

Graduate Application Guide

For entry in Fall 2025

1. What do I need to know?

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3. How do I apply?

4. What happens after I apply?



Questions?

My name is James and I will be handling your application. Please do not hesitate to reach out by email if you have any questions. Looking forward to working with you!

James Doing
Graduate Program Manager
gpm@music.wisc.edu

1. What do I need to know?

Before you apply...

All candidates must have completed a Bachelor's degree in Music at an accredited institution with a minimum GPA of 3.0 before the start of the Fall 2025 semester.

Doctoral candidates must have completed a Master's degree before the start of the Fall 2025 semester, unless you have obtained the consent of our faculty.

Additionally, the Music Education and Wind Conducting programs require school teaching experience.

Areas of Study

www.music.wisc.edu/areas

MUSIC

Master of Arts (MA)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Musicology

MUSIC EDUCATION

Master of Music (MM)*

Music Education

*The MS and PhD are offered in the
Dept. of Curriculum & Instruction
<https://ci.education.wisc.edu/>

MUSIC PERFORMANCE

Master of Music (MM)

Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)

Brass

Composition

Conducting: Choral

Conducting: Orchestral

Conducting: Wind

Jazz (MM only)

Percussion

Piano: Collaborative

Piano: Perf. & Pedagogy

Piano: Performance

Strings

Voice

Woodwinds



What degree am I applying for?

Be careful when selecting your degree in the Graduate School application! If you choose the wrong program, you will have to submit a new application and pay a new fee. Please review the Areas of Study (see right) and make sure you are picking the correct degree program.



Do I have to send test scores?

The GRE is not required for our graduate programs.

English Proficiency

An English test score is required for all international students. The School of Music does not grant waivers for U.S. degree holders. Minimum acceptable scores are:

- TOEFL.....85
- IELTS.....7.0
- DuoLingo.....120



Do I have to audition?

An audition is required for all Music Performance degrees (except Composition). Please review the specific instructions for your Area of Study.

Candidates for the degrees in Composition, Musicology, and Music Education are not required to complete an audition or interview.

2. What do I need to prepare?



In addition to these general requirements, please consult the documents on our website for specific instructions from your *Area of Study*.

A. The following materials are required for all candidates:



Statement of Purpose

Describe your educational and professional background and what you plan to do with your degree. Be sure to include any relevant teaching experience and other skills that would qualify you to serve as a Teaching Assistant in the School of Music.



Musical CV / Full repertoire list

As part of your CV, please include a comprehensive list of repertoire that you have mastered, performed, conducted, and composed.



Letters of recommendation

Select no more than 3 people to serve as your recommenders. When you enter their contact information on the application, they will receive an automated link to upload their letters online.



Unofficial transcripts

You will upload an unofficial transcript or grade report from each school where you have received a degree. This can be a scan or screenshot of your grade report, or a full transcript.

B. The following materials are only required for some candidates:



Portfolio

Required for all Music Performance degrees (see list of *Areas of Study* above)

See the specific instructions from your *Area of Study*. You must prepare a separate URL link containing all of your media. Do NOT upload media directly to the “Digital Portfolio” section of the application.



Writing sample(s)

Required for MA/PhD Musicology and all DMA candidates (not required for MM)

- DMA candidates must submit 1 sample of their academic writing.
- MA/PhD candidates must submit 2 samples of their academic writing.



Composition scores

Required for *Composition* only

Choose a maximum of 5 scores to match the recordings in your portfolio.

3. How do I apply?

Link to Graduate School application:

<https://gradapply.wisc.edu/apply/>

Application Sidebar:

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Music Section

Before filling out this part, please be sure to review the guidelines from your Area of Study. Here is where you will complete your music-specific details, including (if applicable):

- Enter your audition preferences
- Request your studio
- Upload your writing sample
- Upload your composition scores
- Indicate your residency status for our information

Digital Portfolio

Please do **not** upload media directly to this Digital Portfolio. Instead, select “Upload Link” at the bottom and provide the URL to your external portfolio. To verify that the URL has been uploaded properly, select “Preview” → “Display Website”

Follow the instructions from your Area of Study. Be sure that your URL is unlocked and accessible to the public so that our faculty can view your materials.

Statement & CV/Resume

Follow the instructions on Page 2. For the CV, please be sure to include a comprehensive repertoire list.



DEADLINE

Submit your finished application no later than
11:59 PM (CST) on Sunday, December 1.

4. What happens after I apply?

Brass, Conducting, Jazz, Percussion, Piano, Strings, Voice, and Woodwinds



Prescreening for auditions

Performance faculty will review portfolios and determine eligibility for the full audition. Decisions will be sent no later than Friday, December 20.



Auditions

Auditions will be held in January and February. Please consult the documents on our website for specific instructions from your Area of Study regarding audition modalities and repertoire requirements.



Travel options

You may visit UW-Madison and complete your audition in person, or you may stay at home and update your portfolio according to the audition requirements, followed by a Zoom interview on the audition day.

- Brass & Jazz applicants who stay at home will audition live on Zoom.
- Conducting auditions must be completed in person.

Composition, Musicology, and Music Education

No audition or interview is required for your program, although the faculty may contact you for further information or to schedule an optional Zoom meeting or campus visit. In any case, your file will be reviewed between December and February. Thank you for your patience!



Admission

Admission decisions are usually finalized in mid-February. You will be admitted, denied, or placed on a waitlist for your Area of Study.

Please note that admission to the School of Music does not guarantee admission to the Graduate School. The Graduate School must approve your admission separately on the basis of your official transcripts, which you will be asked to submit at that time.



Funding

Initial funding offers will be made in mid-March. Detailed information regarding the funding selection process will be provided upon admission to the School of Music.

In the meantime, see the document called "Graduate Funding in the School of Music" on our website for basic information. We offer funding primarily in the form of Fellowships and Teaching Assistantships.