from the 12-key requirement are: Nica's Dream, Pensativa, Upper Manhattan Medical Group, Moment's Notice, Airegin, Chega de Saudade, Stablemates, and In Your Own Sweet Way.*

All exams must be passed before the student may proceed to the thesis.

Thesis Exam

Jazz majors fulfill the thesis requirement by composing and performing a large-scale (approx. 30-minute) work for studio orchestra. The student must conduct and/or solo in the performance. The work must be accompanied by a written commentary and analysis. Students receive 10 hours of thesis advisement with a jazz faculty member during two semesters.

ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Students may request a leave of absence for up to two semesters. During a leave, they may not enroll in any courses or lessons, and the time does not count toward the five-year completion limit. International students should note that a leave of absence ends F-1 visa status and requires departure from the United States.

To begin the process, contact the Dean of Students.

INTENT TO GRADUATE

Students intending to graduate during the academic year—typically the year they submit their thesis or performance project—must complete an Intent to Graduate form. The form is emailed to eligible students in December of each academic year.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY, CONDUCT, AND INTEGRITY

Doctoral students are held to the highest standards of academic integrity, professionalism, and personal responsibility. As members of the Manhattan School of Music community, they are expected to uphold the values of honesty, respect, and excellence in all aspects of their work.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All submitted work must be the student's own. Plagiarism—the use of another's words, ideas, or work without proper attribution—is a serious violation of MSM's academic policies and may result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the program.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Generative AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Grammarly, machine translation tools) may be used only to support the writing process—for example, for outlining, proofreading, grammar correction, and citation formatting. They may not be used to generate original content that is submitted for academic credit.

Submitting AI-generated content as original work—whether in recital program notes, research documents, final papers, or theses—is considered a form of academic dishonesty and may result in disciplinary action.

All students are required to sign the Doctor of Musical Arts Academic Integrity and Responsible AI Use Agreement at the start of the program. Please consult this agreement for more information regarding expectations for academic honesty and the appropriate use of AI tools.

CITING AI TOOLS (CHICAGO STYLE)

The Chicago Manual of Style recommends acknowledging AI-generated content when it meaningfully contributes to your writing process. While AI tools cannot be credited as authors, students must cite their use appropriately.

CHICAGO NOTES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY STYLE

1. Text generated by ChatGPT, OpenAI, March 7, 2023, <https://chat.openai.com/>

2. ChatGPT, response to “Explain how to make pizza dough from common household ingredients,” OpenAI, March 7, 2023, <https://chat.openai.com/>

CHICAGO AUTHOR-DATE STYLE

(ChatGPT, March 7, 2023)

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND COMMUNICATION

Students are expected to:

- Participate actively in all academic requirements
- Communicate professionally with faculty, staff, and peers
- Meet deadlines without exception
- Keep the Doctoral Office informed of academic progress or issues

Failure to maintain appropriate conduct or communication may result in warnings, probation, or dismissal. For full institutional guidelines on behavior and disciplinary procedures, refer to the MSM Student Handbook, available at msmnyc.edu/student-handbook.

COMPLIANCE WITH DEGREE MILESTONES

Degree progress may be suspended if required recitals, papers, exams, or other milestones are missed without prior communication or formal deferral approved by the Associate Dean. Students are responsible for monitoring their progress and meeting internal deadlines set forth in this handbook and by the Office of the Registrar.

FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

For all DMA-related forms, style and study guides, please visit the DMA Page in the MSM Student Portal.