

**University of Manitoba
Desautels Faculty of Music**

**Graduate Diagnostic Exam in Music Theory
(updated June 25, 2019)**

Students admitted to the Master of Music program in the Desautels Faculty of Music are expected to possess a certain breadth and depth of knowledge of music theory, in order to enter and succeed in the graduate theory seminar (MUSC 7110). In order to assess their knowledge, all incoming graduate students must write a diagnostic exam, involving theory and analysis of tonal and post-tonal music. This exam will normally be given during the week preceding the first week of classes in September, at a date and time set by the Faculty. The material on the exam corresponds to that covered in the Faculty's undergraduate theory courses. You will need to write the diagnostic exam before you register for any courses.

You will have 2.5 hours (150 minutes) in which to complete the exam. The exam contains four parts, as follows:

1. Harmonization, in four-voice chorale style, of a brief tonal melody

A short chorale-style melody will be given in the soprano. You will write a harmonization of the melody, in four voices. In some bars, a bass line and/or figured bass symbols may be provided. For at least part of the melody, you will need to write your own bass line and harmonic progression. You will provide complete harmonic analysis, including figured bass for inversions, using any standard analytical notation.

You should expect to include the following in the harmonization:

- A correct and effective harmonic progression
- Correct voice leading
- Some use of non-harmonic tones
- Correct use of some chromatic chords, such as applied (secondary) dominants, diminished sevenths, Neapolitan, borrowed chords / modal mixture, augmented sixth chords, other linear chromatic chords

2. Analysis of an extended movement of 18th or 19th century music

You will be given a complete extended movement from the 18th or 19th century repertoire. You will be asked some questions about the piece, dealing with the following topics:

- Large-scale formal structure. This may include large forms such as sonata-allegro or rondo, as well as multi-part forms (various types of binary, ternary, etc.)
- Analysis of smaller sections: cadences, division into phrases, etc.
- Discussion of how different sections of the movement relate to each other
- Discussion of the formal function or purpose of a given section within the entire movement
- Analysis of key areas and modulations
- Some detailed harmonic analysis of shorter sections may be required

3. Analysis of chromatic harmony

In this section, you will need to provide complete and detailed harmonic analysis of a passage of chromatic harmony, most likely from the 19th century repertoire. The types of chromatic chords to be expected are those listed above for Part 1.

In addition to providing harmonic analysis (using any standard notation), you may be asked to explain the function or voice leading of certain chords in the passage, using your own words.

4. Analysis of 20th century music

In this section, you will be given a short complete piece (or section from a longer piece) of 20th century music, and then asked some analytical questions about the piece. Those questions will deal with the following:

- Pitch structure. Depending on the piece, you may want to refer to different pitch collections or scales, or to employ specific analytical techniques (such as pitch-class set theory or 12-tone theory). However, employing specific theories is not strictly necessary. What is important is that you are able to discuss aspects of melody and harmony in detail, in any way that seems useful and appropriate to you.
- Formal structure. You will be asked to describe the form of the piece, in any way that seems useful and appropriate. To help determine the form, you may be asked to discuss how different sections in the piece relate to each other, or contrast with each other.
- Other features of the music, including rhythm, texture, timbre (tone colour).

Based on your work on each part of the exam, you may be required to complete the theory review module for that part; for example, a student might pass parts 1 and 4, but be required to complete theory review for parts 2 and 3. If you do sufficiently well on all four parts of the exam, you will not be required to complete any theory review. All theory review modules will need to be completed during the student's first term in the master's program; theory review does not count for credit toward the Master of Music degree.

Please prepare thoroughly for the diagnostic exam! Careful and detailed preparation may ensure that you don't need to complete any theory review. To help you prepare for the exam, we recommend that you study from undergraduate theory textbooks, such as the following:

- Horton and Ritchey, *Harmony Through Melody*
- Kostka and Payne, *Tonal Harmony*
- Clendinning and Marvin, *Theory and Analysis*
- Laitz, *The Complete Musician*
- Burstein and Straus, *Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony*
- Straus, *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*
- Roig-Francoli, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music*