



School of Music

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Vocal Studies Handbook

2025-2026

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Dear USC Voice Student:

Welcome! This handbook has been prepared to give you helpful information about the University of South Carolina School of Music Division of Vocal Studies. Specific policies, procedures, and degree requirements are outlined. Your careful study of these pages should answer many of the questions and concerns facing you, both as you begin this exciting time of your life and as you anticipate your studies in the coming years. The members of the Voice Faculty are here to assist you in your endeavors. Should any policy or statement need clarification, don't hesitate to ask any of us for assistance.

The Vocal Studies area emphasizes strong and thorough class and private vocal instruction, providing sound training in vocal repertoire, pedagogy, diction, and artistry, while maintaining a primary commitment to excellence in performance. We hope that your time at USC will be both stimulating and productive.

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This handbook describes policies and procedures for voice students enrolled as music majors in the School of Music at the University of South Carolina. The provisions of this handbook do not constitute a contract express or implied between the University of South Carolina or the School of Music and any applicant, student, student's family, or faculty or staff member. The University of South Carolina and the School of Music reserve the right to change the policies, procedures, rules, regulations, and information in this handbook at any time. Changes will become effective at the time the proper authorities so determine, and the changes will apply to both the prospective students and those already enrolled. This handbook is a general information publication only and is not intended to nor does it contain all regulations that relate to students in the School of Music. In the event of conflicting information, policy contained in the School of Music handbooks for undergraduate and graduate students will take precedence.

Degree Programs

- I. **Bachelor of Music**
The B.M offers an excellent general education combined with rigorous training in an area of emphasis (Composition, Jazz Studies, Music Education, Performance, Performance with a concentration in Chamber Music, Entrepreneurship or Technology, and Theory).
- II. **Bachelor of Arts in Music**
The B.A. in Music is designed for students who want to major in music while receiving a broad, liberal arts education.
- III. **Bachelor of Arts with a Concentration in Musical Theatre**
The concentration provides students applied instruction in the various styles of Musical Theatre. In lieu of a minor, students complete 18 credit hours in dance and theatre courses.
- IV. **Bachelor of Science in Music Industry Studies**
The B.S. in Music Industry Studies is a liberal arts degree with a major in music industry studies featuring coursework intended to provide students desiring a career in the music industry with the skills and dispositions that can make the dream a reality.
- V. **Performance Certificate**
The performance certificate is award to those undergraduate music students with degree emphases other than music performance as well as musically-talented student who major in other disciplines.
- VI. **Music Minor**
The music minor gives students majoring in other disciplines the opportunity to broaden and deepen their knowledge and musical experiences through formal study in music.
- VII. **Minors for the Music Major**
Audio Recording, Music Entrepreneurship, Music Industry Studies
- VIII. **Graduate Certificate in Performance**
The Graduate Certificate is designed for students who have completed an undergraduate degree in music and wish to focus on applied music study and performance activities.
- IX. **Master of Music in Performance**
MM Performance students focus on developing excellent vocal technique, skill in interpreting repertoire, refined diction in English and foreign languages, and solo artistry.
- X. **Master of Music in Opera Theatre**
Opera Theatre students develop characterization, stage presence, diction, movement and other necessary theatrical skills through classes, coaching, workshop activities and public performances.
- XI. **Master of Music Education**
Students in the MM Education program will enhance their general music knowledge and understanding of learning theories and familiarize themselves with cutting-edge pedagogy and research.
- XII. **Doctor of Musical Arts in Performance**
DMA students develop the knowledge and skills needed to build successful careers in performance, teaching, and research.

Lessons

Students enrolled in the following course numbers will receive one 30-minute lesson weekly:

MUSC 101V: Undergraduate, non-degree voice electives
MUSC 111V: BME, Freshman and Sophomore; BA majors
MUSC 311V: BME majors, Junior and Senior
MUSC 501V: Graduate voice electives
MUSC 511V: Graduate voice electives

Students enrolled in the following course numbers will receive one 60-minute lesson or two 30-minute lessons weekly:

MUSC 211V: BM Performance and Perf. Certificate, Freshman and Sophomore
MUSC 411V*: BM Performance and Perf. Certificate, Junior and Senior
MUSC 711V: MM and Graduate Certificate students
MUSC 811V: DMA students, Applied
MUSC 891V: DMA students, Recital Preparation

* Those in the BM performance, BME and Performance Certificate must pass a Sophomore Upper Division Jury before they register for upper-level voice courses (311V, 411V). BA music majors are not required to pass a Sophomore Upper Division Jury but may remain at 111V.

Teacher Assignments

The number of openings in the studios will vary from year to year, but a student's teacher request is honored if possible. An applicant may contact and audition for a particular teacher prior to enrollment. The teacher may then request that this student be placed in his or her studio.

Lesson Attendance

One-on-one instruction is invaluable, and instructional time is limited to one thirty or sixty- minute lesson per week. The weekly private lesson should be a priority for each student. A student registered for applied music lessons who incurs more than two (2) unexcused absences will receive a failing grade.

Make Up Lessons

Those lessons missed by your teacher for any reason will be made up. Student absences for any reason, including illness or scheduling conflicts, will be made up at the discretion of the teacher, and only if the teacher is notified prior to the absence. Any time the University is officially closed (such as holidays or weather-related closings) or one of the choirs is off campus, the lessons will not be made up. Individual teachers have the right to develop their own policy on the matter of student absences. If for any reason your ability to meet this requirement seems doubtful, discuss it with your teacher as early in the semester as possible. Waiting until the last part of the semester might mean that failure becomes unavoidable.

Studio Class

Studio Class is a group made up of those students studying with a particular teacher. Your studio class will meet at a time and place designated by your teacher on a weekly basis. No more than two absences are permitted per semester. Attendance and participation in this class comprises a part of your semester grade in voice.

Guest Artist Recitals and Master Classes

The Voice Area frequently hosts guest artists in recital and/or master class. These are important learning opportunities; therefore, attendance is required as part of your semester grade in voice. If there is a guest artist recital or masterclass during your lesson time, you will be required to attend the event in lieu of your lesson.

Concert and Recital Attendance

Undergraduate music majors are required to attend ten (10) concerts or recitals per semester as part of their applied study. The student will present programs of the concerts attended to their applied faculty member at juries. Students who attend less than the required minimum number of recitals or concerts during any given semester will receive an incomplete in their primary applied area. The incomplete may be removed by attending additional concerts or recitals during the subsequent semester. Of the ten (10) concerts, at least three (3) must be selected from the list of approved Faculty and Guest Artist Recitals. Students may not count an event in which they are a performer. The applied teacher must approve off-campus events.

Changing Voice Teachers

Normally students remain with one teacher for the duration of their degree program. A change of studio may be appropriate if circumstances arise that affect the student's progress. If you wish to change from one studio to another, you must follow this procedure:

1. Speak to your teacher about your concerns.
2. Speak with the Coordinator of Vocal Studies. He or she will offer counsel to you and will act as a mediator if conflict arises.
3. If the situation cannot be resolved satisfactorily, request a "STUDIO TRANSFER REQUEST" form from the area coordinator and make arrangements with another teacher for a lesson. Upon hearing you, the prospective teacher may accept you or suggest another faculty member.
4. Notify your current teacher of your intention to change studios. He or she will sign the form, releasing you from that studio at the end of the semester.
5. Take the form to your new teacher who will then sign and give to the area coordinator.

This form must be completed and filed with the Coordinator of Vocal Studies by December 1 for a change to take place the following spring semester, and by May 1 for a change to take place the following fall semester.

NOTE: Barring extenuating circumstances, students are expected to remain with their assigned teacher for at least two semesters before a studio change will be considered. It is considered professionally unethical to pursue a change in studios without consulting your current teacher.

Collaborative Pianists

Vocal students are expected to engage the services of a collaborative pianist in a timely fashion to play for lessons, rehearsals, and performances. Please see the “Guidelines for Working with Collaborative Pianists” that appear below. Compensation for these services is the responsibility of the student. A limited number of student pianists are provided free of charge by the School of Music. These are graduate assistants, undergraduate scholarship students, and students from the undergraduate accompanying course. Assignments of these pianists are made by individual applied faculty. Collaborative pianists are also available on a private, free-lance basis. A list of pianists is published yearly by the piano department. Fees for free-lance pianists vary depending on the level of experience of the pianist, and the amount and difficulty of repertoire to be prepared. While the list of pianists is provided through the school, all arrangements with these pianists (contracting, scheduling and payment) are the exclusive responsibility of the student. Please contact your private instructor with any questions regarding collaborators or collaborative services.

Guidelines for Working with Collaborative Pianists

*The essential guideline: **plan ahead***

1. The student soloist is responsible for contacting the pianist in advance to allow for adequate preparation of repertoire for rehearsals, lessons, and performances. This demonstrates respect for the pianist’s time and other performing commitments as well as a desire for a high-quality musical experience.
2. Music should be given to the pianist as soon as it has been assigned. *Do not wait until you wish to rehearse together to give the pianist the music.* According to the School of Music Accompanying Policy, accompanists should have all of the repertoire for a given performance within the following schedule depending on the nature of the performance:
 - a. Degree Recitals: Fall Semester—two months in advance; Spring Semester—three months in advance
 - b. Juries: six weeks in advance
 - c. Seminars, studio classes or master classes: one month in advance

It is well within the pianist’s right to refuse a request for a rehearsal, lesson or performance date if she/he was not given the music in a timely fashion, or if the minimum preparation time was not met.

3. Inadequate preparation time may result in a delayed performance or a lower recital or jury grade.
4. A minimum of 24-hours notice is to be given for cancellation or rescheduling of rehearsals, lessons or other engagements. Meetings cancelled with less than a

24-hours notice, unless the direct result of an emergency, will only be rescheduled at the pianist's discretion.

5. Know the best way to reach your pianist. A soloist should not assume that the pianist "got the message" and should keep calling or writing until confirmation is received.
6. Pianists who are provided through the school are assigned a certain number of hours per week. Hours may not be "banked" or "stored" for a later use unless the pianist agrees to do so. Hours beyond those assigned per week are *subject to a charge* at the pianist's discretion. Fees and method of payment should be discussed in advance.
7. In working with freelance pianists, students should show similar consideration for the pianist's time by procuring her/his services well in advance, by making sure she/he has the score, and by discussing all fees and how they are to be paid. It is strongly suggested that some sort of invoice system be used to facilitate this.

School of Music Accompanying Fee

Who owes the fee?

Any student presenting a degree recital with either a *Staff Accompanist* or a *Graduate Assistant* assigned to an applied studio is required to pay the fee. Students utilizing undergraduate accompanists or any accompanist that the recitalist student chooses to hire on their own are not required to pay the fee. In addition, any student working with a Graduate Assistant accompanist on an activity that is not a degree recital, is not subject to the fee.

How much is the fee?

\$180 for a full degree recital and \$90 for a half degree recital.

When is the fee due?

By September 11th in the Fall semester and by January 29 in the Spring semester.

Where is the fee paid?

The fee should be paid through the Touchnet system where Recital Fees are paid.

Jury Standards and Degree Requirements

I. JURIES

- A. Every voice student, except for non-scholarship students enrolled in 101V or 501V, must perform a jury at the end of each semester during the examination period. If a student is unable to sing a jury because of illness, an incomplete will be assigned. There are two ways to remove this incomplete: (1) A special jury examination given at the beginning of the subsequent semester, or (2) The student may present an extended jury at the end of the subsequent semester. The jury grade earned in the subsequent semester will also be used by the teacher in determining the grade for the semester of the incomplete.
- B. Students who present degree or performance certificate required recitals that are evaluated by the area faculty are exempt from jury performances during the semester of the recital.
- C. Students register for a jury time and complete a repertoire sheet using an online system. Songs prepared for the jury should be clearly indicated. Solo, duet, and chamber music may be offered as part of a Jury. All music listed as memorized must be performed on demand.
- D. Students enrolled for one 30-minute lesson per week should memorize a minimum of five songs each semester, which should represent various vocal styles, languages, and periods. Repertoire for those in the Musical Theatre Concentration should represent contrasting vocal styles, composers, and musical theatre periods. The teacher may reduce these requirements if the student is pursuing specific technical goals. The faculty committee will make selections from the repertoire list.
- E. Lower division students (111V/211V) enrolled for one 60-minute lesson per week should memorize a minimum of six songs each semester. Upper division students (311V/411V) enrolled for one 60-minute lesson per week should memorize a minimum of seven songs each semester. The repertoire should represent various vocal styles, languages, and periods. Repertoire for those in the Musical Theatre Concentration should represent contrasting vocal styles, composers, and musical theatre periods. The teacher may reduce these requirements if the student is pursuing specific technical goals. The faculty committee will make selections from the repertoire list.
- F. The jury members will assign a jury grade based on the jury performance only and will provide written comments to the student regarding the jury performance. The teacher will determine the semester grade taking into consideration the jury grade, lesson attendance, studio class performances, other course requirements and general progress during the

semester in question. The semester grade given by the teacher may not differ from the jury grade by more than one (1) letter except that a failing grade given by the jury must be officially recorded as the final grade.

II. SOPHOMORE UPPER DIVISION JURY

All students in the BM performance, BME and Performance Certificate program must successfully complete a Sophomore Upper Division Jury to advance to the upper division. This hearing will usually be taken at the end of the fourth semester of study. A Sophomore Upper Division Jury is not required for BA majors.

REQUIREMENTS

- A. Repertoire: six pieces which include four different languages (selected from French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin and English). All repertoire should be memorized with the exception of oratorio arias or chamber music selections which may be performed with the score, according to standard performance practice. One of the six selections must be prepared by the student without help from the teacher: this piece, designated the "self-prepared" piece must be in French, German, Italian or Spanish.
- B. Diction: Students should be prepared to recite any of the texts from memory at the request of the faculty.
- C. Translations: Students are expected to translate any foreign language texts from memory at the request of faculty.
- D. Requirements for Musical Theatre Performance Certificate Students:
 - 1. Six songs/pieces representing contrasting styles, chosen from the seven musical theatre time periods (pre-1920's-present). All repertoire must be memorized.
 - 2. One memorized monologue, one minute in length, from a published play.
 - 3. One musical theatre history research paper, representing an important work or composer.

GRADING

After the jury performance, the jury members will discuss whether the student will remain at the present level of applied study advance to a higher level or be placed into a lower level. A jury decision to advance a student or place them into a lower level will be determined by a simple majority vote of the faculty present.

REPEATING THE SOPHOMORE UPPER DIVISION JURY

A student who does not receive a satisfactory grade on the Sophomore Upper Division Jury may repeat the jury. This jury may not be taken more than twice. Two failures will result in the student being advised into another degree plan or major.

Undergraduate Recitals

REPERTOIRE

BM Performance Junior recitals should have 25 minutes of music. The program should be composed of a variety of styles and languages. All repertoire, except for oratorio arias or chamber music, must be performed from memory unless otherwise approved by the Division of Vocal Studies faculty.

BM Performance Senior Recitals should have 50 minutes of music. The program should be composed of a variety of styles and languages. All repertoire, except for oratorio arias or chamber music, must be performed from memory unless otherwise approved by the Division of Vocal Studies faculty.

Performance Certificate students may fulfill the recital requirement by presenting a junior and senior recital, each consisting of 25 minutes of music, or one senior recital, consisting of 50 minutes of music. The programs should be composed of a variety of styles and languages. All repertoire, except for oratorio arias or chamber music, must be performed from memory unless otherwise approved by the Division of Vocal Studies faculty.

Students in the Musical Theatre Concentration Performance Certificate may fulfill the recital requirement by presenting a junior and senior recital, each consisting of 25 minutes of music, or one senior recital, consisting of 50 minutes of music. The programs should be composed of a variety of styles, representing different genres, tempos, composers, characters, and time periods (pre-1920's-present). All repertoire must be performed from memory.

Students are responsible for the length of their recital program and should understand that a program that is too short or too long may adversely impact their grade.

EVALUATION

Those presenting a recital must successfully complete a recital hearing in advance. All repertoire for the recital must be memorized and performance ready for this evaluation. The hearing for a half recital will last 15 minutes, while the hearing for a full recital will last 25 minutes. Undergraduate recitals will be adjudicated by a two-member committee of area faculty. The semester grade given by the teacher may not differ from the recital grade by more than one (1) letter except that a failing grade given by the faculty committee must be officially recorded as the final grade.

SCHEDULING

Undergraduate voice degree recitals are presented at the School of Music at 4:30 and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday only. Your primary applied teacher must approve the date in advance. All recitals are scheduled in the following manner:

1. The recital fee of \$100, which includes the video recording fee, is paid [online](#).
2. Once your primary applied teacher has approved the intended date, the student contacts Laveta Gibson in person or via email (lgibson@mozart.sc.edu) to confirm availability and reserve the date.
3. Student recitals must be scheduled in the semester prior to the recital, by the last day of Exam week.
 - a. Faculty Handbook OP E.3.00 – Student recitals must be officially scheduled one semester in advance of the performance date. For example, a Spring semester recital date would be placed on the calendar during the Fall semester. Failure to schedule a recital by the last day of exam week will result in a \$100 late fee, making the total recital fee \$200. (Exceptions: Doctoral Candidacy Recitals, Doctoral Chamber Recitals, Graduate students entering the University that semester.)
4. Degree half recitals should be paired, whenever possible. Students presenting these recitals are strongly encouraged to find a pair for their half recitals, and applied faculty are encouraged to assist. Pairs can be with other students presenting a degree half recital within the same studio, the same area, or from other areas.
5. Non-degree recitals can be scheduled in the Recital Hall only by Dean-approved exceptions (006 is available most Thursdays and Fridays at no charge to the student. Recording and stagehands will not be provided).
6. The decision to cancel a recital and the notification of all parties involved are responsibilities of the applied teacher. Scheduling another recital date requires repayment of the \$100 recital fee unless extenuating circumstances exist.

DRESS REHEARSALS

The Recital Hall is available only for scheduled recitals, not for general practice. Recital practice must be arranged by the applied teacher and may take place only immediately prior to the recital date. Students performing degree recitals may use the Recital Hall for one rehearsal of up to two hours, pending availability.

PROGRAMS

At least three weeks prior to the recital, the student must enter all program information into the [Degree Recital Processing system](#). Instructions will be provided.

GREEN ROOM

The Green Room is intended for use only by the current recitalist and only during their recital. The Green Room must always be vacated immediately following the recital—before any post-recital reception begins—so the next recitalist can gain access.

RECEPTIONS

Post-recital receptions, which are to be scheduled through Ms. Laveta Gibson, may only be held in the Lobby. For further information please contact the Music Office.

Graduate Recitals

REPERTOIRE

Graduate Vocal Performance Recitals should have 50 minutes of music. Recital content and form will be decided with the major professor. The literature performed on a solo recital will be learned specifically for that performance. The student should submit a typed recital prospectus to his or her major professor, who will see that it is signed by each member of the area faculty and submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies at least three weeks before the recital is to be presented. The prospectus will include a listing of the works to be performed with the approximate duration of each work listed.

Guidelines for preparing the prospectus are available in room 101K or online. All repertoire, except for oratorio arias or chamber music, must be memorized unless otherwise approved by the Division of Vocal Studies faculty.

For doctoral students, three of the four recitals must be solo recitals (MUSC 896). The fourth recital is to be a lecture (MUSC 892), chamber music recital (MUSC 895), or a major opera/oratorio role (MUSC 893).

EVALUATION

Those presenting a recital must successfully complete a recital hearing in advance. All repertoire for the recital must be memorized and performance ready for this evaluation. Graduate recital hearings will last 25 minutes. Graduate recitals are adjudicated on a pass/fail basis by at least a three-member committee selected from the area faculty. A graduate recital judged unsatisfactory by the area faculty may be repeated once. The repeated recital may contain any or all of the contents of the unsatisfactory program. If two graduate recitals (including a repeated recital) are judged unsatisfactory, the student's status as a graduate candidate will be terminated, and he or she will need to fulfill all of the requirements for admission then in effect to be readmitted to the graduate program. A student may appeal to the Music Graduate Committee regarding a decision to discontinue graduate status.

SCHEDULING

Graduate voice degree recitals are presented at the School of Music at 4:30, 6:00 and 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday only. Your primary applied teacher must approve the date in advance. All recitals are scheduled in the following manner:

1. The recital fee of \$100, which includes the recording fee, is paid online (https://secure.touchnet.net/C21544_ustores/web/store_cat.jsp?STOREID=46&CATID=93).
2. Once your primary applied teacher has approved the intended date, the student contacts Laveta Gibson in person or via email (lgibson@mozart.sc.edu) to confirm availability and reserve the date.
3. Student recitals must be scheduled in the semester prior to the recital, by the last day of Exam week.

- a. Faculty Handbook OP E.3.00 – Student recitals must be officially scheduled one semester in advance of the performance date. For example, a Spring semester recital date would be placed on the calendar during the Fall semester. Failure to schedule a recital by the last day of exam week will result in a \$100 late fee, making the total recital fee \$200. (Exceptions: Doctoral Candidacy) Recitals, Doctoral Chamber Recitals, Graduate students entering the University that semester.)
4. Non-degree recitals can be scheduled in the Recital Hall only by Dean-approved exceptions (006 is available most Thursdays and Fridays at no charge to the student. Recording and stagehands will not be provided).
5. The decision to cancel a recital and the notification of all parties involved are responsibilities of the applied teacher. Scheduling another recital date requires repayment of the \$100 recital fee unless extenuating circumstances exist.

DRESS REHEARSALS

The Recital Hall is available only for scheduled recitals, not for general practice. Recital practice must be arranged by the applied teacher and may take place only immediately prior to the recital date. Students performing degree recitals may use the Recital Hall for one rehearsal of up to two hours, pending availability.

PROSPECTUS

At least four weeks prior to the recital, the student must enter all program information into the Degree Recital Processing system. Instructions will be provided.

PROGRAMS

The School of Music provides the recital program only. The student will provide copies of translations and/or program notes.

GREEN ROOM

The Green Room is intended for use only by the current recitalist and only during his/her recital. The Green Room must always be vacated immediately following the recital—before any post-recital reception begins—so the next recitalist can gain access.

RECEPTIONS

Post-recital receptions, which are to be scheduled through Ms. Laveta Gibson, may only be held in the Lobby. For further information please contact the Music Office.

Additional Graduate Requirements

All graduate students must demonstrate diction proficiency in English, French, German, and Italian. In addition, *MM students* must document one year of college-level study in each of two languages, French, German, or Italian, with a grade of B or above. *DMA students* must document one year of college-level study in each of three languages, French, German and Italian with a grade of B or above. Applicants who have studied languages other than those listed may petition the voice faculty to accept a substitute. If the language requirement is not met at the time of the audition, it must be met before the end of the third semester of study.

DOCTORAL CANDIDACY EXAM

The following are topics included on the Doctoral Candidacy Exam. Study suggestions are italicized.

1. The candidate should exhibit a functional knowledge of literature, composers, and performance practices of various historical periods as they relate to the candidate's specific conducting or performance medium. *Review leading art song composers, significant works and stylistic development. Review well-known operatic repertoire from the 17th-20th centuries and be able to discuss the output and style of major composers.*
2. The candidate should exhibit a functional knowledge of notation and ornamentation, particularly that from historical periods that contain outstanding literature for the student's particular medium (e.g., Baroque ornamentation, avant-garde notation). *Understand how expressive terminology is used in vocal literature.*
3. The candidate should display an understanding of the history of the chosen conducting or performance medium as well as past and present artisans of distinction.
4. The candidate should show an ability to relate the conducting or performance medium to its role in various performance situations (e.g., vocal solo recitals, opera, choir). *Identify leading textbooks on vocal pedagogy and be able to discuss various approaches to teaching voice. Review knowledge of voice types, vocal ranges, technical issues, and vocal terminology.*
5. The exam will include score identification.

DICTION PROFICIENCY EXAM

All incoming graduate students majoring in vocal performance will need to complete the Diction Proficiency Exam prior to their first day of class. The exam is offered the week prior to the first day of class and is used to assess each student's understanding of the fundamental rules of Italian, German, and French diction. In addition to the written exam, each student will also be asked to speak lines of text at sight for each language. If it is determined that a student has a deficiency in any of

the languages, they will be advised to register for the requisite course. Italian, German, and French diction courses are each one semester in length. It is possible to retake the exam if deficiencies occur, however each diction course is only offered once every two years. The spoken part of the exam may be retaken multiple times throughout the year until the student has passed. The oral exam is offered at the beginning and end of the spring semester as well as at the beginning of the fall semester.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY EXAMS

DMA students must satisfy their foreign language requirement by passing THREE Language Proficiency Exams in Italian, German, and French, which test reading and translation skills. *Master of Opera Theatre students* must pass TWO Language Proficiency Exams, choosing from Italian, German, or French. These exams may be scheduled once a student has passed their Candidacy requirements. All three exams must be completed before a student takes their Comprehensive exams. Language exams will be administered by the voice area and will be offered multiple times throughout the year. Hard copy dictionaries and verb books may be used during the exam to aid in translation. In order to sign up for an exam, email lkompas@mozart.sc.edu, providing the language you would like to test and the specific date you would like to take the test.

Voice-Related Courses

- MUSC 278: Intro to Singer's Diction 2 credits
Techniques of pronunciation, phonetics, and international phonetic alphabet as applied to standard vocal repertory.
Required for BM Music Education majors, and BA students whose primary area is voice.
Offered in fall semester only.
- MUSC 410: Vocal Coaching (Undergraduate) 1-2 credits
Advanced study of stylistic, interpretive, linguistic and other performance issues in solo operatic, oratorio, and recital repertoire.
- MUSC 500: Styles of Singing 2 credits
An exploration of practical and pedagogical approaches to singing various genres, including opera, jazz, pop and musical theatre.
- MUSC 543: Song Literature 3 credits
Both a performance and survey class, the course examines the development of art song throughout Europe and the US through the exploration of important pieces of the repertoire by major song composers.
Required for BM Performance and MM Opera Theater majors.
Offered only in the Fall semester of odd years (2025, 2027).
- MUSC 545: Survey of the Opera 3 credits
A Survey of the literature of Baroque, Classic, Romantic, and modern opera, with special attention given to the recognition of the best-known works in each school.
Required for BM Performance and MM Opera Theater majors.
Offered only in the Spring semester of even years (2026, 2028).
- MUSC 570: Italian and Latin Diction 2 credits
Techniques of pronunciation for singing in Italian and Latin.
Required for BM Performance majors.
Offered in the Spring semesters only.
- MUSC 577: Vocal Pedagogy 2 credits
A study of the anatomy and function of the singing voice with practical application to teaching.
Required for BM Performance and BM Music Education majors.
Available to juniors, seniors and MM students.
Offered in Fall semester only.

MUSC 578: German and English Diction Techniques of pronunciation for singing in German and English. Required for BM Performance majors. Offered in the Fall of even years (2026, 2028)	2 credits
MUSC 579: French Diction Techniques of pronunciation for singing in French. Required for BM Performance majors. Offered in the Spring of odd years (2027, 2029).	2 credits
MUSC 710: Vocal Coaching (Graduate) Advanced study of stylistic, interpretive, linguistic and other performance issues in solo operatic, oratorio, and recital repertoire for graduate students.	1-2 credits
MUSC 740V: Music Literature/Voice Satisfies the Literature requirement for the MM and DMA. Independent study, pending teacher availability.	2 credits
MUSC 777: Advanced Vocal Pedagogy Advanced study of the anatomy and function of the singing voice with application to the diagnosis and correction of problems in singing. Cross-listed with MUSC 801. Offered in the Fall of even years (2026, 2028).	3 credits
MUSC 778: Advanced Diction Required for MM Opera Theater majors. Typically offered in the Spring of even years (2026, 2028).	2 credits
MUSC 781: Role Preparation Study of operatic role(s) with attention given to style, interpretation, language/diction, and musical accuracy. 2 semesters required for MM Opera Theater (performance) majors.	1 credit
MUSC 801: Advanced Performance Pedagogy Cross-listed with MUSC 777. Offered in the Fall of even years (2026, 2028).	2 credits
MUSC 897: Document Preparation 2 credits required for DMA students.	1-2 credits

Vocal Coaching

Individual coaching sessions are offered by Dr. Lynn Kompass at both the graduate and undergraduate level, with the purpose of enriching the voice student's creative and artistic development, expanding their knowledge of contrasting musical styles and performance practices, and building a foundation for developing their own individual interpretation of the repertoire. Coaching is available through two different courses:

Role Preparation (MUSC 781/410)

Graduate students cast in a major role for an Opera at USC production are expected to register for 1 credit of MUSIC 781 (Role Preparation). This credit provides students with both individual and ensemble coaching sessions to guide them in their musical preparation prior to staging rehearsals. Coaching sessions will be held at least once a week prior to staging rehearsals and will continue until production week. Grading will be based on the quality and consistency of preparation evidenced throughout the process.

Undergraduate students cast in a major role in an Opera at USC production are expected to register for 1 credit of MUSC 410.

Vocal Coaching (MUSC 710/410)

Graduate students: Private coaching sessions with Dr. Kompass are available to all graduate (MM, MOT, and DMA) voice majors. Coaching is designed to complement the work being done in voice lessons by focusing on stylistic issues, language and text interpretation, diction, and musical accuracy. Coaching is especially useful in preparing for recitals and auditions. Graduate students are encouraged to register for coaching throughout their academic studies. Grading will be based on the quality and consistency of progress made over the course of the semester as well as the amount of repertoire that is covered. Graduate students interested in coaching sessions should register for 1 credit of MUSC 710 (equivalent to 1 hour of coaching EVERY OTHER week) or 2 credits of MUSC 710 (equivalent to 1 hour of coaching EVERY week). Singers are welcome to bring their own accompanist, although it is not necessary.

Undergraduate students: Undergraduate performance majors in their junior or senior year who are preparing for a degree recital and/or auditions are also eligible to register for individual coaching (MUSC 410). They should consult with their primary voice teacher before reaching out to Dr. Kompass.

PLEASE NOTE: Before registering for coaching, please contact Dr. Kompass to receive a clearance code.

OPERA at USC

Opera at USC offers a truly comprehensive program for both graduate and undergraduate students, covering every facet of opera production, both on stage and behind the scenes. Singers, directors, pianists, conductors, marketing and public relations students and theatrical technicians get expert teaching and intensive hands-on experience in their respective crafts.

Opera at USC is one of only a handful of colleges and universities nationwide that offers special training and practice for aspiring opera stage directors. You can gain abundant practical stage experience by participating in the operas either onstage or off.

Opera at USC presents two fully staged operas with orchestra each year and also presents an evening of One-Act Operas, often with a graduate stage director. Roles are open to undergraduates and graduates.

Master classes conducted by international opera singers, conductors, coaches and directors are held each semester.

Auditions

Auditions will be held Monday, August 18, 2025 2:00-6:00pm.

2024-2025 Season

The Consul by Gian Carlo Menotti
November 7-9, 2025
Drayton Hall Theatre

Les Mamelles de Tirésias by Francis Poulenc
(in French with English titles)
February 27-March 1, 2025
Drayton Hall Theatre

TBD
The Lanny and Sidney Palmer One Act
Series
April 11-12, 2026
School of Music Recital Hall

Repertoire and dates subject to change.

Opera Courses

MUSC 130K: Opera Workshop	1 credit
Study of selected operatic characters from a historical, psychological, and physical perspective.	
2 semesters required for BM Performance majors.	
MUSC 130P: Opera Production	1 credit
Supervised preparation and production of an opera.	
MUSC 780: Opera Theater	1 credit
Study of selected operatic characters from a historical, psychological, and physical perspective.	
2 semesters required for MM Opera Theater majors.	
MUSC 781: Role Preparation	1 credit
Study of operatic role(s) with attention given to style, interpretation, language/diction, and musical accuracy.	
2 semesters required for MM Opera Theater (performance) majors.	
MUSC 782: Opera Production	1 credit
Supervised preparation and production of an opera.	
Available to MM and DMA students.	

Musical Theatre Concentration

The B.A. in Music with a Concentration in Musical Theatre is designed for students interested in focused study in Musical Theatre. Students receive applied instruction in the various styles of Musical Theatre and participate in a musical theatre ensemble. In lieu of a cognate or minor, students in this concentration complete 18 credit hours of dance and theatre courses.

MUSC 130M: Musical Theatre Workshop	1 credit
Supervised preparation of all performance and production elements involved in the collaborative process of musical theatre. Opportunities to perform musical theatre solos, scenes, and monologues, culminating in a staged performance..	

CHORAL MUSIC at USC

If you love to sing, the choral department offers several performing ensembles in which you can participate – our choral ensembles are open to every student in the university and have varying time commitments.

Students perform year-round in musical styles ranging from Renaissance to recent compositions, to jazz or gospel in a variety of choral ensembles. Not only will you experience the thrill and joy of performing for audiences both on and off campus, you'll meet others with similar interests and goals.

Auditions

Auditions are held twice yearly, prior to the start of each semester. Students receiving a choral scholarship are required to audition each year.

Choral Ensembles

MUSC 125: Concert Choir 1 credit

Concert Choir is our most select choral ensemble and requires an audition to participate.

MUSC 129: University Chorus 1 credit

USC's largest choir performs diverse repertoire from the Renaissance to the present day.

MUSC 130S: Carolina Alive 1 credit

Carolina Alive is a vocal jazz ensemble of 12-16 singers chosen by audition.

MUSC 734C: Graduate Vocal Ensemble 1 credit

Graduate Vocal Ensemble is one of the hallmarks of the master's and doctoral degree programs in choral conducting.

MUSC 130H: Gamecock Chorale 1 credit

Gamecock Chorale is open to all TTB voices regardless of major. Repertoire includes a variety of genres, from chant and classical works to folk songs and a cappella arrangements.

MUSC 130X: Garnet Chorale 1 credit

Garnet Chorale is open to all SSA voices regardless of major. Repertoire varies from traditional women's chorus literature to classical, spirituals, multicultural and contemporary.