Music - Master of Music (MMus)

The Master of Music degree programs at CU Boulder are modeled after the guiding principles outlined by the National Association of Schools of Music. The purpose of Master of Music degree work is to refine skills in music performance, music composition, research and writing, and pedagogy. There are numerous fields of study within the Master of Music program as listed below. The musicology program admits students only at the PhD level.

The Master of Music degree provides advanced studies in performance, performance/pedagogy, composition (with an optional emphasis in technology), music theory, and conducting (choral, orchestral, and wind). Areas of emphasis in performance and performance/pedagogy include all band and orchestral instruments, guitar, harp, harpsichord, jazz, organ, piano, and voice. Each of the MM degrees incorporates studies in the major area, support courses in music electives, and thesis/recital work.
The minimum credit hours required for a MM degree varies from 30 to 32 depending on the area of study. For specific major area requirements, see the list of Master of Music degrees at the College of Music website.

Brass, conducting, percussion, string, voice and woodwind majors are required to participate in a music ensemble. Your ensemble placement will be determined by an audition during the first week of classes.

Dual Degree Program

Master's Degree in Two College of Music Programs

Students may apply for a dual master’s degree that combines any two master’s programs in the College of Music. The student must apply separately and be admitted by the faculty in each of the degree programs under their respective admissions procedures and standards. The student must be accepted to both degree programs at the time of the initial application. With the exception of thesis credit hours, courses that fulfill requirements in both degree programs need only be taken once to be counted for both. A minimum of 45 credit hours must be earned. For most students, it is far preferable to pursue the DMA or PhD degree after completing a master’s degree, rather than to pursue a dual master’s degree.

Requirements

Prerequisites

Students should have completed undergraduate preparation equivalent to that expected for the bachelor’s degree at this university. Normally this is a bachelor of music degree in the proposed area of concentration.

Before admission, composition majors should upload representative scores and recordings (to the digital portfolio on the application) and a list of completed compositions. Theory majors should upload two scholarly writing samples that demonstrate ability in critical analysis, appropriate research techniques and skill in the cogent use of English. For further details, see the Application Process section of the website. Performance majors must submit a repertoire list and arrange for an audition, or upload a recording of their performance. Conducting majors must upload a recording of their performance.

Program Requirements

The master of music (MM) degree, which the Graduate School considers a Plan II program, requires a minimum of 30–32 credit hours of graduate course work, including thesis projects. Many students find it necessary to exceed this minimum in order to meet the musical and academic standards demanded by the MM qualifying examination. Specific degree requirements for each program are available online at the College of Music website.

Each student’s program is directed by a three-member advisory committee headed by the major advisor (the student’s major professor). A second member is chosen from the major area; the third member is usually from outside the major area. (The major areas are composition, music education, music theory, and performance.) By the second semester of residence, the student should complete a tentative degree plan and obtain the approval of the advisory committee and the associate dean for graduate studies. Students must complete the master’s degree within four years of matriculation into the program.

Examinations

In addition to preliminary examinations, master’s degree students in music must take the Master’s Qualifying Examination. The procedures, guidelines for registration and deadlines for taking these examinations are announced by the Music Graduate Office.

Recital/Thesis Requirements

The recital/thesis requirement for the MM in composition is a composition (during the period of graduate study) of several works of major proportion, at least one of which must receive a public performance. For the major in conducting, the requirement is a public practicum and a performance-related or other scholarly document. For the major in music theory, it is two thesis papers. For the major in performance, presentation of two public recitals fulfills the requirement. For the major in performance and pedagogy, a full-length recital and a research document in pedagogy are required.