



Music
**Final Assessment Report &
Implementation Plan**
October 2023

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Don Wright Faculty of Music	
Degrees Offered	MA, MMus, DMA, PhD	
Date of Last Review	2014-2015	
Approved Fields	Music Theory and Musicology (MA) Composition, Music Education, and Performance (MMus) Musicology, Music Theory, Music Education, and Composition (PhD) Voice, piano (solo and collaborative), orchestral instruments, and conducting (choral and instrumental) (DMA)	
External Reviewers	Dr. David Rayl College of Music Michigan State University	Dr. Lisa Barg, Schulich School of Music McGill University
Internal Reviewers	Dr. Kamran Siddiqui, Associate Dean, Faculty of Engineering	Hanna Barnett, PhD Candidate, Hispanic Studies
Date of Site Visit	February 1, 2, & 3, 2023	
Date Review Report Received	April 30, 2023	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program and Faculty Responses - August 25, 2023	
Evaluation	Good Quality	
Approval Dates	SUPR-G: January 22, 2024 ACA: February 7, 2024 Senate (for information):	
Year of Next Review	Year of next cyclical review: 2030-2031	
Progress Report	June 2026	

Overview of Western’s Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process

In accordance with Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the Graduate Music Program, delivered by Don Wright Faculty of Music.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program’s self-study brief;
- the external reviewers’ report; and
- the response from the Program/Faculty.

This FAR identifies the strengths of the program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines the timeline for completion.

The FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Senate Graduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-G) and ACA, then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance. Subsequently, it is publicly accessible on Western’s IQAP website. The FAR is the only document from the graduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Graduate Music Program, the Don Wright Faculty of Music, the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS), and SUPR-G.

Executive Summary

The MA and MMus degrees were inaugurated in 1969, one year after the constitution of the Faculty of Music. The duration of the MA degree was modified from five terms to three terms (one year) in 2020, and the revised MA program admitted its first students in Fall 2021. The PhD degree has been in place since 1988; the DMA degree was approved in 2010 and admitted its first students in Fall 2011. The DMA degree was modified in 2021 to include a Research-Creation Portfolio and the choice between two curriculum options, one project-based the other thesis-based. The collaborative specialization in Music Cognition was launched in 2020. Total enrolments for each degree in 2020-2021 were: 5 in the MA; 73 full-time and 23 part-time in the MMus; 49 in the PhD; and 25 in the DMA.

To inform the self-study, the program undertook: 1) a graduate student survey (n=67), which provided wide-ranging quantitative data; 2) a student-led focus group (n=10), which provided follow-up qualitative data; 3) a virtual curriculum mapping process, which involved faculty members in curriculum mapping and assessment of learning outcomes; and 4) an EDIAD reflection exercise, which examined the graduate admissions process for evidence of unconscious bias.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the Graduate Music Program. They offer a total of eight recommendations for further enhancement.

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- Students in all fields of specialization benefit from exposure to a variety of ways in which music research, performance, and composition inform and enhance each other.
- Large pool of ensembles and performers available to perform student compositions.
- Wide range of courses and performance activities that provide graduate students with diverse teaching opportunities and other professional training.
- Flexibility and interdisciplinary nature of the curriculum that support the varied research interests and professional goals of students.
- Mobile course offerings and alternative pathways stimulate interest and attract a greater diversity of students; which is reflected in a substantially increased international graduate enrolment since 2015.
- Dual-degree partnerships with Soochow University, East China Normal University, and Tongji University.
- Students have access to a Music Library that is among the best in North America and a Music Building recently enhanced by a major renovation and new equipment.
- In addition to the ongoing major modifications to the graduate programs from 2016 to 2022, the program is exploring the feasibility of adding two more terms of

lessons in the project-based stream in the DMA (Performance); and, adding Composition as a field within the DMA.

Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program

- Continued efforts to attract a diverse pool of students is needed.
 - o Ongoing review of graduate admissions practices with the aim of identifying and addressing the ways the program 1) has historically favored some applicants over others; 2) failed to attract applicants from some groups.
- Diverse range of graduate course offerings.
 - o Some students expressed an interest in more courses that are better aligned with the competencies they believe they will need upon graduation – courses dedicated to publication, editing, different forms of writing, pedagogy, and knowledge mobilization.
- Opportunities for interdisciplinarity and work across fields in music.
- Greater emphasis on professional development and experiential learning.

Review Process

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers, one internal reviewer and a graduate student reviewer, were provided with Volume I and II of the self-study brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met virtually (due to pandemic restrictions) over two days with the:

- Vice-Provost of the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Associate Vice-Provost of the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Associate Vice-Provost, Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty
- Director, Academic Quality & Enhancement
- Dean, Don Wright Faculty of Music
- Associate Dean, Graduate Studies, Don Wright Faculty of Music
- Assistant Dean, Research, Don Wright Faculty of Music
- Chair, Music Research and Composition
- Chair, Music Performance Studies
- Chair and Co-Chair, Music Education
- Graduate Committee Members
- Associate University Librarian
- Director, Music Library
- Graduate Program and Department Staff
- Program Faculty Members
- Graduate Students

Following the virtual site visit, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Faculty for review and response (given that there is no academic unit that administers this program directly, only a response from the Faculty was provided). Formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Program and Decanal responses form the basis of this Final Assessment Report (FAR) of the Graduate Music Program. The FAR is collated and submitted to the SGPS and to SUPR-G by the Internal Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

Summative Assessment – External Reviewers’ Report

External reviewers shared: *“We commend the excellent faculty, thriving and engaged graduate student community, and a strong curriculum in spite of a reduction in faculty complement. [...] The graduate program makes a vital contribution to the university, the larger community and to music research, education, composition, and performance on a national level.”*

Strengths of the Program

- Faculty demonstrates considerable strength in research, graduate teaching, and advising.
- Admission requirements ensure that entering students possess the academic readiness and skills necessary to successfully complete the program.
- The curriculum was revised to effectively address the rapidly evolving state of the music profession by: 1) adding the online TCPS-2 CORE as a requirement, which is essential for doctoral students; 2) adapting the DMA in Performance into a project-based and thesis-based curriculum; 3) introducing a new Qualifying Examination which permits a broader range of exam types, matched to the research/creative activity of the individual student; 4) converting MMus in Composition into thesis-based which is in accordance with professional expectations of those with graduate degrees in composition; 5) adding flexibility to language requirement for PhD students in musicology.
- The development of the music cognition interdisciplinary stream, a feature of the program that promises to attract students interested in interdisciplinary opportunities and challenges.
- Students in performance degrees have many opportunities for experiential learning and collaborative work on and off campus.
- The library’s location and significant holdings.
- Completion rates for the MA, MMus and DMA students are excellent.

Prospective Improvements for the Program to Consider

- Students expressed the need for 1) greater clarity in the communication of the nature and structure of the program; 2) varied types and styles of instruction; 3) mentoring for PhD students to enable their successful program completion. *(embedded in external reviewer recommendation #1)*
- Insufficient resources hinder course options for students in a given semester or even over the length of their study, as well as the development of additional courses and co-curricular activities. For instance, in relation to “music entrepreneurship” and “music career development.” *(embedded in external reviewer recommendations #2 and #3)*
- Meaningful discussions regarding EDID integration into the program are taking place, however the implementation of actions is only at the cusp of taking place. *(embedded in external reviewer recommendation #4)*
- The 4-year limit on funding and language requirements for PhD students could be negatively impacting the completion rates for PhD students. *(embedded, in part, in external reviewer recommendation #8)*
- Consider the addition of elective coursework and/or co-curricular opportunities in the area of Musicians’ overall health and wellness is essential in the preparation of 21st-century music professionals.
- Consider ways to offer applied lessons to non-music majors, which could provide teaching opportunities.

Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers. Recommendations requiring implementation have been marked with an asterisk (*).

Reviewers’ Recommendation	Program/Faculty Response (Only one response is included as the Faculty’s Associate Dean Graduate effectively oversees the administration of the graduate program offerings – no other program administrator exists).
<p>Recommendation #1* Enhance communication and mentorship/advising for new graduate students.</p> <p>a) Graduate program should institute a formal graduate orientation, organized by the Graduate Studies office. A series of formal graduate orientation events can help to address many communications related issues raised by new students.</p> <p>b) Coordinated approach to communication of program requirements, milestones and deadlines to ensure effective program advising.</p>	<p>a) The program will pilot a new version of the Fall orientation on September 5, 2023, which will be planned by Graduate Program and supported by SOGSIM. The all-day event will include an information packet, presentations from the ADG, the Graduate Program Assistant, the department Chairs, as well as representatives from PSAC SGPS, and others. There will be a student reception at the end of the day. Improved communication of program requirements and procedures will be further enhanced by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • redesigning the graduate webpages to clarify, by degree and area, all program requirements. • developing renewed planning documents 1) for PhD, DMA, and dual-degree MA and MMus intended to help students monitor progress as they move through their programs. • reconfiguring the DMA advisory committees with the aim of having regular meetings. <p>b) To strengthen program advising, the program will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • introduce a notification system prompting committee Chairs to schedule annual or semi-annual meetings with students; and explore the feasibility of a reporting mechanism within Pathfinder for supervisors to submit feedback after these meetings. • the ADG will host drop-in sessions once a term to discuss program elements and academic resources, to supplement the work of the advisory committee. • seek advising support for DMA and MMus students in Music Performance to relieve advisory burden on the ADG and Graduate Program Assistant.
<p>Recommendation #2 Temporarily suspend doctoral admissions for students in music education until there is a commitment from the Provost’s Office to faculty renewal to resolve the unsustainably high number of students-to-faculty ratio. Current resources should be used to support existing students.</p>	<p>The Graduate Program has suspended doctoral admissions to the PhD program in Music Education, pending a commitment to at least one full-time hire in this area. The need for renewal in Music Education was identified in the December 2022 budget submission. This need has become more acute since then, with the retirement of one full-time member in July 2023 and the announcement of a second retirement effective June 2024. By June 2024, Music Education will have lost four of its nine full-time members in two years. Despite these losses, the program continues to produce excellent students. Six PhD students defended in Fall-Winter 2022-23 and three more will defend in Fall 2023. That will leave eleven students, which is within the current supervisory capacity of the program.</p>

<p>Recommendation #3 Address program-wide lack of faculty resources in the areas of music education, theory, musicology, and composition. This recommendation is critical for sustaining and expanding the excellence of the program.</p>	<p>The Graduate Program agrees that faculty renewal across all fields of Music is critical to the long-term health and reputation of the program. Overall graduate enrolment is healthy, but faculty resources depend on robust undergraduate enrolment as well. The Faculty will target areas that will expand excellence in graduate education while supporting a strong undergraduate foundation. The next opportunity to make a budgetary case for faculty resources is December 2023.</p>
<p>Recommendation #4* Prioritize program-wide EDID initiatives and goals via curriculum diversification, targeted faculty hires from equity-seeking groups, recruitment of BIPOC students, and community engagement.</p>	<p>The Graduate Program is committed to the implementation of these goals; and, acknowledge that the program, though off to a good start, is at the beginning of this journey. Graduate courses are incorporating EDID themes; concert programming is more diverse than ever; colloquium series is showcasing research on race, gender, and social justice. PhD students and postdoctoral researchers are working on Indigenous topics. To achieve program-wide change will take time and require institutional support in the form of at least one targeted hire in the short term.</p>
<p>Recommendation #5 Enhance opportunities for teaching and pedagogy via the creation of TA assignments that offer graduate students' opportunities for classroom, ensemble, and studio teaching.</p>	<p>A wide range of teaching opportunities is available to graduate students in the Faculty of Music. These include leading classroom tutorials, guiding discussion groups, providing technical and artistic support in performance events, professional development in various musical settings, teaching musical skills, and so on. Students are also solicited, as per 13.02b of the GTA Collective Agreement, for their input into course assignment preferences.</p>
<p>Recommendation #6* Offer DMA option for Composition.</p>	<p>The Program has begun to explore the possibility of a DMA in Composition. The ADG and full-time composition faculty are considering whether such a program would replace the PhD in Composition or exist alongside it. The program is also examining the practices of peer institutions; and, will consult with other faculty members and former/current graduate students in Composition before making a final decision.</p>
<p>Recommendation #7* Reduction in required faculty for DMA committees to address current and projected increases in DMA enrolments.</p>	<p>DMA advisory committees will be reduced from three members to two members in Fall 2023. This is partly to alleviate workload for non-performance faculty (who have traditionally served on these committees), but mostly a response to the revision of the DMA program. The majority of DMA students will elect the performance-based stream of the revised program and will not require a thesis supervisor. The performance faculty serving on these committees will oversee an MRP and not require doctoral membership in SGPS. It will be easier for these reduced committees to schedule meetings. In most cases the committee Chair will also be the student's studio instructor and optimally positioned to monitor academic progress.</p>

<p>Recommendation #8* Reduction or removal of language requirements for PhD in Musicology and Music Theory as it is a challenge for students to complete within the 4-year funding window, and the current language requirement seems inconsistent with EDID aims, goals and initiatives.</p>	<p>The Graduate Program appreciates this recommendation and will bring it to the Department of Music Research and Composition and to the Graduate Committee. The ADG will recommend the removal of this requirement, since there are no graduate-level reading courses that properly support the development of research skills. Undergraduate languages courses do not meet that need. If a thesis topic requires reading proficiency in a language other than English, the Advisory Committee should advise the student of this, but the language requirement as it currently stands should be withdrawn.</p>
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Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Graduate Program Chair, in consultation with the SGPS and the Dean of the Faculty is responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan.

Recommendations prioritized for implementation include only those with current or future actions. In this case, recommendations #2 and #3 relate to hiring decisions which are outside the purview of the Program (and the scope of this review process) and recommendation #5 does not require any action as resources and opportunities are already in place to support this recommendation, as indicated in the response table above. As such, these three recommendations are not included in the implementation table below.

Prioritized Recommendations	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>Recommendation #1 Enhance communication and mentorship/advising for new graduate students. a) Institute a formal graduate orientation. b) Clearer communication of program requirements, milestones and deadlines to ensure effective program advising.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program will assume responsibility of the Orientation program and will consult with SOGSIM. • Redesign graduate webpages to clarify, by degree and area, all program requirements. • Develop a plan for regular program communication with students (e.g., a newsletter, highlighting important deadlines). • Develop planning documents 1) for PhD, DMA, and dual-degree MA and MMus to help students monitor progress. • Reconfigure the DMA advisory committees with the aim of having regular meetings. • Introduce a notification system prompting committee Chairs to schedule annual or semi-annual meetings with students. • Explore implementing a reporting mechanism within Pathfinder for supervisors to submit feedback after these meetings. • Host drop-in sessions once per term to discuss program elements and academic resources. • Seek much needed advising support for DMA and MMus students. 	<p>Associate Dean, Graduate</p>	<p>By May 2024</p>

<p>Recommendation #4 Prioritize program-wide EDID initiatives and goals.</p>	<p>Continue efforts to action the implementation of EDID goals, such as embedding of EDID themes in graduate curricula, showcasing diverse artists in concert programming, and featuring relevant research on race, gender, indigeneity and social justice.</p>	<p>Associate Dean, Graduate</p>	<p>By Dec 2024</p>
<p>Recommendation #6 Offer DMA option for Composition.</p>	<p>Examine the possibility of this option via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued discussion of feasibility among relevant faculty members and the Dean’s Office. • Examination of practices at peer institutions • Consultation with former and current students in composition. 	<p>Associate Dean, Graduate</p>	<p>By Dec 2024</p>
<p>Recommendation #7 Reduction in required faculty for DMA committees to address current and projected increases in DMA enrolments.</p>	<p>Reduce DMA advisory committees from three members to two members.</p>	<p>Associate Dean, Graduate</p>	<p>By Dec 2023</p>
<p>Recommendation #8 Reduction or removal of language requirements for PhD in Musicology and Music Theory.</p>	<p>Recommend the removal of the language requirement, with specific measures in place where a thesis topic does require reading proficiency in a language other than English.</p>	<p>Associate Dean, Graduate</p>	<p>By June 2024</p>