

University of Central Arkansas

Music Department

Guidelines for Completing a Master's Thesis

Candidates for the Master of Music in Music Theory should adhere to all policies outlined in the *Thesis and Dissertation Preparation Guide* issued by the Graduate School of the University of Central Arkansas.

General Information

Before completing fifteen hours of graduate credit, a student who intends to write a thesis is required to file a notice of intent with the department chair and with the Graduate School. The Thesis Committee, consisting of a Thesis Committee Chair and two Graduate Faculty members (one of whom may be from outside the department) should also be chosen at this time.

The student must file a *Petition for Admission to Candidacy* with the Graduate School between the completion of the 9th and 18th hours.

The student must submit a formal proposal detailing the proposed research to the Thesis Committee, and present the proposal orally (see *Thesis Guide* p. 8). The Thesis Committee may request revisions prior to approval. Upon approval, the proposal must be signed by all committee members. The student will distribute copies of the approved proposal to the Department Chair and the Thesis Committee chair. This should be completed as early in the thesis process as possible, but at least by the end of the first semester in which the student registers for thesis credit.

Thesis Preparation

The thesis must conform to the style outlined in the UCA *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*, including all elements of format and pagination described on pages 9-19. Citation style for Music Department theses will be *Chicago Manual of Style*.

When the thesis has been completed, the student will provide a hard copy to each member of the Thesis Committee at least one month before the date of the oral examination/defense. The thesis should include all citations and examples, and follow the format prescribed in the *Thesis and Dissertation Guide*. Each committee member will read the thesis and provide feedback and suggestions for revision to the student.

The student will distribute the revised thesis to each member of the committee, as well as to the Graduate Dean, the College Dean and the Department Chair.

Thesis Defense Presentation Protocol

The thesis defense should take place at least four weeks prior to the date of graduation. The defense is open to the public, and the student should schedule a suitable venue for this. The Graduate Dean, the College Dean and the Department

Chair should be invited to the defense. The typical defense will last one to two hours, and will include the following:

- An oral presentation by the candidate (approximately 20 minutes). The presentation should include an introduction to the topic, a summary of existing literature on the topic, the methodology of the study, and research results.
- A question and answer period by the members of the Thesis Committee and the candidate. Committee members may ask for clarification of methodology, research results, further explanation of examples, etc.
- A question and answer period by the public and the candidate.
- The candidate and public will be excused so that the Thesis Committee may vote to pass or fail the thesis. Criteria used to determine this is listed below.

If the thesis does not pass, the candidate has six months to revise the thesis, resubmit the thesis to the committee, and schedule another defense.

Further revisions may be required of the candidate. After all corrections requested by the Thesis Committee have been made, the student will submit the thesis to the Graduate School (see *Thesis and Dissertation Guide* p. 20).

Criteria for Passing

- The thesis must meet all style guidelines outlined in the UCA Thesis and Dissertation Guide.
- The thesis must represent original research. This may include an original analysis of a work, the collection and presentation of new data, archival research, or a new interpretation or use of existing data.
- The thesis must contain an introduction to the topic, a summary of existing literature on the subject, a statement of methodology, and clear summary of the results of the research.
- The student must demonstrate an understanding not only of the subject of research, but how this subject relates to existing scholarship in the field of music theory.

Possible Grades

- Pass. The thesis meets all the criteria listed above.
- Pass with reservations. The thesis requires minor revision of content or format. The candidate must make corrections and resubmit the corrected paper to all members of the committee before turning it in to the Graduate School.
- Fail. The thesis does not meet the criteria for passing. The candidate must make major revisions, resubmit a draft to all members of the Thesis Committee for feedback, revise the thesis, and publicly defend the work again.