

**PENN STATE**  
**SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

**VOICE AREA HANDBOOK**

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## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

This handbook is a set of practical guidelines compiled by the voice faculty. It is designed as a helpful reference and a means of clarifying many of the day-to-day happenings in the voice area. It does not attempt to be comprehensive. Questions pertaining to degree requirements should be addressed to the proper source.

### **SCHEDULING VOICE LESSONS**

Students should contact their assigned teacher either prior to or within the first days of each semester to schedule regular lessons times. Some teachers will post available lesson times and expect students to sign-up (after having confirmed availability with accompanists); others will ask for a copy of schedules (from you and your accompanist) and will assign lesson times.

### **ACCOMPANISTS**

It is your responsibility to find an accompanist who can be available for your lessons, juries, and performances. Accompanists will typically be needed for the second half-hour of lessons each week, beginning after the first few weeks of initial study. (Staff accompanists from Theatre may be available to play for musical theatre students.) One resource for finding accompanists is your teacher who may make recommendations. (Singers must remember that accompanists are equal partners in music making. Ensemble preparation is not to be neglected; this includes being prompt to rehearsals and lessons, and providing music to accompanists in a timely manner.)

### **ACADEMIC REMINDERS**

Voice students in BM, BMA, and BS degree programs must be enrolled in a vocal ensemble each semester. Those in the BA degree program must be in an ensemble for four semesters.

The voice faculty strongly recommends that all voice emphasis students and voice minors enroll for diction (MUSIC 387) during their freshman year. This course is a requirement for the Music Education degree program.

Voice students planning to enter the Music Education degree program should take the voice proficiency exam during their freshman year. Information may be obtained from the Music Education staff assistant.

### **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

Each student is assigned to an advisor, and is strongly encouraged to visit his or her advisor at least once per semester. Advisors have copies of degree audit forms for distribution to their advisees and receive reports about academic difficulties. They can be valuable sources of help in discussing degree progress, giving advice concerning academic problems, or selecting courses for subsequent semesters.

### DECLARING A MAJOR / MID-PROGRAM EVALUATION

From the School of Music Undergraduate handbook:

*Students are admitted to the School of Music and the College of Arts and Architecture under the designation AAMUS and begin to track their intended degree program. Program reviews are held during the fourth semester. Students who have achieved satisfactory standing may then formally change to their intended major.*

To facilitate program reviews for voice students, a mid-program evaluation will take place at the V270J or V280J jury (see PROCEDURE FOR ALL UNDERGRADUATE VOICE JURIES). Students interested in pursuing the BM or BMA degree will be required to present a dossier including performance credits, a statement of goals, and a cumulative repertoire list. The outcome of the jury will be among the factors that determine the appropriateness for entry into specific degree programs.

### ADDITIONAL STUDY IN ALL DEGREE PROGRAMS

Students often wish to continue studying voice after completing their required applied sequence (4 semesters for BA and MM, 7 semesters for BME, 8 semesters for BM, BMA, and BFA). To request additional semesters (on a space-available basis, to a maximum of 10 undergraduate or 6 graduate), provide a written request to the voice faculty by the end of the last required semester. Include your reasons for continuing study, proposed graduation date, and a copy of your unofficial transcript.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

It is expected that students admitted to the jury track will progress in accordance with their degree program. Students who leave the jury track for any reason other than an official leave of absence must re-audition. Contact the auditions secretary, Irene Kohute, concerning the re-audition.

## VOCAL EVENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

All undergraduate voice majors and minors, BFA in Musical Theatre students, and Master of Music students are required to attend solo vocal events each semester. The number required is seven for School of Music students and three for Musical Theatre students. Students may choose concerts from a list of offerings that will be given to each student by his or her voice teacher. The list is also posted on the Voice Area Bulletin Board. In most cases students may not choose events in which they are performing. Students are encouraged to check the Voice Area Bulletin Board regularly for reminder notices of events.

This requirement benefits voice students in the following ways:

1. As singers, voice students need to know as much vocal literature as possible. The body of literature is so vast that no student could sing even a large fraction of it, so they must learn most vocal works by listening to live concerts or recordings.
2. As students of singing, voice students need to hear their teachers, other solo artists, and other students perform, so as to see and hear in action the physical, vocal, musical, and artistic principles they are learning in the studio.
3. As members of the School of Music community and the voice area, voice students need to support the solo vocal activities of their teachers, peers and the School.
4. As aspiring professional musicians, voice students need to acquire the habit of going to concerts.

### VOCAL EVENTS SELECTION

Approved vocal events are solo performances that focus on students who currently study voice at Penn State, and Penn State-sponsored performances that emphasize solo singing. Choral concerts are not counted towards the attendance requirement, but oratorio performances with solo singing are. Also approved are: Jury Recognition Recitals, NATS Student Auditions, dress rehearsals for recitals, multiple performances of the Penn State Opera Theatre (because of the different casts), and School of Music-sponsored vocal master classes and trips (such as the New York opera Trip and the New York musical theatre trip—one show only). Other events are approved at the discretion of the voice faculty. Events which fall outside these categories will not receive credit.

### PROCEDURE AND GRADE INFLUENCE

Students will receive credit for solo vocal events in one of two ways:

1. Pick up an **attendance coupon** from a voice faculty member before the concert, fill it out, and return it to the same faculty member after the concert. This procedure will be followed in School of Music recitals.
2. If there is no coupon available, write your name and student number on the program (not wrapped in a paper around it or stuck to it), and put it **in Dr. Boardman's mail box in Room 234, Music Building I. *Caution: Do not place your program in the accordion file in the mail room or in a box outside the recital hall after a concert.*** Programs collected in this way will give School of Music students credit for the School of Music recital requirement, but not voice credit. Dr. Boardman will place any programs she receives from SOM voice undergraduates in the accordion file after she has given them vocal event credit.

The LATEST DATE AND TIME YOU MAY TURN IN YOUR PROGRAMS FOR CREDIT IS **NOON OF THE FIRST DAY OF JURIES**. If your program is turned in after that time, you will not receive credit for it. Period.

Attendance will influence each student's final voice grade in the following ways:

Missing one or two of the events will drop the grade one quality point (i.e., from A to A-).

Missing three or four of the events will drop the grade two quality points (i.e., from A to B+).

Missing five or six of the events will drop the grade three quality points (i.e., from A to B).

## **VOICE FORUM**

Voice Forum is held on Fridays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in room 110, MBI. The forum offers an opportunity for performance with constructive feedback from the voice faculty and from peers, and for special events. A sign-up sheet to sing on Voice Forum will be posted weekly.

All School of Music voice majors and minors are required to attend Voice Forum at least seven times per semester. BFA in Musical Theatre students are required to attend Voice Forum at least three times per semester. Students studying voice as an elective, and those in voice classes are encouraged to attend Voice Forum. To receive attendance credit at Forum, students sign-in on individual studio sheets on the table in room 110. Each voice faculty member keeps track of the attendance of his/her students through these sheets.

Undergraduate students may defer the Voice Forum attendance requirement during any two semesters of study to allow more flexibility in scheduling required general education courses. The student is to make his or her applied teacher aware of any deferred attendance at the beginning of the semester in question to avoid inappropriate grade penalties.

Students are encouraged to check the voice area bulletin board regularly for reminder notices of events.

### **PROCEDURE AND GRADE INFLUENCE**

Each student writes his or her name on the studio sign-in sheets upon arrival at Voice Forum. A record of attendance is kept by the voice faculty. Latecomers and those who leave early will not receive full credit.

Attendance will influence each student's final voice grade in the following ways:

Missing one or two of the required forums will drop the grade one quality point (i.e., from A to A-).

Missing three or four of the required forums will drop the grade two quality points (i.e., from A to B+).

Missing five or more required forums will drop the grade three quality points (i.e., from A to B).

## UNDERGRADUATE VOICE JURY POLICY

### MINIMUM REPERTOIRE REQUIREMENTS

#### Bachelor of Music Bachelor of Musical Arts

Freshman Year: 5 selections in English\* and Italian\*\* each semester.  
 Sophomore: 6 selections in English, Italian, German or French each semester.  
 Junior Year: 7 selections in English, Italian, German, and French each semester.  
 Senior Year: 8 selections in English, Italian, German, and French each semester.

#### Bachelor of Music Education Bachelor of Arts Minor

Freshman Year: 4 selections in English\* and Italian\*\* each semester.  
 Sophomore: 5 selections in English and Italian each semester.  
 Junior Year: 6 selections in English, Italian, German or French each semester.  
 Senior Year: 7 selections in English, Italian, German, and French each semester.

#### Bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre

Sophomore Year: 5 selections, including at least 2 contrasting musical theatre selections and 2 classical selections in English and Italian\*, each semester.  
 Junior Year: 6 selections, including at least 3 contrasting musical theatre selections and 2 classical selections in English and Italian, each semester.  
 Senior Year: 7 selections, including at least 4 contrasting musical theatre selections and 2 classical selections in English and Italian, each semester.

\* *One musical theatre selection may be included at the discretion of the teacher.*

\*\* *Other languages (Latin, Spanish, etc.) may be added or substituted at the discretion of the teacher.*

### PROCEDURE FOR ALL UNDERGRADUATE VOICE JURIES

1. Students studying voice for 2 or more credits, and students in the Bachelor of Fine Arts in Music Theatre degree are required by the voice faculty to take a jury each semester. Students will not typically be required to take a jury the semester of their degree recital.
2. All selections are to be memorized. Singers may begin with the selection of their choice. The faculty will choose another song or songs to be heard.
3. The faculty may ask questions about the composer, the poet or librettist, the form of the piece, the period, the style, or other pertinent musical matters.
4. With the applied music teacher's permission, the voice jury may also serve 3 other purposes:
  - A. To audition for admission to the B.M. or B.M.A. programs:  
To audition for admission to these programs a student is required to present appropriate repertoire equivalent to the jury requirements for these degrees at their course level from the following categories: art songs or arias in English, Italian, and at least one other language. The faculty may ask to hear some or all of these selections.
  - B. To omit a voice course level:  
On rare occasions a student may use the jury as an audition to omit a voice course level. To accomplish this the student must present memorized literature equivalent to that required for the level they wish to omit in addition to the literature memorized for the present semester.
  - C. To be admitted to the voice jury track from Voice 100J or 110J:  
To audition for admission to the voice jury track from Voice 100J or 110J a student must present literature equivalent to that required in the freshman year of the Bachelor of Science in Music Education and Bachelor of Arts degrees.
5. Juries may be deferred when necessary, and only in consultation with the applied teacher. Make-up juries will be heard during a voice faculty meeting early in the subsequent semester.

### GRADING

A letter grade will be assigned by each faculty member. These grades will be averaged to determine the jury grade. The jury grade will influence the course grade in the following manner:

#### Freshman Year and Sophomore Year:

The applied teacher may assign a course grade not more than one full letter grade higher or lower than the averaged jury grade. (Example: An averaged jury grade of "B" will result in a course grade no higher than "A" and no lower than "C".)

#### Junior Year:

The applied teacher may assign a course grade not more than two quality points higher or lower than the averaged jury grade. (Example: An averaged jury grade of "B" will result in a course grade no higher than "A-" and no lower than "C+").

#### Senior Year:

The applied teacher may assign a course grade not more than one quality point higher or lower than the averaged jury grade. (Example: An averaged jury grade of "B" will result in a course grade no higher than "B+" and no lower than "B-".)



## UNDERGRADUATE RECITALS

### RECITAL GUIDELINES

Full degree recitals are required for students in the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Musical Arts programs.

Additional recitals may be presented in any degree program with permission of the instructor.

All recitals must be memorized (exceptions for certain literature may be made upon request to the voice faculty). The performance literature will be determined at the discretion of the applied music teacher.

### DEGREE RECITAL HEARINGS

A hearing is to be scheduled by the student for degree recitals and should take place at least two weeks prior to the performance date. The student will present lists of the performance repertoire to the voice faculty and may begin with the selection of his or her choice. Additional selections will be requested by the voice faculty. The hearing will typically last no more than 20 minutes. Insufficient preparation will result in an unsatisfactory recital hearing.

In the case of an unsatisfactory hearing, the student will be required to reschedule the hearing following adequate preparation time.

At the time of their degree recital hearing, students in the Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Musical Arts programs will present a comprehensive list of repertoire from undergraduate studies, which shows serious study of works from a broad range of styles and languages (art song in English, Italian, German, French, and/or other languages), music of the Baroque, Classic, Romantic, and Twentieth Century periods, opera (some in the original language), oratorio, cantata.

Recital hearings are not required for non-degree recitals, however, Music Education students presenting a recital in the last semester of their junior year or in their senior year may be exempted from juries under the same conditions that apply to BM and BFA students: (1) they must have a hearing at least two weeks before the scheduled performance date and (2) the recital must be evaluated by a committee. The Music Education student committee must consist of the student's voice teacher and another faculty member.

## GRADUATE VOICE JURY POLICY

### MINIMUM REPERTOIRE REQUIREMENTS

Master of Music in Voice Performance

Master of Music in Voice Performance and Pedagogy

8 or more songs each semester, usually representing at least 4 languages. (Extended works may count for more than 1 selection.)

Master of Education in Music Education

PhD in Music Education

Other

5 or more songs each semester, usually representing at least 2 languages.

### PROCEDURE

1. Any student studying voice for 2 or more credits is required by the voice faculty to take a jury each semester; however, students typically will not be required to take a jury the semester of their degree recital.
2. All selections are to be memorized. Singers may begin with the selection of their choice. The faculty will choose another song or songs to be heard.
3. The faculty may ask questions about the composer, the poet or librettist, the form of the piece, the period, the style, or other pertinent musical matters.
4. Juries may be deferred when necessary, and only in consultation with the applied teacher. Make-up juries will be heard during a voice faculty meeting early in the subsequent semester.

### GRADING

A letter grade will be assigned by each faculty member. These grades will be averaged to determine the jury grade. The jury grade will influence the course grade.

## GRADUATE FINAL PROJECTS

Graduate students in Voice Performance and Voice Performance and Vocal Pedagogy are required to present:

- 1) a full recital, and
- 2) one of the following:
  - (a) a lecture-recital, or
  - (b) a research paper.

### MASTER'S RECITALS

All recitals must be memorized (exceptions for certain literature may be made upon request to the voice faculty). The recital literature will be determined at the discretion of the applied music teacher.

The recital will be graded by a special committee appointed by the Graduate Committee.

### RECITAL HEARING

A recital hearing must take place at least two weeks prior to the recital date. The student will present lists of the recital repertoire to the voice faculty and may begin with the selection of his or her choice. Additional selections will be requested by the voice faculty. The recital hearing will typically last no more than 20 minutes. Insufficient preparation will result in an unsatisfactory recital hearing.

In addition, the student must present a list of memorized repertoire, including music from undergraduate studies, which shows serious study of works from a broad range of styles and languages (art song in English, Italian, German, French, and/or other languages), music of the Baroque, Classic, Romantic, and Twentieth Century periods, opera (some in the original language), oratorio, cantata.

In the case of an unsatisfactory recital hearing, the student will be required to reschedule the hearing following adequate preparation time.

### SCHEDULING

The recital must be presented during the scheduled academic year (from the first day of classes through the last day of classes in the fall and spring semesters).

### LECTURE-RECITAL

A lecture-recital consists of two parts. One is the actual public lecture-recital. The other is the lecture portion in written form, together with a bibliography and other pertinent material. The written lecture is presented to the chair of the Graduate Committee in the same form required for master's papers. The procedure for developing a lecture-recital varies in several points from the master's paper, however.

For information concerning the procedures and guidelines for the master's paper, refer to the Graduate Handbook.

### SCHEDULING

The lecture-recital must be presented during the scheduled academic year (from the first day of classes through the last day of classes in the fall and spring semesters).

### MASTER'S PAPER

The master's paper should be a written study of some musicological, theoretical, or performance issue that reflects the student's particular interests and expertise, and should have the support of the advising faculty. Its scope should exceed that of a research paper routinely written for an academic music course, but may have such a paper as its basis. It is expected that the paper will be developed and written under the close consultation of a faculty advisor and one or more second readers, and will be reviewed in drafts before the final paper is submitted. The master's paper for students in the Master of Music in Voice Performance and Pedagogy degree is to be specified in an area of voice pedagogy.

For information concerning the procedures and guidelines for the master's paper, refer to the Graduate Handbook.

In addition to the details contained in the Graduate Handbook, the voice faculty requests that the first draft of the paper be completed eight weeks before the end of classes. Later submissions run the risk of missed graduation deadlines.

The student may not expect faculty members to read papers between the last day of finals and the first day of classes of the subsequent semester (fall and spring).

### ORAL EXAMS IN THE MAJOR

Oral exams should be scheduled by the fourth week of the semester in which they are to be taken.

The "other areas of literature pertinent to the major" found in the Graduate Handbook may include, in addition to material on the degree recital, history and literature of the art song, opera, oratorio, cantata, chamber music, pedagogical collections, and other relevant areas of study.

The student will be expected to understand general concepts of style, general historical context, reasonable listening skills.

Part of the examination may be take-home projects.

### **PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING A CHANGE OF TEACHER**

The voice faculty expects that, in the ordinary course of events, students will stay with their assigned teacher for their entire degree program. We feel strongly that consistency in the teaching and learning of fundamental techniques far outweighs most problems between student and teacher. Original assignments are based on auditions for admission to the School of Music, discussions among the voice faculty, and the need to maintain equity in faculty teaching loads.

Rarely, and for good and sufficient reason only, a student may feel it necessary to request a change. In that case, this procedure must be followed:

1. The student must bring this issue up with his or her current teacher and all possibilities for reconciliation must be pursued. Under no circumstances should the student speak to any other teacher before this has been accomplished. Such conversations may draw the other teacher into unethical and unprofessional behavior, and cause misunderstandings that work against the best functioning of the voice area.
2. If the student-teacher relationship cannot be resolved, the student must submit a written request for a change and outline the reason(s) for the request. This request is to go to the Coordinator of the Voice Area, who will forward it to the other voice faculty members. This request must be submitted before the last day of classes. Changes in teacher assignments cannot be made after the semester begins.
3. The voice faculty will meet during the final exam period to discuss the request and decide the best course of action. The student will be informed by mail concerning the faculty's joint decision. If the faculty approves the change, the student may then contact the teacher with whom he or she wishes to study. This must be done before the first day of classes in the following semester.
4. If a student believes that his or her personal rights or freedoms are being abused in the student-teacher relationship, he or she should go directly to the Director of the School of Music for the swift resolution of the problem(s). The University has established procedures for investigating and dealing with those grievances.

## PERFORMING OPPORTUNITIES

From the time you enroll at Penn State, all of your performances reflect not only on you, but also on your teacher, the School of Music, and on Penn State itself. You must inform your teacher of every public performance you undertake. Generally, your teacher will want to work with you on material you are performing.

Students of voice will find many opportunities for performance at Penn State:

1.     Voice Forum  
Students meet on Fridays from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. for performance practice and discussion of material of specific interest to singers. Check the voice area bulletin board for the specific schedule.
2.     Common Hour  
With their instructor's permission, students may request performing time on this Friday 2:30 p.m. event. These opportunities are on a first-come first-served basis. Request forms are available in the School of Music office.
3.     Bach's Lunch  
Varying opportunities are available to sing at this Thursday 12:10 p.m. concert held in Eisenhower Chapel. These dates are committed one semester in advance.
4.     Studio Classes  
Voice faculty may elect to hold studio classes at certain times during the semester.
5.     Philharmonic Soloist Concert  
Advanced students are encouraged to compete for the opportunity to perform with the Penn State Philharmonic in their winter concert. Auditions will consist of a preliminary round and a final round, both held in the fall semester. An audition announcement will be posted on the voice area bulletin board. The voice area customarily has been permitted to send three singers to the final round of competition.
6.     Choral Ensembles and Opera  
Solo opportunities happen regularly in choirs. Be certain to inform your voice teacher if you are offered the opportunity to audition or sing.  
  
The Penn State Opera Theatre is a curricular ensemble which offers performance opportunities by audition. These opportunities include Opera Intermezzo (an opera scenes programs), the Opera Gala, the Children's Opera (which often tours), and Opera at Schwab.
7.     School of Theatre  
Many auditions in theatre are open to all students. Watch announcements in the Arts Building.
8.     Thespians  
This long-established student-run organization presents musicals twice a year. Auditions are required.
9.     Non-Curricular Groups  
Often, students at Penn State have begun their own performance groups. Participation in this kind of performance is encouraged as long as it does not impact negatively on your curricular accomplishments.

## THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING

The National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) is a professional organization of importance to teachers and students of singing. The objectives of NATS are "to encourage the highest standards of the vocal art and of ethical principles in the teaching of singing; and to promote vocal education and research at all levels, both for the enrichment of the general public and for the professional advancement of the talented."

The NATS *Journal of Singing* is the official publication of NATS and contains articles relating to the art and technique of singing, reviews of newly published books and music, and a wealth of other pertinent information. It is published every other month and is sent to all members. The NATS *Journal of Singing* is also available in the Arts Library in Pattee. For information concerning membership, see any of the voice faculty.

NATS is established on national, regional, state, and local chapter levels. There are organized events on every level, each of which includes opportunities for students to sing for constructive comments and/or compete for prizes.

The local Allegheny Mountain Chapter of NATS (AMC NATS) typically holds meetings each fall (usually in late September). A program pertaining to the multi-faceted art of singing is offered, of interest to teachers and students alike.

AMC NATS also typically holds an annual student auditions each fall (usually in early November). This day-long event includes a preliminary audition in the morning and a final round of singing in the afternoon. Each student prepares at least three songs (or more depending on the division assigned). Voice teachers have repertoire requirements specific to divisions. The preliminary audition is non-competitive; each student beginning with a song of his or her choice. Additional songs are selected as time permits. Three judges write constructive comments and score each singer according to his or her individual performance. These comments are made available after the auditions. The three singers in each division with the highest scores will advance to the finals. (Due to time constraints a semi-final round is not held, however, some students may receive semi-finalist certificates based on their scores.) Those singers advancing to the final auditions will sing one song of their choice (provided that this song was performed in the preliminary auditions). The finals are competitive, and the singers receiving first, second, and third place honors are awarded a small cash prize. There is a modest entry fee. Transportation is usually provided by the School of Music.

Singers should dress appropriately for these auditions. Men should wear coats and ties; women should wear dresses appropriate for daytime performing. Professional accompanists are often available at student auditions. These arrangements must be made in advance.

The Eastern Region of NATS (comprised of Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, New Jersey, New York, and Québec) holds student auditions each spring (usually in late February or early March). These auditions take place over a three-day period. The procedure followed is much the same as for the Chapter NATS auditions. There is a modest entry fee. Students are responsible for out-of-town expenses. Transportation is usually provided by the School of Music.

A national NATS conference is held every two years. The national semi-finals and finals of the NATS Artist Award competition (NATSAA) are held at this meeting. The first prize includes a \$10,000 cash award, a singing engagement at Carnegie Hall, and a scholarship for participation in the AIMS program in Graz, Austria. Other prizes are also given to national semi-finalists and finalists. Preliminary auditions for the NATSAA are held on the district and regional levels.