

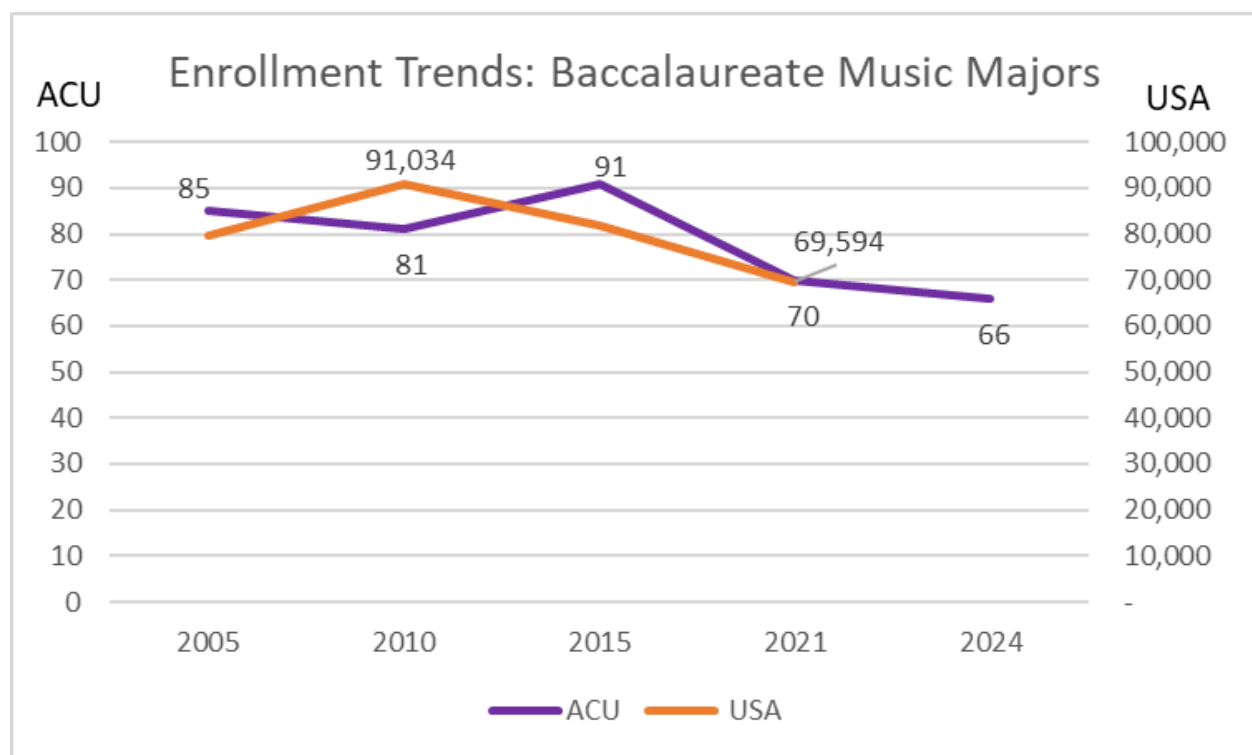
Music Curriculum Revision 2025

Overview

This proposal attends to two mutually reinforcing elements in its design: creating *pathways for early successes* to improve retention and *focusing on our strengths* to ensure long-term viability.

Departmental Landscape

The post-pandemic environment remains a challenge for the performing arts, with [declines of more than 4%](#) expected to continue after 2022. The decline in the number of music majors at ACU is slower than the national total, though it still shows a steady decrease: 13.5% decrease from 2010 to 2021, compared with a 23.5% decrease nationwide.

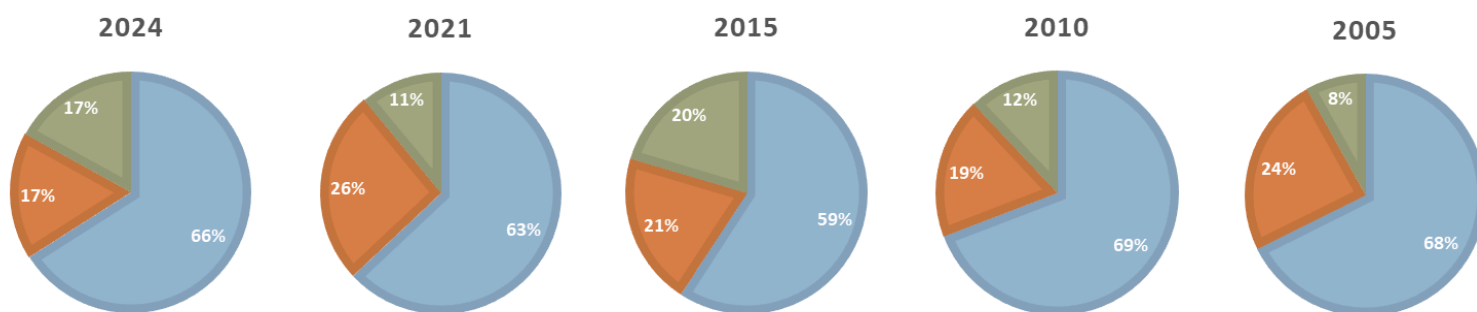


[HEADS Data Summaries](#) - National Association of Schools of Music.

Approximately two-thirds of ACU's music majors are music education: MTIA (Music Teaching - Instrumental Emphasis) and MTVA (Music Teaching - Vocal Emphasis). This percentage has been very steady for two decades.

ACU Music Major Enrollment - Percentage by Area

BMEd (Instrumental and Vocal) - BA Music - BM Vocal Performance



Regarding retention, the department's rate is below both the College's year-to-year retention rate and the other fine/performing arts departments:

- Fall 2023 to Fall 2024 - Freshman to Sophomore Retention
 - 84.1% = College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (n=180)
 - 94.0% = Theatre (n=16)
 - 86.0% = Art and Design (n=36)
 - 80.0% = Music (n=20)

Notably, the 80% retention rate is an increase from the previous years:

- Fall 2022 to Fall 2023 = 67%
- Fall 2021 to Fall 2022 = 67%
- Fall 2020 to Fall 2021 = 74%
- Fall 2019 to Fall 2020 = 75%
- Fall 2018 to Fall 2019 = 80%

Having a Freshman to Sophomore retention rate greater than 80% will be a significant help to the department in terms of credit hours produced, size of upper-level classes, efficiency of recruiting, and graduation rate.

Finally, the shape of the faculty has changed significantly in the last decade. In Fall 2015, the department had 15 FTE faculty; ten years later, it was 10.25 FTE: a 32% decrease. The credit hour production during the same time has remained relatively flat, then decreased: 920 hours in Fall 2015; 931 in Fall 2023, dipping to 761 in Fall 2024 (a 17% decrease from 2015). While we are fortunate to engage a number of adjunct and part-time faculty to help staff lessons, classes, and small ensembles, the tension of maintaining credit-hour production with a third less full-time faculty needs to be addressed by streamlining our degree requirements.

One especially significant faculty pressure-point comes from new Texas Education Agency (TEA) requirements that expands from 30 to 50 the number of observation hours music education students must complete to receive their certification. Additionally, what used to be four formal observations of student teachers has expanded to four formal plus three informal observations (with at least one of the informal observations being in-person). The burden of scheduling, overseeing, assessing, and administering those observation hours adds significantly to music education faculty's responsibilities. Addressing this will also be an important aspect of curriculum revision.

Curriculum Revision - Areas of Focus

The above overview shows a number of areas that need to be addressed. These are grouped into three categories:

- Freshman/Sophomore music classes
- Streamlined degree structures
- Partnership with the School of Education

Following are the specific proposals for each category.

Lower Level (Freshman/Sophomore) Music Classes

Students come to music from a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences. Some are more talented than others; others are not successful and need to repeat a class. We are not in a position to have an "advanced track" of classes for certain students or a "trailing section" for others. Early failure in music theory courses is often a barrier for students' successful completion of the program since Freshman-level courses serve as prerequisites for most others.

To help ensure students move through the curriculum in a more consistent manner, the following changes are proposed to the Freshman/Sophomore music theory and history sequence:

- Create a three-credit Music Foundations course that is composed of 3 one-credit courses
 - MUSC 101 - **Foundations of Musicianship** (Fall semester - Monday @ 8:00 am)
 - effective practicing; foundations of pedagogy; music as vocation; departmental practices (e.g. Recital Seminar, performance lab); alumni engagement (Zoom or F2F); music opportunities in town/region; etc.
 - MUSM 101 - **Foundations of Listening** (Fall semester - Wednesday @ 8:00 am)
 - basic musical forms; intro to Western time periods; musical style identification; identifying performing groups; initial aural skills (e.g. recognizing chord types; meter; intro solfege)
 - MUST 101 - **Foundations of Music Theory** (Fall semester - Friday @ 8:00 am)

- introduction to staff structure; note names; clefs; intervals; key signatures; time signatures; notation foundations; initial sight-reading and dictation
- Restructure the lower-level theory and history sequence of courses as follows:
 - Fall Freshman Year: Music Foundations (3 1-credit classes)
 - Spring Freshman Year: Elementary Theory (3) + Elementary Aural Skills (1)
 - Fall Sophomore Year: Intermediate Theory (3) + Intermediate Aural Skills (1)
Sophomore Year: Music in World Cultures (3)
 - Spring Sophomore Year: Advanced Theory (3) + Advanced Aural Skills (3)
 - Here is a summary of the [course objectives in the Music Theory Sequence](#).

CURRENT CLASS SCHEDULE							PROPOSED CLASS SCHEDULE						
Fall Semester			Spring Semester				Fall Semester			Spring Semester			
	#	Title	CR Hr	#	Title	CR Hr		#	Title	CR Hr	#	Title	CR Hr
F R E S H M A N	MUST 111	Aural Skills I	1	MUST 112	Aural Skills II	1	F R E S H M A N	MUSC 101	Musicianship	1	MUST 151	Elementary Aural Skills	1
	MUST 131	Theory I	3	MUST 132	Theory II	3	S O P H O M O R E	MUSM 101	Listening	1	MUST 150	Elementary Theory	3
				MUSM 131	Music in World Cultures	2	A N N O U N C E	MUST 101	Found. Theory	1			
S O P H O M O R E	MUST 211	Aural Skills III	1	MUST 212	Aural Skills IV	1	S O P H O M O R E	MUST 251	Intermediate Aural Skills	1	MUST 291	Advanced Aural Skills	1
	MUST 231	Theory III	3	MUST 231	Theory IV	3	A N N O U N C E	MUST 250	Intermediate Theory	3	MUST 290	Advanced Theory	3
				MUSM 132	Music Literature	2	H I S T O R Y	MUSM 131	Music in World Cultures	3			

The restructured lower level music theory and history sequence would require these changes:

- Close MUST 232 and MUST 212
- Retitle and Renumber MUST 131 from Music Theory 1 to MUST 150 Elementary Music Theory
 - shift course content to start with part-writing and end with secondary dominants
- Retitle and Renumber MUST 111 from Aural Skills 1 to MUST 151 Elementary Aural Skills
 - shift course content to start with I, IV, V solfege and end with cadences

- Retitle and Renumber MUST 132 from Music Theory 2 to MUST 250 Intermediate Music Theory
 - shift course content to start with secondary dominants and end with chromatic harmony
- Retitle and Renumber MUST 112 from Aural Skills 2 to MUST 251 Intermediate Aural Skills
 - shift course content to start with cadences and end with modulations
- Retitle and Renumber MUST 231 from Music Theory 3 to MUST 290 Advanced Music Theory
 - shift course content to start with chromatic harmony and end with 20th century techniques
- Retitle and Renumber MUST 211 from Aural Skills 3 to MUST 291 Advanced Aural Skills
 - shift course content to start with modulations and end with chromatic harmony
- Close MUSM 132
- Move MUSM 131 from a Spring offering to a Fall offering. Expand from a 2 credit to 3 credit course.
 - students would take Music in World Cultures the fall of Sophomore year

Streamlined Degree Structures

To better align the faculty makeup with the efficient scheduling of classes, the following changes are proposed:

- revise MUSC 217 (English and Italian Diction - 1 credit hours) as a two credit course by including material from MUSC 218 (French and German Diction - 1 credit hours). Retitle the course as MUSC 217 - Diction (2 credit hours)
 - rationale: subject matter is conducive to a single course; a single course is easier to fit into the teaching rotation and the students' schedules
 - currently, MUSC 217 and 218 are both 1 credit hour meeting for 2 contact hours per week
 - MUSE 217 (the proposed course) would be a 2 credit hour course meeting for 3 contact hours per week
 - this would require the following actions:
 - close MUSC 218
 - revise MUSC 217
- revise MUSE 116 (Concepts of Clarinet and Saxophone) to include material from MUSE 118 (Concepts of Flute and Double Reeds). Retitle the course as MUSE 116 Concepts of Woodwinds (1 credit hour).
 - rationale: all other concept courses cover a single family of instruments
 - MUSE 110 - Concepts of Percussion
 - MUSE 119 - Concepts of Strings
 - MUSE 125 - Concepts of Brass

this would create equity between the instrument families while also facilitating the sequencing of the course in both faculty and students' schedules

- this would require the following actions:
 - retitle MUSE 116
 - close MUSE 118
- Vocal Performance Degree
 - remove MUST 331 - Counterpoint (2 credits) from the VOCP degree; replace with 2 credits of music electives (e.g. credited ensembles)
- Catalog Cleanup: the ACU Catalog includes four courses under "Other Required Courses" at the end of the MTIA degree plans; these should be moved under the "Pedagogy" heading to more accurately reflect their importance and inclusion in the degree plan. They are correctly grouped in the MTVA degree plan. These courses are:
 - MUSE 236 - Vocal Concepts
 - MUSE 332 - Elementary Music Techniques and Literature
 - MUSE 338 - Band Methods: Marching Techniques and Wind Literature
 - MUSE 339 - Secondary Music Methods - Instrumental
- Catalog Cleanup: Close MUST 233 Jazz Theory and Improvisation and remove from the catalog. This course was taught two times; the last time was Spring 2015.
- Catalog Cleanup: retitling classes to be consistent within the degrees
 - MUSE 332
 - change from Elementary Music Techniques and Literature
 - to Elementary Music Methods
 - MUSE 333
 - change from Secondary Music Methods: Choral Organization and Administration
 - to Secondary Music Methods - Choral
- Degree Consistency: Choral Music Literature - the MTVA degree does not contain a literature-based course like the MTIA degree: MUSE 338 (Band Methods: Marching Techniques and Wind Literature).
 - Develop MUSE 335 - Choral Literature. 2 credits. Outcomes: overview of historical development of choral music; pedagogical and practical considerations when selecting music for a variety of ensembles of various ages and genders.
- Expand MUSM 131 (Music in World Cultures) from 2 credits to 3 credits
 - use the expanded contact time to engage another key area of music history: popular music around the world, including North America and Europe.
- remove MUSM 449 (Capstone) from the curriculum; MUSM 431 is also designated as a Capstone Course. Any other outcomes can be covered in students' final semester of Recital Seminar and as an asynchronous module.

- Make MUSE 334 (Beginning Conducting) a three-credit course. Currently it is a two-credit course with three contact hours. This change aligns contact and credit hours and better supports music students in their comprehensive musicianship.
- MUSM 236 Music in Leipzig: Past and Present
 - add this course to BA and Minor menus and to the General Education (Fine Arts) menu; has been for piloted three years

Partnership with the School of Education

Music Education students take approximately 30% of the degree coursework in classes led by the School of Education. For decades, there has been a strong partnership between Music and Education which has helped position our students for success after graduation.

The Texas Education Agency's recent decision to increase the number of observation hours from 30 to 50 puts a great deal of pressure on music faculty to identify, facilitate and assess those hours. Additionally, the TEA's refusal to not to fully recognize "after hours" events such as marching band practice or choir rehearsals as hours that count for observation simply because they are outside the 8:00-3:00 approved window of time, means that music education students are prohibited from counting some of the most germane, important, valuable and formative observations in their 50-hour total.

Music is an outlier among all the other content-area education degrees at ACU (i.e. Art Education, Social Studies Education, Spanish, Theatre, Math, etc.) because Music students do not take the *SECONDARY BLOCK* set of courses: EDUC 412 (Secondary Curriculum and Media) and EDUC 432 (Secondary Management and Methods). Both courses provide overviews of techniques for classroom management and discipline, motivation, and a variety of teaching strategies. Crucially, both provide for 45-hours of field work in the classroom. The observation hours are facilitated by having a back-to-back block of time (TR 12:00-2:50) in which the two courses are offered - allowing students to travel to local school campuses, observe, reflect, and return to ACU for later-afternoon classes and labs.

To help prepare Music Education students, the School of Education developed the one-credit EDUC 449 (Professional Practice in Music Education); however, that course includes no observation hours. The Music faculty are extremely grateful for this collaboration but recognize that the time is right for a substantial change to better position students for the challenges of public school education in the mid twenty-first century. We propose the following changes:

- remove EDUC 449 from the MTIA and MTVA degree plans
- include EDUC 412 and 432 in the MTIA and MTVA degree plans
 - this would be a net change of 5 additional hours in the music degree plans

- EDUC 412 = 3 hours
- EDUC 432 = 3 hours
- remove EDUC 449 = -1 hour
- two hours are gained by the reworking of the Freshman/Sophomore music theory and history sequence (see above); this leaves three hours to “find” in order to accommodate this change without expanding the already-very-full music education degree plan
 - The Music Department petitions the UGEC and AUAC to reduce the Bible requirement from 15 hours to 12 hours for the MTIA and MTVA degrees; thus allowing the 3-hours to be reallocated to EDUC 432 for Music Education majors.
 - Note: this portion of the proposal was borne out of a suggestion emerging from the Provost Office, where it has also received preliminary approval.

Music Department representatives met with faculty and administrators in the School of Education about this portion of the curriculum revision. [Here is a memo](#) outlining their views of the current state of the music education degrees and the challenges currently faced. And [here is a memo](#) articulating the School of Education’s support for the changes outlined in this section of the document.

Thank you for considering these changes for the Music Curriculum. The faculty feel like, in concert, these changes will be a significant improvement in our ability to serve and retain students, deliver classes effectively and efficiently, and strengthen the partnership with the School of Education in ways that will benefit both areas in the future.

APPENDIX A

[Here is a summary](#) of the four music degree plans (MTIA, MTVA, VOCP, MUSI) with their current structure compared with proposed changes outlined in this document.

Here are the course-specific changes that are being made:

- New Courses
 - MUSC 101 - Foundations of Musicianship
 - [syllabus and new course application](#)
 - [library support memo](#)
 - [Adams Center support](#)
 - Curriculum Change Form
 - MUSM 101 - Foundations of Music Listening
 - [syllabus and new course application](#)
 - [library support memo](#)
 - [Adams Center support](#)
 - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - MUST 101 - Foundations of Music Theory
 - [syllabus and new course application](#)
 - [library support memo](#)
 - [Adams Center support](#)
 - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - MUSE 335 - Choral Literature
 - [syllabus and new course application](#)
 - [library support memo](#)
 - [Adams Center support](#)
 - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - MUSM 236 - Music in Leipzig: Past and Present
 - [syllabus](#) and [new course application](#)
 - [library support memo](#)
 - [Adams Center support](#)
 - [Curriculum Change Form](#) - new course
- Revised Courses
 - [MUSC 217 - Diction](#) - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - change from 2 credits to 3 credits; expand scope of course
 - [MUSE 334 - Beginning Conducting](#) - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - change from 2 credits to 3 credits; align contact and credit hours

- [MUSE 116 - Concepts of Woodwinds](#) - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - consolidate two classes into one; no change in credit hours
- [MUSM 131 - Music in World Cultures](#) - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - change from 2 credits to 3 credits; expand scope of course
- Lower-Level Music Theory classes: there's no change in credit hours or course content; just a renumber of the sequence to help make their progress more clear to students.
 - Renumber/Retitle MUST 111 to [MUST 151 - Elementary Aural Skills](#)
 - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - Renumber/Retitle MUST 132 to [MUST 250 - Intermediate Music Theory](#)
 - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - Renumber/Retitle MUST 112 to [MUST 251 - Intermediate Aural Skills](#)
 - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - Renumber/Retitle MUST 231 to [MUST 290 - Advanced Music Theory](#)
 - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - Renumber/Retitle MUST 211 to [MUST 291 - Advanced Aural Skills](#)
 - [Curriculum Change Form](#)
- Retitled Courses (no other changes)
 - [MUSE 332 - Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - [MUSE 333 - Curriculum Change Form](#)
- Closed Courses
 - [MUST 232 - Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - [MUST 212 - Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - [MUSM 132 - Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - [MUST 233 - Curriculum Change Form](#)
- Degree Plan and Minor Changes - these Curriculum Change Forms correspond to each of the four music degrees and the changes outlined in this document
 - [MUSI - BA - Music](#)
 - [MTIA - BM - All-Level Teacher Certification - Instrumental Concentration](#)
 - [MTVA - BM - All-Level Teacher Certification - Vocal Concentration](#)
 - [VOCP - BM - Vocal Performance](#)
 - [MUSI – Music Minor](#) - [Comparison Chart](#)

APPENDIX B - Changes made in December 2025 following a review by Karen Witemeyer

- [MUST 131 - renumber and retitle to MUST 150: Elementary Music Theory](#)
- [MUST 331 - prerequisite change](#)
- [MUST 333 - prerequisite change](#)
- [MUSM 431 - prerequisite change](#)
- [MUSM 432 - prerequisite change](#)
- [MUSM 132 - remove course from the General Education menu](#)
- [MUSC 217 - corrected the prefix typo](#)
- Updated [Music Minor change form](#) and [Comparison Chart](#)
- Update [MUSM 131 - Music in World Cultures - Curriculum Change Form](#)
 - change from 2 credits to 3 credits; expand scope of course
 - note: this clarifies a typographical error I made in the initial Google Doc (sorry for the confusion!)