

Music Theory Placement Test Guidelines

Information for Incoming Freshmen, Transfer Students, and Advanced Standing Tests

I. Incoming Freshmen

Studies in music theory begin with **Music Theory I (MUSI 1121)**, taken during the first semester of your freshman year. There is no placement test needed to pass into this class.

If you enroll as a freshman, you may take placement tests to try to pass into Music Theory II, III, IV, or out of the sequence; these tests are not required. Placement tests are offered twice a year, typically in December (for students beginning in the spring) and August (for those beginning in the fall). Stay alert for announcements from the BSOM office. We only advise you to take a placement test if you have had substantial prior training in music theory (e.g., AP Music Theory).

II. Transfer Students

If you are transferring music theory or aural skills courses to KSU from your previous institution(s) and wish to apply this credit towards your degree, you must take our placement tests to verify your level of competency in the content of those courses. The placement tests will be administered **ONLY** on placement test days. Placement tests for a course are carefully matched to its semester exams or final exam.

A grade of 'C' (70%) or better constitutes a passing grade for placement tests if you have previously taken a course on that level. If you score below 70% on any exam, you will be required to re-take that course at KSU. Specific content and expectations for theory courses are shown below. More information is available in the KSU course catalog online.

Here are a few self-contained FREE online courses:

[Music Theory Flashcards](#)

[Online Music Theory Reference](#)

<https://www.musictheory.net/>

Here are a few theory textbooks that you may study:

Concise Introduction to Tonal Harmony, 2nd edition

<https://wnorton.com/books/9780393417180>

Tonal Harmony, 8th edition

<https://www.mheducation.com/highered/product/tonal-harmony-kostka-payne/M9781259447099.html>

III. Advanced Standing

If you have mastered the content of college courses through high school study, private study, or self-study, you may be awarded credit for theory or aural skills courses through a university-wide procedure known as the Advanced Standing Examination. This procedure allows the student to take a test comparable to the final examination for any university course. Successful completion of the test—80% score or higher for examinations delivered on the School of Music Placement Testing Days in August and January—allows a KSU student to be awarded degree credit for that course without taking it. An

advanced standing exam at a particular level (e.g., out of Theory I) may only be taken a maximum of two times.

KSU regulations for Advanced Standing Examinations are listed on the Advanced Standing Examination forms available online from the Registrar's Office:

[https://registrar.kennesaw.edu/student-resources/docs/Advanced Standing Exam.pdf](https://registrar.kennesaw.edu/student-resources/docs/Advanced_Standing_Exam.pdf)

Kennesaw State University School of Music
Music Theory Test-out Guidelines:
Knowledge Requirement by Semester
Last updated December 2022: Dr. Ben Wadsworth

Course	Content
MUSI 1121: Music Theory I	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic elements of pitch and rhythm• Construction and analysis of triads and seventh chords• Principles of voice leading• Part writing with root position triads• Construction and analysis of non-chord tones
MUSI 1122: Music Theory II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part writing with diatonic chords up to 6/4 chords, predominant and dominant sevenths, and iii and vi• Construction and analysis of normative harmonic progressions: T-PD-D-T and descending fifths• Analysis of tonic expansions, cadences, phrases, and periods
MUSI 3121: Music Theory III	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Secondary (applied) dominants• Sequences• Neapolitan chords• Modal mixture• Modulations• Binary and ternary forms
MUSI 3122: Music Theory IV	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Augmented sixth chords• Enharmonic spellings and enharmonic modulations• Expanded elements of harmonic vocabulary such as common-tone chords• Late 19th century tonal practices• Introduction to 20th century techniques such as modes, collections, pc sets, and 12-tone rows

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