

PIANO GUIDELINES

Follow this link for a PDF version of the guidelines below: [Keyboard Area Guidelines 11.13.25.pdf](#)

A-State Keyboard Degree Program Guidelines Undergraduate and Graduate

Keyboard Students The following is an explanation of the expectations and procedures for keyboard majors at Arkansas State University. The motivation behind these guidelines is the desire of the A-State Department of Music to ensure that graduates are qualified and prepared at the highest possible level for professional endeavors appropriate to the degree program sought. These criteria pertain to students whose applied area of concentration is woodwinds.

DEGREES

Bachelor of Music (BM)

- **Performance (P):** This degree prepares students to pursue performance careers as soloists and collaborative performers in ensembles and to teach privately. Most students seek graduate work before embarking on their careers.
- **Performance - Music Industry (MI):** This degree prepares students to embark upon a professional career through a body of knowledge and skills in music industry and business. Many students will seek employment after graduating with this degree or continue with graduate work.
- **Performance - Jazz Studies (JS):** This degree prepares students to pursue jazz performance or composition careers. Most students seek graduate work before embarking on their careers.

Bachelor of Music Education (BME) - Instrumental Music or Vocal Music

This degree prepares students to teach music in grades K-12 in the state of Arkansas. Students often complete graduate study to pursue careers in higher education.

Master of Music in Piano Performance (MM) This degree provides advanced study in keyboard performance culminating in a graduate recital. It prepares students to pursue performance careers as soloists or collaborative artists and prepares them to teach privately or in higher education. Some students will continue their education with a doctoral degree.

Master of Music in Collaborative Piano Performance (MM) This degree provides advanced study in keyboard performance focusing on collaborative repertoire (pieces involving at least one other singer/instrumentalist), culminating in a graduate recital. It prepares students to pursue performance careers as collaborative artists and soloists prepares them to teach privately or in higher education. Some students will continue their education with a doctoral degree.

Master of Music in Piano Performance and Pedagogy (MM) • This degree provides advanced study in keyboard performance culminating in a graduate recital. It prepares students to pursue advanced coursework in piano pedagogy (the art of teaching piano) while also pursuing performance careers as soloists or collaborative artists. Some students will continue their education with a doctoral degree.

LEVELS OF STUDY

Lower Level MUSP 1111 Appropriate for students who are non-music majors or music minors who have not passed their Upper Level Proficiency.

MUSP 1112 Appropriate for freshman music majors, as well as those who have not passed the Upper Level Proficiency for upper level study.

Upper Level MUSP 3111 Appropriate for non-majors who are classified as juniors or seniors, or for music majors seeking study of a secondary instrument.

MUSP 3112 Appropriate for music majors (MI or BME) who have passed their Upper Level Proficiency.

MUSP 3113 Appropriate for music majors (P or JS) who have passed their Upper Level Proficiency.

Graduate MUSP 6111, 6112, 6113, 6114

Appropriate for graduate music majors (MM or MME) students.

REPERTOIRE REQUIREMENTS Repertoire will be assigned based on the musical and technical skills and needs of the individual student. The level of preparation and performance will be reflected in the final grade each semester.

PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS There are various performance opportunities for students each semester. Many are required based on the degree program and are outlined below.

Tuesday Morning Recitals All students majoring in BME, BM (Performance, Music Industry or Jazz Studies), or MM - Performance (Concentration in Piano; Concentration in Collaborative Piano, Concentration in Piano Performance and Pedagogy) who are enrolled in MUSP 1112, 3112, 3113, or

6112 as their primary instrument must perform a solo on a Tuesday Morning Recital once a semester. Exemptions may be granted to first semester freshman, or those that perform a solo on a studio recital or other recital. These recitals involve all applied areas and occur periodically in the Recital Hall on Tuesdays at 11:00 AM. The format is a traditional recital for which the appropriate attire is required. All performances require consent of the major applied teacher by filling out the Tuesday Morning Recital Form found on the A-State Music Department Website under Current Students.

Studio Class For piano majors, perform at least three times per semester. At least once must be from memory. For non-piano majors, at least once per semester. Collaborative performances are welcome. The same pieces may be repeated several times, to gain performance experience.

Preparation/Memorization Schedule: For piano majors, make this for each solo piece that will be memorized, for entire semester, due 2nd week of the semester. Include:

- Dates by which you will learn each section/piece accurately and in a consistent slow tempo, with metronome marking. This will also be the date by which you'll have all fingerings written in for that section/piece, and all translations of terms in languages other than English.
- Dates by which you will learn each section/piece accurately and up to tempo, with metronome marking.
- Dates by which you will complete a Memorization Chart for each piece. Will include a measure-by-measure survey of each piece, including form, harmonic analysis, unusual features, memory landmarks, etc.
- Dates you'll play in Studio Class, including performances using music and from memory

Jury At the end of each semester of piano or organ study, students will perform a jury as a final exam before the keyboard faculty. The repertoire will be selected together with the applied teacher. The faculty will select the appropriate number of pieces from the repertoire list to be performed. BM and BME will be ten minutes long and ask for a minimum of five minutes of music be prepared, unless it is a Upper Level Proficiency jury. (See below for more information on Upper Level Proficiencies.) MM juries will be twenty minutes long and ask for a minimum of fifteen minutes of music prepared. A grade will be given by each faculty member, the average of which will be the jury grade. A Signup Form will be completed prior to the jury. It will list your repertoire and technical studies from the semester and include links to full scores of your jury repertoire. Attributes of a fine jury performance demonstrate mastery of musicality, technique, rhythm, tempo, dynamics, tone quality, voicing/balance, pedaling, articulation, interpretation, and professionalism. Exception from a jury requirement may be granted when successfully performing a recital (half, full, or graduate) and passing a recital hearing.

The jury evaluation (including recital hearings and exit juries) follows a specific rubric, which is detailed below:

Musicality: A performer's knowledge, skill, and artistic sensitivity in performing music.

Technique: A performer's agility, fluency, and clarity moving through the range of the instrument. Students will also be evaluated on scales, arpeggios, and chord progressions appropriate for their level. See specific guidelines below.

Rhythm: A performer's ability to play the correct rhythm within the pulse given the style of the piece.

Tempo: A performer's ability to play with a steady tempo at all times, demonstrating mastery of internal pulse. When appropriate, the performer executes other tempo directives (e.g. *ritardando*, *accelerando*) organically and thoughtfully.

Dynamics: A performer's ability to consistently create a wide range of contrasting dynamic levels that are appropriate for the style of music being played.

Tone quality: A performer's ability to create a tone that is consistently focused, clear, and resonant at all registers and dynamics.

Articulation: A performer's ability to effortlessly employ a varied palette of note shapes appropriate for the musical context. The mechanical and physical sounds of the articulation do not impede or distract from the music.

Voicing/Balance: A performer's ability to bring out a melody and play accompaniment figures in the background, and the ability to balance similarly between the hands as appropriate to the musical passage.

Pedaling: A performer's ability to use pedal effectively within the style, and the ability to use the correct amount of pedaling, neither too much nor too little pedal.

Interpretation: A performer's ability to play characteristically in the appropriate style of the piece(s) and demonstrate an understanding of other instrumental or vocal parts if applicable.

Professionalism & Stage Presence: A performer's ability to meet professional expectations while in the performance, space, including professional language, dress, stage presence, and demeanor.

Benchmarks have been set for each lesson level as a range for where students should aspire to:

1000 level: 40

3000 level: 60

6000 level: 70

75% of music majors in each category should meet these benchmarks.

PIANO JURY TECHNIQUE REQUIREMENTS

Arkansas State University

In consultation with the teacher, students may add additional technical requirements to their individual Jury.

PIANO MAJORS:

Freshman, Semester 1:

- Pentascales: Choral warm-ups:

Play 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1 CHORD, CHORD, go up by $\frac{1}{2}$ steps

- All Major Scales, 4 octaves, in sixteenth notes, quarter note = 60
- All Major Arpeggios, 4 octaves, in triplets, quarter note = 60
- All Major Chords and Inversions

Freshman, Semester 2:

- All Major Scales in 3rds, and all Harmonic Minor Scales, 4 octaves, in sixteenth notes, quarter note = 60
- All Minor Arpeggios, 4 octaves, in triplets, quarter note = 60
- I - IV - I - V- I in all Major keys

Barrier/Admission to Upper Level

- All Major Scales and Harmonic Minor Scales, 4 octaves, in sixteenth notes, quarter note = 72
- All Major and Minor Arpeggios, 4 octaves, in triplets, quarter note = 72
- All Major Chords and Inversions
- I - IV - I - V- I in all Major keys

Sophomore, Semester 1:

- All Major Scales in 10ths and all Natural Minor Scales, 4 octaves, in sixteenth notes, quarter note = 72
- All Major and Minor Arpeggios in Inversions, in triplets, quarter note = 60
- I - IV- I - V7 - I in all Major keys
- Review all technique from previous semesters, quarter note = 72

Sophomore, Semester 2:

- All Major Scales in 6ths, and all Melodic Minor Scales, 4 octaves, in sixteenth notes, quarter note = 72
- All Diminished 7th Arpeggios, 4 octaves, in sixteenth notes, quarter note = 60
- i - iv - i - V - i in all Minor keys
- Review all technique from previous semesters, quarter note = 80

Junior, Semester 1:

- All Major Scales in Contrary Motion, in sixteenth notes, quarter note = 72
- All Dominant 7th Arpeggios, 4 octaves, in sixteenth notes, quarter note = 60
- i - iv - i - V7 - i in all Minor keys
- Review all Major and Minor Scales (3 forms) and Arpeggios in parallel motion, quarter note = 90

Junior, Semester 2:

- All Minor Scales in Contrary Motion, in sixteenth notes, quarter note = 72
- All Major and Minor Arpeggios in Contrary Motion, in triplets, quarter note = 72
- I - IV - I - V7 - I in all Major keys, with Inversions
- Review all Major and Minor Scales (3 forms) and Arpeggios in parallel motion, quarter note = 100

Senior, Semester 1:

- All Harmonic Minor Scales in 3rds and 10ths, in parallel motion, quarter note = 120
- Review all Major and Minor Arpeggios in parallel motion, quarter note = 110
- i - iv - i - V7 - i in all Minor keys, with Inversions

Senior, Semester 2:

- All Harmonic Minor Scales in 6ths, in parallel motion, quarter note = 120
- All Major and Harmonic Minor Scales in Octaves, sixteenth notes, quarter note = 55
- All Major and Minor Arpeggios in Parallel and Contrary Motion pattern, in triplets, quarter note = 72 (Up 2 octaves - Out 2 octaves - In 2 octaves - Up 2 octaves - Down 2 octaves - Out 2 octaves - In 2 octaves - Down 2 octaves)
- Review Diminished 7th and Dominant 7th Arpeggios in all keys, quarter note = 120

Graduate, Semester 1:

- Fill in any gaps from Undergraduate levels above
- Same as Senior, Semester 2

Graduate, Semester 2:

- Fill in any gaps from Undergraduate levels above
- Major Scales in Parallel and Contrary Motion Pattern (Up 2 octaves - Out 2 octaves - In 2 octaves - Up 2 octaves - Down 2 octaves - Out 2 octaves - In 2 octaves - Down 2 octaves)

Graduate, Semester 3:

- Technique as assigned by Instructor

Graduate, Semester 4:

- Technique as assigned by Instructor

NON-PIANO MAJORS:

Instructor will approve appropriate level in which to begin study.

Metronome markings will be determined by the instructor. Students should play at the tempo at which they can play evenly and accurately, without hesitations.

Semester 1:

- Pentascales: Choral warm-ups:

Play 1-2-3-4-5-4-3-2-1 CHORD, CHORD, go up by $\frac{1}{2}$ steps

- Cross-Hand Arpeggios in all Major and Minor keys
- Chords and Inversions in all Major Keys, with correct fingering

Semester 2:

Also serves as Barrier/Admission to Upper Level. Repertoire should be Bach Minuet in G, Schumann easier pieces from Album for the Young, and similar.

- 2-Octave Scales with thumb turns, B, Db, F# Major
- 2-Octave Arpeggios with thumb turns, all white note keys
- I-IV-I-V7-I Cadences in C, G, F Major
- Review all technique from previous semester

Semester 3:

- 2-Octave Scales with thumb turns, in C, G, D, A, E Major
- 2-Octave Arpeggios with thumb turns, Eb, Ab, Db
- I-IV-I-V7-I Cadences in D, A, E Major
- Review all technique from previous semesters

Semester 4:

- 2-Octave Scales with thumb turns, in F, Bb, Eb, Ab Major
- 2-Octave Arpeggios with thumb turns, F#, Bb
- I-IV-I-V7-I Cadences in Db, Eb, F#, Ab, Bb Major
- Review all technique from previous semesters

Semester 5, or for those who have completed all Keyboard Skills classes:

- Do requirements for Freshman Piano Majors, Semester 1 above. May be done hands separately or together.

Upper Level Proficiency Admittance to the Upper Level of Applied Lessons (MUSP 3112 or 3113) will not be granted until the Upper Level Proficiency has been successfully completed. Minimum expectations include demonstration of certain musical skills and reasonable development while performing literature which the woodwind faculty deems appropriate. An Upper Level Proficiency is typically attempted at the same time as keyboard juries. A BM (MI), and BME student will typically attempt this at the end of their third semester of applied study. A BM (P or JS) student will typically attempt this at the end of their second semester of applied study. The Upper Level Proficiency will consist of a 20-minute jury with a minimum of two keyboard faculty evaluating. A vote of the woodwind faculty present is required for granting or denying admission to the Upper Level (MUSP 3112 or 3113). If granted admission, the student will enroll in Upper Level lessons for the following semester and will proceed through the appropriate courses. Repertoire presented should be approximately 12-15 minutes of music selected by the applied teacher from the current semester. Scales could be a requirement in front of the keyboard faculty or to be performed prior to the jury for the applied teacher only, as is at the discretion of the applied teacher.

It is possible to receive a passing grade in Applied Lessons and still not pass the Proficiency. All students will remain at this Lower Level for as many semesters as necessary to pass the Proficiency. The Upper Level Proficiency may be repeated in subsequent semesters until admission is granted. Failed attempts could result in extra semesters of undergraduate enrollment.

A BME and BM (MI) must complete a minimum of 6 credits at upper level (MUSP 3112). A BM (P and JS) must complete a minimum of 18 credits at upper level (MUSP 3113)

Recital Requirements All students seeking the BM Degree in Keyboard Performance and Jazz Studies must present a Half Recital (MUSP 3130) and a Full Recital (MUSP 4131). All students seeking the BME Instrumental Degree and BM in Music Industry must present a Half Recital (MUSP 3130).^{*} The student is responsible for establishing the date and time of the degree recital in consultation with the major applied teacher as well as notifying their recital committee of the date, time, and venue no later than four weeks prior to the recital and recital hearing. The Half Recital should contain approximately 25 minutes of music with no intermission; the Full Recital must contain at least 45 minutes of music and may include a brief intermission. All students seeking the MM Degree with concentrations in Piano Performance, Collaborative Piano Performance, or Piano Performance and Pedagogy must present a Graduate Recital MUSP 6131. The Graduate Recital should contain approximately 50 minutes of music with an intermission. Repertoire for recitals will be selected by the teacher and student.

Scheduling: The student must work with their applied teacher to schedule their recital. Fall recitals should be scheduled by September 5 and spring recitals should be scheduled by December 1. Scheduling a recital after these dates will not be guaranteed and could delay graduation. To schedule a recital, students should use the Recital Date Request Form in collaboration with the

Scheduling Calendar.

Recital Hearing: This must take place at least two weeks prior to the Half and Full Recitals. It will be performed for a committee of of the student's applied teacher and at least one other member of the faculty. It is the responsibility of the student to assemble the committee, schedule the hearing date, and reserve the venue. The purpose of the hearing is to determine the readiness of the student to perform the recital repertoire. The student should be prepared to perform any selections on the recital (a portion of each piece will be heard). A typed draft of the recital program and program notes will be presented at this time for grading. As a general rule, program notes should consist of roughly two paragraphs for each piece. If information is taken from a composer's website, it must be indicated, and quotes must be cited in text (i.e. Mozart's biographer Donald Minx said...) The hearing must be passed in order to present the Half or Full Recital. If the hearing is failed the recital must be rescheduled or postponed. The recital hearing rubric is the same as the jury rubric.

Literature: All recitals must include literature chosen by the teacher in consultation with the student. Varied styles should be represented for all recitals. All pieces programmed for any recital must have teacher approval. Some literature may be from previous semesters of study.

Evaluation: For Undergraduate students the recital assessment takes place at the recital hearing. Following the hearing, the faculty in attendance will determine whether the student has met the requirements for the Half or Full Recital. If the requirements are not met, the recital must be rescheduled or postponed. If the new recital date takes place after the last day of classes in the semester an Incomplete (I) for the course (MUSP 3130 or MUSP 4131) will be given. The applied teacher will give the final grade for the recital. If the recital is not completed in due time, the grade will be recorded as "F."

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