

Theory and Ear Training Placement/Proficiency Information Sheet

Updated: 6/5/2025

A typical music major is required to enroll in four sequential Theory and Ear Training/Sight Singing courses. A placement exam will determine whether the student can enter the initial course in the theory and ear training sequence (MUTY 1211/1116) or if additional remediation is needed by way of Elements of Music (MUTY 1370). Students with no prior theory background can opt not to take the placement exam and will be automatically placed in Elements of Music.

Students who are placed in MUTY 1370 for the fall semester typically use the Summer I session to catch back up to those who placed into the initial course. For example:

Tested into 1211/1116 – Fall Semester 1211/1116 (Theory/Sight Singing I) Spring Semester 1212/1117 (Theory/SS 2), Following Fall Semester 2211/2116 (Theory/SS 3).

Tested into 1370 – Fall semester 1370 (No ear training course), Spring Semester 1211/1116, Summer 1 Session 1212/1117, Following Fall Semester 2211/2216.

The music department *strongly* recommends that those who are placed into MUTY 1370 take the summer courses in their first year of study to get back on track. Otherwise, the student will be a year behind in their music studies.

Those who have had outside theory and ear training or have taken the AP Theory exam and received a 3 or higher, can be placed in a higher course level. An appropriate placement exam would be administered at their initial audition.

The higher-level placement exam consists of:

1. Four-part writing in root position.
2. Harmonic analysis, including Roman numerals and figured bass.
3. Non-chord tone identification.

Transfer students that have four semesters of theory and ear training from another institution that wish to complete their requirements must take a transfer exam and successfully pass all sections. If the student is deemed to have deficiencies, the theory coordinator will recommend that they be placed in the appropriate level course in the sequence. The student wishing to fulfill their theory/ear training proficiency should contact the theory coordinator (Dr. Michael McAndrew – mmcandrew1@lamar.edu) to request and schedule the exam as early in the semester as possible and no later than the 12th class day.

The exam materials are modeled from *Tonal Harmony* by Kostka and Payne, and *Manual for Ear Training and Sight Singing* by Gary Karpinski. They will consist of:

Theory

1. Four Part Writing under a given *soprano* line.

It must include first and second inversion triads, a V7 chord, a secondary dominant, an augmented sixth chord of any type, a passing tone, a neighbor tone, and a suspension of any type.

2. Harmonic Analysis

Roman numerals and figured bass, as well as non-chord tone identification. The analysis includes all the harmonic devices contained in the part writing exercise. (Secondary dominants, augmented sixths, etc.)

Ear Training

Melodic Dictation

1. Melodies in major and minor.
2. Two-part dictation.
3. Modulating melodic excerpts.

Harmonic Dictation

1. Bass line dictation and Roman numerals/figured bass.
2. Harmonic language including Secondary Dominants and Augmented Sixth Chords.
3. Modulating excerpts, in which the student must identify the modulation and where it occurs.