

Undergraduate Student Handbook

**Department of Music
Oakland University**

The Oakland University Music Department is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Music.

The university catalog is the official listing of all university requirements. This handbook is meant to amplify and clarify university policies. It is the responsibility of each student to carefully read this manual in its entirety.

Ver. 9.1.2026

Table of Contents

- I. [Department of Music Mission Statement](#)
- II. [Degrees offered in the Department of Music](#)
 - A. [Bachelor of Arts](#)
 - B. [Bachelor of Music](#)
 - 1. Performance
 - 2. Education
 - 3. Music Technology
 - C. [Dual degrees in music education and performance](#)
 - D. [Concentrations \(for music majors\)](#)
 - E. [Minors \(for non-music majors\)](#)
- III. [Academic policies and expectations](#)
 - A. [Professional Expectations](#)
 - B. [Advising](#)
 - C. [Minimum grades in music courses](#)
 - D. [Repeating classes](#)
 - E. [Attendance](#)
 - F. [Dropping classes](#)
 - G. [Academic integrity](#)
 - H. [Email and Moodle](#)
 - I. [Technology help](#)
 - J. [Remote learning policies](#)
 - K. [Overrides](#)
 - L. [Missing classes for performances](#)
 - M. [Grievance Procedures](#)
 - N. [Scholarships](#)
- IV. [Applied lesson policies](#)
 - A. [Scheduling applied lessons](#)
 - B. [Canceled or missed lessons](#)
 - C. [Final Performance Examinations \(FPEs\)](#)

- D. [Major Standing](#)
- E. [Recitals](#)
- F. [Accompanists](#)
- V. [Facilities](#)
 - A. [Practice rooms](#)
 - B. [Percussion and Piano practice rooms](#)
 - C. [Instrument storage](#)
 - D. [Keys](#)
 - E. [Swipe card access](#)
 - F. [Classrooms](#)
 - G. [Third floor quiet study area](#)
 - H. [Music technology lab](#)
 - I. [Pianos and other school-owned instruments and equipment](#)
 - J. [Reserving rehearsal spaces](#)
- VI. [Entering students](#)
 - A. Auditions
 - B. Theory placement
- VII. [Transfer students](#)
 - A. Transcript
 - B. Theory placement
- VIII. [Student Advisory Board](#)
- IX. [Music fraternities](#)
 - A. [Sigma Alpha Iota](#)
 - B. [Phi Mu Alpha](#)
- X. [Annual music awards and competitions](#)
- XI. [Health and Safety](#)
 - A. [Personal safety in Varner Hall and on campus](#)
 - B. [Reporting behavior](#)
 - C. [Statement of instructional techniques](#)
 - D. [Health and safety statement](#)

- E. [Noise-related hearing loss](#)
- F. [Vocalists](#)
- G. [Instrumentalists](#)
- H. [Instrument hygiene](#)

I. Mission of the Department of Music

The Department of Music cultivates a supportive community of learners and guides students to become skilled and innovative music professionals. Students receive rigorous and personalized instruction, gain real world experience amidst metro-Detroit's robust communities and beyond, and learn to be creative problem-solvers ready for diverse 21st century careers.

II. Degrees offered in the Department of Music

A. Bachelor of Arts (B.A.)

The B.A. is a liberal arts degree in music that features a broad curriculum and abundant performance opportunities, paving the way to diverse careers in music.

B. Bachelor of Music (B.M.)

The B.M. is a professional degree with majors in performance, education, and music technology. Each B.M. can choose a concentration to augment their educational preparation. All B.M. majors take a minimum of eight semesters of applied lessons on their instrument and eight semesters of large ensemble.

1. Performance

- a. Instrumental
- b. Vocal
- c. Piano

2. Education

- a. Choral/general
- b. Instrumental/general

3. Music Technology

C. Dual Degrees

The department offers dual degrees in music education and performance. These are generally five-year plans in which students will earn **two** Bachelor of Music degrees, one in performance and one in music education.

- 1. Bachelor of Music in Music Education (Instrumental/General) and Bachelor of Music in Instrumental Performance
- 2. Bachelor of Music in Music Education (Choral/General) and Piano Performance

3. Bachelor of Music in Music Education (Choral/General) and Voice Performance

D. Concentrations (for music majors)

1. Music composition
2. Music technology
3. Music theory
4. Performance (piano, vocal, instrumental)
5. Piano pedagogy
6. World music

E. Minors (for non-music majors)

1. Jazz
2. Music minor (auditioned)
3. Music minor (non-auditioned)
4. Music technology
5. World music

III. Academic Policies and Expectations

A. Professional Expectations

The start of your college journey marks the beginning of your professional life; your professors are honored to guide you through this journey and will be the ones to write recommendations and serve as references for job and graduate school applications. It is important to remember how important these relationships will be for you as you make daily choices in your actions, and written and spoken communications.

Students in the Department of Music are expected to exhibit a professional disposition and attitude at all times, both on campus and when representing the university and department

off-campus. This expectation extends to your actions and to both written and verbal communication.

1. Address faculty as they wish to be addressed. Just like students, different faculty may prefer to be addressed differently.

2. Write professional emails.

a. Include a salutation.

Example: "Dear Professor LastName," ...

As above, address faculty as they wish to be addressed. If you are not sure how someone wishes to be addressed, or if you have never met a faculty member, err on the side of formality until invited to be more informal by using, "Dear Professor LastName." It is always okay to begin an email that way.

b. Proofread the body of your email. It's just reality that well-written requests will be taken more seriously than hastily written emails that are rife with misspellings and sentence fragments.

c. Phrase requests as questions and not demands.

d. Include your name at the end.

e. Use your OU email address. Faculty will not respond to emails sent from non-OU email addresses.

3. Be polite in all written and verbal communications.

4. If you must miss a class, lesson, or rehearsal, alert your instructor as early as possible. Make it clear in the email that you understand that the responsibility for making up missed work is yours. Ask what you can do to make your absence minimally disruptive to your academic progress and then follow through.

B. Advising

All music faculty mentor and advise students on an ongoing basis. However, for schedule-checking and degree planning (including adding or changing majors/concentrations), students should make an appointment with CAS advising (casadv@oakland.edu).

C. Minimum grades in music courses

Only courses in which a grade of C is earned will count for music major credit. Please note: some professional music education courses require a minimum grade of B. It is a good idea to aim high, particularly in sequential courses like music theory, aural skills, and keyboard techniques, in which knowledge gained in one course forms the foundation for concepts to be learned in later semesters. Barely scraping by in the foundational semesters of a course does not predict strong performance in ensuing semesters.

D. Repeating classes

Per [Office of the Registrar](#) [link]:

“Students may repeat courses for grade improvement purposes. A maximum of three attempts is allowed. Unless the course is designated as repeatable for credit, the grade earned in a subsequent enrollment will replace the earlier grade regardless of whether the new grade is higher or lower than the previous grade. Only the last grade assigned in a course will be calculated in the grade-point average. If you are repeating an Oakland University course, you must retake it at Oakland University. You cannot take an equivalency of the course at a different institution.”

E. Attendance

Music is both an art and a skill. Improvement and excellence can only be achieved through consistent practice and consistent feedback from your professors and peers. Students are expected to attend all classes, ensemble rehearsals, and applied lessons. Individual syllabi will spell out specific requirements regarding absences, but all students are encouraged to make punctual attendance a habit. Your education is an important investment in your future, and you will get out of it what you put into it!

F. Dropping classes

The [academic calendar](#) [link] specifies important drop deadlines. There are two drop deadlines for each semester. The earlier deadline will result in a full refund. The later deadline will provide no refund but will ensure that a W appears on the transcript in lieu of a failing grade. If you think you may need to drop a course, consult the faculty member teaching the course as soon as possible, as well as your academic (CAS) advisor. Dropping a course may have implications for your status as a full-time student, which can affect health care, car insurance, and other things.

Please note: If you need to drop a course that has co-requisites (music theory, aural skills, or keyboarding), allow plenty of time in advance of the drop deadline to procure overrides. Overrides are required to drop a course that has co-requisites, and these cannot be entered at the last minute!

G. Academic integrity

The Student Code of Conduct spells out [examples of academic dishonesty](#) [link]. These include, but are not limited to:

1. Cheating on assignments and examinations
2. Plagiarizing the work of others
3. Falsifying Records
4. Unauthorized collaboration on assignments
5. Resubmission of original work

All these offenses are explained on the above-linked website. When in doubt, ask your instructor what is allowed. Infractions will be reported to the Dean of Students office for consideration by the Academic Conduct Committee of the University Senate. Depending on the outcome of the committee's investigation, several consequences may result, from earning a zero in the course to expulsion from the university.

Guidelines for the ethical usage of AI vary by discipline, course, and instructor, as Oakland University does not currently have an official university-wide AI policy. Students will find AI guidelines on course syllabi and assignment instructions and are expected to comply with those specifications.

H. Email and Moodle

1. You are expected to check your OU email regularly (at least twice per day) for course updates and reminders. Our primary mode of communication is via email, and reminders sent through Moodle (see below) will go to your OU email address. **You are responsible** for any information sent to your OU email address; “I didn’t check my email” is not an excuse!

2. Students should also check Moodle regularly because many faculty post grades and assignments on Moodle. **You are responsible** for any information posted to Moodle.
3. You are expected to respond to emails within two days.
4. Please do not contact faculty using non-OU email addresses; we will not respond.

I. Technology help

Music faculty are not computer experts and cannot help you troubleshoot technology problems that hinder coursework. Please avail yourself of the following resources.

1. Moodle issues: Use the “Get Help” link at the top of the Moodle page.
2. For access to technology and in-person assistance, call or visit the Student Technology Center.
3. For general technology assistance, consult the OU Help Desk.

J. Remote learning policies

In case of global pandemic, instructor illness, power outage, facilities issues, or other unforeseen events, classes may need to be conducted remotely. Music department policies regarding remote learning are as follows—note that specific syllabi may add to these policies.

1. To complete work remotely, students will either need a printer and a way to scan completed work (a smartphone with a scanning app will suffice), OR a tablet with stylus.
2. Your video feed must always remain on with you situated within the frame.
3. Remain focused on the lecture or activity.
4. Refrain from any disruptive activities such as eating, cooking, or using other electronic devices.
5. No cell phones allowed, unless specified by the instructor.

6. In case your computer or internet crashes, it is essential to have a “backup plan” in place where you can log in using a different computer or travel to another location with working internet.
7. Files should be saved to the cloud (free solutions as an OU student include Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, etc.) and not a local hard drive, USB stick or external disk. Saving files this way guarantees your files are not dependent on computer hardware that could fail.

Forum posting rules

1. Respect the rules of netiquette in the online environment.
2. Begin messages with a greeting and close with your name.
3. Use clear subject lines for discussion forum posts.
4. Respect your peers and their privacy.
5. Be intentional and cautious in forum posts. You will have 15 minutes to edit posts, and after that you cannot edit or delete your posts.
6. Use professional, respectful language. Do not use profanity or other inappropriate language.
7. Avoid sarcasm, which can be misinterpreted and cause hurt feelings.
8. When discussing controversial topics or topics that raise strong emotions, prioritize listening, learning, and empathy. Refrain from engaging in inflammatory or discriminatory comments.

Course participants are expected to

1. Ensure that their computer is compatible with Moodle.
2. Login daily.
3. Follow the calendar of events and complete all assignments by their deadline.
4. Participate in a thoughtful manner.

K. Overrides

If you encounter a registration error, please email the instructor of record of the course you are trying to register for. They can enter an override for you. Please try to register as early as possible to avoid unnecessary delays.

L. Missing classes for performances and rehearsals

The University's [Excused Absence Policy](#) [link] allows students to miss classes and rehearsals for university-sponsored travel or performance. Students are expected to submit the appropriate documentation to their instructors, with the appropriate signatures, as soon as they are aware of the conflict, to facilitate any necessary accommodation. Students are also responsible for completing missed work in a timely fashion.

[Excused Absence Approval form](#) [link]

Your instructors will do what they can to accommodate missed coursework for university-sanctioned performances and conferences. However, learning loss resulting from excessive missed class for any reason is unavoidable; for this reason, it is recommended that students who are in their first two years of study as music majors avoid overloading themselves with commitments that may require missing excessive classes.

M. Grievance procedure

This policy addresses grievances, not safety threats or suspicious behavior concerns. For imminent safety concerns or other emergencies, including if you are concerned that someone may pose an imminent threat to themselves or others, call 911 or OUPD (248.370.3331). (See also XI. [Health and Safety](#) [link].) To report non-emergency suspicious behavior or concerns, use the [Report Concerns](#) link on the university's landing page.

In general, if you are not sure where to turn with a concern or problem, email the Department Chair, Dr. Melissa Hoag (hoag@oakland.edu).

The purpose of the following set of procedures is to provide an equitable system for resolving problems that may arise between students and faculty or staff of the department.

The procedures are available for the review of problems such as the following:

1. All aspects of the degree-granting process, including grading, evaluation, or status, in cases where other university procedures are not mandated;
2. Alleged professional misconduct toward a student by a faculty member or staff member of the department, while that faculty or staff member is performing duties under the purview of the department;
3. Alleged illegal, discriminatory, unfair, or intimidating treatment of students;
4. Allegations concerning the application or propriety of regulations, policies, or procedures governing student behavior or student rights.

Procedures

These procedures shall be administered by the Chair of the Department, or in their absence, by the Acting Chair. In a situation where the Chair or the Acting Chair is the subject of a complaint, the Director of SMTD shall administer these procedures. The procedures shall be as follows:

1. A student who has a complaint with respect to any music class or the faculty or staff assigned by the department to that class should first make the complaint to the instructor of the class in question. Whenever possible, resolution should be attempted at this level, i.e., the student should first speak with the instructor regarding their complaint, because it is possible that a complaint may be the result of a misunderstanding, miscommunication, or error. Where this is not possible or appropriate, the complaint may then be considered by the chair.
2. The chair shall: 1) hear the student complaint, 2) hear the faculty's or staff member's response to the complaint, and 3) assess the gravity of the complaint and its prima facie validity. Having done so, the chair shall attempt to mediate a resolution of the situation.
3. If efforts at mediation fail, the chair shall require that the student put the complaint in writing. The faculty member or staff member shall respond in writing to the student complaint. Such formal complaints should be filed not later than the end of the next regular (i.e., Fall or Winter) semester after the occurrence of the incident or incidents that are the basis of the complaint. In extraordinary cases, such as the illness or absence of either the complainant or the faculty member in question, the chair may permit a filing up to one year after the initial incident.

4. If the faculty member is unavoidably absent from the area due to an official leave of absence, the faculty member may either 1) designate a colleague with authority to represent them and to make academic decisions in the faculty member's behalf; or 2) may request that the hearing be postponed until the faculty member's return from leave.
5. If, having studied the document, the chair believes the complaint to be frivolous or without substance, the chair shall advise the student, and shall inform him/her of the right to appeal the decision of the chair to the Director of the School of Music, Theatre and Dance.
6. If the chair believes the complaint has some substance, the chair shall appoint a committee of two tenured faculty members. This committee of two shall nominate to the chair a third member of the tenured faculty who, when appointed, shall join the now constituted Committee of Inquiry. If the chair, the student, or the faculty or staff member in the dispute so requests, the committee of two shall be required to draw the third member of the Committee of Inquiry from outside the department.
7. The Committee of Inquiry may take testimony from the faculty member, or the faculty member's representative, from the student or students involved, and others who may contribute to an understanding of the case.
8. The Committee of Inquiry shall 1) report the facts in the case, and 2) make recommendations to the chair for a resolution of the case, or for further action to be taken. A vote of two of the three members of the committee shall give authority to the recommendations of the committee.
9. The chair shall study the report of the Committee of Inquiry, make a determination in the case and inform the student and the faculty or staff member of the decision.
10. In cases where the Committee of Inquiry has recommended that a grade or grades be changed, the chair may decide that the chair, or a faculty member designated by the chair, shall become the instructor of record for the section in which the dispute occurred. The new instructor of record shall have the right to petition the Committee on Instruction of the College of Arts and Sciences to make grade changes for that section for the purpose of rectifying the situation that gave rise to the dispute.

11. In cases where the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the chair, the student shall have the right to appeal the matter to the Director and Associate Dean of the School of Music, Theatre and Dance.
12. When in the course of complaint procedures, the chair has decided to call a Committee of Inquiry, the chair shall have the duty to inform the faculty member of the right to seek advice and assistance as provided in the Faculty Agreement.

For More Information: See [University grade appeal procedure](#) [link]; scroll down to “Final Course Grade - Formal Grade Appeal Procedure.”

N. Scholarship policies

Students on a music scholarship are expected to uphold certain academic standards and to perform service for the department.

1. All scholarship recipients must maintain an overall 2.5 (C+) GPA and a 3.5 (B+) GPA or higher in their major as prescribed by each individual degree program.
2. All scholarship recipients must be enrolled in the appropriate classes and must fulfill all degree program requirements as specified in the student’s scholarship notification letter.
3. As part of your SMTD scholarship award, you are required to work for ten (10) hours per semester for the department. Ushering and recruitment service is the top priority for first and second year students. Students may [sign up](#) [link] for each fall and winter concert/production season. Once those hours are filled, remaining time will be spent on activities within your area or you may propose a scholarship service project (info below).
4. The department representative on the Scholarship Fulfillment Committee is responsible for checking completion of scholarship hours. This should be done on the last day of finals week every Fall and Winter.
5. Students who have failed to maintain the necessary GPA or who have not met their scholarship responsibilities will be placed on probation at the end of the fall or winter semester in question and sent a formal letter of probation. The student then can complete any missing work and/or establish minimum GPA requirements during the following fall or winter semester. By the end of the semester, if the student has still not met the scholarship requirements, the student will lose the scholarship.

IV. Applied Lesson policies

A. Scheduling applied lessons

Your studio teacher will reach out to you to schedule your applied lessons during the first week of classes. Lessons will typically begin during the second week of the semester. If you have not heard from your studio teacher during the first week of classes, please reach out to them to ensure that they have your correct contact information.

If you register for **one credit** of applied lessons, you should receive 12 30-minute lessons per semester.

If you register for **two or four credits** of lessons, you should receive 12 60-minute lessons per semester.

If you do not receive the correct number and duration of lessons, please speak to your instructor first. If the matter is not rectified, please see the department chair.

B. Canceled or missed lessons

Please note that individual studio instructors may have more detailed policies in their syllabi.

When you are absent: Fewer than 24 hours' notice of cancellation will be considered an unexcused absence, and the lesson will not be made up. The result of three such absences will be a grade of F for the semester. Excused absences may (at the discretion of the instructor) be made up if scheduling permits. If you must miss a lesson for any reason, you must inform both your instructor and your assigned accompanist with as much advance notice as possible. The instructor will determine if the absence may be excused.

When your instructor is absent: It is possible that your instructor may have to be absent from time to time. In the event your instructor is absent, you should still meet with your accompanist at the appointed time. **All lessons missed due to the instructor's absence will be made up.**

C. Final Performance Examinations (FPEs)

Final performance exams (FPEs) are the applied music version of final exams. While they are usually brief, you should prepare for the FPE as you would prepare for any other public performance. FPEs will be scheduled by mid-October each semester.

More details about duration and performance requirements for FPEs will be provided by your studio teacher or area coordinator.

D. Major standing

Major standing is a performance exam for Bachelor of Music students in music education, music technology, and performance that occurs at the end of the sophomore year. The purpose of the major standing exam is to ensure that the student is making adequate progress for their degree (performance, music technology, music education). Bachelor of Arts students are not required to pass major standing.

One of three outcomes may result from the major standing:

1. **Pass**, in which the student continues in their chosen degree program;
2. **Defer**, in which the student can redo their major standing exam in the following academic year upon further work with their applied teacher;
3. **Not pass**, in which the student may be advised to move to a different degree program or major, upon consultation with their applied teacher and music advisor.

For Music Education students: In addition to a performance exam, the major standing also serves as an academic checkpoint to ensure that students are making satisfactory academic progress through the degree. Therefore, music education majors must also pass all first- and second-year coursework to successfully pass major standing.

All instrumental major-standing exams will be scheduled during studio class; voice and piano major-standing exams will be scheduled during FPEs.

E. Recitals

Students who are required to perform a recital for their degree should schedule their recital as early as possible while there is room in Varner Recital Hall.

(See [Recital Scheduling Request form](#) [link].)

Recitals must occur before grades are due, or the student will earn an incomplete grade. If your instructor has not made arrangements for your recital to occur during a regular fall or winter semester, please contact the music department chair.

The recital program must be submitted a minimum of two weeks prior to the recital. Students are required to use the [official program template](#) [download].

Rescheduling recitals should be avoided whenever possible. However, if rescheduling is necessary, please use the [request form](#) [link].

F. Accompanists

Because Oakland University is a no-fee institution, collaborative pianists are provided to students who are music and musical theatre majors and minors at no charge to the student for degree-required performances. The following policy outlines the expectations of students, faculty, and accompanists.

1. Professional and courteous behavior is always expected by all parties.
2. Applied faculty will submit to the collaborative pianist coordinators the accompanying needs for their studio within the first week of class, including student names, emails, year of study, and recital/major standing expectations.
3. Students will be assigned to a collaborative pianist within the first 2 weeks of the semester. It is the student's responsibility to contact the pianist to arrange rehearsal days and times. Please see below for guidelines regarding when to provide music to pianists. Not complying with this request could prevent students being assigned a pianist for the semester.
 - i. Students scheduled to perform a senior recital or major standing must provide music to their pianists by the end of the second week.
 - ii. Students scheduled to perform a final performance exam must provide music to their pianist two weeks prior to first rehearsal.

- iii. Students who receive new pieces throughout the semester must provide music to their pianists as soon as possible. Pianists can ask to delay the first rehearsal or lesson upon consulting with faculty if the repertoire is too difficult to learn within the timeline.
- 4. Students should respect the pianist's time and communicate with them regarding cancelled or rescheduled lessons and/or rehearsals. Please note that if a student cancels a lesson where the pianist was expected to attend, it is the student's responsibility to also notify their pianist of the cancellation – it is not the teacher's responsibility to contact the pianist.
- 5. Pianists are under no obligation to reschedule missed rehearsals or lessons for which no advance notification is given. Rehearsals and lessons missed without advance notice will count towards a student's total number of rehearsals with their pianist.
- 6. The accompanist is expected to wait no longer than ten minutes at an appointment for either the applied student or the applied teacher. The accompanist is not obligated to attend rescheduled or make-up lessons without a mutually agreeable arrangement.
- 7. No performance (including dress rehearsals, recitals, studio classes, and juries) should be scheduled without consulting the pianist first before confirming the date of the performance.
- 8. The following degree-required services are included in the allotted contact hours within a collaborative pianist's contract:
 - i. Lessons, rehearsals, studio class performances, juries, degree recitals, Arts at Noon performances, SMTD sponsored guest artist masterclasses and competitions, and any off-campus events sponsored by OU or SMTD.
 - ii. Each meeting/rehearsal will count as at least a 30-minute increment
 - iii. Each recorded practice track counts as one 30-minute rehearsal.
- 9. The following services are not included in the collaborative pianist's contract:
 - i. Non-degree recitals; rehearsals or lessons on additional repertoire not assigned by the applied teacher; audition and competition recordings; and any off-campus events, or events not sponsored by OU or SMTD.
 - ii. Any of these activities will require the student to personally pay the accompanist at their hourly rate.

10. Exceptions

Any exceptions to the above policies must be requested in writing, preferably at the beginning of the semester. Requests will be considered by the area coordinator and the department chair.

V. Facilities

The music facilities in Varner Hall must be respected and maintained by all members of the music community. **Please leave areas as you found them or better, and do not leave trash, food, drinks, or other objects behind.** If you move something (music stands, chairs, desks, or tables), **move it back.** Bottom line: Treat the facilities in Varner Hall courteously and with respect.

A. Practice rooms

1. The third floor has practice rooms for use by music majors, auditioned music minors, and students enrolled in music ensembles only.
2. Do not occupy practice rooms for longer than needed (for example, if doing homework that does not require a piano or a quiet place to practice), as other students may need to use them.
3. If you are using the room for something other than practice or homework that requires you to sing or play the piano (i.e., aural skills or keyboard techniques), other students who need practice space may ask you to relocate.
4. Do not leave piano pedals down in practice rooms.
5. Many practice rooms lock after closing. If you are locked out, please call OUPD. Neither the music office nor the faculty have keys to let you back in.
6. If you notice something that is broken or otherwise needs maintenance, please contact mtldroom@oakland.edu [link].

B. Percussion and Piano practice rooms

1. **Percussion practice spaces** are reserved for students who are enrolled in applied percussion or an appropriate ensemble. Any other requests for access will be determined on a case-by-case basis per the percussion faculty.
2. **Piano practice rooms** are reserved for piano majors or auditioned minors who have secured prior approval from the piano faculty.

3. Please see instructions for obtaining a key for these spaces if you fit the qualifications listed above (see **V.d. Keys**, below).

C. Instrument storage and borrowing

1. **School-owned lockers** are located on floor 1.5 across from the Recital Hall entrance. Locker reservations occur at the beginning of each semester and are assigned according to instrument size.
 - a. Do not just put a lock on a locker; it will be removed by staff, and your belongings will be stored in the SMTD office.
 - b. **Food and drinks may not be stored in lockers; violations of this policy will result in forfeiture of the locker.**
2. **School-owned saxophones** are housed in the 3rd floor studio lockers outside of the saxophone studio office.
3. **To borrow a school-owned instrument, students should submit an [instrument loan form](#) [link].**

D. Keys

Key requests involve two forms, one submitted by a student and one submitted by a sponsoring faculty member. Both forms are required for the student to receive a key.

1. [Student Form](#) [link] (student submits)
2. [Instructor Form](#) [link] (instructor submits)

Once both completed forms have been received, the key(s) will be placed in a secure envelope addressed to the instructor and student. The envelope can be collected from the 'Key' mail slot in Room 208, which is accessible through the main office in Room 207 during regular business hours.

After the key has been retrieved by the student or instructor, kindly **send a confirmation email to mtdroom@oakland.edu to finalize the process.**

Key(s) must be returned by the end of the Winter semester at the latest.

Failure to return keys may result in an academic hold being placed on the student's account. A secure drop box for key returns is available outside the main SMTD offices (Room 207).

E. Swipe card access

For a student needing swipe access to a room, a sponsoring faculty member must email the Box Office Manager/Assistant Production and Facilities Manager with the student's name and full Grizz number.

F. Classrooms

Academic classrooms (231, 230, 226, and 218) may be used as rehearsal spaces in the evenings or on weekends. **If chairs, desks, or tables are moved, please move them back. If music stands and/or chairs are moved into these spaces, please return them to their original locations. These classrooms must be reset as classroom spaces.**

Please do not leave trash, food, drinks, or other objects in these spaces.

G. Quiet study area

The third-floor area by VAR300a is **not intended to be a social gathering space** for students. Because this area is located near teaching studios and faculty offices, excessive noise or congregating may disturb students or faculty teaching applied lessons or working. For this reason, it is intended to be a **quiet study area only**.

Social gathering areas can be found in the vestibule outside Recital Hall, in the OC, at the top of the stairs on the second floor, or even outside!

Please do not leave trash, food, drinks, or other objects in these or other gathering spaces.

H. Music technology lab

The music technology lab is intended for students who are music technology majors or others who are enrolled in music technology courses. If you need access, email the music technology coordinator.

Please do not endanger our expensive equipment by eating or drinking near any of the music technology equipment.

I. Pianos and other school-owned instruments and equipment

1. **Do not put drinks on pianos of any kind**, either acoustic or electric, in any locations: practice rooms, recital hall, applied studios, or the piano lab.
2. **Percussion equipment** may NOT leave the building for any reason without written consent from Justin Lamb and Mark Stone. Please treat the percussion equipment like it is your own. For more detail on equipment maintenance and care, consult the Percussion Student Handbook.

J. Reserving rehearsal spaces

Email mtdroom@oakland.edu to reserve a rehearsal space (studios, percussion practice rooms, and piano major practice rooms require a sponsoring faculty member's permission). Students should only request rooms from their own departments. Please allow a reasonable amount of lead time (24–48 hours minimum).

VI. Entering students

Entrance audition days are held several times each year. The audition schedule and downloadable application are available on the [SMTD website](#) [link]. Please submit the application to Alex Sellers (fasellers@oakland.edu). Students should be prepared to demonstrate proficiency in their proposed area of specialization.

- A. Students seeking admission to Oakland University as music majors or auditioned music minors must audition for the music faculty.

- B. Students who audition and do not enroll within two semesters must re-audition. Students who enroll and leave school for at least two semesters must re-audition.
- C. Music students who enroll and leave school must re-audition and also retake the theory placement exam.

VII. Transfer Students

Transfer students should first apply to the university as a transfer student and send their transcript to Oakland University to begin the process. Transfer students intending to major in music should send their transcript to and schedule an audition through music outreach officer Alex Sellers (fasellers@oakland.edu). It is best to schedule the audition at the student's earliest convenience. Music faculty will audit the transcript and determine placement in applied lessons, ensembles, music theory and aural skills, keyboard, and music history. Some subjects like music theory and aural skills may require individual meetings with faculty to determine placement in our curriculum. College of Arts and Sciences advisors (casadv@oakland.edu) can help with entering any exemptions or transferred credits that will apply to your degree.

VII. Music Department Student Advisory Council (MDSAC)

The Oakland University Music Department Student Advisory Council is a student-driven organization that:

- A. Acts as an intermediary between the students and the administration, faculty, and staff;
- B. Implements strategies that ignite change; in order to
- C. Cultivate a culture in which (i) all interests and perspectives are honored and (ii) open lines of communication are created and upheld.

Qualifications

To be a member of MDSAC, one must have at least a 3.0 GPA at Oakland University, as well as completed their first semester of study. Enrollment in the School of Music—as a music major or minor—is a requirement for membership in this council. Undergraduate and graduate students can apply for membership in this council.

Council Formation

- A. The council shall be composed of fifteen students, four of which will serve on the executive board.
- B. During the fall semester, the current council will disperse a call for MDSAC council nominations. This will be sent to all music faculty & students which allows for faculty nominations, student self-nominations, and students nominating fellow students.
- C. Faculty advisors and council members will review the nominations and member applications and make the final decision on which nominees are accepted into the council. The final decision is decided by an anonymous vote by the council.
- D. If a nominee receives a majority of votes for acceptance, faculty advisors will check if the student meets the GPA requirements for acceptance. If they are eligible, the President will notify the student of their acceptance into the council via email.
- E. New members are nominated at the end of the fall semester and beginning of the winter semester. Once chosen, new members officially join the council immediately. Technically, new members begin their official council term in the fall. Each term lasts a full academic year.
- F. Nomination eligibility:
 - 1. Must be enrolled as a full-time student in good academic standing
 - 2. Students must be enrolled in on-campus courses
 - 3. No students who are transferring at the end of the semester, no student-teaching students, no students graduating at the end of the semester

Contact Information

MDSAC Email Address: mdsac@oakland.edu

The MDSAC holds student outreach events and general student meetings to gain student input. The MDSAC also hosts fundraising for initiatives and acts as intercommunication between faculty and administrators.

IX. Music Fraternities

A. Sigma alpha iota

Sigma Alpha Iota (SAI) is an international music fraternity dedicated to advancing the art of music and building lifelong friendships among those who share a passion for it. Founded in 1903, SAI inspires musicians to lead with purpose, serve their communities, and make music that transforms lives.

Membership is open to women and gender-inclusive individuals who study or actively participate in music (at least one credit in a music class - not necessarily a music major/minor), uphold strong academic and musical standards, and demonstrate character, leadership, and service.

Joining Oakland University's Nu Zeta Chapter means becoming part of a supportive community that celebrates creativity, connection, and growth. From hosting performances and service projects to supporting fellow musicians, the sisters of our Nu Zeta create meaningful experiences that extend far beyond campus. Participation in SAI empowers members to find their voice, develop as leaders, and continue a proud legacy of sisterhood and musical excellence that resonates across generations.

If you are interested in joining SAI, please reach out to advisor Amanda Ross (aross2@oakland.edu [email]).

B. Phi mu alpha sinfonia

Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia is the world's oldest and largest fraternity devoted exclusively to the advancement of music. Founded in 1898, Sinfonia exists to promote brotherhood through music, inspire leadership and service, and foster a lifelong commitment to artistic excellence.

Membership is open to men and those who identify as men who are actively engaged in music, who uphold strong academic and musical standards, and who demonstrate integrity, leadership, and a desire to serve others through music.

Joining the Sigma Nu chapter of Phi Mu Alpha at Oakland University means becoming part of a close-knit community of musicians dedicated to supporting one another and enriching campus and community life. Through performances, service initiatives, and professional development, Sinfonians create meaningful musical experiences while building lasting bonds of brotherhood. Participation in Phi Mu Alpha empowers members to grow as musicians, leaders, and advocates for the arts, continuing a proud legacy that has shaped generations of musicians.

If you are interested in joining Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, please contact one of the faculty advisors, Dr. Michael Mitchell (mmitchel@oakland.edu) or Dr. Kenneth Kroesche (kroesche@oakland.edu).

X. Annual Music Awards and Competitions

The music department offers a number of annual awards and competitions that result in performance opportunities.

Competitions

David Wilder Daniels Young Artist Competition

[Chamber Music Competition](#) [link]

[Solo Performance Competitions](#) [link]

Annual awards

The School of Music, Theatre and Dance awards annual MaTilDa awards (named for Music, Theatre, and Dance and for Matilda Dodge Wilson, the founder of Oakland University). MaTilDa awards include:

- A. Distinguished Musicianship Award
- B. Outstanding Student in Vocal Performance
- C. Outstanding Student in Opera
- D. Outstanding Student in Piano Performance
- E. Jennifer Scott Memorial Award (Piano)
- F. Outstanding Student in Instrumental Performance
- G. Outstanding Student in Music Education
- H. Outstanding Student in Jazz (instrumental)
- I. Outstanding Student in Jazz (voice)
- J. Outstanding Student in World Music

- K. Outstanding Student in Music Technology
- L. Outstanding Student Service Award
- M. Distinguished Community Service Award
- N. Alumni Achievement Award

XI. Health and Safety

A. Personal safety in Varner Hall and on campus

When the university is open, Varner Hall's normal operating hours are 6:30 am–11:00 pm on weekdays and 7:00 am–11:00 pm on weekends. These hours may change during breaks.

Varner Hall is equipped with several safety and security devices, including:

1. 9 cameras located within the building
2. 8 exterior cameras that monitor the exterior areas of Varner
3. AED and bleeding control kits located on each floor
4. 2 Blue Light phones located at exterior locations (press the “help” button to be connected to OUPD Dispatch)
5. 1 Oakland County severe weather siren located on the roof

Tips for staying safe

1. Include OUPD's phone number (248.370.3331) in your cell phone under “AA_OU POLICE” so that it comes up first in your contacts. Varner Hall's address is 371 Varner Drive.
2. In case of an emergency, it is always OK to call 911.
3. Walk in groups, especially after dark. If you have no choice but to walk alone, OU has a SafeWalk program. Simply use a blue call box to connect directly with OUPD or call OUPD from any cell phone (248.370.3331), and an OU police officer or Police Service Aide will escort you to your destination.
4. Do not leave valuables in unlocked areas.

B. Reporting behavior

1. To report suspicious or concerning behavior, go to the university's landing page and click on "Report Concerns" at the top of the page.
2. In case of harassment or violence occurring imminently, call OUPD (248.370.3331) or call 911.

C. Statement of Instructional Techniques

Instruction in the performing arts—music, theatre, and dance—utilizes many techniques unique to these disciplines. Professionals in these fields are often called upon to express themselves through physical, verbal, and emotional techniques.

Certain teaching strategies unique to the performing arts are frequently used to develop the professional skills of students. For example: a dance instructor may touch a student's body to mold it into the correct shape; a voice teacher may press on a student's abdomen to demonstrate proper breathing; an acting student may have to work with lines expressing intimate emotions, sexual feelings, or offensive language or ideas.

These techniques are appropriate and consistent with professional standards of instruction in the performing arts. The department encourages students who feel uncomfortable with any instructional procedure to discuss their concern with the instructor. Other avenues include the Department Chair, the Director of the School of Music, Theatre and Dance, or the Dean of Students.

D. Health and Safety Statement

The School of Music, Theatre and Dance provides this information to assure students, faculty, and staff are aware of potential health and safety issues, hazards, and procedures inherent in practice, performance, teaching, and listening both in general and as applicable to their specific specializations. This includes but is not limited to information regarding hearing, vocal and musculoskeletal health, injury prevention, and the use, proper handling, and operation of potentially dangerous materials, equipment, and technology.

The School continues to develop policies, protocols, and operational procedures to guard against injury and illness in the study and practice of the performing arts, as well as to raise the awareness among students and faculty of the connections between artists' health, the suitability and safety of equipment and technology, and the acoustic and other health-related conditions in the university's practice, rehearsal, and performance facilities.

It is important to note that health and safety depend largely on personal decisions made by informed individuals. Therefore, students, faculty, and staff are personally responsible for avoiding risk and preventing injuries to themselves.

E. Noise-Related Hearing Loss

Hearing health is essential to your lifelong success as a performer or arts educator. Your hearing can be permanently damaged by loud sounds, including music. Technically, this is called Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL). Such danger is constant.

The closer you are to the source of a loud sound, the greater the risk of damage to your hearing mechanisms. Sounds over 85 dB in intensity (a typical vacuum cleaner) pose great risk to your hearing. Risk of hearing loss is based upon a combination of loudness intensity and duration.

Recommended maximum daily exposure times to sounds over 85 dB are as follows:

- 85 dB (vacuum cleaner, MP3 player at 1/3 volume) – 8 hours
- 90 dB (hair dryer) – 2 hours
- 94 dB (MP3 player at ••• volume) – 1 hour
- 100 dB (lawnmower, MP3 player at full volume) – 15 minutes
- 110 dB (power tools, rock concert) – 2 minutes
- 120 dB (jet engine at takeoff) without ear protection, damage is immediate

Certain behaviors (controlling volume levels in practice and rehearsal, avoiding noisy environments, turning down the volume, and wearing ear protection) reduce your risk of hearing loss. Be mindful of those MP3 ear buds as these pose a significant danger to hearing health (see chart above).

Day-to-day decisions can impact your hearing health, both now and in the future. Since sound exposure occurs both in and out of school, you also need to learn more and take care of your own hearing health on a daily, even hourly basis. The routine use of ear protection is paramount to protecting your hearing health.

F. Vocalists

To maintain a healthy voice, you must maintain a healthy body. Get regular exercise. Yoga, swimming, walking, and biking are excellent activities for vocalists. Hydration is very important: it is recommended that singers consume 100 ounces of water daily, and avoid alcohol, caffeine, and soft drinks.

Avoid illness. Wash your hands regularly, limit contact with surfaces in public whenever possible, disinfect your hands after sneezing, coughing, or touching surfaces that might collect germs.

Warm up the body prior to singing with special attention to release for head and neck, jaw, tongue and face muscles. Train your voice to meet the workload your singing demands. Develop stamina through regular vocal strength and endurance training guide by your instructor.

Prevent vocal abuse:

1. Avoid smoking of any kind. Super-heated chemically charged smoke passes directly over the vocal folds.
2. Avoid excessive loud talking, harsh laughter, yelling, and noisy environments.
3. Avoid cold medications containing pseudoephedrine as it can contribute to dehydration. NSAID pain relievers pose potential problems for singers, as does alcohol consumption, especially red wine.
4. Avoid overuse: practice in short, efficient sessions. If you feel your voice is tired, STOP SINGING and rest for today. If you “mark” your rehearsals when ill, you can be more certain you will be able to sing well for the performance.
5. Stop singing before you tire. Good, efficient habits are reinforced in this way.

G. Instrumentalists

Many potential injuries may result from playing an instrument, most of which are caused by overuse, repetitive strain, poor posture and improper positioning of the body, arms, legs, hands, fingers, etc. Consult a doctor if you are experiencing aches and pains or if you feel you're in danger of serious injury. Some common injuries experienced by instrumentalists include:

1. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: characterized by a tingling sensation or numbness of the thumb, index and middle finger.
2. Tendinitis: inflammation or irritation of the tendons due to overuse or wrong posture/position.
3. Bursitis: inflammation or irritation of tendons, muscles or skin.
4. Quervain's Tenosynovitis: characterized by pain on the inside of the wrist and forearm.
5. Thoracic Outlet Syndrome: may be either neurological or vascular; characterized by pain, swelling or puffiness in the arms and hands, neck and shoulder pains, muscle weakness, difficulty gripping objects, muscle cramps and tingling or numbness in the neck and shoulders.
6. Cubital Tunnel Syndrome: pain in the upper extremity such as the arm and elbow.

Observe the following

1. Always warm up carefully and with patience.
2. Take short breaks throughout your practice and rehearsal sessions to relax and stretch.
3. Routinely evaluate your technique and pay attention to your body.
4. Routinely evaluate your other activities (such as computer usage, etc.).

H. Instrument Hygiene

Sharing of instruments is routine in music schools, where students practice and perform on borrowed instruments throughout the year. Certain basic considerations and recommendations for standard operating procedures regarding shared instruments are as follows:

1. All students should have their own mouthpiece if possible.

2. All students and faculty sharing reed instruments **MUST** have their own individual reeds. Reeds should **NEVER** be shared.
3. All students should have their own instrument if possible.
4. Instruments must be shared in class, alcohol wipes or Sterisol germicide solution should be available for use between different people. Each user must understand that regular cleaning of these musical instruments is required to practice proper hygiene.

Like many health-related issues, prevention is much easier and less expensive than cures. Take time to read available information concerning injuries associated with your art.

Resources

Conable, Barbara. *What Every Musicians Needs to Know About the Body* (GIA Publications, 2000)

Klickstein, Gerald. *The Musician's Way: A Guide to Practice, Performance, and Wellness* (Oxford, 2009)

Norris, Richard N. *The Musician's Survival Manual*