

Voice Area Handbook

2026-2027



School of Music
University of Missouri

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Voice Area Handbook - 2025-2026

Welcome to the Voice Program!

You are an essential part of our community of dedicated musicians. This handbook serves as your guide, providing comprehensive information about our program's policies, opportunities, and resources. Our goal is to support your artistic and academic growth, helping you cultivate your unique voice and prepare for a successful career in music. We encourage you to familiarize yourself with its contents, as it will be an invaluable resource throughout your studies here.

School of Music Mission

The School of Music is dedicated to preparing students to make meaningful contributions in the world as performers, composers, teachers, and scholars. We strive to expand the understanding and impact of music through faculty and student performance, composition, and research. Our mission also includes fostering appreciation for music and participation in musical activities throughout the campus, enriching and engaging the broader community through performances and educational programs, and serving—as the School of Music of Missouri’s flagship university—as a resource for the state, the nation, and the world.

School of Music Values

We believe in music’s unique ability to improve the human condition. Our values emphasize musical citizenship and collaboration, serving and connecting with others through music. We foster creativity, innovation, and diversity of perspectives, and are committed to a close-knit learning and performance environment with extensive faculty-student interaction. These values align with the University’s stated commitment to Respect, Responsibility, Discovery, and Excellence.

Handbook Purpose

This Voice Area Handbook provides practical guidance for voice study, sets procedural standards for all voice students, and clarifies the day-to-day happenings of the voice department. It is to be read in conjunction with your studio teacher’s syllabus and the School of Music’s broader policies.

This handbook is not intended to supersede the School of Music or University of Missouri student handbooks, but to provide voice area students with pertinent information for their focused study of singing.

Important Contacts

For your convenience, here is a list of important contacts within the Voice Program and the broader department.

Voice, Choral, and Collaborative Piano Faculty

- **Prof. Steven Tharp (Chair):** For any questions related to Voice Area policy, please contact Prof. Tharp at tharpst@missouri.edu, FAB 212.
- **Prof. Christina Ray:** ctckw4@missouri.edu
- **Prof. Caleb Haselhuhn:** crhbc5@missouri.edu
- **Dr. Alexandra Schoeny:** a.schoeny@missouri.edu
- **Dr. Rachel AuBuchon (Collaborative Piano):** aubuchonr@missouri.edu
- **Dr. Brandon Boyd (Director of Choral Activities):** boydba@missouri.edu
- **Dr. Austin Norrid (Assistant Director of Choral Activities):** austin.norrid@missouri.edu

Department Office

Many policies and forms can be found at music.missouri.edu/resources. Please look here first before emailing the department office.

The department office led by **Susan Worstell** is your primary point of contact for administrative inquiries, forms, and general assistance. Ms. Worstell can be contacted at worstells@missouri.edu.

Handbook Information and Communication

A paper copy of this handbook will be distributed at the beginning of each academic year. The most current version will always be available online at . Any questions about the policies stated herein should be addressed to Professor Tharp. Any updates to these policies will be communicated through university email prior to implementation.

Communication Policy

Official communication from the voice area will be **exclusively** through the university email system. Students in the voice area are expected to check their university email at least once daily to stay abreast of all communications from the department.

Degree Programs

The School of Music offers a variety of degree programs designed to prepare you for a successful career in music. For detailed curriculum information, please visit the links below:

- **Bachelor of Music in Voice Performance:** <https://music.missouri.edu/undergrad/bm>
- **Bachelor of Arts in Voice Performance:** <https://music.missouri.edu/undergrad/ba>
- **Bachelor of Music in Music Education:**
<https://music.missouri.edu/undergrad/bm-music-education>
- **Master of Music in Voice Performance:** <https://music.missouri.edu/grad/master-music>
- **Minor in Music:** <https://music.missouri.edu/grad/music-minors>

Academic Policies

Navigating your academic journey is crucial for your success. Here, you'll find important policies governing your coursework and performance requirements.

Grading Policies

Your academic performance will be assessed according to the university's **grading policies**. Specific criteria for voice lessons, ensembles, and academic courses will be outlined in individual studio syllabi. We encourage open communication with your instructors if you have questions about your progress.

Attendance and Punctuality

Consistent **attendance and punctuality** are paramount for all voice lessons, classes, and rehearsals. Your presence is vital for both your individual progress and the success of collaborative projects. Unexcused absences or chronic lateness may impact your grades and standing in the program, including casting. Please communicate any unavoidable conflicts with your instructors as soon as possible. This includes availability for opera rehearsals.

Academic Integrity

We uphold the highest standards of **academic integrity**. All submitted work, including research papers, analyses, and performance preparations, must be your own original effort. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in serious disciplinary action as outlined in the university's student code of conduct. Additionally, each class syllabus will include a statement on AI use governing work for that class.

Course Registration and Load

To ensure a balanced and manageable academic experience, students are expected to adhere to specific guidelines regarding **course registration and load**. Details on minimum and maximum credit hours, as well as specific course sequencing for your degree path, are available through your academic advisor.

(hynesl@missouri.edu) and on the department website.

Academic questions, including degree progress and planning, can be addressed by the Directors of Undergraduate or Graduate Studies, as well as the academic advisor for the School of Music.

Director of Undergraduate Studies - Dr. Peter Lea - leap@missouri.edu

Director of Undergraduate Studies for Music Education - Dr. Wendy Sims - simsw@missouri.edu

Director of Graduate Studies - Dr. Eli Lara – larae@missouri.edu

Academic Advisor - Lauren Hynes – hynesl@missouri.edu

Voice Study

The study and application of voice is highly demanding, requiring disciplined habits and consistent effort.

Student Learning Outcomes

Voice lessons are designed to reinforce several key student learning outcomes:

- **Vocal Technique:** Lessons should reinforce technical concepts that allow you to achieve your artistic goals.
- **Musicianship:** Lessons should strengthen your understanding of musical building blocks, such as rhythm, pitch, phrasing, harmony, and expression, resulting in greater musical independence in more advanced repertoire.
- **Language Skills:** Lessons should build your idiomatic facility with the major languages of singing, including Italian, French, German, Spanish, and Latin.
- **Vocal Health and Wellness:** Lessons should include accurate information regarding care for the professional voice and the anatomy and physiology of the vocal apparatus.
- **Artistry and Expression:** Lessons should encourage you to be artistically and expressively adventurous, displaying a comprehension of the text resulting in clear communication.
- **Collaboration:** Lessons should be a professional collaborative experience between you, your instructor, and your collaborative pianist.
- **Critical Thinking:** Lessons are a space for analysis, problem-solving, and discovery. You will develop individualized routines for warming up and efficient use of practice time.

Registering for Voice Lessons

Following your audition, students accepted into major or minor study will be assigned a studio teacher by the Area Chair. These assignments typically take place during the first week of each semester. Once a studio teacher is assigned, you will register for the appropriate section. This may require a permission code due to University scheduling protocols. The contact for this code is Susan Worstell, worstells@missouri.edu, located in the School of Music administration suite, Squirefield Music Center 206.

Studio Assignments

Requests for specific studio teachers should be directed to the Area Chair at least one week prior to the start of the semester, if possible. Priority for studio assignments is given in the following order:

1. Graduate majors
2. Undergraduate majors
3. Undergraduate non-majors

Studio Change Policy

- All studio changes must first be discussed between the student and their current teacher in writing.
- Following this communication, the issue will be brought to the Area Chair.
- Pending availability, the studio change will be implemented the following semester.
- Issues of urgency, including physical or emotional safety, should be brought immediately to the attention of the Area Chair. The Area Chair will facilitate, if necessary, escalation to the appropriate University services, including the Title IX office or Campus Counseling services.

Applied Lesson Policies

Students shall receive 15 lessons over the course of the semester. Majors typically receive 50-minute lessons, while non-majors may receive either 50- or 30-minute lessons.

Attendance

Each studio instructor is responsible for keeping accurate attendance records and for creating and implementing their specific studio policy for attendance, notification for missed lessons, and make-up lessons. Lessons missed due to instructor cancellation or absence will be made up. Attendance is required for both weekly lessons and weekly studio class.

Studio Class

Each applied teacher holds a weekly studio class. A pianist is assigned to each class. Music for studio class must be submitted to the pianist no later than a week before the class on which you are scheduled to perform. If your applied instructor's studio class conflicts with another class, you must attend the studio class of another instructor at a more amenable time.'

Studio Class Expectations

- Students will submit their music to their studio class pianist a week prior to singing in class
- The audience will, if requested by the instructor and singer, provide thoughtful, constructive comments on their colleague's performance.
- Students will display professionalism when performing and when observing.

Practice Expectations

The study and application of voice is highly demanding. Each student is expected to develop disciplined habits of regular practice and to consistently hone performance skills in order to succeed in the Voice Area. Studio instructors may implement policies regarding practice documentation in their syllabi. If you need guidance in developing practice habits, please speak to your applied instructor.

Lesson Expectations

Lessons will follow a mutually agreed-upon format, including work on musical fundamentals, diction, interpretation, and vocal technique. It is expected that notes and rhythms will be learned by the student in the practice room, not during the lesson. Progressive goals, mutually agreed upon, will be set at the end of each lesson.

Repertoire Requirements

Students are expected to prepare at least the minimum number of pieces required for the jury each semester. (See below: Jury Requirements.) As students progress through their degree, it is expected that the level of difficulty and quantity of repertoire will increase.

Scores and Materials

It is expected that students will obtain copies of all assigned music, whether digital or physical. A 3-ring binder containing physical copies and a pencil, or a tablet with PDFs that can be annotated, are acceptable. Phones and laptops are not acceptable for music reading during lessons. It is recommended that you record your lessons for review.

Collaborative Pianists

- Students are required to fill out a form requesting a collaborative pianist at the beginning of each semester. These forms can be found on the piano bulletin board on the first floor of the Fine Arts Building, next to FAB 138.
- A yearly updated version of this form is also available online in the general school of music handbook, linked here. However, **physical copies of the forms must be turned in to be assessed**. The deadline for these forms is always the second Friday after classes begin in a given semester.
- Priority is given to students who will be giving degree recitals during the semester and/or performing an upper-level jury.
- If you are not assigned a pianist for the semester, a list of students who are open to playing for a small fee is available. You are responsible for finding a pianist for your jury.
- Sheet music must be submitted to your studio pianist 7 days before you need your pianist to play for you in a lesson or studio class.

Juries and Assessments

Jury Policies

Juries occur during exam week at the end of each semester. Every student who takes applied lessons is required to present a jury, with the exception of those students who have presented a successful solo recital during the course of the semester. If a student is ill or unable to present their jury, they will receive an incomplete for applied lessons until the jury is made up. All pieces presented for the jury must be memorized, with the exception of pieces from oratorio repertoire. Students may not re-list pieces from prior juries; however, they may sing repertoire that they have previously performed in recital.

Jury Format

The jury panel consists of the current applied voice faculty. The student may choose their first selection, and the faculty will then select another piece. The upper-level jury for students attempting to pass into 3455 will be performed as a set, with all four pieces sung in the order of the student's choosing. The student will sing their selections with their assigned or hired collaborative pianist.

Jury Requirements

- **2445:** 2 pieces memorized
- **1435:** 3 pieces memorized
- **2455**
 - **First semester:** 3-4 pieces memorized
 - **Second semester:** 3-4 pieces memorized
 - **Third semester:** 4-5 pieces memorized
 - **Fourth semester (Upper Level Jury):**
 - 4 contrasting pieces memorized in Italian, French, German, and English.
 - The English piece is to be prepared without the guidance of the applied lesson teacher.
 - The student will present all four pieces and may decide the order of performance.
 - If the student does not pass their upper-level jury, they will not be permitted to pass into 3455/4455 (junior level applied voice).
 - The student may retake their upper-level jury once. If it is not passed a second time, the faculty will reassess your continuation as a voice major.
- **3455, 4455, 7435, 7455, 8455:** At least 5 pieces memorized in contrasting styles and languages. Significant solo assignments in Opera or other ensembles may partially satisfy jury requirements.
- Students may sing pieces from the oratorio repertoire unmemorized.

Recital Policies

Recital Hearings

All recitals require a hearing at least 10 days prior to the proposed recital date. The student must be prepared to sing from memory any piece they intend to sing on the recital. The student may choose their starting piece, and the hearing committee will choose any following pieces they wish to hear. BM Vocal Performance and MM students must be heard by a committee that includes a member from outside the voice area. BA and BMusEd, as well as non-major students must be heard by a committee of the voice area faculty.

In the case that a student fails the hearing, they must reschedule their recital to at least 10 days after the next scheduled hearing date. This may mean the recital cannot be performed until the following semester.

Program Submission

At the time of the Recital Hearing, the student must submit a draft of their recital program, including translations and program notes.

- All translations not done by the student must be appropriately attributed to the translator.
- Program notes must include factual information regarding the piece or set, as well as the student's original thoughts on how these pieces fit into their program or inspire their performance.
- Adhere to all academic integrity and AI usage guidelines as stated in your instructor's syllabus.

Bachelor of Music (BM) Recitals

BM students are required to present full-length junior and senior recitals. Recital duration must be at least 45 minutes for a junior recital and no more than 60 minutes for a senior recital. 75% of the repertoire presented must be from the classical canon; if there is a question about this proportion, the percentage will be determined by the duration of the pieces. Recitals must include at least four languages. Pieces from oratorio may be sung unmemorized.

Bachelor of Arts (BA) Recitals/Projects

BA students are required to present a senior capstone recital or project. BA students may present a traditional recital. If the student wishes to present a project that is not a traditional recital, a proposal should be submitted by the first Friday of the semester in which they intend to present their project. The proposal should include:

- A thesis statement for the project.
- A description of the form the project will take.
- A complete list of repertoire to be explored, either through presentation or analysis.

- Students currently in the BA who are not performing a recital should enroll in MUS_GENL 3085 section 10, Problems in Music with the permission of their supervising instructor. Students who are beginning the BA in 2026-2027 will enroll in MUS_GENL 4970 Senior Research in Music when they are ready for their capstone project.

Elective Recitals

Students who wish to present a recital not required for their degree, such as Bachelor of Music Education students and non-major students, may schedule their recital later in the semester, once degree recitals have been scheduled.

Master of Music (MM) Recitals

MM students must present one recital. Recital duration must be at least 45 minutes and no more than 60 minutes. 75% of the repertoire presented must be from the classical canon; if there is a question about this proportion, the percentage will be determined by the duration of the pieces. Recitals must include at least four languages. Pieces from oratorio may be sung unmemorized.

Performance Opportunities

Our program offers a wealth of performance opportunities designed to hone your stage presence, expand your repertoire, and build confidence.

Choral Ensembles

We encourage all voice students to participate in our diverse choral ensembles, which include:

- University Singers
- Concert Chorale
- Choral Union
- Sankofa
- Hitt Street Harmony
- Canticum Novum - student led
- Ars Nova - student led

These groups offer opportunities to develop your musicianship, blend, and collaborative skills while performing a wide range of choral repertoire.

Opera Workshop and Scenes

Participants in our **Opera Workshop and Scenes** program gain invaluable experience in operatic performance. This includes coaching, staging, and performing excerpts from various operas, preparing you for the demands of operatic roles. Specific opportunities include:

- Opera Scenes
- Show-Me Cabaret
- Show-Me Opera

Other Performance Venues

Additional opportunities to perform and compete include:

- Fortepiano concert
- Aria/Concerto Competition
- Masterclasses
- Off-Campus Performances: Opportunities for off-campus performances may arise through department initiatives or individual student pursuits.
 - NATS
 - MTNA (for those already preparing a recital)
 - community outreach
 - church engagements
 - collaborations with local arts organizations

Opera Policies

Opera at Mizzou is a class, taken for credit, with specific attendance and preparation requirements.

Attendance

- Opera meets five days a week, typically between 4-6 PM on Mondays through Thursdays, and between 3-5 on Fridays
- N/As for other performances and academic conflicts must be submitted at the beginning of each cycle (Scenes, Show-Me Opera, and Show-Me Cabaret).
- No N/As will be granted during tech week for any performance.
- Calls to rehearsal may vary depending on staging needs; students **must** be available during all possible call times.
- Employment or other non-academic conflicts are **not** valid excuses for non-attendance.
- An overview schedule will be provided at the beginning of each cycle, and a weekly schedule will be sent out by the director no later than Friday morning for the following week.

Preparation

Music must be memorized by the first staging of a scene. Students who are not prepared for staging may be removed from participation at the director's discretion.

Auditions

Auditions for Opera take place at the end of the spring semester for returning students and before the fall semester begins for incoming students. Auditions should consist of two contrasting pieces. Ideally, repertoire should reflect the role a student is auditioning for, whether in tessitura, style, language, or character.

Practice, Health, and Time Management

Effective **practice and rehearsal habits** are fundamental to vocal development. These guidelines will help you maximize your time and protect your instrument.

Practice Room Etiquette

Please observe proper **practice room etiquette**. This includes respecting scheduled times, actively practicing in the space, maintaining a clean environment, protecting the pianos, and being considerate of others using nearby spaces.

Scheduling Practice Time

Scheduling practice time consistently is key. We recommend establishing a regular routine that allows for focused, productive sessions. Remember that **consistency reaps greater rewards than intensity**.

Vocal Health and Hygiene

Prioritizing vocal health and hygiene is non-negotiable for a singer. This includes regular hydration, sufficient rest, adequate nutrition, and avoiding activities that strain or damage your voice. If you experience persistent vocal discomfort, loss of voice that is sudden or lasts more than a week, please consult with your voice instructor and seek medical attention promptly.

Warm-Ups and Cooldowns

Always begin your practice and performance sessions with a thorough **warm-up routine**. Your voice instructor will guide you in developing a personalized warm-up that prepares your vocal mechanism safely and effectively. Cooldowns after intense or long rehearsals are also advisable, please consult your instructor for appropriate exercises.

Time Management

Students are encouraged to develop a weekly plan that includes their classes, rehearsals, and regular independent practice times. If you need help with time management, there are lots of ways to make a system that works for you. Consult with your instructor or advisor if you are struggling with time management.

Student Support Services

We are committed to your holistic well-being and offer a range of **student support services** to assist you academically, personally, and professionally.

Health and Wellness Resources

The university provides comprehensive **health and wellness resources**, including medical services, mental health support, and wellness programs. We encourage you to utilize these services to maintain your physical and mental health. Comprehensive information is available at <https://wellbeing.missouri.edu/>.

Career Services

Our **career services** office offers valuable support for your post-graduation plans, including resume building, interview preparation, networking opportunities, and guidance on pursuing various career paths in music. <https://career.missouri.edu>

Facilities and Resources

Performance Halls

You will have access to our state-of-the-art **performance halls** for rehearsals, recitals, and other departmental events.

- Sheryl Crow Recital Hall - SMC 132
- Whitmore Recital Hall - FAB 135

Music Library

The **music library** houses an extensive collection of scores, recordings, books, and research materials essential for your studies. The librarian for the music department is Janet Hilts (janethilts@missouri.edu).

Digital resources for our students include

- IPASource - IPA transcriptions for thousands of vocal pieces
- Nkoda - digital score resource
- [IMSLP.org](https://imslp.org) - thousands of public domain scores
- RILM - scholarship in music

Many additional resources can be found at <https://libraryguides.missouri.edu/music>

Recording

All student recitals are recorded by our recording staff. For questions, contact Dr. Cory Brodack, c.brodack@missouri.edu.

MU Applied Voice Jury Evaluation Rubric

Name: Studio: Course: Credits:

	5	4	3	2	1	Score
Vocal Technique:	Excellent breath coordination; consistent resonance; seamless registration; accurate intonation throughout.	Mostly solid technique with minor inconsistencies in breath, resonance, or registration.	Functional technique but noticeably inconsistent; intonation issues in challenging passages.	Frequent technical instability; breath or registration issues interfere with performance.	Significant technical issues preventing healthy or reliable singing	
Musicianship & Accuracy:	Highly accurate; clear diction; strong rhythmic precision; independent and confident musician.	Mostly accurate with minor lapses; diction generally clear.	Some rhythmic or pitch errors; diction inconsistencies.	Frequent accuracy problems; difficulties maintaining rhythm or pitch.	Major inaccuracies; unable to maintain musical integrity.	
Artistic Communication :	Fully communicative; stylistically compelling; strong artistic investment.	Clear expressive intent with moderate stylistic definition.	Some expressive elements but limited dynamic or stylistic variety.	Little expressive connection; inconsistent phrasing or dynamics.	No clear artistic intention; disengaged performance.	
Repertoire Requirements & Preparedness:	All repertoire fully prepared, memorized, stylistically appropriate; exceeds level expectations.	Repertoire prepared and memorized with minor insecurities.	Meets minimum requirements but inconsistently prepared.	Missing requirements OR underprepared repertoire.	Substantially unprepared or non-compliant with requirements.	
Overall Progress & Level Advancement:	Remarkable progress; clearly exceeds level expectations.	Noticeable progress; solid advancement for level.	Acceptable progress; meeting standards.	Minimal progress; concerns about advancement.	Regressive or insufficient development for level.	
5 = Exceptional 4 = Strong 3 = Satisfactory 2 = Developing 1 = Needs Improvement					Total:	

A = 23–25 | B = 20–22 | C = 17–19 | D = 14–16 | F = ≤13

Recommended Jury Grade: Hearing Professor:

Comments

Strengths:

Areas for Continued Development:

Recommendations: