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Preparing for Graduate Entrance Exams and Auditions

การเตรียมตัวสำหรับการสอบข้อเขียนและการสอบปฏิบัติ ในหลักสูตรบัณฑิตศึกษา

For the upcoming academic year the College of Music plans to open four graduate programs, all with new entrance requirements. With the entrance exams and auditions coming up in one month, this column aims to give applicants advice on how to prepare. Next month he will discuss taking the entrance interview..

Master of Arts Program (M.A.)

Musicology Major - applicants are first required to demonstrate a basic understanding of Western Music History and Thai Music History. For this part, the applicant should know a broad range of key people, as well as the important repertoire, events, and historical philosophies. Following this, applicants will be given a list of essays that gives them the opportunity to demonstrate expertise in their main area of study within Musicology. The topics will cover both Thai music and Western music, and applicants will be given a choice to write about either one, or both. Finally, applicants should be prepared to write about their research interests and provide possible research topics that they are interested in. In preparing for this exam, it will be very important to demonstrate that applicants have a specific area of interest and that they have been thinking about potential research topics.

Music Education Major - applicants will be given essay questions to answer. Possible topics may come from fundamentals of music teaching and learning,

music curricula, psychology of music teaching, music pedagogy, and the music teaching methods including Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze. Applicants do not need to be experts in all of these areas of study, but should have a basic knowledge of all of them. Applicants should also be able to demonstrate a specific understanding in the pedagogy of a certain instrument or type of music.

Music Business Major - applicants will participate in an interview instead of an examination. At the interview applicants should be prepared to discuss their knowledge and experience in music business, as well as the education received in music business, other areas of business, and music. Applicants will also be asked to discuss their career goals, as well as their financial readiness and determination to complete the program on time. The interview will be conducted in Thai.

Music Therapy Major - applicants will participate in an interview instead of an examination. At the interview applicants should be prepared to discuss their knowledge of music therapy, as well as any education or previous work experiences that relate to music therapy, any medical field, or music. Also, the committee will specifically want to know Why do you want to be a music therapist? Applicants will also be asked to discuss their career goals, as well as their financial readiness and determination to complete the program on time. In the Music Therapy major, students will study the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions

to accomplish individualized goals within a therapeutic relationship. Successful candidates can expect to use functional music skills such as singing, guitar and/or piano to lead interventions. If applicants are able, they are encouraged to bring a musical instrument to demonstrate their playing ability and how they might lead a group in singing. The interview will be conducted mostly in English, so applicants should practice their English listening and speaking skills.

Master of Music Program (M.M.)

Performance and Pedagogy Major - the audition requirements vary, depending on the instrument, and applicants should double check to make sure they have prepared the correct material. Since there is flexibility with the audition repertoire for some of the instruments, it is important that applicants select pieces that really show their abilities. It is also advised that applicants review **all** of the material with a private teacher prior to the audition, including scales or exercises, if required. Also, applicants should be professionally dressed and present the audition in a professional manner. Since the Performance and Pedagogy major includes music pedagogy, applicants should be able to briefly discuss their ideas about teaching their instrument. Since the M.M. program is an international program, the discussion be conducted in English. Applicants should consider all of these things, simply because in the past there were applicants that played the wrong material, didn't understand how to play all of the repertoire, weren't dressed well, and weren't ready to answer basic questions in English. Lastly, the applicant must bring an accompanist to the audition, if required for the repertoire, as well as five copies of all scores for the audition committee.

Composition and Theory Major - the entrance requirements for the Composition and Theory major have two parts. The first part is the Audition, in which applicants will need to discuss their submitted works (3) with the composition faculty, as well as demonstrate basic skills at the piano (these skills are in the Graduate Admissions Handbook, available from the College of Music Website). For the discussion of works, applicants will need to provide a **brief** introduction to the pieces, including a description of the pieces, inspiration for writing the pieces, compositional techniques used, as well as the structure of the pieces. Applicants should also be able to answer questions, in English, about any of these characteristics of the pieces. For the second part, Music Theory Oral Exam, applicants will be emailed a music score to analyze one week before the exam. The exam will begin with the applicant making a presentation that explains their observations about the structure, melodic elements, harmonic properties, and

any other special aspects of the piece. The committee will then ask questions, in English, about the applicant's analysis. Applicants should prepare five copies of the analyzed score to give the committee.

Conducting Major - the written exam for the Conducting major will include topics such as the major composers and literature for the applicant's major area (band, orchestra, or choir), knowledge of the instrumental practice in the major area (understanding of the instruments, including their ranges, sounds qualities, techniques, difficulties, etc.), common performance practice (performing the music following historical styles), transposition skills (including transposing music to other keys), and trends in ensemble performance/conducting (including modern practices of ensemble teaching and performance). There are many study sources for conducting and large ensembles, including books, journal articles, etc., and the applicant should try to read as much as they can about their conducting area prior to the exam.

Collaborative Piano major - the applicant should double check the audition requirements very carefully check to make sure they have prepared the correct material. Since there is flexibility with the audition repertoire, it is important that applicants select pieces that really show their abilities. It is also advised that applicants review **all** of the material with a private teacher prior to the audition, including the instrumental sonata and songs, both with and without the soloist or collaborative musicians. Playing chamber music requires a special set of skills and at the audition, the committee will be interesting in seeing that the applicant can demonstrate these skills. At the end of the audition, the committee will ask a few questions about the applicant's experience as a chamber musician and also their desire to study in the Collaborative Piano major. The applicant must bring all collaborative musicians to the audition, as required for the repertoire, as well as five copies of all scores for the audition committee.

Jazz Studies major - the applicant should double-check the audition requirements to make sure they have prepared the correct audition material. The entrance requirements are very specific for the Jazz Studies major and the committee will insist that the applicant follow them exactly. There are a lot of technique exercises on the audition, and it would be a shame if an applicant scored poorly because they forgot to practice one of the many arpeggios. The exam committee was very specific identifying the criteria they will be looking for: sound quality, intonation, time-feel, improvisation, authority, jazz vocabulary, artistry, technique, and overall musicianship. Also, applicants should be professionally dressed for the audition. Lastly, the applicant is responsible for bringing accompaniment for the solo pieces.

Doctor of Philosophy Program (Ph.D.)

Musicology Major - applicants are first required to demonstrate a basic understanding of Western Music History and Thai Music History. For this part, the applicant should know a broad range of key people, as well as the important repertoire, events, and historical philosophies. Following this, applicants will be given a list of essays that gives them the opportunity to demonstrate expertise in their main area of study within Musicology. The topics will cover both Thai music and Western music, and applicants will be given a choice to write about either one, or both. Finally, applicants should be prepared to discuss the research literature in Musicology, their research interests, and also provide several potential research projects for the Doctoral Thesis, a book-length formal research project. For each of the potential research projects, applicants should be able to articulate the elements of a formal research proposal, including the background and significance, objectives, review of literature, and methodology.

Music Education Major - applicants will be given essay questions to answer. Possible topics can come from fundamentals of music teaching and learning, music curricula, psychology of music teaching, music pedagogy, and the music teaching methods including Kodaly, Orff, and Dalcroze. Applicants should demonstrate that they have a thorough understanding of each of these areas of study. Applicants should also be able to demonstrate an expert understanding in the pedagogy of a certain instrument or type of music. Finally, applicants should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the research in music education and also to provide potential research topics for the Doctoral Thesis, a book-length research project.

Doctor of Music Program (D.M.)

Performance and Pedagogy Major - applicants to the Performance and Pedagogy major are expected to be top-level performers and highly professional. When choosing repertoire for the 30 minute recital, the applicant should follow the audition requirements very carefully (details are in the Graduate Admission Handbook, available on the College of Music Website). There is some freedom for choosing repertoire, so applicants should select the repertoire that best displays their abilities and talents. The applicant should review **all** of the repertoire with their private instructor prior to the exam. Because the major has a pedagogy component, the applicant will be expected to **briefly** discuss their educational philosophy and also to provide several potential research topics for the Doctoral Thesis, a book-length research project. Lastly, the applicant must bring an accompanist to the audition, if required for the repertoire, as well as five copies of all scores for the audition committee.

Composition and Theory Major - the entrance requirements for the Composition and Theory major have two parts. The first part is the Audition, in which applicants will need to discuss their submitted works (3) with the composition faculty, as well as demonstrate basic skills at the piano (these skills are in the Admissions Handbook, available from the College of Music Website). For the discussion of works, applicants will need to provide a **brief** introduction to the pieces, including a description of the pieces, inspiration for writing the pieces, compositional techniques used, as well as the structure of the pieces. Applicants should also be able to answer questions, in English, about any of these characteristics of the pieces. For the second part, Music Theory Oral Exam, applicants will

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Conducting Major - the written exam for conducting will include topics such as the major composers and literature for the applicants major area (band, orchestra, or choir), knowledge of the instrumental practice in the major area (understanding of the instruments, including their ranges, sounds qualities, techniques, difficulties, etc.), common performance practice (performing the music following historical styles), transposition skills (including transposing music to other keys), and trends in ensemble performance/conducting (including modern practices of ensemble teaching and performance). There are many study sources for conducting and large ensembles, including books, journal articles, etc., and the applicant should try to read as much as they can about their conducting area prior to the exam.

Dr. Christopher Schaub is currently Instructor of Bassoon, Woodwind Department Head and Chair of the Master of Music Program at the College of Music, Mahidol University.





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Preparing for the Graduate Entrance Interview

การเตรียมตัวสำหรับการสอบสัมภาษณ์ในระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา

For applicants that passed the Graduate entrance exams and auditions at the College of Music, Mahidol University, this column aims to give advice on how to prepare for the entrance interview. The interview is the final step for entrance into the university. It is required for all graduate programs and majors, except for the Music Business and Music Therapy majors in the Master of Arts program.

The entrance interview committee will consist of faculty members at the College of Music, Mahidol University. For the international graduate programs (Master of Music and Doctor of Music), the interview will be conducted entirely in English. For the Thai graduate programs (Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy), the interview will be conducted in Thai, but interviewees may be asked to answer any questions in English. All interviewees should be fully prepared to listen to and express their ideas in English.

At the beginning of the interview, students will be asked to introduce themselves and any guests they have brought. The committee will then ask them a series of question. The following is a list of possible interview questions.

Why would you like to study in this program?

The obvious reasons are to “Improve myself” or “Get a job.” The committee, however, will be looking for more specific information. For example, how would you like to improve yourself? What is the specific type of job you are looking for? In a university? In a private music school? In the music business industry? As a professional performer? As a teacher? What type of

teacher? Interviewees should have a clear idea of what they hope to benefit from the program.

What are your career goals?

Interviewees should have some type of plan for the next five and ten years that includes the career they would like to have. In the field of music, professionals are often working in two or more areas, for example teaching privately and performing in an orchestra. Whatever their career goals are, interviewees should be able to explain them, including their ideas for career related activities, such as research articles, recordings, special performances, related special projects, etc.

What past experience do you have in your field?

Interviewees should be able to explain their past education and experience in their field and also the benefits they received from both.

Can you discuss the literature in your field?

All of the graduate programs and majors require students to be active researches in their field. The basis for doing research is to know the literature in their field. This includes books, journal articles, dissertations, and other types of research projects like websites. For those interviewing for a Doctoral program, they should be quite knowledgeable about the literature in their field. For those interviewing for a Master’s program, they should be familiar with several sources in their field and be able to discuss them.

What are your current research interests?

All graduate students will need to write a large research paper at the end of their study. This research paper will make a contribution of new information to the student's field. The committee will want to see that interviewees have been thinking about this. For those interviewing for Ph.D. program, they will discuss the research proposal that they submitted with the application. For other programs and majors, simply offering a few potential topics would demonstrate that the interviewee has been thinking about this.

How long do you plan to study in the program?

The committee will want to see that interviewees plan to finish the program in a reasonable amount of time. The committee may ask related questions, such as: Will you be working while you study? Full-time or part-time? How will you fund your study? Do you plan to live near the campus while taking classes?

In summary, the committee may ask additional questions related to the above questions, or entirely different questions. Remember that interviewees may be asked to answer any question in English. Also remember that the committee is not looking for a long formal answer to any of the above questions, but simply that the interviewee has been thinking about these important areas related to graduate study.



Dr. Christopher Schaub is currently Instructor of Bassoon, Woodwind Department Head, and Chair of the Master of Music Program at the College of Music, Mahidol University. Next month he will discuss preparing for graduate music study for students that have been accepted into one of the graduate programs.



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Preparing for Graduate Music Study

การเตรียมตัวเพื่อศึกษาต่อทางดนตรีในระดับบัณฑิตศึกษา

For applicants that passed the graduate entrance process at College of Music, Mahidol University, this column aims to give advice on how to prepare for graduate music study. First, I would like to congratulate you on the accomplishment of being accepted into one of our graduate music programs. Not everyone is capable of studying at the graduate level and being accepted shows that the faculty at the College of Music believe that you have a future as a professional in the field of music.

Studying at the graduate level is quite different than studying at the undergraduate level. Graduate students are expected to work at a higher level in regard to both determination and quality of work. Graduate study is also more difficult academically and students are often not ready to do this kind of work.

This article is a collection of suggestions for students in the month or two prior to beginning graduate study. It is separated into three categories: things to do, things to review and research, and things to buy. The more of these things that you are able to prepare before the start of classes, the more prepared you will be for graduate music study and beyond.

Things to Do

Organize Finances

Graduate school can be expensive for many students. It is important to make sure that you have enough money to pay your tuition, fees, and other expenses (such as books and music) for the duration of your study. Unfortunately, some students run out of money and leave school to work. Some of these students never return to finish their degrees. This might be the most important thing that you do prior to beginning study.

Manage Your Work

When studying at graduate school, students need to spend a great deal of time attending classes, doing

assignments and practicing their instruments. It is advised that students do not try to work a full-time job while studying graduate school. Many employers, especially schools and universities, will allow graduate students to take leave from their work while they are studying in graduate school. If you are currently in a full-time job, it is advised that you find a way to take leave while studying. If you are currently working in a part-time job, you should consider whether the income you make is truly worth the time taken away from your studies.

Create or Update Your Curriculum Vitae (CV)

A Curriculum Vitae (CV) is an academic document that lists all of the academic study, work, and activities that you have done in the past. They are generally used to apply to academic positions, which you will probably be looking for if you are getting a graduate degree (especially a doctoral degree). A CV generally contains sections for skills, education, teaching experience, research experience, publications, academic presentations, awards, honors, and organizations. It is important to keep your CV updated and if you have never made one, you can find plenty of information about writing CVs on the internet. Having an updated CV that looks good is a sign of a professional.

Practice Your Fundamentals

If you are studying in a performance major, including conducting, when you begin graduate studies your private teacher will probably first want to check your fundamental skills and the way you practice them. In your last degree program, the final requirement was probably to perform a concert. During that time most students focus more on their recital repertoire than on their fundamentals. Reviewing your fundamental skills is an excellent way to prepare for starting private lessons in a new program.

Things to Review and Research

Academic Preparation

One of the most important things you will study at graduate school is the research in your area of study. If you can, it would be helpful to look at the books, journals, theses, and websites in your field before coming to study. Yes, you will surely study these sources as a graduate student, but it is always helpful to start early.

Also, at the undergraduate level, students learned the fundamental music subjects, including music history, theory, and analysis. At the graduate level students will further study these subjects at a higher level, but are expected to have basic knowledge in these subjects. Students should continue to develop knowledge in these essential areas of study.

Time Management/Productivity Skills

When first starting graduate school, students will realize that their schedules are more free than when they were undergraduates. However, this free time is taken up by assigned reading for classes, time-consuming class assignments, and long practice schedules. Becoming good at managing your time and being highly productive is extremely important if you wish to succeed in graduate school and also have time to sleep and eat. There is a near endless amount of information written about being productive. A personal favorite of mine is the book Getting Things Done by David Allen. The main point of this book is that if you keep an organized to-do list that covers all aspects of your life, and have a system for regularly reviewing it, you can really focus on your current task because your mind isn't busy worrying about everything else you have to do. This book, along with many others, can really help in managing the busy life of a graduate student.

Professional Networking Skills

Even before entering graduate school is important to think about what you will do after graduation. Surely you will be looking for a job. Professional Networking is the set of skills you have to meet new people, especially those in your area of study. The university is a great place to meet people that may one day help you to get a job. Before beginning study it is advised to study some Professional Networking skills so that you are ready when classes begin. There is a lot of information about this topic on the internet and a very popular organization, Linked In (www.linkedin.com).

Things to Buy

Standard Books in Your Area of Study

As a profession musician and scholar you should have a good collection of standard reference books in

your area of study. As a graduate student you will need these resources. Many of them will be in the college library, but may be checked out. As a professional, you should have a copy of your own. If you are unsure about what these resources are, ask your private instructor or one of the university professors. If you have not yet met them you can find their email addresses on the college website.

Standard Music Repertoire in Your Performance Area

A professional musician should have original copies of all the standard music repertoire. Even if you don't plan to play all of the standard repertoire now, it would be a good idea to start collecting it now. Getting all of the standard repertoire is expensive and usually takes a long time. Also, don't forget to start collecting music for students of different ages if you are teaching or plan to teach private lessons.

Professional Clothing

Graduate students are expected to dress in a professional manner. The style of dress does not need to be very formal, but should not be casual. A good rule for graduate students is to dress like a teacher. When graduate students dress in a professional manner it shows their instructors and college administrators that they are committed to being a professional. This is really important for graduate students that will be seeking employment in the future, as their instructors and administrators can assist in finding them work.

Notebook Computer and Backup Hard drive

Nowadays notebook computers are becoming less popular as people have started to use tablets such as the iPad. In graduate school, students will generally write more papers and need a computer quite often. It is recommended to have a small and light notebook computer, if possible, that can be carried around all the time. Since graduate students usually don't have much free time, having a portable office can really aid in productivity. Also, it is extremely important to have a backup hard drive. Hard drives in computers do fail, and usually when this happens, all of the data is lost. It would be terrible if you worked on an assignment for 10 hours (possible in graduate school) and lost all of your work because you didn't back up. When you do get a backup hard drive, make sure to use it often to back up your files.

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