

# **Graduate Handbook**

**Ph.D. Program in Music and Multimedia Composition  
Department of Music  
Brown University**

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**This document supersedes previous MEME or MMC Doctoral Student Handbooks.**

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The Music and Multimedia Composition (MMC) Graduate Handbook is intended to help guide new and continuing students through their graduate studies in the MMC program at Brown. It contains a mixture of rules, regulations, rationales, and advice. For clarification and additional information on policy, speak with the MMC Director of Graduate Studies (DGS). DGSs are responsible for all graduate-related issues and act as liaisons between graduate students and the Graduate School. DGSs are expected to send annual updates to graduate students informing them of their academic standing and expected progress and are the primary point of contact for students who may need to make special requests regarding deferred admission, travel, leaves of absence, etc. Additionally, each graduate student should meet regularly with the DGS to discuss goals, course planning, and progress.

The Academic Student Affairs Coordinator in the Music Department administers the department's graduate program and should be contacted first on administrative matters having to do with the Graduate School, such as regulations, forms and deadlines. The first part of this handbook is a summary of the regulations concerning degrees. The second part expands on the first, offering suggestions about each year of study, and explaining procedures governing evaluation, financial aid, and the qualifying examinations (prelims).

General information for graduate students is contained in the Catalog of the University, the Catalog of the Graduate School, and online at the Graduate School website. You should consult these other sources of information as well as this handbook. The most up-to-date information is here in the MMC Graduate Handbook.

MMC faculty have a wide range of specializations and backgrounds. They are here to help expand and refine your existing artistic interests while opening new areas of aesthetic and technical inquiry. You are encouraged to take courses from a wide range of perspectives and consult with multiple faculty in MMC and Musicology/Ethnomusicology, as well as outside the department. The flexibility of the curriculum allows for you to create a customized program, and your mentors and advisors are here to help realize this. You have substantial agency over your choice of mentors, advisors, and committee members, and you are expected to take an active role in assembling a set of faculty who can support your work in meaningful ways.

MMC is a small program; community and collegiality are important to its ethos and success. Being a good citizen of the department and a trusted colleague are of great importance. You are expected to regularly attend and participate in program events such as the MMC colloquium. We value your commitment as an active artist and interlocutor in the department and community at large.

While the DGS, mentor/advisors and committee members will work with you closely, you are ultimately responsible for your academic progress, and that includes keeping in good standing each year. Please refer to Part Three and the [Graduate School Handbook](#) for information on academic standing and yearly evaluations. It is your responsibility to keep track of important deadlines as outlined in the sections below.

## **PART ONE: Degree Requirements**

### **Overview of Requirements**

The MMC doctoral program requires students to take around eighteen to twenty courses during their first three years of study. With the consultation of the student's advisor, courses will be chosen in order to suit an individualized plan of study. By mid-March of the third year, the candidate will take a three-hour oral qualifying examination. Passing the qualifying examination authorizes the student to proceed to the doctoral dissertation, which is completed during the remaining two or three years.

### **1. The M.A. Degree: Requirements**

You are admitted to the graduate program with the expectation that you will be a full-time student. Most students will earn both the M.A. and Ph.D. An M.A. is awarded as an intermediate step during the second year of study provided you have completed a minimum of eight courses, an approved master's thesis, and passed the Second Year Review.

**1.1 Tuition units.** For the M.A. the Graduate School requires a minimum of eight tuition units (eight courses), although students typically complete fourteen courses by the end of the second year (including independent studies). A Fellowship pays four tuition units per semester while a Teaching or Research Assistantship pays three tuition units per semester. (For explanations of Fellowships, Assistantships see below under Financial Aid.)

**1.2. Course requirements.** For the M.A. you must complete a minimum of eight approved semester courses with a grade of B or higher. Courses with a mandatory S/NC grade option must be completed with a grade of S. Students are required to take at least four MMC 2000-level graduate seminars (one in each of the first four semesters), as well as attend and participate in the MMC Graduate Colloquium.

Most students take the general graduate composition/production seminars each semester during their first two years (listed in the course schedule in the 2200's). Students are strongly encouraged to take one or more 2000-level courses in the Musicology and Ethnomusicology program.

The remaining courses may be chosen, with approval from the DGS and in consultation with the first year mentor, from any graduate or upper-level undergraduate courses at Brown or RISD. Students often take advanced courses outside of the department, such as those in art and media production, technical skills and critical theory or history classes.

Students are limited to four independent study credits during their first two years in the program (one per term at most) but can petition for more in consultation with the DGS. A second independent study credit in a single term must be taken in addition to all other course credit requirements; it cannot substitute for one of them.

**1.3. Master's Thesis.** The thesis will be a substantial creative project and accompanying paper that must be approved by at least two faculty members from the MMC program. By May 1st of the first year, the student will form the M.A. committee (two MMC faculty plus optional others) and send the names to the DGS and Department Chair. The first year mentor may be part of this committee but it

is not required nor expected. The project should demonstrate original ideas and techniques, with the form determined by the student. Examples include, but are not limited to, audio/visual installation, electronic performance using interactive technology, new instrument design and performance, fixed media work, acoustic composition for solo instruments or ensembles, and hybrid combinations of the above. Professional documentation of your work (typically video and/or audio recordings collected in an electronic portfolio), along with a paper of a minimum of 30 pages describing aesthetic concepts, background information and technical realization of the work is required.

A detailed thesis proposal, typically 5-10 pages, must be submitted and approved by the chair of your M.A. committee, who will approve and send the decision to the DGS at the end of the first year (deadline June 1st). The proposal should include a summary of the project, a detailed aesthetic/artistic description and rationale, a detailed technical description including research needed to complete the project, and a detailed timeline. The typical timeline includes:

1. Presentation of prototypes at the end of the third semester
2. Ongoing critiques of work-in-progress in the first half of the fourth semester
3. A final project critique at least two weeks before the work is shown
4. A final showing, performance, or presentation of the work by March 15
5. A completed first draft of the paper by April 5
6. A final copy of the paper by April 15
7. The completed thesis and all documentation approved and submitted to the committee by May 1. Two PDF copies are required: one to the Music Library, and one for MMC.

**1.4. Second Year Review.** In the fourth semester, after a public presentation of the M.A. thesis project, each student will undergo a Second Year Review and critique administered by the M.A. committee and the DGS.

The committee will review reports by instructors, the student's progress, samples of work completed at Brown, and the M.A. thesis. The committee will then meet with the student, which will give the student the opportunity to communicate with the committee. The goal of the meeting is to be retrospective as well as to discuss future directions including suggestions and possibilities for qualifying exam areas. Based on an evaluation of the student's progress in the M.A. program, the committee will make a decision to either admit the student into the Ph.D. program or (rarely) determine that the student may not proceed in his or her studies and award a terminal M.A.

**1.5. Duration of Study.** Students are required to complete the M.A. within four semesters of full-time study. Students who petition to have previous graduate work accepted may proceed more rapidly.

**1.6. Students with Prior Graduate Degrees.** Students entering with a master's degree from another institution may petition to have up to eight graduate course credits transferred. If you have completed a master's thesis similar to the one required by the MMC program, you may also petition to have your thesis accepted as part of your requirement towards earning Brown's Ph.D. degree.

Students whose thesis is accepted and who transfer eight credits may be able to complete their Ph.D. in four years, instead of five or six, and will not receive the M.A. from Brown. These students will still meet the M.A. two-year course requirements, and they will begin preparing for their qualifying exam during their second year.

## 2. The Ph.D. Degree: Requirements

**2.1. Prerequisites.** You must complete all the M.A. requirements before entering the Ph.D. program.

**2.2. Tuition units and residency.** For the Ph.D. the Graduate School requires sixteen tuition units beyond the eight for the M.A. You must spend at least two semesters beyond the M.A. in full-time study in residence at Brown.

**2.3. Duration of study.** Most students should plan on five or six years of full-time study for the completion of the Ph.D, with six years of funding guaranteed by the Graduate School. The sixth year of funding requires that the student be in good standing. Some students entering with a master's degree may proceed more rapidly. The Graduate School requires students to complete the dissertation no later than five years after advancement to candidacy.

**2.4. Course requirements.** Requirements for the Ph.D. include ongoing MMC composition seminars, independent study, and additional courses relevant for the Ph.D. thesis. Most students receiving the M.A. and Ph.D. take about eighteen to twenty courses in total during three years of full-time coursework. The additional course credits needed to meet the graduate school's requirement of twenty-four are counted when a student is researching and writing the dissertation. (See section eight for a schematic of typical course loads). Students are expected to participate in the MMC Graduate Colloquium during every term they are enrolled in the program and in residence at Brown.

Students usually take at least three course units per term during the third year (but may petition for two in consultation with the DGS), typically independent studies to work on the qualifying exam, or optionally, MMC composition seminars or courses relevant to the qualifying exam research.

**2.5. Selecting the Qualifying Exam and Dissertation Committees.** Soon after a student is admitted into the Ph.D. program (after completion of the M.A. at the end of the second year), it is time to select members of the Qualifying Exam ("Quals") committee, which is made up of three people: the Chair (most likely the eventual Dissertation advisor), and two other faculty members. Usually this committee does not include more than three people and usually they are all Brown faculty members, though this is a norm and not a requirement. Having more than three committee members, including people from outside Brown, generally happens at the Dissertation level. The Chair must be a member of the Brown Music Department. Professors (all ranks) and senior lecturers, may serve as primary advisors, as well as, serve on any of the graduate committees.

Generally the same committee is in place for both the Qualifying Exams and the Dissertation, but changes can be made between the two. Once the quals committee has been formed the student must send the finalized list of committee members to the DGS and Department Chair. This should be done by May 15, in advance of formulating the Reading/Listening/Viewing List, which is due on June 1.

The committee chair will be the student's primary advisor and advocate, guiding them through the process of the qualifying exam and eventually, in most cases, the dissertation. The student and chair collaborate to assemble the committee, including the advisor and usually two or three additional professors chosen for their area of expertise. When appropriate, MMC students are encouraged to

include Musicology and Ethnomusicology faculty on their committee. Committee members may be chosen from outside of the University or the department. This advisory committee will typically see the student through the qualifying exam to the completion of the dissertation, but it is possible to change members, including the chair, specifically for the dissertation committee.

**2.6. Ph.D. qualifying examination: overview.** The qualifying exam comprises four distinct components:

1. A reading/listening/viewing list for study and research
2. A qualifying exam proposal with questions / topics for three essays
3. Three essays (History & Critical Theory, Analysis, Special Topic)
4. An oral exam

A detailed exam reading/listening/viewing list must be submitted to the student's Qualifying Exam committee no later than nine months before the exam (June 1 or earlier). Subsequently, the full qualifying exam proposal must be submitted and approved no later than six months before the exam (September 15 or earlier).

Provided normal progress is made towards the degree, students will take the qualifying oral exam during the **first half of the sixth semester (before March 15)**.

### **2.6.1 Selecting exam areas**

After completion of the M.A. thesis (end of the second year), a student will meet with the Qualifying Exam chair to define **three specialized areas** for the qualifying exam. The selected exam areas should delimit fields pertaining to the student's projected dissertation research, and should address these topics:

1. **History & Critical Theory:** This addresses the history and critical theory of music and/or multimedia fields, both in general and specifically as they relate to the student's work.
2. **Analysis:** Reflects the specific artistic goals of the student, analyzing and discussing exemplary creative work that may be influential on the final dissertation project. Typically, this takes the form of a comparative analysis of three related works.
3. **Special Topic:** In consultation with their primary advisor and committee, each student will choose a special topic area to gain and demonstrate expertise. The choice of topic is open and may include intensive studies of, for example, technical subjects (software, acoustics, hardware design), music perception, musical genres, or an examination of a particular artist or composer's work.

These three specialized areas will be the main subjects that guide the choice of reading, listening and viewing materials, and the subsequent work for the three essays.

### **2.6.2 Reading/Listening/Viewing List (due June 1 or earlier of the second year)**

The first stage of the qualifying exam process is the preparation of a reading/listening/viewing list based on the three chosen areas of specialization. Each student will create a core reading/listening/viewing list in consultation with their advisors. This list should be divided into the three areas designated for the qualifying exam, and may be composed of scholarly texts, musical

scores, and audio-visual material. The list will be submitted to the Dissertation Committee along with a descriptive statement on the areas of study and the focus of inquiry.

### **2.6.3 Qualifying Exam Proposal with Questions for Three Essays (due September 15 or earlier of the third year)**

The qualifying exam proposal comprises a set of questions the student will address for each of the three chosen areas of specialization. These questions directly lead to the essay writing, and so should be constructed as prompts for the research to follow. The proposal should be 5-10 pages in length. The reading/listening/viewing list for each area should be attached as a bibliography for each set of questions.

Before you can proceed, members of the exam committee must accept the qualifying exam proposal via email to the committee chair, who will forward them to the DGS. The committee reserves the right to refuse to examine you in an area which it feels is insufficiently competent. Therefore, you should gain informal approval of an area before you begin to prepare yourself in it. In the rare instance where you wish to postpone the examination you must petition the Graduate Committee no later than the beginning of the sixth semester.

Once the set of questions is approved, the student will commence study, culminating in three essays.

### **2.6.4 Essays (February 15 or earlier)**

Each essay begins with a set of questions it will address, and proceeds with a definition of the area and a review of relevant scholarship and creative work. In so doing, you outline the major intellectual, technical and aesthetic issues of the field. The essays should include your insights, thoughts, and analyses of critical problems facing each area. These essays, along with the bibliography, will be given to committee members **at least one month before the oral exam**. (The essays are typically 15-20 pages, not including a bibliography or images, and should be accompanied by audio/visual links to discussed work, when possible). It is advisable to have your main advisor read the essays and make comments before they are sent to the rest of the committee. Keep in mind that committee members will make suggestions and comments, and will want to see the rewrite at least one week before the exam.

### **2.6.5 Oral Exam (March 15 or earlier)**

During the oral exam (up to three hours) the essays and bibliography will be used as a basis to center discussion. The usual format for the Oral Exam is for the student to give a concise presentation (10 minutes or so) followed by a discussion on each of the essays. Sometimes it may make more sense for the student to give one overall presentation (around 30 minutes) before the discussion begins. The format should be agreed on in advance between the student and committee chair. The committee will review the student's competence and knowledge in the areas where research is planned. The oral exam is not public, and includes only the student and committee members.

Upon completion of the exam, the committee will come to one of the following determinations: (a) Pass; (b) Pass with Distinction; (c) Retake. Students may retake the exam once, but this must be



done by the end of the semester. Upon passing the qualifying exam, the candidate may proceed to the dissertation.

## **2.7. Dissertation proposal and advancement to candidacy (May 15 or earlier)**

After passing the Ph.D. qualifying examination, you will work with your dissertation advisor to develop a thesis proposal (you should have begun discussing your thesis topic in the previous year in preparation for the qualifying exam).

The detailed proposal must include:

1. a statement of artistic concept to be investigated
2. a description of your Ph.D. project
3. a review and bibliography of the relevant scholarly literature
4. a description of the research methods you will use
5. a projected timetable
6. a discussion of the feasibility of the project
7. a statement of its significance for the field.

The dissertation proposal is typically 10-20 pages.

The dissertation proposal should be circulated to the members of the student's dissertation committee by May 15 of the sixth semester, and discussed with individual committee members. A file copy of the approved proposal will be signed by all members of the dissertation committee (email approval is acceptable) and will be provided to the Director of Graduate Studies of the Computer Music and Multimedia program. This is typically done by the end of the sixth semester.

Once the dissertation proposal is accepted, you are advanced to candidacy for the degree. At this point you have completed all of the requirements for the doctoral degree except the dissertation (ABD).

A dissertation proposal often undergoes some modification as the research progresses and you are in communication with your dissertation advisor. Any major change in topic or research method requires approval of a revised proposal. No dissertation will be accepted from a student who has not had a research proposal accepted.

## **2.8. Dissertation**

The dissertation is an original work of art/music/performance (the dissertation "project") that makes a substantial contribution to knowledge in the field; plus a detailed paper that describes the project's overall concept, technical methods, historical/theoretical/artistic context, and a detailed analysis (the paper is typically 100-120 pages long). **The dissertation project must be performed/shown in public well before the written portion is completed (by October 1 of the final year).** It is recommended to have several work-in-progress showings of the project before it is completed. **A final formal critique of the finished work will take place, with all committee members present, no later than three weeks before the first public presentation.**

For a commencement at the end of May, **a first draft of the written thesis must be sent to the dissertation advisor for comments by February 1, with a final draft completed by March 1** and sent to the dissertation committee.

While the work on the dissertation is under way, a written progress report by the student is required each semester. The report should be sent to the DGS, who will send it to the dissertation advisor.

The Graduate School has a very specific set of rules regarding the format of the dissertation text and the procedures surrounding its submission. The paper must be accompanied by audio/visual documentation. (See [Graduate School website](#) for details).

*NOTE: If you are in your fifth or sixth years, preparing your dissertation, you need only register for the non-credit-bearing course MUSC2990 -- Thesis Preparation -- in order to remain active, regardless of whether or not you are on campus or in the field doing research.*

**To summarize the important milestones in the dissertation:**

1. Final formal critique at least 3 weeks prior to the first public presentation. This is for your committee members
2. Public presentation by October 1 of the final year
3. First draft of written thesis to primary advisor by February 1 of final year
4. Final draft of written thesis to full dissertation committee by March 1 of final year
5. Contact Music Student Affairs Officer second week of March to begin arranging defense
6. Dissertation defense during the period of April 1 - April 6 (see below for details)
7. Final version of written thesis, incorporating suggested revisions, to dissertation committee by April 15
8. All materials and paperwork submitted to the Graduate School by May 1

*NOTE: The Graduate School issues diplomas three times per year on May 1st, October 20, and February 19. If you are planning on submitting your dissertation for the October or February dates then you can change the schedule of milestones in collaboration with your advisor and the DGS.*

## **2.9. Defense**

The dissertation defense is scheduled approximately four weeks after the committee receives the written dissertation, with the expectations that there will be some revisions required (April 1-6). **A final version, incorporating suggested revisions, must be sent to the committee for approval by April 15. All materials and paperwork must be received by the Graduate School by May 1.**

The defense is in the form of a forty-five minute presentation, followed by questions and comments from members of the committee (60-90 minutes), followed by questions and comments from other audience members. The defense is open to the community and has to be announced publicly.

In order that the defense paperwork can be properly prepared, **three weeks prior to the defense date** you will provide the following information to the department's Student Affairs Coordinator:

- a list of previous degrees awarded, the institution(s) that conferred each degree, and the date the degree was awarded
- date, time, building, and room number for the defense
- official title of the dissertation
- committee members names, differentiating your committee director (dissertation advisor) and the readers. (If members are not Brown affiliated, then also provide the name of their institution and department)

*NOTE: Since the defense is often the one time that the entire dissertation committee is in one place together, we recommend that you bring three copies (on acid-free paper) of your properly formatted dissertation signature pages, so you can get the committee signatures*

**PART TWO: Standard 5-year timetable for progress towards the degree (may be extended to 6 years)**

*(A 4-year timetable is possible with accepted master's thesis and eight transfer credits).*

	<b>Number of Courses</b>	<b>Additional Requirements</b>
<b>Year 1</b>	Total of 8	M.A. Program
Semester 1	4	
Semester 2	4	Form M.A. thesis committee by May 1.
<b>Year 2</b>	Total of 6	M.A. Program
SUMMER		M.A. Thesis Proposal approved by June 1.
Semester 3	3	Draft showing of M.A. Thesis project by end of third semester
Semester 4	3	M.A. Thesis project (March 15), Written thesis first draft (April 5) final draft (April 15). Graduate School deadline (May 1). Post-thesis Qualifying Review & critique
<b>Year 3</b>	Total of 6*	Ph.D. Program, Meet with Thesis Advisor. (*Any adjustments in number of course credits require a petition and permission of the DGS).
SUMMER		Select Qualifying Exam committee chair(s). Discuss preliminary dissertation topic, Identify 3 areas for Qualifying

		Exam, assemble committee by May 15. Submit reading list by June 1.
Semester 5	3	Qualifying exam proposal approved by September 15.
Semester 6	3	Completed essays sent to committee (February 15) Qualifying Exam (March 15) Write and submit dissertation proposal (May 15)
<b>Year 4</b>	0	Ph.D. Program
Semester 7	0	Dissertation Research
Semester 8	0	Dissertation Research
<b>Years 5 and 6</b>	-	Ph.D. Program
Semester 9 or 11	0	Dissertation Projects presented (by Oct. 1 of final year) in year 5 or 6.
Semester 10 or 12	0	Dissertation - First draft for main advisor (Feb. 1). Final draft sent to committee (March 1). Dissertation defense (April 1-6). Final revised dissertation sent to committee for approval (April 15). Graduate School deadline to receive completed dissertation and signed paperwork (May 1). Dates apply to year 5 or 6.

### The first year

An MMC faculty member will be assigned as your mentor for the first year. The mentor helps with academic and artistic advice and other more informal support, while the DGS advises on course selection and other formal and administrative processes in the program and university, such as signing off on and/or providing support letters for applications in UFunds. This role is not automatically tied to advising on the Master's project, Qualifying Exams, or Dissertation work, though the faculty member may end up serving in some capacity for the student in those parts of the program.

MMC students will also have an ongoing secondary advisor in the Musicology and Ethnomusicology program, with whom they can consult for advice in addition to their mentor and later advisors.

The M.A. thesis advisor and later, qual chair/dissertation advisor will assume responsibility for advising once you have advanced to the second year and beyond. First-year students are awarded fellowships, in order to concentrate entirely on class work without job responsibilities.

Prior to or upon arrival at Brown you should consult with the MMC DGS and your mentor about your program of courses so that you may register for the fall semester. They will join you in assessing your strengths, your needs, and your goals. Your coursework should lead to the knowledge in electronic and acoustic audiovisual media that will enable you to make an original and substantial contribution to the field in your doctoral dissertation.

The DGS will help you make a rough plan of your course work for the next three years. During the first year you should:

- Take at least two MMC seminar courses, one per term (required).
- Take elective courses that will help you acquire new skills and develop critical thinking with a view toward developing three areas for the Ph.D. qualifying examination and the dissertation.
- Begin preliminary research for the M.A. thesis and identify your committee Chair. Submit names of your committee members to the DGS and Department Chair by May 1.
- *Summer after the first year:* submit M.A. thesis proposal (June 1). Begin research and production for the M.A. thesis

### **The second year**

At the beginning of the year you should meet with your advisor to discuss your progress and make plans for the future. Students will have an opportunity to teach and to get advanced and practical technical training through TAs. We encourage students to take advantage of the Sheridan Center, which offers workshops and advice for graduate students who are planning on a teaching career. Informal mentoring in your teaching practice also takes place when you are a teaching assistant.

Some of the things you must accomplish in your second year:

- Serve as a TA for two courses, one for each term
- Take at least two MMC seminar courses, one per term (required).
- Finish the M.A. course requirements
- Complete the M.A. thesis. (Project: March 15, written first draft: April 5, final draft: April 15)
- Choose your qualifying exam Chair and committee members by May 15.
- Begin to do more independent work on areas leading to the qualifying examination

- *Summer after the second year:* submit reading list for Ph.D. qualifying exam (due June 1)

### **The third year**

This year you will finish your coursework, take your qualifying examinations, and prepare your dissertation proposal. Now is the time to take any remaining required courses, perhaps take an independent study course to help you prepare for your qualifying examination, or take courses outside the Music Department related to your dissertation research. You will also continue your responsibilities as a TA.

Working towards your qualifying exam includes:

- Submit Ph.D. qualifying examination proposal (due September 15)
- Receive approval from your committee for your qualifying exam proposal
- Study and research for qualifying exams, write the three exam essays
- Take the qualifying examination. You must take the examination no later than the middle of your sixth semester (usually March 15<sup>th</sup>). Your essays must be given to your committee members no later than one month before the exam.

After your qualifying exam:

- Submit the dissertation proposal (due May 15). Since your qualifying examinations will include your dissertation area, it will give you the opportunity to review the literature and study relevant topics for your thesis. The usual length of the proposal is 10 - 15 pages, excluding bibliography, discography, and filmography.
- Committee meeting to approve of the dissertation proposal

### **The fourth year**

You will spend your fourth year doing dissertation research. You will serve as a TA but are not required to take any courses. You should be working primarily on your thesis creative project, but also keeping notes and starting to form an outline for the written component. Some students may want to travel to other research institutions during this year to gain additional expertise and/or access to specialized facilities (in which case, the Dissertation Fellowship will be taken the fourth year instead of the fifth). Keep in touch with your advisor during this time. A dissertation progress report is required after the end of each semester.

During your fourth year, you should:

- Complete the bulk of research and production for your thesis project.
- Write a detailed outline and complete one or more chapters of the written portion of your dissertation.

- Schedule the public presentation date for the creative part of your dissertation. Given the demands for space on campus you should do this at least a year in advance. This can be done in the fifth year if working towards a six-year timetable.
- Determine whether you plan to complete the program in five years or six. Taking the extra year allows for more flexibility in scheduling the presentation of your dissertation project, though it still needs to be presented by October 1st of the sixth year at the latest.

### **The fifth year\*\* (also see below under “the sixth year”)**

In the fifth year you will usually be supported with a Dissertation Fellowship, which will allow you to devote all of your time to completing and showing your thesis project, and writing your dissertation. (If opting for a sixth year, see below).

The final steps towards your Ph.D. include:

- Critique process. Starting as early as the fourth year, the thesis project will be shown, in stages, for critique by other students and faculty. A final formal critique of the finished work, with the committee members present, will take place no later than three weeks before the first public presentation.
- Public presentation. The work must be presented in public no later than October 1 (earlier is better to give you more time for writing). If possible, all committee members should attend.
- First draft. Send a first draft of the written dissertation to your advisor before February 1. The committee should get a finished, edited copy of your thesis by March 1. This should be a very complete draft (not a “rough” draft), already seen by your primary advisor and possibly other committee members. Your committee members will make suggestions and suggest revisions. Keep in mind that committee members must be given adequate time to read the next (and hopefully, final) version of your dissertation, which will include revisions based on their feedback. We usually ask for comments back within two weeks of receiving the manuscript.
- Dissertation defense. The defense will take place 3-4 weeks after the thesis has been sent to the committee (April 1-7). The defense is in the form of a talk (generally 45 minutes), followed by questions and comments from members of the committee (60-90 minutes), followed by questions and comments from other audience members. The exact format is to be determined by the candidate and the committee. The defense is open to the community.
- To graduate in May, the final, revised copy of the dissertation must be sent to the committee by April 15. The Graduate School deadline to receive all signed paperwork and dissertation copies is May 1.

### **The sixth year**

\*\*If you decide to take a sixth year, the scheduling requirements listed under year five will be shifted by a year. You will also have the opportunity to teach a course of your own design, and TA for another course.

## **PART THREE: Evaluation and Advising**

### **Evaluation**

Acceptance by the Music Department and Graduate School implies that you have the potential for successful study at Brown. Thereafter the faculty offers you guidance and criticism to help you realize this potential.

Each year, at the end of the fall semester you will meet with the MMC faculty for an individual advising/evaluation meeting. As a result of the meeting you will receive oral and written evaluation indicating whether you are making satisfactory progress. Progress is judged by your coursework, artistic output, work as a TA (when applicable), and participation in MMC events. You are also expected to arrange public showings of your work and to seek professional opportunities to present at conferences and festivals. Refer to the section in the [Graduate School Handbook](#) on Academic Standing (p. 13).

#### **Evaluation during the first year.**

Any student who is not making satisfactory academic progress may be denied financial aid for the second year, or asked to leave the program at the end of the first year.

#### **Evaluation during the second year (first year for students with prior accepted M.A. thesis).**

Any student who is not making satisfactory academic progress in the M.A. program may be asked to work for an M.A. as the terminal degree. In such a case, any financial aid will cease after the second year.

#### **Evaluation during the third year (second year for students with prior accepted M.A. thesis).**

The qualifying examination is taken during the final semester of the third year.

#### **Evaluation during the fourth and fifth year (ABD) (third and fourth years for students with prior accepted M.A. thesis).**

Semester updates on progress and final completion of the dissertation.

### **Financial Support**

Brown guarantees that you will receive financial support for up to six years, so long as the quality of your academic and other work (TA service, participation in the program) is satisfactory. Support also includes a summer stipend for up to five years, which students are expected to use to make progress on required research and creative projects. The term of support is for five consecutive



academic years, with no possibility of deferral (except for authorized medical, personal, and family leaves).

Financial support for graduate students is normally distributed in the form of Fellowships, Teaching Assistantships, Technical Assistantships, Teaching Fellows and Proctorships, each with a tuition scholarship, health benefits, and a cash stipend. A Fellow receives a tuition scholarship and a cash stipend. Positions normally require up to twenty hours of work per week during the school year. The average will work out to around eighteen to twenty hours. A graduate Teaching Assistant is assigned to one course per semester, and may be asked to give occasional lectures and teach workshops as part of the mentoring process. Occasionally, opportunities for Proctorships may arise depending on student and program needs.

Travel to present your work at significant festivals and professional meetings is a very important aspect of graduate study. The Graduate School and the Music Department offer funds to graduate students for these purposes. Be sure to check with the Graduate School and Music Department well in advance of any travel about the availability of funds. Additionally, there is an ad hoc fund of \$1000 each year to assist with equipment and projects (including paying collaborators and assistants). You should write a short description and budget to be approved by the DGS in order to access these funds.

### **Additional Information**

#### **\*Policy on the Use of Departmental Equipment\***

All department-owned equipment (musical instruments, audio and video recorders, cameras, computers, editing equipment, etc.) is used at your own risk. Ordinary wear excepted, if you break it, or lose it, you are liable to pay for repair or replacement.

### **Independent Study Courses**

Students are eligible to take independent study courses for credit in advanced subjects not offered in the departmental curriculum, with the approval of the DGS or advisor. To do so, you approach a member of the faculty and propose to pursue a subject of study; you and the faculty member discuss the proposal and determine the procedure. Ordinarily you meet with the faculty member at regular intervals and complete a project during the course of the independent study.

Most faculty members require a written proposal before approving an independent study. The proposal contains a description of what you intend to do, how you intend to do it, a timeline, a statement of the kind and degree of the faculty member's involvement, and the basis for the faculty member's evaluation of what you accomplish. Usually you propose the independent study informally some weeks prior to the semester and gain the faculty member's tentative approval, then propose it formally during the first week of the semester. Faculty members may refuse to offer independent studies in areas where they do not feel sufficiently competent, or when their schedule does not

permit it. Faculty members almost never offer independent studies in subjects already covered by course offerings.

Students are limited to four independent study credits during their first two years in the program (one per term at most) but can petition for more in consultation with the DGS. A second independent study credit in a single term must be taken in addition to all other course credit requirements; it cannot substitute for one of them. Starting in the third year there are no restrictions on the number of independent study credits that can be taken.

### **Teaching Opportunities**

In the standard form of progress through the program every student is given the chance to run the performance course (aka MEME Ensemble) at some point in their time here, usually during years three or four. In addition, if you opt for a sixth year in the program, you will be offered the chance to teach a course of your own design during that year.

Occasionally there is a chance for a graduate student to teach a regularly offered course in the Music Department, meaning one that is already on the books and takes place in most years. The opportunity to teach a regularly offered course would ideally be in addition to these other teaching opportunities, but there is no full guarantee since teaching and TA needs change from year to year. If an opportunity arises for one of the students in the program to teach a regularly offered course, the DGS will inform all students of this and take expressions of interest in it.

The opportunity to teach a class at Brown opens up from the third year onward. Graduate students in the department are not permitted to teach courses in the first two years of the program.

### **Teaching Assistantships**

Each year the Music Department will notify the Graduate Students of courses offered in the following academic year which require graduate TAs. Students will be able to express their preferences of courses for which they would like to serve as TA. Determination of course TA assignments will be made by the DGS in consultation with the Chair and the DGS of the M/E program. Graduate students can expect to TA for a variety of classes and faculty during their time here.

### **Protection of Graduate Students' Rights**

The Student Affairs Officer maintains a file of information on you that contains your transcript, faculty members' evaluations of your coursework, memos, proposals, the written qualifying examination, and various miscellaneous papers. You have the right to inspect this material under the Buckley Amendment but you must give a week's advance notice during the school year, and more notice during vacation periods.

If you have a complaint against a student or faculty member, you should first try to resolve the problem at the department level. In most cases all that will be necessary is to speak to the person

against whom you have the complaint. If that does not suffice, you should next speak with your faculty advisor. Usually your advisor can help you resolve the problem informally, but if not, you should speak with the Director of Graduate Studies. If you still feel that your problem is unresolved, the next step is to speak with the Department Chair. If all these resources of departmental clarification and conciliation have been tried and failed, you may turn to the Dean of the Graduate School.