

## SUNY-Fredonia School of Music

### *Graduate Comprehensive Exam Policies*

Revised 23 April 2010

#### Applicability:

These policies and procedures apply to graduate students pursuing the Master of Music degree in performance, composition, and music theory; they do not apply to those pursuing the Master of Music in Music Education degree or the Master of Music in Music Therapy degree. Any student undertaking the graduate comprehensive exam for the stated degrees must be enrolled as a graduate student during the semester in which the exam is undertaken.

#### Formation of Committee:

The comprehensive exam committee is comprised of three members of the School of Music faculty chosen in consultation with candidate's advisor or applied/studio instructor and will include: the candidate's advisor or applied/studio instructor, a faculty member of the musicology division, and faculty member of the music theory division. The committee members need *not* be full-time, tenure-track faculty members. Whenever possible, the musicology and theory members will be those who have taught the candidate as a student in a graduate class.

#### Timeline:

The exam will take place during the last semester of the candidate's graduate work. In order to allow sufficient time for preparation, and to manage the teaching commitments of faculty members, the *Request for Oral Comprehensive Exam* must be submitted to the Associate Director for Academic Affairs early in the semester; for the fall semesters this date is **5 September**; for the spring semesters this date is **5 February**. Upon receipt, the *Request for Oral Comprehensive Exam* will be dated, recorded, and forwarded with instructions to the area head (or applied teacher where appropriate) to coordinate formation of the committee. **The committee must be formed and exam questions set by 20 September and 20 February respectively.** The exam shall take place no sooner than one month after the formation of the committee.

#### Content of the Exam:

The exam content is developed by the committee in a collaborative manner and addresses the three areas of performance, music history, and music theory as appropriate for the student's work while in residence. Each committee member will develop and present to the student and the committee an exam question. The question may, but need not, focus on the student's performance repertoire or particular research specialty. The question is motivated by and will have at its core the principle of "comprehensive" understanding at the graduate level. Thus, the question will be broad enough to allow the candidate to demonstrate facility with context and background of the subject matter, but specific enough to allow for the demonstration of deep understanding. Any request by the candidate for the use of multimedia must be approved by the committee beforehand.

## Exam Preparation:

Preparation for the exam is the candidate's responsibility and is to be carried out independently. Early in the process, committee members may suggest primary or secondary source readings. Candidates are thus encouraged to enquire about research resources. Where clarification is needed regarding expectations of any particular question, candidates may seek such clarification from committee members.

## Exam Procedure:

The exam will last ninety (90) minutes and proceed as an oral examination of the candidate rather than a formal presentation of prepared material. Examination questions will be asked of the candidate moving in turn from one area to the other. Although the appropriate examiner will lead the questions for each section of the exam, all examiners will participate in the oral examination by presenting pertinent questions, which may, at times, overlap with other areas of the exam. The candidate will be allowed to bring to the exam an outline or minimal notes related to the exam questions, but should be prepared to address each question confidently and effectively without having to refer extensively prepared written material.

## Outcomes of the Exam:

Three outcomes are allowed and are as follows:

"Pass." The candidate completes the exam and successfully fulfills this requirement without reservations.

"Pass with Revisions." The candidate successfully completes the majority of the exam but must revise a minor portion of the exam before a date set by the committee. The committee and exam content remain in place. The committee schedules the re-examination in consultation with the candidate.

"Fail." The candidate's performance on the exam is unacceptable and must be undertaken anew the *following* semester. The committee will be reconstituted and may involve different members. New content for the exam will be developed. *Candidates are allowed no more than two chances total to pass the graduate comprehensive exam.*

Students who fail the comprehensive exam and are to retake the exam in a succeeding semester must maintain continuous enrolment until the exam is completed. This is accomplished by registering for GRAD 699, "Continuous Enrollment." Only in special cases (military service, medical circumstance, approved caretaking responsibilities) is a student eligible for academic leave of absence once the graduate comprehensive exams have been taken. Students approved for such a leave of absence must re-enroll in GRAD 699 for the semester in which they re-take the exam.