

Music (Popular Music), BA

HIMUSPMBA

Are you interested in a career in the modern music industry? Choose from multiple specializations in this flexible program that includes four semesters of applied study, with internships and a capstone project.


Program description

The BA program in music offers a popular music concentration, accommodating musicians who are interested in various popular music genres, such as singers, songwriters, laptop performers, producers, composers, instrumentalists and vocalists. Students can choose between performer and non-performer tracks, following a flexible major map.

The program equips all students with foundational skills in musicianship, preparing them for specialized areas such as songwriting, production, composition, performance and more. Students engage in group and individual applied study, with opportunities that involve visiting artists and include industry exposure and professional development. Internships offer real-world experience, while a capstone senior year deepens their craft. Students need a personal laptop with digital audio workstation capability, which may require purchasing music software applications. Classes are held at the Downtown Phoenix campus.

The program fosters excellent musicianship, a strong understanding of the music industry, and business and entrepreneurial skills to ensure that students are well-prepared for careers in popular music.

At a glance

- **College/School:** [Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts](#)
- **Location:** [Downtown Phoenix](#)
- **Second language requirement:** No
- **First required math course:** MAT 117 - College Algebra Any math course that meets the MATH designation.
- **Math intensity:** General 

Required courses (Major Map)

[2024 - 2025 Major Map \(on-campus\)](#)

[Major Map \(Archives\)](#)

Concurrent program options

Students pursuing concurrent degrees (also known as a "double major") earn two distinct degrees and receive two diplomas. Working with their academic advisors, students can create their own concurrent degree combination. Some combinations are not possible due to high levels of overlap in curriculum.

Admission requirements

General university admission requirements:

All students are required to meet general university admission requirements.

[First-year](#) | [Transfer](#) | [International](#) | [Readmission](#)

Additional requirements:

Audition Process for admittance to BA in Music (Popular Music) concentration:

Artist Statement:

All auditioning students must submit an artist statement explaining both their current work and vision of their future work in popular music. A minimum of 250 words is required.

Audition:

Live auditions or recorded auditions are required for admission to the BA program in popular music and for placement in MUP 111 Studio Instruction in popular music. A live audition consists of a 15-minute performance or presentation consisting of three to five selections of live or digital music performance. The selections may be original works or selections from popular music repertoire. The audition also includes scales, improvisation and aural skills. Students may also provide a recorded sample of their creative popular music work if they so choose.

For students seeking to pursue popular music performance, a live or recorded performance video is required for at least part of the audition. For other disciplines in which a video is not possible (studio recording, music creation and composition), students are required to submit a digital audio sound recording of three to five selections.

The audition also includes a live or remote interview. A live audition is preferred. Applicants who are unable to visit the campus for a live audition may upload a recorded audition to the School of Music, Dance and Theatre application. These students will be contacted by faculty to arrange a remote interview.

Students interested in pursuing classical music lessons are required to follow the classical repertoire audition requirements for MUP 111 Studio Instruction in addition to auditioning for MUP 111 Studio Instruction in popular music.

Transfer admission requirements:

Students transferring from community colleges, other universities or other ASU programs engage in the same audition process as first-year students.

Transfer students are encouraged to audition during the semester before they wish to enroll at ASU. They will also take piano and music theory diagnostic exams at that time to ensure placement in appropriate coursework.

Transfer of courses from other accredited institutions is subject to the existence of parallel and equal courses in the college's curriculum, and departmental or school evaluation of studio and class piano courses with respect to performance standards.

Every candidate for the bachelor's degree must earn a minimum of 30 credit hours in resident credit at ASU. Transfer students enrolled in the institute must complete a minimum of 15 resident credit hours in the major as approved by the faculty.

Tuition information

When it comes to paying for higher education, everyone's situation is different. Students can learn about [ASU tuition and financial aid](#) options to find out which will work best for them.

Change of Major Requirements

An ASU student who would like to change majors to one offered by the Herberger Institute or one of its programs must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.50 (scale is 4.00 = "A") and may change their major to the BA in music with a concentration in popular music if they successfully complete the audition process required for admittance and are accepted into the degree program.

Students should visit the [Change of Major form](#) for information about how to change a major to this program.

Transfer options

ASU is committed to helping students thrive by offering tools that allow personalization of the transfer path to ASU. Students may use [MyPath2ASU®](#) to outline a list of recommended courses to take prior to transfer.

ASU has [transfer partnerships](#) in Arizona and across the country to create a simplified transfer experience for students. These pathway programs include exclusive benefits, tools and resources, and they help students save time and money in their college journey.

Program learning outcomes

Program learning outcomes identify what a student will learn or be able to do upon completion of their program. This program has the following program outcomes:

- Analyze key creative and artistic processes from a range of musical styles and historical periods.
- Apply music industry studies as it pertains to popular and contemporary music industry starting from the late 19th century to modern day.
- Execute professional level techniques in their chosen specializations.

Global opportunities

Global experience

With more than 300 [Global Education program opportunities](#) available to them, music students are able to tailor their experience to their unique interests and skill sets. Whether in a foreign country, in the U.S. or online, students build communication skills, learn to adapt and persevere, and are exposed to research and internships across the world, increasing their professional network.

Career opportunities

Graduates are prepared for careers in the popular music industry that involve creativity and creating new work, being a flexible musician, collaborating with others in the community, and having knowledge of music business and music marketing. Possible jobs include:

- contemporary composer for film, TV and games
- concert or artist manager and promoter
- entrepreneur and music marketer
- live event production and experience designer
- label or music executive
- musical director, arranger and publisher
- music performer in the popular music sector
- nonprofit arts-related professional
- sound designer or studio engineer
- songwriter, producer or teacher in a private studio

Example job titles and salaries listed below are not necessarily entry level, and students should take into consideration how years of experience and geographical location may affect pay scales. Some jobs also may require advanced degrees, certifications or state-specific licensure.

Career	*Growth	*Median salary
Art Professor	3.2%	\$77,280

<u>Casting Director</u> ☀	6.7%	\$85,320
<u>Freelance Writer</u>	3.7%	\$73,150
<u>Music Producer</u>	1.1%	\$62,940
<u>Musician/Singer</u>	1.2%	\$0
<u>Public Relations Manager (PR Manager)</u> ☀	5.9%	\$129,430
<u>Public Relations Specialist</u> ☀	6.1%	\$67,440
<u>Sound Recording Engineer</u>		\$60,670
<u>Talent Agent</u> ☀	8.2%	\$82,530

* Data obtained from the Occupational Information Network (O*NET) under sponsorship of the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA).

☀ **Bright Outlook**

Contact information

School of Music, Dance and Theatre | MUSIC E167
mdtadmissions@asu.edu | 480-965-5069