# Graduate Orientation Examination in Music Theory

All incoming graduate students in music (except jazz and music education majors) must take the graduate orientation exam in music theory at the start of their first semester on campus. The required portions of the orientation exam deal with basic music theory and basic aural skills. Students who score below 70 percent on either portion are required to take the corresponding remedial course. (For more information, see pp.13 of the Graduate Handbook: https://www.music.msu.edu/information-for-students/for-graduate-students/advising

| **SUMMER 2022** | **FALL 2022\*** | **SPRING 2023** |
|---|---|---|
| June 20, 2022 | August 28, 2022 | January 8, 2023 |
| 6:00 p.m. | 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. & 2:30-6:30 p.m.\* | 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. |
| Location TBD | 106 Farrall Hall  (FAE) | Location TBD |

*\*Due to ensemble auditions, students will be emailed prior to determine morning or afternoon time slot.*

Students taking the test are required to take the first two exam parts.  These cover:

**a.   Aural Skills (lasts about 30 minutes)**

Test recognition of chord type, ability to take down simple textures, melodic dictation, error detection and so forth. Students should find their own materials and use these to practice basic listening skills.

**If your score is below 70% on this section, MUS 201 (Aural Skills Review) is a graduation requirement. Students who are required to take MUS 201** must complete the course with a grade of 2.0 or higher at some point during the student's degree program. **\*** *MUS 201 is a 1 credit course that does NOT count towards your total credit requirement*.

**b.   Basic Written Theory (lasts 40-80 minutes)**

The theory material is basic theory, dealing with diatonic and chromatic harmonic vocabulary and part-writing. Contents are generally covered in any undergraduate text. Texts used at MSU have included: Aldwell/Schachter, Jostak/Payne and Laitz.

**If your score is below 70% on this section, MUS 200 (Music Theory Review) is a graduation requirement AND a pre-requisite for any 800-900 level theory course. Students who are required to take MUS 200** must complete the course with a grade of 2.0 or higher BEFORE enrolling in any 800-900 level music theory course. \**MUS 200 is a 1 credit course that does NOT count towards your total credit requirement.*

**To enroll in any graduate theory courses, you MUST satisfy one or more of the following requirements:**
Pass the Basic Written Theory portion of the Orientation Exam with a grade of 70% or higher OR complete MUS 200(Music Theory Review) with a grade of 20 or higher.

**PREPARATION:** Students are welcome to prepare however they wish for these exams. Some students may not need any special preparation, and some may wish to review materials from previous music theory courses. For those students who feel they need substantial preparation, the music theory faculty recommends an online course called **eTheory Grad Review**, created by Seth Monahan at the Eastman School of Music. This self-paced course uses multimedia video and thoughtful assessments to teach basic music theory clearly and engagingly. This online course is likely to be especially useful to students who have not taken music theory courses in recent years, but it would be beneficial to others as well because its approach and terminology align very closely with ours here at MSU.
https://www.esm.rochester.edu/iml/store/product/etheory-graduate-music-theory-review/

This exam is strictly optional and the cost is $139. If equipped with sufficient command of basic music theory, an incoming graduate student could pass the orientation exam without having taken this online course. Moreover, completion of this online course does not guarantee passage of the orientation exam.

Students who would like additional information are welcome to contact Dr. Michael Callahan, area chair of music theory, at mrc@msu.edu.

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The Entrance Exam also has two optional parts designed to help advisors determine which theory courses are appropriate for graduate students, especially theory majors. You are encouraged to take either or both sections.  They include:

a.  Counterpoint                b.   Orchestration and Basic Instrumentation