

Music Theory Graduate Placement Test

Guidelines for Graduate Students

Introduction

The Graduate Placement Test (GPT) is a ninety-minute exam that will ascertain your readiness to pursue the required graduate credits in music theory and composition. Graduate students in music education, music theory/composition, or applied music must achieve a score of at least 70 percent on the exam. If these qualifications are not met, the student must register for a remedial intensive review course, MTC 591: Music Theory Review and obtain a passing grade before enrolling in higher-level music theory courses. Remember that remedial course credits do not count toward the total for graduation.

Format of the Exam

The exam assesses a students' ability to do the following:

- 1) List pitches of chromatic chords given a key and chord function symbol, including secondary function, augmented sixth and Neapolitan chords.
- 2) Examine passages of music and identify elements that correspond to music theory terminology, such as those related to:
 - a) non-chord tones (*appoggiatura, suspension, etc.*)
 - b) motive (*tonal transposition, inversion, etc.*)
 - c) harmony (*secondary pre-dominant, mode mixture, sus, whole-tone, tonic expansion, circle of fifths progression, retrogression, etc.*)
 - d) modulation (*direct, common-chord pivot, enharmonic, etc.*)
 - e) cadences (*authentic, turnaround chords, elision, etc.*)
 - f) rhythm (*syncopation, hemiola, compound meter, hypermeter, etc.*)
 - g) contrapuntal motion (*similar, oblique, etc.*)
 - h) texture (*homophony, non-imitative polyphony, etc.*)
- 3) Use a chord symbol (C7/E, etc.) to label harmony based on a figured bass
- 4) Examine a musical passage that exhibits modulation and identify modulation methods (*direct, common-chord pivot, enharmonic, etc.*)

Technical needs

This exam is given online using a test proctoring service. Students will need to register for the exam using instructions given by the Wells School of Music Graduate Coordinator and then will access it using D2L. Students must complete the exam independently, in one sitting, in a private space. All answers will be input online, and students may not access other aspects of their computer (the screen, microphone and camera will be recorded as a proctor).

Students may use a blank sheet of staff paper and a piano or keyboard for assistance taking the exam.

Studying for the Exam

Too few entering graduate students review adequately for this exam. Only a small percentage pass, and many earn scores in the 40 to 50 percent range. One should begin a detailed review of music theory several weeks before taking the exam, ideally employing a theory textbook such as TONAL HARMONY by Kostka and Payne.

If you have any general questions about the placement exam, please contact the chair of the Department of Music Theory, History and Composition, Professor Adam Silverman (asilverman@wcupa.edu).

Sample Questions

Writing chromatic chords.

- 1) Spell V^4_2/ii in F Major, listing the bass tone first.
- 2) Spell $Neap^6$ in B Minor, listing the bass tone first.
- 3) Spell Fr^{+6} in G Minor, listing the bass tone first.

Terminology

Locate occurrences in this musical passage that corresponds to each of these terms; audio is online here, beginning at 3 minutes, 16 seconds:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyhUHJKfR5Y>.

- 4) A secondary pre-dominant
- 5) A third inversion chord
- 6) A chromatic neighbor-tone
- 7) A motive transformed through ornamented transposition
- 8) A half cadence
- 9) A circle of fifths progression
- 10) An anacrusis

Oh, I, could tell you why The o - cean's near the shore I could
think of things I'd ne-ver think be - fore, And then I'd sit and think some more

Chord symbols: G, F#m7, Bm7, Em7, A7, D, C#m7(b5), F#7, Bm, Bm/A, E7/G#, A7

Analysis. Use this musical excerpt to answer questions that follow; audio is online here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6rpb5bZh8js>.

1. Allegro

11) What texture type is exhibited in bars 1-5?

- a) Heterophony
- b) Homophony
- c) Non-imitative polyphony
- d) Imitative polyphony
- e) Monophony
- f) Imitative monophony
- g) Non-imitative polyphony

12) What texture type is exhibited in bars 7-13? (use the same choices as above)

13) What harmony is found on the downbeat of bar 2 (use a Roman numeral)?

14) What harmony is found on the third beat of bar 5 (use a Roman numeral)?

15) Locate an instance of a *pedal tone*.

16) Locate one or more *appoggiaturas*.

Analysis. Use this musical excerpt to answer questions; audio is online here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C2Dm2ulenis>.

Allegro molto ♩ = 160

f

sempre f

- 17) What type of harmony is prominent?
- Major/minor
 - Sus
 - Octatonic
 - Whole-tone
 - Meridian
- 18) What term best describes this music's approach to meter?
- Simple
 - Compound
 - Mixed
- 19) What polyphonic motion type is represented in the left-hand dyads?
- Contrary
 - Parallel
 - Oblique
 - Similar
- 20) Which compositional approaches are evident here?
- Imitative polyphony
 - Ground bass
 - Additive rhythm
 - Atonality
 - Dodecaphony
 - Whole-tone
 - Metric modulation

Modulation. Use this musical excerpt to answer questions; audio is online here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZCZyApl8fQ>

The musical score is for a piano piece in 2/4 time, marked 'Andante'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system (bars 1-5) begins in B-flat major. In bar 1, the right hand plays a chord with a fingering of 4-2 and the left hand plays a bass line with a fingering of 1. In bar 2, the right hand has a fingering of 5 and the left hand has a fingering of 1. In bar 3, the right hand has a fingering of 3 and the left hand has a fingering of 1. In bar 4, the right hand has a fingering of 4 and the left hand has a fingering of 1. In bar 5, the right hand has a fingering of 5 and the left hand has a fingering of 1. The modulation from B-flat major to D minor occurs between bars 4 and 5. The second system (bars 6-8) continues in D minor. In bar 6, the right hand has a fingering of 5 and the left hand has a fingering of 1. In bar 7, the right hand has a fingering of 1 and the left hand has a fingering of 1. In bar 8, the right hand has a fingering of 1 and the left hand has a fingering of 1. Performance markings include 'p' (piano), 'cresc.' (crescendo), and 'sempre staccato'. The score also includes various articulation marks and fingerings.

21) The modulation that occurs between bars 1 and 6 occurs via what technique?

- a) Direct modulation
- b) Pivot modulation by common-chord
- c) Pivot modulation by enharmonic common-chord
- d) Common-tone modulation

22) The modulation that occurs between bars 6 and 8 occurs via what technique? (use the same choices as above)

An answer key is found on the next page

Answer Key

- 1) C (and D, F#, and A in any order)
- 2) E (and C and G in any order)
- 3) Eb (and G, A and C# in any order)
- 4) C#m7^(b5)
- 5) Bm/A
- 6) A# with the lyric "could" and the D#s in "think of things I'd never think"
- 7) The music over "think of things I'd never think before," as compared to "ocean's near the shore."
- 8) In the last bar of the example
- 9) Starting in the second complete bar on F#m7 through the D chord at the end of the first system.
- 10) The "pick-up" note (D) at the beginning
- 11) Homophony
- 12) Imitative polyphony
- 13) iv (the F is a non-chord tone)
- 14) vii^{o7}/iv
- 15) The long D beginning in bar 7 is a pedal tone when it is not part of the harmony (bars 9 and 13). The left-hand G in bar 4 is also a pedal tone on the first beat of the bar.
- 16) The F that begins bar 7, the C that begins bar 8, the G# that begins bar 10... there are more.
- 17) Octatonic
- 18) Mixed
- 19) Oblique
- 20) Additive rhythm; atonality
- 21) Direct modulation
- 22) Pivot modulation by common-chord