

**GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK
2026-2027**

COMPOSITION PROGRAM

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Program Administration

Daniel L. Trueman, *Chair*

Woolworth Center for Music, Office 310

Dtrueman@princeton.edu

Juri Seo, *Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) - Composition*

Woolworth Center for Music, Office 216

juri@princeton.edu

609-258-4244

Jacqueline Appleby, *Director for Administration and Operations*

Woolworth Center for Music, Office 310

jappleby@princeton.edu

609-258-4240

Rob George, *Academic Program Manager*

Woolworth Center for Music, Office 312

Rob.george@princeton.edu

609-258-8346

Katherine Baltrush, *Program Manager for Performance Activities*

Effron Music Building, Office 207

kbaltrush@princeton.edu

609-258-8124

Beth Schupsky, *Business Manager*

Woolworth Center for Music, Office 313

bschupsky@princeton.edu

609-258-2443

Maureen Riggi, *Academic and Financial Assistant*

Woolworth Center for Music, Office 310

maureen@princeton.edu

609-258-4241

Collin Costa, *Production Manager*

Effron Music Building, Office 204

ccosta@princeton.edu

609-258-8098

Introduction

Long at the vanguard of music composition, Princeton's Graduate Program in Composition considers it essential for composers to build their own vision based on their strengths and passions, while remaining actively open to new musical experiences shared by the community. The program embraces many kinds of music, engaging with diverse musical languages and creative practices. At the heart of our creative endeavor is the public concert series [Princeton Sound Kitchen](#), in which both faculty and graduate students have their new works workshopped and premiered by some of the world's finest professional musicians and ensembles, including the Cone Artist Ensemble in Residence, [Sō Percussion](#). There are also opportunities for composers with orchestral aspirations to have their music rehearsed by the world class New Jersey Symphony. The program also provides cutting edge resources for computer/electronic music research and facilitates interaction with visiting composers through the colloquium series. Princeton also offers an [Interdisciplinary PhD in the Humanities \(IHUM\)](#), which allows for an extra year of funding and research support to explore fields beyond the boundaries of a student's home discipline.

Our graduate composition program balances freedom and independent work with lively interaction as a group in seminars, colloquia, workshops, concerts and ad hoc events. In this community, expressing one's views *about* music is highly valued as well as expressing one's views *in* music. Graduate students are encouraged to find their own rhythm of faculty engagement as they pursue the independent portion of their work.

Graduate students are expected to participate fully in departmental activities, including seminars, concerts, and colloquia. Students are encouraged to find their own rhythm for the independent portion of their work and to take initiative in seeking faculty input as desired.

This graduate composition handbook provides detailed information about the program and the requirements and expectations specific to the Music Department. Students are expected to adhere to all other University-wide policies described in [Princeton University's Rights, Rules, and Responsibilities](#), including rules for [Academic Integrity](#).

Composition Guidelines and Milestones: Overview

Year	Fall	Spring
1 st year	Seminars (2) Composition Lessons & Princeton Sound Kitchen First Year Paper (if not in Spring) Language	Seminars (2) Composition Lessons & Princeton Sound Kitchen First Year Paper (if not in Fall) First Year Conference
2 nd year	Seminars (2) Composition Lessons & Princeton Sound Kitchen Manage Colloquia Second Year Paper (if not in Spring)	Seminars (2) Composition Lessons & Princeton Sound Kitchen Manage Colloquia Second Year Paper (if not in Fall) General Exams
3 rd year	Seminars (2) and/or Precepting, as available Composition Lessons & Princeton Sound Kitchen Choose advisor(s) for dissertation	Seminars (2) and/or Precepting, as available Composition Lessons & Princeton Sound Kitchen Submit dissertation proposal
4 th year	Seminars (2) and/or Precepting, as available Composition Lessons & Princeton Sound Kitchen Dissertation Progress	Seminars (2) and/or Precepting, as available Composition Lessons & Princeton Sound Kitchen Submit First Chapter of Dissertation
5 th year	Seminars (2) and/or Precepting, as available Composition Lessons & Princeton Sound Kitchen Dissertation Progress	Seminars (2) and/or Precepting, as available Composition Lessons & Princeton Sound Kitchen Dissertation Submission & Final Public Oral Exam OR Review any DCE plans with advisor(s)
DCE 6 and 7, if necessary	Dissertation Progress Precepting, as available	Dissertation Progress Precepting, as available

Annual Re-enrollment

Readmission to the program is not automatic year-to-year. All graduate students undergo a re-enrollment process in which they assess their own accomplishments in the program and describe the projects they plan to undertake in the year ahead. The self-assessments and progress in the program are evaluated by the DGS in consultation with other faculty members (for first and second years) and their advisors (year three and beyond). During the first two years students are expected to perform satisfactorily in their seminars and participate in the composition community at large. Students working on their dissertation need to demonstrate adequate progress and should be maintaining close contact with their advisors. Faculty provide their re-enrollment recommendations to the Graduate School for final review and decision.

This process is conducted via the [Graduate School Re-enrollment System](#). Students are notified of re-enrollment decisions via email from the Graduate School. Re-enrolled students must submit an online acceptance to this email via the Graduate School re-enrollment system to complete re-enrollment process and be eligible for [sign-in](#), access to financial support, and more.

Graduate School Sign-In

Admitted/re-enrolled students are required to complete a formal sign-in process for each semester of active study. It is essential to complete this process as **failure to sign in will result in termination of enrollment and inability to receive paychecks and register for classes.**

The following deadlines for Graduate Student Sign-In in [TigerHub](#) will be as follows for 2026-2027, and are the same for both incoming and continuing students:

Fall 2026 Semester: August 31, 2026 at 7:00am EST

Spring 2027 Semester: January 29, 2027 at 7:00am EST

For more information, see <https://gradschool.princeton.edu/academics/enrollment-status-progress/semester-sign>

Stipend & Tuition

Every student in this program is eligible to receive the same stipend and tuition grant for the first five years of study, contingent upon the [annual re-enrollment process](#). Graduate students receive their stipend checks monthly on the last working day of the month. December differs, with pay typically distributed before Winter Break.

Students are encouraged to sign up for Direct Deposit through [TigerHub](#) to ensure the most secure, and fastest disbursement of funds to your accounts despite any travels, changes of address, mail delivery delays, etc.

Students who have not yet completed their degrees by the end of the fifth year are eligible to request to enroll in [Dissertation Completion Enrollment \(DCE\) status](#) for up to two years. Requests for DCE status are made via the [re-enrollment process](#). Students who are re-enrolled in DCE status do not receive a stipend from the University. However, any such [re-enrollment process](#). Students who are re-enrolled in DCE status do not receive a stipend from the University. However, any such students who receive a fellowship or

other grant during their first five years of study may be able to bank a year of funding to be used in their first DCE year.

Graduate Student Committee

In accordance with [the Graduate School's policies regarding Student Government and Advocacy](#), each year the Music Department establishes a committee of graduate students to act as liaisons between students and faculty.

The committee serves in an advisory capacity, providing feedback on curriculum, policies, and climate, facilitating communication between graduate students and faculty about areas of mutual concern. Committee members are encouraged to listen attentively to their colleagues' different perspectives so that all viewpoints can be aired.

The committee meets with the composition Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) at least once a semester. It is the responsibility of the committee to arrange meetings with DGS, formulate the agenda, and follow up with DGS with meetings of the minute and action plans as relevant.

The committee is typically comprised of up to 6 members. Each G1-5 class selects its own representative, and all students in [Dissertation Completion Enrollment \(DCE\) status](#) select one student representative. To make sure that as many voices as possible are heard, students are asked to serve on the committee for only one academic year.

Names of selected committee members should be submitted via email to the [Academic Program Manager and the DGS](#) **no later than September 11th**.

Ombuds Office of Princeton University

The [Ombuds Office](#) offers all Princeton students, faculty, and staff member of the faculty, or staff a confidential place to discuss academic concerns, administrative issues, workplace issues, explanation and interpretation of policies and procedures, and many other issues and concerns. Since their office does not play a part in any formal University process, they are a great way to seek confidential, impartial advice on these challenging issues.

Plan of Study for First and Second Year

All students are subject to the same program, department, and Graduate School requirements.

Residency Requirements

Incoming students are expected to spend at least two (2) years in full-time residence, regardless of prior graduate work. This is over and above the Graduate School's requirement that [at least one \(1\) year in full-time residence](#)

Further, Ph.D. candidates must be in residence for at least one academic year before standing for the [general examination](#), and are expected to be in residence through the duration of their enrollment except when approved to be enrolled in absentia.

Seminars

Number of Seminars

Pre-Generals students who wish to take fewer than two (2) seminars in a semester must discuss this choice with, and receive written approval from, the [Director of Graduate Studies](#) (DGS).

Post-Generals students who are receiving funding may be asked to either take one seminar, or to undertake [Teaching Assistantships](#) or [related teaching assignments](#) in each semester of enrollment.

Required Courses

- Whenever MUS 542 ([Princeton Sound Kitchen, or "PSK"](#)) is offered—usually every spring semester—all enrolled students must register for it.

Composition Lessons

- All enrolled students are eligible to register for Composition Lessons in each semester of study (MUS 531 in fall semesters and MUS 532 in spring semesters).

Expectations and Exceptions

The seminars offered usually reflect the current research of the faculty, factoring for the interests of the enrolled cohort. Occasionally, one of the 2 required seminars might be offered by a musicology faculty or another department. *Any such exceptions are subject to approval by the DGS.*

Students can *occasionally* substitute a 300- or 400-level undergraduate class for a graduate seminar if it is particularly relevant to your interests, with approval from the DGS.

[Language courses](#) do not count as seminars.

Students who are interested in applying to the [Interdisciplinary Humanities \(IHUM\)](#) program are encouraged to take at least one IHUM seminar during their first two years of study.

Occasionally students have organized informal peer-led seminars in an area of widespread interest: Supercollider, Max/MSP, video editing, basic audio engineering, etc. Contact the [DGS](#) if there is a quorum of students with a particular interest to consider options.

Course Selection & Registration

Students should register for, change, or drop courses *only after discussion with and approval of the DGS*. To facilitate these approvals, the DGS is available to meet individually with students still completing course requirements before the beginning of each semester.

All courses registration is done through [Stellic](#). Please see the [Academic Calendar and Deadlines](#) for more information about the dates for adding and dropping graduate courses.

Grading

Composition seminars are normally graded as Pass/Fail (P/F). To remain in good standing with the department, students are expected to attend seminar meetings and complete assignments in a timely fashion. **Failure to complete the work of graduate courses during the semester in which they are taken may result in [deferred reenrollment](#) and negatively impact [financial support](#).**

The Music Department follows the [Graduate School's Policy on Incomplete Coursework](#), which states in part that a "...grade of 'Incomplete' (INC) should be given only under exceptional circumstances when there are compelling reasons, discussed in advance between the course ahead and the student..."

If a student is granted an INC in a course, **it is the student's responsibility to follow up with the instructor and make sure that you have completed the requisite work**. If the work remains incomplete and the grade is not filed within one year after beginning the course, the incomplete automatically becomes an F.

First Year Paper

First-Year students must choose one of the music department seminars taken during the first year and write a 5-10 page paper (double-spaced) on a related topic. Students are expected to discuss the topic ahead of time with the course instructor, and students are encouraged to work with the course instructor throughout the writing process. Any incorporation of pre-existing scholarship or other materials must be cited appropriately, as per the university's [academic integrity](#) policy.

The paper should ideally be submitted to the course instructor, DGS, and Academic Program Manager in the semester in which you are registered for the chosen seminar. However, **the final deadline to submit First Year Papers is the last day of classes in the spring semester**. For 2026-2027, that deadline is **April 23, 2027**.

First Year Conference

Each spring, each first-year student meets with the entire composition faculty for approximately one hour to discuss a composition chosen by the student. The piece will be identified one week ahead of time. Students will also discuss their own creative and academic work undertaken in the first year.

First year conferences are typically broken into two parts:

1. During the first half of the conference, the students present their works created during the first year, with specific examples, as well as their larger goals for the future.
2. In the second half, students will present a detailed analysis of the short piece/excerpt by another composer that they chose, complete with specific examples.

Students are encouraged to choose a piece they think they will learn the most from, whether or not it aligns closely with their own practice. Students should avoid recycling other presentations they may have given in seminars and relying on secondary sources (interpretations/analyses by others).

For Spring 2027, that date is April 26, 2027. You can also find the date for this year's First Year conference in the [calendar, below](#).

Language Requirement

Students must demonstrate proficiency in at least one (1) language. This requirement is often completed in the first semester, but **must be completed before the student may sit for [General Exams](#)**. Students should choose language(s) that are relevant to their course of study and research interests, and may include ancillary skills such as computer programming or audio engineering, by approval of the DGS.

Examples of ways to fulfill the requirement, if approved by the DGS, include:

- Passing a reading exam administered by the relevant language department.
- Passing one of the university's summer language courses.
- Passing a test administered by a qualified faculty member, arranged in consultation with the student's Mentoring Committee chair.
- Passing a summer course at another institution, arranged in consultation with the student's Mentoring Committee chair.
- Completing an online course or certification in a programming language such as Python or R.
- Contributing a short translation of an as-yet untranslated source that is critical to a student's field, arranged in consultation with the DGS.

Students interested in studying languages not provided by the Graduate School (including computer skills such as Ableton or Max) should contact the [Director of Graduate Studies](#) to review options and seek written approval.

It is the student's responsibility to confer with their DGS about the status of their language requirement, and to make the necessary arrangements to satisfy it.

Students may use their [research funds](#) to enroll in a summer language course at Princeton or another institution. Additionally, a limited amount of funding for intensive summer language study is available from the [Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies \(PIIRS\)](#).

If you have questions about the status of your language requirements, please contact the Music Department's Academic Program Manager.

Second Year Paper

Second-Year students must choose one of the music department seminars taken during the second year and write a 10-20 page paper (double-spaced) on a related topic. Students are expected to discuss the topic ahead of time with the course instructor, and students are encouraged to work with the course instructor throughout the writing process. Any incorporation of pre-existing scholarship or other materials must be cited appropriately, as per the university's [academic integrity](#) policy.

The paper should ideally be submitted to the course instructor, DGS, and Academic Program Manager in the semester in which you are registered for the chosen seminar. However, **the final deadline to submit Second Year Papers is the last day of classes in the spring semester.** For 2026-2027, that deadline is **April 23, 2027.**

Princeton Sound Kitchen (PSK)

Princeton Sound Kitchen (PSK) is a vital forum for the creation of new music, serving both composition graduate students and faculty by:

- Connecting composers to professional performers for collaborations;
- Arranging workshops to develop new material;
- Presenting the completed works in concerts and events, and;
- Providing professional recordings for the composers and performers.

Some PSK concerts are eclectic and feature numerous soloists or groups and a mix of instrumentation, while others focus on a particular outstanding chamber ensemble. All demonstrate the extraordinary range of interests and abilities of the Princeton composers, many of whom take the stage themselves as performers of their own and others' music. At a PSK concert, one might encounter improvisation, electronics, video, vernacular music, theatrical elements, or any number of other approaches.

G2 composers will be featured on a PSK concert in their spring semester known as the [Generals Concert](#) and constituting part of the [General Exam](#).

General Exams

A significant milestone in the program is the General Exam which, when successfully completed, advances students to candidacy for the Ph.D. The exam includes two parts:

1. A concert produced collaboratively by second-year students as part of Princeton Sound Kitchen (PSK) oral exam held in late spring. The oral exam comprises several different sections: a large piece or body of pre-twentieth-century music; a second body of more recent music; and the design of a graduate composition course. In addition to the assigned areas of inquiry, Generals topics include the student's compositional work, the second-year paper, and ideas for the dissertation.

The General Exam guidelines are distributed during the summer following the first year of study. Topics change every year. **For the 2026-2027 Academic Year, the topics will be as outlined below.**

Generals Concert – April 13, 2027

You will be selecting a piece of music to respond to. This should *not* be a piece by your favorite composer or a work from a musical practice with which you have the most in common. Strive to select music that challenges or provokes you in some way. In the piece of your choice, identify a technique, sensibility, or propensity that you are interested in trying out at least once. The goal is not to imitate, but to engage in a dialogue by responding to, adopting, or adapting to new ideas.

The piece you select will be performed on the Generals Concert, along with your compositional response. You may need to excerpt a movement from a larger work, arrange the work for more practical performing forces, or otherwise adapt the work to meet the practical requirements of the Generals Concert and/or highlight the feature(s) of the work that you are attempting to engage.

Ideally, there will be a palpable, audible, difference between your Generals piece and your work up to this point. It might not be a better piece, but consider, in this case, 'success' to be gauged in terms of the depth of engagement with the chosen work and the degree of personal risk-taking.

As a group, second-year students are responsible for producing the concert in all its aspects. This means managing the budget, arranging the program (75 minutes is a good maximum duration of musical content), scheduling and rehearsing the performers, etc. To do this, students will engage with the DGS, the faculty Princeton Sound Kitchen director, and Music Department production, business, academic, and communications staff.

Oral Exams

The exam consists of two 90-minute presentations on two separate days in late spring.

Think of the composition faculty as your students, and plan to teach them something. A typical plan is one hour-long analysis followed by 30 minutes on the syllabus on the first day, and one hour-long analysis followed by 30 minutes on your music and your Generals piece on the second day. We would like to end with a broad discussion of you and your music.

Part 1: Analysis

For the analysis portion, you will give two separate analytical presentations on two topics of your choice. The topics can include composers or musical practices. Present one piece from each category. We encourage you

to make one of your selections from a different historical era or musical tradition from our own. See below for the two crucial categories from which you should draw your selections:

1. Composers or musical practices you closely identify with within your own creative practice.
2. Composers or musical practices that challenge you.
 - a. Your choice in this category *may* belong to the same composer or musical practice as your Generals Concert piece. However, the piece you present as part of the analysis should *not* be the same piece that you program on the concert.

We are asking you to make your decision early so that you can spend a significant portion of your second year immersing yourself in preparation. Therefore, we ask you to send your selections to the DGS for approval by **September 30th**.

Part 2: Graduate Seminar

You are teaching a graduate music composition seminar on a topic of your choice. Write a detailed 12-week syllabus for the course, including assignments, reading and listening lists, and prepare a lecture of about 30 minutes. Expect that we will ask questions both about the lecture and the syllabus. The syllabi are typically 3-6 pages long.

Part 3: Your Plans, Generals Piece

We'll also spend some time talking about your past work (composition, classwork) and your plans for the future. We will also discuss your generals piece.

Materials

Let the head music librarian know if you need help finding scores, recordings, films, or any other materials.

Timeline for Generals

Each year and project may call for a bespoke array of processes and deadlines. While the list below, therefore, cannot be exhaustive, here is a list of critical academic deadlines for this project for 2026-2027:

September 30: Deadline to send your choices for the Generals Exam to the DGS for approval

December 10: Proposal for Generals Concert

Let the [Director of Graduate Studies](#) and the director of the [Princeton Sound Kitchen](#) know what your plans for the concert will be and be sure to talk with them about performers, feasibility, date, costs, etc. You should also consult with your colleagues and the production/administrative staff, as described above.

January 29: Generals Concert Terms of Engagement

Submit to all composition faculty not on leave a paragraph or two explaining your terms of engagement with the chosen work/repertoire for the concert. This is not a program note for the general audience but rather a specific outline for the faculty of your compositional project. It doesn't have to be too long, just let us know your goals.

March 19: Focus Pieces and Syllabus

Submit to all composition faculty your choices of “focus pieces” for Generals presentations. Include scores, recordings, or any relevant materials. Also send your syllabus.

April 13: Generals Concert Performance

May 3 & 4: General Oral Exams

Results

Exams are evaluated by the Composition faculty. Within one week of the oral exam, they will receive a written summary of the strengths and weaknesses demonstrated in the [Generals Concert](#) and [Oral Exam](#).

Possible outcomes of the general exam include:

- Pass and move on to doctoral candidacy;
- Pass, but do not move on to doctoral candidacy (if all other requirements are met, a student can receive a terminal master’s at this stage);
- Fail with the option to retake the exam, or;
- Fail with no option to retake the exam (in cases where the student failed the same module twice).

Post-Generals Expectations & Opportunities

Overview

Third-year students should concentrate primarily on finishing their [dissertation proposals](#) and initial chapters. The [dissertation](#) should be the top priority for fourth- and fifth-year students.

Progress on the dissertation will be evaluated at [reenrollment](#) and is taken into consideration in awarding extra funding and teaching and is also a factor in deciding whether a student is prepared to apply for various grants and fellowships. It is strongly advised that students not overcommit to projects that prevent them from making reasonable progress on the dissertation.

Professional Opportunities

Students are encouraged to take an active part in the working composition community at large, through participation in regional, national, and international conferences, festivals, and performances. Students may use their [research funding](#) to cover the cost of society memberships, if they wish.

While we encourage students to pursue professional opportunities, **it is expected that graduate students will discuss these plans with their advisor(s) in advance** to make sure that the projects are viable.

Colloquia Series

The Composition Colloquium series, funded by the Music Department, is organized by the second-year students in consultation with the DGS. The organizers should submit a proposed slate of speakers to the DGS for approval by August 14. The DGS may request changes before approving.

In formulating a proposed slate of speakers, organizers are urged to take account of the breadth of the field, considering not only their own interests but also those of their colleagues. We also ask that they avoid inviting speakers who have visited Princeton in the past five years. Occasionally the faculty may ask to add a guest speaker to the colloquium series; this will be paid for outside of the normal colloquium budget.

Early in the summer between their first and second years, the organizers should reach out to Music Department's Business Manager for information about the annual budget and procedures for paying speakers. The colloquium budget typically covers travel, honoraria, and dinner expenses for up to 6 speakers per year, ideally no more than three per semester.

In-person colloquia are usually followed by a dinner in a local restaurant. For restaurant reservations and room scheduling, please see the Academic and Financial Assistant.

The usual time slot for the colloquium is 4:30 on Thursdays, but other dates and times can be arranged in coordination with the Academic and Financial Assistant and other administrative staff. Please contact staff about alternative day/time requests as early as possible to maximize options.

Regular attendance in the Composition Colloquium Series is expected of all students.

Teaching Opportunities

Teaching Assistantships/Precepting

As noted on the [Graduate School website](#), assistant teaching assignments are awarded to graduate students by the academic departments and programs. Graduate students serving in these roles are referred to as Teaching Assistants, or TAs. Most Ph.D. students at Princeton University serve as teaching assistants at some point during their enrollment, often during specific years of study. Individual programs specify whether and when such teaching may be required. With very rare exceptions, first-year students in Ph.D. programs may not be appointed as TAs. In all cases, graduate students should have the permission of their DGS and adviser before taking on a TA appointment.

In addition, the Graduate School requires all first-time TAs to undergo training with [the McGraw Center](#) to establish a foundation of essential teaching issues and skills. **All graduate students must complete this mandatory training before being eligible to take on TA appointments.** These training sessions are typically offered at the beginning of each semester at the Frist Campus Center.

In accordance with Graduate School policies, composition graduate students are typically not asked to take on teaching duties until after they have passed the [General Exams](#). Exceptions are sometimes made in specific circumstances depending on a variety of factors.

Students will be polled about their availability and interests in teaching for the following semester. While the Music Department tries to factor in students' individual requests, the teaching assignments depend upon multiple factors including class enrollments, funding allocations, and faculty preferences and needs, progress on the dissertation, and more. Priority *may* be given to DCE students who have exhausted their regular funding.

TAs may teach several weekly sections and/or support grading, depending upon the class enrollment and course material. TAs are also expected to attend all the regular lectures and help with grading or make-up classes as requested by the instructor. For more information on TA Hours Allocations, Appointment Dates, and Tuition Contributions/Stipends, please visit <https://gradschool.princeton.edu/financial-support/assistantships#:~:text=assistantship%20in%20instruction>.

[For additional TA opportunities outside of the Music Department, please see this link](#)

Collaborative Teaching Initiative

Students who have excelled as preceptors may also be able to participate in the [Collaborative Teaching Initiative](#), which provides the opportunity for students to co-design and co-teach a Princeton undergraduate course with a current full-time faculty member. The course proposals, prepared by both the student and the sponsoring faculty, are subject to rigorous review, first by our own curriculum committee (two DGSs, Chair, and DUS) and then representatives of the Deans' Offices. Students who have an idea for an innovative course should begin by discussing it with the faculty member in question no later than February of the preceding academic year. Please keep in mind that in a department our size these opportunities are relatively rare—typically no more than one a year for the entire department—and depend on curricular needs and faculty commitments. We may not be able to put through even the most exciting proposals. As with precepting, priority may be given to DCE students.

Outside Teaching and Community College Engagement

Post-Generals students are also encouraged to explore opportunities to gain teaching experience outside the University either in area colleges or the [Community College Teaching Fellowships](#).

Students who are in their regular period of enrollment and still receiving full stipends should get permission from their advisors before accepting an outside teaching position.

Additional Teaching Opportunities and Support

For more information on opportunities and resources, please contact your DGS and see the [Graduate School's Page on Teaching Information](#).

Dissertation

Overview

A Princeton composition dissertation has two parts: a substantial composition or portfolio of compositions; and a written essay about a topic relevant to contemporary music. The balance between these two components varies from student to student. Some write prose very easily, and consider it part of their compositional process. Others do their best thinking in music, and are not particularly drawn to writing. As a result, the written portion of the dissertation varies widely in length and scope, from 40 – 60 pages at the lower end, to more than 200 pages at the upper end.

Dissertation Advising

Students should begin considering possible doctoral dissertation subjects as soon as possible after admission to the program and are urged to identify and meet with faculty whose interests seem best suited to a potential dissertation topic. Concentrated work on the dissertation begins after the successful completion of the [General Exam](#); students should schedule a meeting with a prospective advisor(s) early in the third year to discuss potential topics.

Prospective advisors and students are urged to have a frank conversation early in the process to clarify expectations and responsibilities, to work out a mutually beneficial schedule for meetings and deadlines, and establish clear guidelines for communications and expectations regarding reading drafts, requests for letters of recommendations, managing of outside activities (conferences, teaching, publications), etc. **Students must confirm their dissertation advisor absolutely no later than the last class day of the first semester (December 7, 2026) of the third year of study (G3)** by providing written confirmation to the [Director of Graduate Studies](#) and the Academic Program Manager with the advisor on copy.

It is the student's responsibility to maintain contact with their advisors and make sure that they are making adequate progress on the dissertation.

Each dissertation must also be read and approved by a second reader who is a full-time (non-emeritus) member of the Music Department Faculty. Second readers may be involved with the dissertation from the initial stages or may enter the process closer to the completion of the dissertation.

Both primary and secondary readers submit reports to the Faculty and Graduate School a month before the [Final Public Oral Exam \(FPOE\)](#). FPOEs will not be scheduled without the full approval of both readers. Depending upon the topic, it may be desirable to have an outside reader from another institution or department, depending upon the special nature of the dissertation and needs of the student. The decision to invite outside readers is made by the DGS and advisor in consultation with the student. In addition, should an outside reader be pursued, they must also be approved by the Graduate School directly. Please work with your Academic Program Manager to seek approval.

Should there ever be any concerns about advising, students should contact either the [DGS](#) or the [Department Chair](#), who will help you find an appropriate and comfortable way to address the problem. Students throughout the University have benefitted from the services of the [Ombuds Office](#), which assists students, faculty, and staff with finding strategies to handle difficult interpersonal relationships on campus with complete confidentiality.

Dissertation Proposal for Composition Ph.D

Your proposal should describe both the essay and the composition. In describing the essay, include the question or problem your research will address, the state of research on that question, a chapter outline, and bibliography. Most often, the specific details (such as the ordering or content of chapters, or the precise nature of the composition) will change during the process of completing the dissertation. While you should present a thoughtful and substantial document, it is helpful to remember that the document is not a final statement but rather a stage in the process. Also include a brief account of plans for your composition piece or, if you prefer, portfolio. A paragraph or two will usually suffice, though you can write more if you like. While the length of the proposal will vary, ten pages is a good ballpark. The student is encouraged to consult with faculty as needed.

The dissertation proposal is due no later than the last class day of the second semester (April 23, 2027) of the third year of study and must be submitted by email to the [Director of Graduate Studies](#), your advisor, and the [Academic Program Manager](#).

Admission to the fourth year may be contingent upon the advisor's approval of the dissertation proposal.

Initial Chapter

Students should submit an initial chapter no later than the last day of classes in the spring semester of their fourth year of study. For 2026-2027, that date is **April 23, 2027. This can be submitted by email to the [Director of Graduate Studies](#), your advisor, and the [Academic Program Manager](#).**

This may be any chapter, not necessarily the one that will ultimately open the dissertation; or, depending on the nature of the dissertation, something that reflects a comparable level of progress, as discussed with your advisor.

Dissertation Writing in Fourth & Fifth Years

Students should consult with their advisor regarding the completion of both portions of the dissertation (essay and composition). Sufficient progress on both portions of the dissertation – as approved by your advisor – are a condition of [reenrollment](#) in the fourth and fifth years.

Final Public Oral Exam (FPOE)

Ideally, the doctoral dissertation is written during the student's official last year in residence to ensure full and frequent consultation with the advisor and other faculty members.

Eligibility to Defend

Any post-generals graduate student who has completed all degree requirements, including their dissertation, is eligible to defend.

If a student submits a doctoral dissertation more than five years after passing the general examination, the department is not automatically required to accept it for review. In such cases, the department must hold a faculty vote to determine whether the dissertation will be received for review and examination.

Please remember that **the final decision about whether a dissertation is ready to be defended is made by your advisors and their decisions are final.** While faculty make every effort to accommodate deadlines for jobs or postdoctoral fellowships, the department will schedule FPOEs only for students whose dissertations have the full approval of both readers.

Timeline for a Standard Defense

In the final stages of writing the dissertation, students will need to carefully consider their timeline and scheduling plans for their Final Public Oral Examination (FPOE). Final Public Oral Examinations (FPOEs) may be scheduled anytime in the year when the faculty are available to conduct the examination. The following outlines the typical timeline for a standard defense:

- 1. Student Declares Intent to Defend** (min. 12 weeks prior to preferred defense date)
 - When a student is ready to plan their defense, they must contact the department's Academic Program Manager via email, with their DGS, Advisor, and selected readers on copy.
 - While 12 weeks is the minimum to declare intent to defend, it is welcome and encouraged for students to begin this process earlier.
- 2. Schedule an FPOE Date and Seat Faculty Quorum** - Upon receipt of intent to defend, Academic Program Manager will:
 - Confer with the advisor and DGS to confirm that the dissertation is sufficiently ready to schedule defense;
 - Support coordination with the student and faculty to plan an appropriate FPOE date and faculty quorum.
 - Support seeking Graduate School approval for external readers, examiners, and/or virtual FPOEs, when needed. Approval is at the discretion of the Graduate School and is not guaranteed. This may call for additional lead time in some cases.
 - Students should plan to meet with the Technical Manager in the FPOE venue a few days ahead of the defense date to test audio/visual, computer, and teleconferencing needs.
- 3. Advanced Degree Application** (min. 3 weeks prior to confirmed defense date)
 - Active students (G3-G7) complete their Advanced Degree Application ([instructions linked here](#)). This application must include:
 - Final Title Page – Please refer to the [LibGuide](#) for formatting guidelines
 - Final Abstract – 350 words or less
 - Student provides the Title Page, Final Abstract, final full dissertation, and accompanying media to the Academic Program Manager and Technical Manager to allow for internal circulation among faculty and allow appropriate A/V support for the defense.
 - Final public oral examinations are to take place in-person. In cases where an appearance for the FPO would constitute a substantial hardship for the candidate due to extenuating reasons,

the director of graduate studies, acting on behalf of the department and with the approval of the adviser(s) and all principal examiners, may recommend to the Graduate School the virtual, video-conferenced examination of the candidate, with the department continuing to uphold in all other respects the open, public nature of the examination. Students approved for a virtual examination must connect with the Academic Program Manager and Technical Manager to plan any Zoom and other A/V support needed.

4. **Reader Reports:** Faculty readers and any external readers submit their final, [formal reader reports](#) to the Academic Program Manager. The reader reports will be attached to the Advanced Degree Application by the department.
5. **Advertise the FPOE** - Academic Program Manager and other staff will advertise the FPOE no less than 3 days prior to the defense date, in accordance with Graduate School Requirements.
6. **Defend** – The student defends for a panel of faculty examiners on the scheduled date.
 - All FPOEs have a minimum quorum of 3 examiners.
 - At least two of the examiners must not have served as principal readers of the dissertation.
 - Please see below for more details on regulations for outside readers.
 - Students wishing to work with an outside reader must contact their advisor. If the advisor approves, then the advisor must email the DGS, Academic Program Manager, and Business Manager, cc-ing the student, with this request, no later than 12 weeks prior to the intended FPOE date. This is the same minimum deadline as declaring intent to defend. Review and approval are also required by the Graduate School, in accordance with their quorum and reader/examiner qualification policies. These parameters may change in future years.
7. **Submission of Final Requirements** - Ph.D. students must submit the Checkout Form and Final Paperwork Form to be included on the upcoming degree list. Both forms must be submitted within two weeks of the defense or by the [degree deadline](#), whichever occurs first. This paperwork will take 2-3 hours to complete and includes:
 - A **Checkout Form** submitted via TigerHub- Graduation tile – Checkout Form
 - **Submission of dissertation PDF to [Princeton's ProQuest ETD site](#)**
 - Payment of any applicable publishing and copyright fees (the Graduate School requires traditional or open access publication and does not allow publication restrictions).
 - Students must save a copy of the ProQuest submission confirmation email to attach to the final paperwork form.
 - Complete the **Survey of Earned [Doctorates](#)**
 - Save an electronic copy of the "Certificate of Completion" page of the SED to attach to the final paperwork form
 - **Complete the Graduate School Exit [Survey](#)**
 - You will receive an email with a personalized link inviting you to complete the survey. You can also find your survey link on [TigerHub](#)
 - Upon completing and submitting the survey, you will receive a confirmation email. Please save the confirmation page or email and attach it to your final paperwork form.
 - If a verification letter is needed prior to receiving the diploma, this can be requested on the final paperwork form.

Timeline for Defense for Dissertation Completion Fellowships & Postgraduate Research Associates

1. Recipients of the Postgraduate Research Associate Program (or, PGRA) who are teaching in the term following their FPOE use the standard FPOE guidelines, but must do **so by no later than the December 31 deadline (for spring semester teaching) or May 31 deadline (for fall semester teaching)**. Later deadlines cannot be granted, due to the deadlines for teaching.
2. PGRA recipients who do not successfully complete the FPOE by the appropriate deadline become ineligible to convert to PGRA status. They may, however, continue enrollment in DCE status. Such students will have no guaranteed funding from the Graduate School, except in cases of previously obtained University funding, and no further opportunity for a PGRA appointment. These students may apply to and receive funding opportunities available to DCE students including Teaching Assistantships, departmental funds, and external awards.
3. Recipients of the Dean's Completion Fellowships (or, DCF) who are not teaching the following term use the standard FPOE guidelines, but must do **so by no later than the January 31 deadline (for fall semesters) or May 31 deadline (for spring semesters)**. Later deadlines cannot be granted, due to the deadlines for the DCF process.
4. Due to these deadlines, scheduling will begin upon notice of the award of the PGRA or DCF.

Timeline for Defense More Than 5 Years After Completing General Exams

1. **Student Requests to Defend** (min. 16 weeks prior to preferred defense date)
 - A student in ET/DCC status may present a dissertation for consideration by the department without special approval from the department or the Graduate School for up to five years following the successful completion of the general examination.
 - When a student is ready to plan their defense, they must submit a completed dissertation draft to the department's Academic Program Manager via email, with their DGS, Advisor, and selected readers on copy.
2. **Faculty vote to hear the defense**
 - If a student wishes to submit a dissertation more than five (5) years after passing the general examination, and/or their ET/DCC status has been terminated, then the department must vote to determine whether the appropriate faculty wish to review the dissertation. The department is not obligated to review dissertations from former ET/DCC students or consider requests to return such students to ET/DCC status. Requests to return former ET/DCC students to ET/DCC status always require the approval of the Graduate School.
 - In these cases, the Academic Program Manager will facilitate a vote to determine whether the appropriate faculty wish to review the dissertation. This may be conducted via email, with decisions rendered by a simple majority.
3. **Schedule an FPOE Date and Seat Faculty Quorum** - Upon an approving vote, Academic Program Manager will:
 - Confer with the advisor and DGS to confirm that the dissertation is sufficiently ready to schedule defense;

- Support Coordination with faculty with work with the student and faculty to plan an appropriate FPOE date and faculty quorum.
- Support seeking Graduate School approval for external readers, examiners, and/or virtual FPOEs, when needed. Approval is at the discretion of the Graduate School, and is not guaranteed. This may call for additional lead time in some cases.
- Students should plan to meet with the Technical Manager in the FPOE venue a few days ahead of the defense date to test audio/visual, computer, and teleconferencing needs.

4. **Advanced Degree Application** (min. 4 weeks prior to confirmed defense date)

- Students who have been unenrolled for more than one (1) year no longer have Princeton login credentials. Therefore, the **Academic Program Manager must complete the Advanced Degree Application** on behalf of the student.
- Students must provide the following to the Academic Program Manager:
 - Current legal name
 - Current address
 - Final Title Page – Please refer to the [LibGuide](#) for formatting guidelines
 - Final Abstract – 350 words or less
 - Final, [formal reader reports](#) from Faculty (the student or staff must upload to the application)
 - The final, full paper itself. This must include any edits/adjustments the faculty advisor and readers required after reading.
 - Any accompanying media
 - Other details, as needed.
- Final public oral examinations are to take place in-person. In cases where an appearance for the FPO would constitute a substantial hardship for the candidate due to extenuating reasons, the director of graduate studies, acting on behalf of the department and with the approval of the adviser(s) and all principal examiners, may recommend to the Graduate School the virtual, video-conferenced examination of the candidate, with the department continuing to uphold in all other respects the open, public nature of the examination. Students approved for a virtual examination must connect with the Academic Program Manager and Technical Manager to plan any Zoom and other A/V support needed.
- Academic Program Manager circulates materials to the faculty.

5. **Advertise the FPO** - Academic Program Manager and other staff will advertise the FPO no less than 3 days prior to the defense date, in accordance with Graduate School Requirements.

6. **Defend** – The student defends for a panel of faculty examiners on the scheduled date.

- All FPOEs have a minimum quorum of 3 faculty.
- At least two of the examiners must not have served as principal readers of the dissertation
- Please see below for more details on regulations for outside readers.

- The Department typically does not provide fees for outside readers. If compensation is required in some way, students and their advisor and/or DGS may raise it early with the Academic Program Manager and Business Manager for review.
7. **Submission of Final Requirements** - Ph.D. students must submit the Checkout Form and Final Paperwork Form to be included on the upcoming degree list. Both forms must be submitted within two weeks of the defense or by the degree deadline, whichever occurs first. This paperwork will take 2-3 hours to complete and includes:
- A **Checkout Form** submitted via TigerHub- Graduation tile – Checkout Form
 - **Submission of dissertation PDF to Princeton's ProQuest ETD site**
 - Payment of any applicable publishing and copyright fees (the Graduate School requires traditional or open access publication and does not allow publication restrictions).
 - Students must save a copy of the ProQuest submission confirmation email to attach to the final paperwork form.
 - Complete the **Survey of Earned Doctorates**
 - Save an electronic copy of the "Certificate of Completion" page of the SED to attach to the final paperwork form
 - **Complete the Graduate School Exit Survey**
 - You will receive an email with a personalized link inviting you to complete the survey. You can also find your survey link on [TigerHub](#)
 - Upon completing and submitting the survey, you will receive a confirmation email. Please save the confirmation page or email and attach it to your final paperwork form.
 - If a verification letter is needed prior to receiving the diploma, this can be requested on the final paperwork form.

Receipt of Advanced Degree

For this academic year, the following chart outlines the degree deadlines and accompanying dates when the degree will be awarded. The degree deadlines are the final dates by which the student must have successfully defended their dissertation and completed all post-FPOE final paperwork required of the Graduate School. If the deadline on the left in the chart below is met, then the advanced degree will be awarded on the date on the right. This schedule is subject to change, with the most current dates available at <https://gradschool.princeton.edu/academics/degrees-requirements/degree-deadlines#:~:text=advanced%20degree%20deadlines>

Degree Deadline for 2026-27:**Degree to be Awarded on:**

Monday, August 31, 2026

Saturday, September 26, 2026

Friday, October 30, 2026

Saturday, November 21, 2026

Tuesday, December 15, 2026

Saturday, January 30, 2027

Friday, February 26, 2027

Sunday, April 4, 2027

Thursday, May 6, 2027

Tuesday, May 25, 2027

NOTE: Dates are tentative and subject to change before the beginning of the academic year.

For more information on your status after the FPOE please visit:

<https://gradschool.princeton.edu/academics/degrees-requirements/advanced-degree-application-process>

Additional Dissertation Resources

Readers and Examiners

Readers

- There must be at least two principal readers
- At least one must be a current faculty member from the student's home department
- All readers must be approved to serve in graduate advisory roles (see table below)
- External readers must receive prior approval by the Graduate School by emailing CV and justification to appropriate Academic Affairs Dean. CV and dean approval need attached to advanced degree application.
- External readers must hold a position equivalent to those approved to serve in advisory roles at Princeton

Examiners

- There must be at least three principal examiners
- At least two of the examiners cannot have also served as readers of the dissertation
- External examiners require prior approval by the Graduate School by emailing CV and justification to appropriate Academic Affairs Dean. CV and dean approval need attached to advanced degree application.
- Remote participation requires approval by the Graduate School, and at least two examiners must be present in person

Funding Support for Composition Ph.D Candidates

Base Support

The [Graduate School Financial Support Model](#) details the amounts and pay schedules of Tuition, Student Health Plan, and Stipend support provided to enrolled graduate students during their first year, as well as Fellowship and other funding opportunities that support Princeton's full-funding guarantee for PhD students throughout their regular program enrollment.

Music Department Financial Support

Research Funds

Each graduate student is provided a pool of research funding for travel, equipment, and other approved needs.

Incoming graduate students may receive **up to \$2,400 per year for five years** as research funds to be accessible until end of G7 or the semester in which dissertation defense occurs, whichever comes first.

The department will plan to disperse up to \$2,400 per year per student, but within G1 and G2, students can ask for a one-time advance for up to \$6,000 (vs. the \$4,800 set to be automatically dispersed over the course of the first 2 years). The advanced, additional amount (up to \$1,200) will then be subtracted in equal parts from remaining fund allocations scheduled to be released over the next 3 years.

Students may propose rolling over funds to accumulate more than \$2,400 to be used in a single year after G2, with permission from their DGS and the administrative staff.

The process for students to submit requests for use/advances/rollover of funds/etc. is to [email the Business Manager and Director of Administration and Operations](#). They will collate and present to the DGS for approval.

Automatic categories will be developed for common expenses to be processed through the office without need for approval by a DGS. Examples of these could be:

- Purchase of common equipment including computers, audio production equipment, or software
- Conference fees
- [Studio lessons with Princeton studio faculty](#)
- Outside lessons with non-Princeton faculty
- Language study
- Other specialized study such as Ableton, audio production, mixing, and more

To apply to use available balances, visit [SAFE](#) (the Student Activity Funding Engine). Applications must include a detailed budget proposal, including any receipts and booking confirmations, and an explanation of the intended use.

Those seeking funds for travel must also complete required University travel enrollment through [Enroll My Trip](#). Travel-related funds will not be awarded if the travel enrollment is not approved.

Completed applications are reviewed by the relevant DGS. If funding is awarded, the student will receive an email from SAFE with instructions on next steps to accept the funds.

Please contact the [Business Manager](#) for your Research Fund balance at any time.

Additional Departmental Funds for Beneficial Projects

Graduate students may request additional funding from the department if they want to propose a project or an initiative that benefits more than just them as individuals (i.e., launching a mentorship program, curating a conference, etc.)

Student Activity Funding Engine (SAFE)

[SAFE](#) is the University's one-stop resource for supplemental funding. There, students will find portals to apply available research funds from their remaining [Bryan Fund](#) balance, funds available via select fellowships and grants, and applications to funding opportunities provided by the Graduate School and other campus partners.

Additional Funding Opportunities

Student Activity Funding

The Graduate School seeks to support student innovation and enrichment via targeted funding opportunities. Such opportunities may include support for travel to present research at professional conferences, summer research, and other professional development.

Complete eligibility criteria, application deadlines, timelines, and application instructions are available in [SAFE](#).

Princeton and External Fellowships

The [Graduate School Financial Support Model](#) shares an array of Princeton University and external fellowship opportunities to bolster funding throughout regular program enrollment. Many of these opportunities allow recipients to bank some funding for future use in a first DCE year, if necessary. Terms and conditions differ fellowship-to-fellowship. Students are encouraged to consult with their advisor(s) and DGS about appropriate opportunities and application support.

Honorific Fellowships

Princeton departments and programs may nominate students whose work shows exceptional promise for one of a few Honorific Fellowships. Final selection for such fellowships is made by the dean of the Graduate School and the academic affairs deans, in consultation with a Faculty Committee.

The Music Department typically nominates one musicologist for Honorific Fellowships, the selection of whom is voted on by the musicology faculty. Since these are exceedingly competitive, the department will only nominate students who:

1. Are qualified applicants to the given fellowship;
2. Has done exceptional work, and;
3. Are likely to finish the [dissertation](#) the following academic year.

All graduate students who are eligible will be considered for Honorific Fellowships; students do not need to request consideration.

If the candidate nominated for an Honorific Fellowship is not successful, the musicology faculty will automatically nominate that student for the Dean's Completion Fellowship. If they do receive an Honorific

Fellowship, the faculty will then choose another candidate only if they are likely to finish their dissertation within the prescribed period.

Included in these opportunities are several **Honorific Fellowships**, for which Princeton departments and programs nominate students whose work shows exceptional promise. Final selection for such fellowships is made by the dean of the Graduate School and the academic affairs deans, in consultation with a Faculty Committee.

The Music Department typically nominates one composer for Honorific Fellowships, the selection of whom is voted on by the composition faculty. Since these are exceedingly competitive, the department will only nominate students who:

1. Are qualified applicants to the given fellowship;
2. Has done exceptional work, and;
3. Are likely to finish the [dissertation](#) the following academic year.

All graduate students who are eligible will be considered for these fellowships; students do not need to request consideration.

If the candidate nominated for an Honorific Fellowship is not successful, the composition faculty will automatically nominate that student for the [Dean's Completion Fellowship](#). If they are successful, the faculty will choose another candidate only if they are likely to finish their dissertation within the prescribed period.

Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS)

The [Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies \(PIIRS\)](#) offers opportunities for funding for intensive language study in the summer. Please visit their website for details on applying for their funding.

Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program in the Humanities (IHUM)

The highly competitive [IHUM program](#) offers the opportunity of earning a 3-year interdisciplinary PhD in the Humanities to students whose research extends to other disciplines.

Applications are accepted in the spring semester of the third year of study (G3). Potential applicants are encouraged to take at least one [IHUM course or seminar](#) during G1 and G2. Remember that all [course plans must be discussed with and approved by the DGS](#), as outlined in the section regarding course selection.

Successful applicants may receive an additional year of fellowship support, as well as research and travel stipends during their three years in the IHUM program. **For the most up-to-date information, please visit the [IHUM program's website](#).**

Dissertation Completion Enrollment (DCE) Status

Students who have not completed their PhDs after five years may be enrolled for up to two (2) additional years in Dissertation Completion Enrollment (DCE) status. The primary goal of DCE status is to provide students with continued access to libraries and other campus resources, health insurance, and—as available—teaching opportunities while they complete their dissertations.

Eligible students apply for DCE status with the Graduate School during the [reenrollment process](#) in the last year of their program of study and must be approved for DCE status by their department and the Graduate School based on criteria for satisfactory academic progress.

International students applying for DCE status should begin discussing their financial situation with the Business Manager and Academic Administrator as early as possible in their fifth year of study to make sure that they have the adequate support to renew their visas. While the Department makes every effort to help its international students stay on campus, there is no guarantee that the Department can provide sufficient teaching and/or grants to satisfy visa requirements.

Students approved for and enrolled in DCE status are fully and formally enrolled graduate students, working full-time to complete degree requirements. DCE students may be enrolled as regular (in residence) or In Absentia students (pursuing their work away from Princeton).

Tuition in DCE Status

The tuition rate for DCE students for this academic year will be available on the [Graduate School website](#).

However, The Graduate School waives tuition for students who [precept](#) for at least two hours a week .

In addition, students in good standing may apply to the Music Department for DCE tuition subsidies in semesters in which they are not teaching or if they are funded by outside grants that do not include tuition.

Students requesting DCE status may apply to the Music Department for bespoke support in semesters in which they are neither precepting nor receiving funding via grants. Approval of such requests is not guaranteed.

Funding For Students in DCE Status

Often, students enter DCE status having exhausted their regular funding. Therefore, students should begin discussing DCE funding with their advisors at least a year before their funding runs out to see if they are ready to apply for [outside grants](#), many of which require students to have at least two chapters of their [dissertation](#) drafted.

Many students in DCE status supplement their income with [precepting](#); students who anticipate needing precepting hours should indicate their need and availability on their DCE application.

There are several opportunities to receive internal funding during the DCE period via [internal and external fellowships](#) and other relevant opportunities.

In addition, the faculty may nominate one composer for the [Dean's Completion Fellowship/Postgraduate Research Associates \(DCF/PGRA\) Program](#), which pays the DCE tuition and a full stipend for one semester

during their sixth year. Students who successfully defend the dissertations by the end of that semester have to opportunity to be appointed as Post Graduate Research Assistants for the spring semester, with full stipend.

Enrollment Terminated/Degree Candidacy Continues Status (ET/DCC)

If students beyond their department's regular program length are not in [DCE status](#) and have not graduated, they will be given Enrollment Terminated/Degree Candidacy Continues (ET/DCC) status. ET/DCC is an unenrolled status in which students **are ineligible for the benefits** that come with formal enrollment. For ET/DCC students, library access and student borrowing privileges (for those in Princeton or the vicinity), and e-mail and computer account access will continue for a period of up to five years beyond the date on which the [General Exam](#) is completed. Students who choose ET/DCC status are eligible for appointments as part-time Lecturers through the Dean of the Faculty's Office.

2026-2027 Calendar of Key Dates

The following list of dates is intended to help you plan your work toward key targets throughout the year. These dates remain subject to change throughout the year and this document will not necessarily be updated in all cases. Please keep a close eye on correspondence and announcements from Music Department faculty and staff for the latest information.

August 2026

- August 1 [Fall Semester Sign-In](#) Begins for new and returning students
[Seminar Registration](#) Begins for Returning graduate students
- August 14 List of proposed [Colloquia](#) speakers Due to DGS
- August 20 [Seminar Registration](#) Begins for new graduate students
- August 26-27 Graduate School Opening Address & Orientation (2 days)
- August 28 International Graduate Student Orientation
- August 30 Princeton Opening Exercises
- August 31 Final Deadline for [Fall Semester Sign-In](#)

September 2026

- September 2 First day of Fall 2026 classes
Music Department Graduate Student, Faculty, & Staff Meet & Greet
- September 11 Deadline to submit names for the [Graduate Student Committee](#)
- September 23 DGS Fall meeting with newly formed Graduate Student Committee
- September 30 [General Exam](#) choices must be submitted to the DGS for approval

October 2026

- October 17 Fall Recess Begins
- October 26 Classes Resume

November 2026

- November 24 Thanksgiving Recess begins after last class
- November 30 Classes Resume

December 2026

- December 5 Graduate Student Seminar Registration for Spring Begins
- December 7 Last day of fall classes

Graduate Student Deadline for Fall Semester [Course changes](#) at 11:59pm Eastern.
Deadline for G3s to confirm their dissertation advisor

December 10 Proposal for [Generals Concert](#) Due

January 2027

January 25 First day of Spring 2027 Classes
Deadline for G2s to submit [Generals Concert Terms of Engagement](#)

January 29 Final Deadline for [Spring Semester Sign-In](#)

February 2027

February 16 DGS Spring Meeting with [Graduate Student Committee](#)

March 2027

March 6-14 Spring Break

March 15 Classes Resume

March 19 Deadline to submit [Focus Pieces](#) and [Syllabus](#) for [General Exam](#)

April 2027

April 13 [Generals Concert](#)

April 15 [Reenrollment](#) Begins

April 23 Last day of spring classes
[First Year Papers](#) Due to DGS and instructor of course inspiring paper
[Second Year Papers](#) Due to DGS and instructor of course inspiring paper
Deadline for G3s to submit dissertation proposals
Deadline for G4s to submit initial dissertation chapter

April 25 Graduate Student Deadline for Fall Semester [Course changes](#) at 11:59pm Eastern

April 26 Fall Term [Seminar Selection](#) Begins
[First Year Conferences](#)

April 27 [General Exam Oral Exams](#) Day 1 of 2

April 28 [General Exam Oral Exams](#) Day 2 of 2

May 2027

May 13 Graduate School's Last Permitted Day of PhD Exams
May 24 Graduate Hooding Ceremonies