Music Composition, MM

Are you interested in working with renowned faculty who have diverse musical specialties? Expand your knowledge and advance your skill set in a wide variety of genres, from chamber to orchestral and from acoustic to electronic.

Program Description

Degree Awarded: MM Composition
The MM program in composition focuses on the development of skills required for a career in music composition.

Composers learn through experiential opportunities, including composing for fellow student performers leading to performances of their works in venues on campus and off. Project-based experiences include working with the Visiting Quartet Residency program and creating new works for student string quartets.

Students develop advanced skills such as orchestration, electronic studio techniques, film and video scoring, and jazz composition in the degree program. Collaboration with music scholars, theorists, performers, educators and other composers under the guidance of renowned composition faculty provides students with a broad and well-rounded foundation for advanced careers in music.

At a Glance

- College/School: Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts
- Location: Tempe campus

Degree Requirements

32 credit hours, a thesis and a written comprehensive exam, or
32 credit hours, a thesis, a written comprehensive exam, and an oral comprehensive exam, or
32 hours including a written comprehensive exam and an applied project (MTC 593), or
32 hours including a written comprehensive exam, an oral comprehensive exam, and an applied project (MTC 593)

The credit hour requirements for the degree are distributed as follows:

composition (9 credit hours)
electives (8 credit hours)
music theory and music history (9 credit hours)
thesis or applied project (6 credit hours)

Additional Curriculum Requirements
Completion of diagnostic exams in musicology and music theory is required of all new graduate music students prior to enrollment in the ASU School of Music, Dance and Theatre.

Additional information about degree requirements for all graduate music programs may be found on the check sheets at https://musicdancetheatre.asu.edu/degree-programs/music/graduate.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must fulfill the requirements of both the Graduate College and the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts.

Applicants are eligible to apply to the program if they have earned a U.S. bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution or the equivalent of a U.S. bachelor's degree from an institution in another country that is officially recognized by that country.

Applicants must have achieved a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 (scale is 4.00 = "A") in the last 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of their first bachelor's degree program.

All applicants must submit:

1. graduate admission application and application fee
2. School of Music, Dance and Theatre application (including a resume and personal statement): https://musicdancetheatre.asu.edu/admissions/music/graduate-steps-to-apply
3. official transcripts
4. prescreening portfolio
5. three letters of recommendation
6. proof of English proficiency

Additional Application Information
An applicant whose native language is not English must provide proof of English proficiency regardless of current residency: https://admission.asu.edu/international/graduate/english-proficiency. The School of Music, Dance and Theatre does not offer conditional admission under any circumstances. In order to meet
English proficiency requirements, students must have a TOEFL score of at least 550 (PBT) or 80 (iBT), or an IELTS overall band score of at least 6.5, or a Pearson Test of English score of at least 60.

Although a bachelor's degree in music is not required to be eligible for admission, applicants who do not hold an undergraduate degree in music may wish to take foundational courses in music theory and history as recommended by their advisor.

Applicants should see the program website for application deadlines. After receipt of complete application materials, including recommendation letters, transcripts and English proficiency, and review of prescreening materials, an applicant may be invited for an interview. Information on the interview may be found at https://musicdancetheatre.asu.edu/admissions/music/graduate-auditions.

Career Opportunities

The School of Music, Dance and Theatre graduate programs inspire and empower students to become creative leaders who transform society through music.

Musicians with expertise in performing, composing, teaching, researching and arts advocacy are in high demand across many sectors and industries, including performing arts organizations, educational institutions, entertainment companies, health and wellness industries and community arts organizations. Skills such as creativity, collaboration, innovation, entrepreneurship and the focused discipline needed for success as musicians are all highly valued by a wide range of companies and professions.

Career examples include:

- arts administrator
- community arts advocate
- composer for film, video games, or television
- performing musician
- public or community school teacher
- university professor

Contact Information

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