

Strings Comprehensive Exam Guide
School of Music
University of Missouri
(last update: March 2018)

I. Goals and Purpose of the Exam

The oral comprehensive examination provides a forum for MM students in strings performance to demonstrate:

- A command of content in the major area of study, particularly in areas of performance and pedagogy
- An ability to apply appropriate historical knowledge and theoretical skills to the major area of study

II. Take-Home Assignments

None

III. 60 minutes before the Exam

A. Orchestral Excerpt: Provide bowings and fingerings

B. Two Contrasting Scores: To evaluate, based on major repertoire for the students particular string instrument (i.e. concerto, sonata or chamber music). You will be able to take the scores to a practice room along with your instrument, and you may make notes on the scores to bring with you to the exam. You may not access the internet, the library, the ped library, or other reference sources (cell phones & computers will be collected prior to your preparation time).

IV. Oral Exam (60 minutes)

A. Orchestral Excerpt: Identify the work and/or discuss the period it was composed

B. Score Analysis (please prepare to discuss all movements):

1. What type of piece is it?
2. Identify the probable time period in which the piece was written, and if possible the composer.
3. Give basic analysis of form, including key areas or tonal centers.
4. Describe the themes and motives.
5. Discuss musical texture (e.g. contrapuntal, homophonic, etc.). Focus especially on the use of your instrument within the overall texture.
6. Discuss harmonic language.
7. Discuss the historical context and significance of the piece.
8. Discuss any other features of interest that may occur to you.

V. Results

Exams will be graded pass/fail, and no follow-up projects to remedy weaknesses exhibited during the exam will be permitted. If a student does not pass the exam, he/she will be allowed one retake the next semester (not including summer).