

GRADUATE DIAGNOSTIC  
PLACEMENT EXAMINATION  
STUDY GUIDES

**Part I: Theory and Aural Skills**

A. Fundamentals

The examination will include questions which cover the notation and identification of standard notation, clefs, key signatures, rhythmic devices such as beams and rests, meter signatures, and tempo and expressive markings. Also included may be ‘church’ modes, all major and minor scales, interval recognition and construction given standard names (perfect fifth, major second, etc.), and the building of triads, seventh chords, and extended dominants (ninth, eleventh, and thirteenth chords). The student should also know the so-called French, Italian, and German augmented sixth chords.

B. Aural Skills (sight-singing and dictation)

(1) The student will be asked to sing two melodies in different clefs. After a brief silent practice, the student should sing through the melodies without stopping. Evaluation is based on musicality and phrasing, pitch and rhythm accuracy, tonal retention, and familiarity with clefs. (2) The student will be asked to write down a melody that will be played at the keyboard. The melody will be a few times, then each phrase will be played a few times, followed by a final playing. (3) The student will be asked to write down short chorale progressions, using standard Roman and Arabic figured-bass symbols in a manner similar to that described in (2) above.

C. Harmonization

A figured bass will be given. The student will be asked to realize the bass in a traditional four-part vocal style, showing an understanding of figured bass notation, correct voice-leading and spacing, non-harmonic tones, and an ability to supply the complete harmonic analysis.

D. Analysis

A musical example will be provided. Then questions will be asked about the functional harmonic analysis, dissonance treatment (non-harmonic tones), methods of formal articulation (modulation and other methods of contrast, cadence types: plagal, deceptive, etc.), compositional form (binary, ternary, theme and variations, etc.), and other factors depending on the given example.

E. Counterpoint (for students intending to major in composition)

The student will be asked to add a line in ‘florid’ style above or below a given line (16<sup>th</sup>-century style). Evaluation will be based on correctness of traditional technique in voice-leading, dissonance treatment, and rhythmic style.

Suggested Review Materials:

*Basic Materials in Music Theory*, by Paul Harder;

*Music in Theory and Practice*, by Bruce Benward, or a similar first and second year introductory text in theory for music majors.

*Gradus ad Parnassum*, by Fux (trans. Mann);

*Counterpoint in Composition*, Schachter et al.;

*Modal Counterpoint*, Thomas Benjamin (out of print)

## **Part II: Music History and Literature**

This exam is designed to test your knowledge of the Medieval through contemporary eras as covered in an undergraduate music history survey course for music majors. An effective way to prepare is to review any of the standard comprehensive music history textbooks, such as Bonds, Burkholder/Grout/Palisca, Seaton, Stolba, Wright/Simms, along with any complementary listening and score examples.

### **A. Historical Overview**

This is a multiple choice exam testing your knowledge of standard composers, genres, works, compositional techniques, periods, and style characteristics.

### **B. Score Identification**

This section consists of score examples in which you will be asked to identify the style period, genre, and a possible composer, along with specific reasons justifying your identification.

### **C. Listening Identification**

This is a drop-the-needle exam of standard literature and styles, Medieval through 20<sup>th</sup> century, asking you to identify either the specific work or a most likely composer, along with the selection's style period or era.