

**D.M.A. QUALIFYING ("COMMON") EXAMINATIONS  
GUIDELINES, TIMELINE, AND PROCEDURES  
MUSIC THEORY**

**Guidelines:**

**Part I** of the qualifying exams for all DMA performance students will consist of common exams in music theory and history. These exams, given once each semester [in the 3rd week of classes], are 3 hours each, equivalent to the corresponding sections of the old-format qualifying examination. The Theory exam is created and graded by the Theory division; the Music History exam is created and graded by the Musicology Division. These are written exams only, with no oral portion, and are administered by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Students may choose to take both the theory and history exams in the same semester or split them up over the course of two subsequent semesters. If they are taken separately, students must understand that this will impede progress towards graduation and it may also adversely affect financial support, which is typically only provided for a term of three years. The DGS will notify students of their exam results within 10 days. The student will be provided with a written summary of the results of the exam, which will also be available to the advisor and members of the advisory committee. The exams themselves will not be available to students or faculty.

*Passing:* once students have passed both the theory and history exams they may then proceed to Part II of the qualifying exam.

*Failing:* only one retake is permitted, which is normally scheduled the next semester (although retakes in both history and theory can be taken one at a time in subsequent semesters). Retakes may only be taken on the regularly scheduled exam date. Individual exams will not be given.

**Part II:** this is the written exam in your major area and the following oral exam. Only students who have passed both the theory and history exams may proceed to Part II of the qualifying exam.

**Theory Exam Process:**

No computers are allowed for the theory portion of the common exam. A score packet and student answer packet will provide all needed pages. All that you need to bring to the exam are pencils. (We recommend that you do some hand writing in the weeks prior to the exam to reduce fatigue.)

**ASSESSMENT OF THE MUSIC THEORY EXAM**

Each DMA Common Exam in Music Theory is divided into five large areas weighted as follows (see the theory handout posted at <http://www.uky.edu/FineArts/Music/DGS/>):

1. **SCORE ANALYSIS (@15%):** Approximately 3-6 questions concerning a more extensive excerpt.
2. **SCORE ANALYSIS (@30%):** Three shorter excerpts with 3-6 questions regarding each.
3. **ESSAY RESPONSE (@25%):** Short essay responses from guided questions. Equal assessment is given for accurate terminology / analysis and for writing clarity.
4. **SCORE ID AND COMMENTARY (@15%):** Commentary on three of five score excerpts.
5. **TERMINOLOGY (@15%):** Definition / explanation of 5 out of 35 terms drawn from your specific coursework and general pool.

Each exam is read by all 5 faculty members of the theory and composition division and all scores are agreed upon by the entire committee. Each portion of the exam is scored against a grading key with the exception of the essay response, which is scored on a qualitative scale.