

Doctoral Programs in Music Education: An Examination of Degrees, Curricula, and Qualifying Examinations

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Executive Summary

- Background: CIC school discussions/ASPA conversations at SMTE
- Questions: What do we know about programs of study; Is there agreement on what constitutes a doctoral degree
- Identified through CMS Directory, reported data on doctoral students given to NASM for 2010-11, and personal knowledge of the field
- Information about programs of study generated strictly from websites and linked documents
- Quite likely there are additional programs associated predominantly with schools of education and programs featuring arts education
- Work in progress and data requires verification by faculty
- Database based on questions about:
 - Name of degree
 - NASM affiliation
 - Mission/philosophical position
 - Maximum time to completion/residency/total credit hours
 - Financial aid
 - Admissions requirements
 - Examination structure
 - Dissertation/committee structure
 - Required classes as a music ed core
- Total N of North American schools in study: 61 (see attached listing)
 - PhD = 46
 - DMA = 10
 - EdD = 4 7 institutions offer multiple degree programs
 - DA = 2
 - DME = 1
- Nearly all NASM schools
- Range of time to completion was 3-10 years with 7/8 average
- Total semester credit hours averaged 90 beyond bachelors degree
- Financial aid in the form of assistantships and/or fellowships/difficult to determine level of support but most packages included tuition costs and some stipend
- All schools specify some admissions guidelines/ranges from undergraduate degree and letters of reference to very detailed lists of requirements that include portfolios of writings, DVDs of teaching, personal statements, resumes, and required essays on a given topic
- Most schools require 2-3 years of K-12 teaching and masters degree, but this is not uniform

- Majority of schools require placement exams in music theory and history
- Majority of schools require a comprehensive exam at conclusion of course work/written and oral exams and most schools ask candidates to sit for day-long exams written by faculty
- Some notable exceptions to the above with 4 schools requiring student generated comp exams and a combination of projects and sit-down exams
- A small number of schools require a candidacy exam in music education after one year of coursework
- All schools require dissertation, but variety of approaches to proposals, committees, and oral examination
- Two-thirds of schools have a delineated core of music education course work, rest leave course selection open to student and guiding committee
- Difficult from websites to determine what courses really exist in the real curriculum that candidates encounter
- Expected distribution of “foundations” courses in philosophy, history, curriculum, and intro to research
- Surprisingly varied approaches to more advanced research courses with many schools opting for electives outside of school qualitative/quantitative courses
- Elective content in music history/theory/performance
- Lack of coursework in higher education teaching, but some schools have innovated internship programs
- Heavy use of elective work outside of music
- Some schools place strong emphasis on the development of a secondary area of expertise and include this secondary area in comprehensive exam structure
- Some observations so far:
 - Innovative aspects of some programs might be worth profiling as best practices, but difficult to assess
 - Websites in some cases are poorly designed and difficult to parse/best sites have summary information and links to handbooks or other downloadable files for details
 - Few programs provide information on past students and their research
 - Difficult to determine if there is a central core of course experiences for the doctorate in music education beyond very tradition courses
 - Advancement of teaching ability, especially for college teaching, quite difficult to determine
 - Clear need for national conversation on the topic of music education professor preparation which would seem essential for teacher education reform at the K-12 level
 - Need to improve the accuracy of the database and widely distribute

Detailed Information on this presentation: <http://www.peterrwebster.com/>

Comments to the authors are welcome