

MUSIC THERAPY STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026

MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR WOMEN

FACULTY:

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Welcome to the Music Therapy Program in the Department of Music at MUW! This handbook contains lots of great information about your future, your past, and your present. Read it thoroughly and it will answer many of your questions. Becoming a Music Therapist is a challenging adventure in which you'll uncover hidden talents, learn about yourself in relationship to others, make lots of music, expand your knowledge of the world, and have a lot of fun. Some of the greater challenges may come through the reading and writing assignments in the coursework, or in the clinical experiences. However, as you travel through this extensive training ground toward becoming a Board Certified Music Therapist, know that you can lean on your peers as well as your professors to help you through it. Keep an open mind and an open heart and enjoy the journey!

Retention in the Major

Grade Point Average and Competency

Students must achieve a grade of C- or higher in all Music and Music Therapy classes in order to be eligible for internship and to sit for the board certification exam. This is an American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) standard and requirement. Students who fail to achieve a C in a class must retake it in the semester it is next offered. In addition, students will be unable to take the next sequential music therapy course unless approved by the faculty. Students will be given only one opportunity to retake any Music Therapy course. If the student is unable to achieve a C or higher at that point, the student will be required to change their major. (See Undergraduate Bulletin for full details). This policy includes Clinical Practicum courses. Students will not be allowed to begin practicum experiences until satisfactory grades have been made in MUS 351, Music Therapy with Children and MUS 352, Music Therapy with Adults.

In addition, students must pass competency examinations for piano, guitar, and voice. This exam must be passed before students can enroll in 400 level Music Therapy courses. Competency in other accompaniment instruments, percussion, and non-symphonic instruments will be assessed through the grading process in the various Music Therapy courses. Many of the courses have pre-proficiency exams which serve as "check-points" to measure student progress towards the final proficiency exam.

Required Courses

Students will find a list of required courses for this major in the online Undergraduate Bulletin. A link to this is on the MUW website home page under "Academics". Below is a sample 4-year curriculum schedule. **Please note:** This is just a sample, and students' course plans may differ significantly based on their functional music skills, transferred courses, and advanced placement courses. Students will meet with their assigned advisor each semester to work together on a course plan.

Music Therapy Sample Curriculum

<u>Freshman</u>	<u>Fall</u>		<u>Spring</u>	
EN 101 English Composition		3	MUS 102 Music Theory II	3
MUS 101 Music Theory I		3	MUS 104 Music Theory Lab II	1
MUS 103 Music Theory Lab I		1	MUS 122 Major Applied Lesson	2

MUS 121 Major Applied Lesson	2
MUS 151 Intro to Music Therapy I	1
MUS 251 Clinical Skills I	1
MUS Ensemble	1
UN 101 Freshman Seminar	1
MUS 107 Group Keyboard Skills I	1
Or	
MUS 128 Class Voice I	<u>2</u>
	14/15 hrs

MUS 152 Intro to Music Therapy II	1
MUS 252 Clinical Skills II	1
MUS Ensemble	1
MUS 126 Class Guitar	2
MUS 105 Intro to Music Literature	3
PSY 101 General Psychology	3
MUS 109 Group Keyboard Skills II	1
Or	
MUS 129 Class Voice II	<u>2</u>
	18/19 hrs

Sophomore Fall

MUS 201 Music Theory III	3
MUS 203 Music Theory Lab III	1
COM 101 Oral Communication	3
MUS 221 Major Applied Lesson	2
MUS 351 Music Therapy with Children	2
MUS Ensemble	1
PSY 206 Human Growth and Development	3
MUS 207 Group Keyboard Skills III	1
MUS 226 Advanced Guitar for MT	<u>1</u>
	17 hrs

Spring

MUS 202 Music Theory IV	3
MUS 204 Music Theory Lab IV	1
MUS 222 Major Applied Lesson	2
MUS 352 Music Therapy with Adults	2
MUS Ensemble	1
MA 113 College Algebra	3
MUS 209 Group Keyboard Skills IV	1
MUS 231 Percussion for MT	1
PSY 201 Intro to APA	1
MUS 253 Music Therapy Observation **	<u>1</u>
	16 hrs

Junior Fall

EN 102 English Composition II	3
MUS 301 History of Music I	3
MUS 305 Form and Analysis	2
MUS 321 Major Applied Lesson	2
MUS 255 Psychology of Music	2
MUS 353 Clinical Practicum I	1
MUS 309 Improvisation I	1
MUS 399 MT Special Topics **	<u>1</u>
	15 hrs

Spring

MUS 302 History of Music II	3
MUS 322 Major Applied Lesson	2
MUS 256 Music Therapy Research	2
MUS 354 Clinical Practicum II	1
MUS 303 Music Therapy Prof. Skills	1
MUS 310 Improvisation II	1
MUS 399 MT Special Topics **	1
Literature Survey	<u>3</u>
	14 hrs

Senior Fall

BSB 141 Anat & Physiology I w/ Lab	4
PSY 304 Abnormal Psychology	3
MUS 452 Music Therapy Principles	2
MUS 431 Clinical Practicum III	1
MUS 315 Conducting	3
MUS 399 MT Special Topics **	1
Electives	<u>3</u>
	17 hrs

Spring

BSB 142 Anat & Physiology II w/ Lab	4
PHL 307 Medical Ethics	3
MUS 452 Music Therapy Practices	2
MUS 454 Clinical Practicum IV	1
History Course	3
Open Electives	3
MUS 399 MT Special Topics **	<u>1</u>
	17 hrs

Senior Summer

MUS 460 Music Therapy Internship I*	1
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Fall

MUS 461 Music Therapy Internship II	1
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*Internship follows completion of all coursework

** This course is not required, but strongly suggested by the faculty.

Minimum Required Credit Hours for Degree = 124

AMTA Competencies and MUW Proficiency Exam

The American Music Therapy Association (AMTA) has required competencies that students must attain before graduation. <https://www.musictherapy.org/about/competencies/> These requirements ensure that all students enter the field of professional clinical practice with the highest possible musical and therapeutic skills. These skills are attained through classroom work and self-study, as well as through clinical practice. Students will be evaluated periodically throughout their coursework by Music Therapy faculty. Each student will have an Individualized Training Plan (ITP) that will keep track of all competency evaluations throughout the coursework as well as log all clinical hours required before internship. Students will also take a pro-active approach and evaluate themselves prior to their senior year to identify areas in need of growth during their final year of study and during the internship. Ms. Osburn will complete a formal pre-internship evaluation during each student's last semester of residency at MUW. This evaluation will be discussed with the student and will be used to identify skills and knowledge areas that will need specific attention during the Internship. Students will be evaluated at various stages during the internship and the Internship Director will communicate the student's level of competency to Ms. Osburn. If feasible, Ms. Osburn will schedule at least one on-site evaluation during the student's internship. Students will also receive a chart that identifies the AMTA Professional Competencies and the MUW courses that address the individual requirements. In order to pass the internship and be eligible for graduation, students must be proficient in all the areas. Yes, this seems daunting, but by the end of internship, you'll be there!

In order for music therapy majors to enroll in senior level music therapy courses, they **must** pass Music Therapy Proficiencies in Piano, Voice, and Guitar. Students may take the proficiencies at the end of the fall and/or spring semester of their junior year. Equivalency and transfer students need to take the exam before the last year of study. Each exam committee will consist of the following: (a) Music Therapy faculty, (b) Instrument Instructor (piano, voice, or guitar), and (c) at least one additional music faculty member.

Students who fail any portion of the exam on their first attempt will be given the opportunity to repeat the exam either before or during the first week of classes in the next semester. The committee may choose to require the student to retake the entire exam, even if portions of it were acceptable. If the student fails their second attempt, they will be given one more semester to improve their competency skills. A third failure will result in the student's dismissal from the Music Therapy Program.

Students are **strongly encouraged** to begin practicing for the proficiencies upon their entrance to the program. The skill areas on the exams will be covered in the Music Therapy and music core classes, and students should ask their private instrument instructors to address specific areas of the proficiency exams in their lessons. Students should not, however, expect their applied instructors to wholly focus on proficiency music in the lessons. Students may also take

additional private lessons or enroll in group classes to refine skills that they may not have mastered. These extra lessons and/or classes may or may not apply towards graduation. Students are encouraged to discuss these matters with the MT faculty.

Song List

Music Therapy faculty has chosen a list of 15 **required** songs for students to master. Students will be required to perform **any title** from this during the exam.

Required Songs:

Amazing Grace	I Walk the Line
Blowin' in the Wind	Lean on Me
Country Roads	My Favorite Things
Fly Me to the Moon	Over the Rainbow
God Bless America	The Lion Sleeps Tonight
Have You Ever Seen the Rain	The More We Get Together
Hound Dog	You Are My Sunshine
I Can See Clearly Now	

In addition, students will have the choice of another 15 songs that fit the following criteria.

1. One from each of the following categories:
 - a. Patriotic/Seasonal
 - b. Multicultural
 - c. Spirituals/Hymns
 - d. Jazz Standards
 - e. Musicals (Broadway)
 - f. Movies/Television/Disney
 - g. Rock
 - h. Early Folk/Country
 - i. Modern Folk
 - j. Modern Country
 - k. Soul/ R&B
 - l. Blues
 - m. Popular 2000s until today
 - n. Popular 1950s-1990s
 - o. Popular 1940s and earlier
2. Must exhibit a wide variety of genres and playing styles.
3. These do not have to be memorized, but memorization will positively affect scoring.

The list of 15 songs chosen by the student, along with a companion recording playlist, will be submitted during MUS 252 Clinical Skills II as part of the Repertoire Binder assignment. The list can be adjusted with permission from the faculty, and the final Proficiency Song List should

be submitted by the beginning of the fall semester of the year in which they will be taking the exam. Copies of the songs can NOT be lyric sheets with only the chords written in. All songs should be at least fake book arrangements, with the melody, words, and chords provided. Music that includes left-hand accompaniment for piano is encouraged. Students may find they need separate copies of the music for different instruments (piano & guitar) to accommodate the playing in different keys.

Students should be prepared to perform the entire song (all of the verses and choruses). When given a choice of keys, **it is important that students choose a key that is appropriate to their vocal range and the vocal range of the intended target population.** Copies of many of the songs can be found in the songbooks located in the instrument cabinets of room 206. Many of the songs are included in the songbooks used in class. Some songs can be found in anthologies in the MUW Library, and/or the Columbus Public Library. Some songs may have to be downloaded and/or purchased from on-line resources.

Vocal Exam:

1. Sing a modern song of your choice (1990 or later) with accompaniment (self, peer, faculty accompanist). The song can be of any genre (Pop, Country, Broadway, etc...). The song cannot be Rap, however. This song should be a separate selection from the list of 15 songs provided by the student.
2. Sing two songs from the list a cappella. The exam committee will choose the songs for you.
3. Sight read a simple melody using *la*, or solfège, (melody will be chosen by the exam committee).

Voice Exam Guidelines:

	Excellent	Proficient	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Vocal Performance: Student's choice	Sang confidently and expressed the emotions of the song.	Sang with moderate confidence and expression. Had good vocal quality.	Sang accurate melody line, with good intonation. Had moderate vocal quality.	Had intonation problems, missed words or notes. Poor vocal quality.
2 songs a cappella	Sang confidently and expressed the emotions of the songs.	Sang accurately with confidence. Good vocal quality.	Sang accurate melody line, with good intonation. Moderate vocal quality.	Had intonation problems, missed words, notes or rhythms. Poor vocal quality.
Sight Reading	Sight read accurately with no mistakes.	Sight read most notes correctly, was rhythmically correct.	Sight read most notes and rhythms correctly. A few mistakes.	Did not sing melody or rhythm accurately.

Guitar Exam

1. Sing and play five songs from the list. At least two songs must be played with a finger-style pattern. Students may play the strumming pattern of their choice for the other songs, but they must be more sophisticated than basic quarter-note strums. The exam committee will choose the songs.
2. Transpose and sing two songs from list: one manually, and one with a capo. The exam committee will give you songs and the keys which to transpose. You may choose the original key of the songs.
3. Prepare an original “Hello” song for a clinical population of your choice. This **MUST** be a song you have written, not a lyric adaptation of a previously written melody. Provide written copies of the song for the committee to view. The copies you provide should include the melody, lyrics, guitar chords, and piano accompaniment on staff paper. Hand-written music is not acceptable, songs should be notated with a computer program.
4. Sight read (sing and play) two songs: one with chord letters, and one with chord numbers (Roman numerals).

Guitar Exam Guidelines:

	Excellent	Proficient	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Strumming Patterns	Played each song with a different, advanced style. Sang well.	Played each song with a different, simple style. Sang well.	Played each song with a different style, some minor mistakes.	Did not play accurately with varying styles. Singing was not accurate.
Transposition	Transposed quickly and easily with no mistakes.	Transposed to the correct key accurately.	Transposed with minimal mistakes.	Did not transpose accurately.
Original Hello Song	Sophisticated song with accurate written form.	Simple song performed well, Written music was accurate.	Simple song, performed accurately. Written music had minimal mistakes.	Performed song did not match the written form, was performed poorly.
Sight Reading	Sight read accurately with no mistakes.	Sang most notes correctly, played chords and rhythms correctly.	Played most chords and rhythms correctly, sang melody mostly correct.	Did not play or sing melody, chords or rhythm accurately.

Piano Exam

1. Play a prepared piece of any genre. This song should not come from the list, and must be of piano lesson quality.

2. Play and sing five songs using various accompaniment styles of your choice. The committee will choose the songs.
3. Prepare an original “Good-Bye” song for the client population of your choice. This MUST be a song you have written, not a lyric adaptation of a previously written melody. Provide written copies of the song for the committee to view. The copies you provide must be fully scored for both hands, with melody, chords and lyrics on staff paper. Hand-written copies are not acceptable, songs should be notated on a computer.
4. Sight read (sing and play) from a hymnal (hymn will be given to you by the exam committee).
5. Sight read (sing and play) two songs from a fake book, one with letters and one with numbers (Roman Numerals).

Piano Exam Guidelines:

	Excellent	Proficient	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Piano Performance	Played confidently and expressed the emotions of the song.	Played with moderate confidence and expression.	Played with a few mistakes. Piece was of appropriate difficulty.	Did not perform piece accurately. Chosen piece was not of appropriate difficulty.
Stylistic Playing	Played each song with a different, advanced style. Sang well.	Played each song with a different, simple style. Sang well.	Played each song with a different style, some minor mistakes. Singing was of moderate quality.	Did not play accurately with varying styles. Singing was not accurate.
Goodbye Song	Sophisticated song with accurate written form	Simple song performed well, Written music was accurate.	Simple song, performed accurately. Written music had minimal mistakes.	Performed song did not match the written form, was performed poorly.
Sight Reading Hymn	Sight read accurately with no mistakes	Played most notes correctly, played chords and rhythms correctly with good tempo	Sight read most notes correctly. Played chords and rhythms with few mistakes	Did not play song melody or rhythm accurately
Sight Reading – Fake Book 2 songs	Sight read and sang accurately with no mistakes	Played most notes correctly, played chords and rhythms correctly with good tempo	Sight read most notes, chords, and rhythms correctly, same melody mostly correct.	Did not play or sing melody, chords, or rhythm accurately.

Music Therapy Resources

MUW Fant Memorial Library

The library contains materials useful to students in the music therapy major. In addition to recordings, journals, and books, the library has access to many on-line databases for research projects. Hard copies of many on-line materials are available as well. If you need a book, or an article from a journal that the MUW library does not carry, inter-library loan is a **free** provided service. Simply complete the request form, which can be done on-line, and you will be notified when the resource has been received. Allow a few weeks for books to be shipped, but articles often arrive more quickly. Books must be returned in a timely manner, but articles from inter-library loan are yours to keep.

The library website now has a research guide specifically developed for Music Therapy majors. You can access it at this link: <https://libguides.muw.edu/MusicTherapy> . Librarians are always available and willing to help you with research projects, so don't be afraid to ask!

Music Therapy Faculty Offices and Classroom

Ms. Osburn and Dr. Fessenden also have a personal library located in their offices. Students are encouraged to **ask** for additional references for research assignments. Many books in the faculty's collection are not in the University Library, but may be checked out by students. Also available to students is a file cabinet full of information about a variety of topics. Originals can be checked out, but must be returned, just as all other department supplies. This file cabinet is located in the Music Therapy Classroom (Poindexter 206).

The cabinets in the MT Classroom contain instruments and other supplies that are available for class presentations, projects, practice, and practicum. Students enrolled in clinical practicum have priority when reserving instruments. Students must check out supplies by writing the information on the Materials Reserve Sheet located in the Blue Binder beside the instrument cabinets. Students who sign out materials must bring them back as soon as possible, but at least within 24-hours, as there are many students, and a limited number of instruments. If the student checks out materials on Friday, they will be due back by Monday morning. Practicum students should return instruments to the cabinets as soon as possible after their clinical sessions. Instruments must be cleaned between uses and all supplies should be returned to their places on the shelves, not left in the instrument bags on the floor of the cabinets. Students are not allowed to check out materials for the entire semester. These supplies will also be needed for Music Therapy classes. All instruments and supplies must be returned by the last day of classes or a hold will be placed on the student's account. If instruments and supplies consistently are not returned in a timely manner, the student's grade will be adversely affected.

Students will receive the combination to the key box for the classroom door and instrument cabinets at the beginning of the school year. Please safeguard this combination and do your part to keep our instruments and supplies safe and in good working order. Do **NOT** share the box combination with non-music therapy students.

The MT Classroom (Poindexter 206) is not to be used to store student's belongings. Do not leave your books, instruments, or any other equipment in the classroom for extended periods. Students have access to lockers on the first floor, across from the kitchen, and will need to supply their own lock to secure their belongings. Items left in the classroom and appearing to be unclaimed after some time will be taken to the Music Department Office lost and found.

Pinterest

MUW Music Therapy program has a Pinterest account that students can access and save ideas to. To log in use the email address: ceosburn@muw.edu and the password muwmusictherapy. Feel free to explore and add to the resources if you find something interesting!

Facebook

The MUW Music Therapy program has a Facebook account that students are encouraged to follow. Both Dr. Fessenden and Ms. Osburn are Administrators, as is the Music Therapy Club President. Please let us know if you are involved in student events that need to be advertised, and when you have pictures of MT students participating in campus events that should be posted. It is listed as "MUW Music Therapy Program".

****Important Note****

Neither Ms. Osburn or Dr. Fessenden will become your friend on Facebook until after you graduate. This rule is in place to maintain a level of ethical professionalism in the teacher/student relationship. Facebook is a place where personal and family information is shared, and the music therapy faculty want to respect your privacy as well as have you respect theirs. However, once you are a graduate, and thus a peer of the faculty, those friend requests may be accepted.

Music Therapy Club

Music Therapy Students have the opportunity to be involved with peers in a campus organization, Mu Theta Chi, Music Therapy Club. This club is open to anyone on campus who is interested in Music Therapy, but Music Therapy majors are **expected** to be active members. The purpose of this club is to promote Music Therapy on campus and in the community. Annual events may include a Fall semester Welcome party, various community service projects, the Baddour Center's and STAR Center's Student Conferences (when occurring), and a "Happy Trails" party for departing Seniors. Club members also are involved in fund raising projects throughout the year. Funds are used to defray costs to national and regional conferences. Officers are elected in the Spring semester, before school breaks for the summer. Regular meeting times and the cost of dues will be determined by the executive officers and announced during the first meeting of each academic year. The executive officers may also announce special called meetings throughout the semester.

Because this is a club supporting your chosen profession, it is expected that students will place greater importance on its events than other non-music extracurricular activities. Therefore, students should let the club President know as soon as possible when you will be unable to attend scheduled club meetings, and let Ms. Osburn know when you are unable to participate in formal club events. Excuses will only be granted for certain circumstances including work, class

conflicts, emergency events, and illness. Conflicts with social clubs and other non-music clubs will not be excused. See Ms. Osburn for excuse letters which you can submit to your social club officers.

Classroom Etiquette and Policies

Personal Responsibility

It is your responsibility to come prepared for classes and clinical experiences, and be ready to learn. Attendance is critical to gaining the knowledge and skills you will need to succeed in the program. The music faculty expects that you will inform them in advance if you need to miss class or a clinical session for any reason. Our class sizes are small, and an absence may signal the need to cancel or reschedule the class, so please email faculty if you are sick, or need to miss class for another reason. You should know that the Music Therapy Program adheres to the attendance policy established by MUW for all offered courses, and often the attendance policy is more strict. Students are advised to refer to individual course syllabi for each course's requirements.

The AMTA Professional Competency 17, Professional Role/Ethics requires that students and professionals have the following skills:

17.3 Demonstrate dependability: Follow through with all tasks regarding education and professional training.

17.6 Meet deadlines without prompting.

Students may use the computers reserved for them in Poindexter Hall, but do not have access to the department copier and printer, so please print your materials at home or use the McDevitt Computer Center. Ms. Osburn and Dr. Fessenden will not print documents for you from their office printers. All assignments that include multiple pages should already be stapled when delivered to faculty. Using a faculty member's stapler is not professional behavior. Class assignments should only be emailed to faculty with prior permission, based on the individual syllabi information.

Syllabi

All students are responsible for reading and fully understanding the syllabi, written assignments and handouts for each class (this applies to non-MT courses too!). If you are unsure about anything, Ask The Instructor! There are no "stupid" questions. Students are responsible for personal documentation of assignments and due dates given either on the syllabus, or in class. All of the Music Therapy course syllabi will be posted on Canvas. In all of the Music Therapy courses, late assignments will automatically be lowered one letter grade. Assignments over a week late will not be accepted, and students will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

Food

Food is discouraged in Poindexter Hall. However, students are allowed to use the kitchen appliances on the first floor. NO food or drinks are allowed in the Auditorium. Please take extra care to keep our building and classrooms clean, and the supplies, instruments, and books

unblemished. No food is allowed during class times, but feel free to snack (within reason) before we get started. Drinks in closed containers are allowed. You are encouraged to drink lots of water!

Cell Phones

Cell phones should always be turned off or on **Silent** during class and left in students' bags or purses. Do not leave your phone on vibrate, as it can still be heard and cause a disruption especially during class presentations or exams. Students should not use their phones to take pictures of lecture slides or to record lectures. By taking hand-written notes or typing on a computer, course information is better retained in your memory. If you have an emergency situation, please advise your professor and an exception may be made to this phone policy. Students who do not abide by this policy will see a decreased grade for the course.

*Students should also take care to place their smart watches on silent as well during classes and clinical experiences.

Attendance

Attendance is required in all classes and practicum sessions. In addition to attending your classes, you are expected to arrive on time. This is not only so that you can pass your classes, but because prompt and consistent attendance is an essential professional music therapy skill. This is especially important for practicum sessions.

We know that unexpected events can happen and that students also can experience scheduling conflicts. If you know you are going to have to miss class or practicum session, please contact your instructor or supervisor as soon as possible. For unexpected events, please contact us as soon as you are able afterwards. Please see your individual course syllabi regarding the number of absences permitted. If you are absent you are still expected to make up all coursework. It is your responsibility to obtain class notes or information from classmates and contact your instructor or supervisor to submit assignments.

Please see section 7.5 of the Undergraduate Bulletin for more information regarding missed classes.

- Excused absences: Per section 7.5 of the Undergraduate Bulletin, students who miss classes due to excused absences will be able to make up work. Excused absences are permitted for the following reasons: authorized university activities, injury or illness (physical/mental) of the student or dependent, medical conditions related to pregnancy, death of a member of the student's immediate family, legal responsibilities, military service, religious observances, and mandatory scheduled interviews (i.e., grad school, internship). You may be required to submit documentation to support your excused absence.

If you are tardy, please enter the room quietly and take your seat. Class events will not always cease in order to acknowledge your arrival. If faculty members are late, please wait patiently for at least 15 minutes before leaving.

Participation

Participation in class is imperative! Classroom participation will always be evaluated by the music therapy faculty as one aspect of the student's final grade. Participation is defined as active engagement in classroom discussions and music experiences, contributions to the learning environment, and honest engagement in self-evaluation and evaluation of peers, when warranted. Active engagement includes note-taking, participation in discussions, asking questions, etc. It may not always be possible for each student to have input in each and every discussion. However, a pattern of a lack of active engagement is recognizable and will be considered in evaluating each student's level of commitment to the learning process. Students should do their best not to introduce discussion that does not apply to the topic of the class. Students should always come to class prepared to discuss that day's reading assignment. A pattern of ill-preparedness will result in "pop" quizzes and additional written homework assignments.

Professional Communication

Professional communication is expected. It is important that students and instructors establish clear, consistent, and respectful communication, both inside and outside of the classroom. Students should always use proper titles such as Dr., Professor, Ms., etc. unless directed otherwise. Professional communication includes appropriate use of email and telephone. Please reserve use of Ms. Osburn's or Dr. Fessenden's cell number for emergencies only. Texting is not considered an appropriate means of regular communication, and should be used only when initiated by faculty, or for emergencies.

Email Etiquette:

All students are required to maintain and regularly check an MUW email address. This is the address to which all class communication will be sent. Professional communication through email requires careful attention to detail. Remember that you are building important professional relationships even through email. Here are a few guidelines to assist you in maintaining professional correspondence:

1. Maintain appropriate formality: Your professors and supervisors are important professionals in your life as a student. Avoid communicating in a casual tone as you would with a friend. Be polite and respectful. Use proper titles such as Dr., Professor, Ms., etc. unless directed otherwise. In all correspondence use proper grammar, full sentences, and avoid using text message slang, smiley faces, emoji, and abbreviations. Write your email messages like formal business letters, including a greeting and closing. Always type your name at the bottom.

2. Subject line: Always use a subject line. Subject lines should be clear and concise information about the topic contained in the correspondence. If you send email without placing identifying information about the correspondence in the subject line, it may not be read because spam mail often does not have a subject and is immediately deleted. Do not use abbreviations in the subject line. Do not use "?" if you have a question. Briefly explain the focus of your question. Ex: "Question about class assignment".

3. Response time: Respond to your professors and supervisors in a timely fashion. However, do not expect your professors or supervisors to be available for immediate communication outside the typical school day (i.e., weekends and evenings). While your

professors often work in the evening and may respond to urgent email at night (for instance, issues related to practicum the following day), do not expect a response to messages you send in the evening until the next day. If you send an email after 10:00pm, it may not be read by faculty until 9:00 the next morning. If you have a true emergency situation, call your professor on the telephone. A good tip - check your email in the morning to see if any classes have been canceled for the day. Ms. Osburn and Dr. Fessenden will send out an email as soon as they know they will have to cancel class due to an illness or other unexpected happening.

4. Grammar: Again, use full sentences. USE SPELL CHECK and PROOFREAD before clicking the send button.

5. Attachments: All email attachments should be labeled appropriately in order to be accepted and for you to receive full credit for your work. In the attachment label include: Student name and title of document.

Office Hours

All faculty have scheduled office hours during each week to accommodate student needs. Students are asked to observe posted office hours. Availability of faculty consultation beyond these hours should not be assumed. If Ms. Osburn's or Dr. Fessenden's office doors are open outside of office hours, they are available for consultation. Please knock or wait to be greeted before entering. If the door is closed, please wait for office hours, unless there is an emergency. You may also seek consultation with faculty after class, if time and scheduling allow.

Assignments

All assignments are due when specified on each syllabus. They should be turned in at the beginning of class. All written assignments should be typed and stapled. If using specific forms (session plans, etc.) students should re-create the documents on their computer, and input the necessary information. Hand-written documents will not be accepted! Points will be deducted for spelling and grammar errors, missing staples, and anything else that detracts from the professional appearance of the document. Make sure your name is on the first page of all assignments. Any assignment that requires references must follow APA guidelines. Assignments should not be screen shots or photographs from a tablet or cell phone (e.g., sheet music).

Policy for Submitting Late Assignments:

See individual syllabi for the penalties for late assignments. Make-up work is allowed for excused absences. However, if students are ill they should arrange for a class peer to turn in their assignments for them, or email the professor and ask to send the assignment electronically. In the case of an excused absence for scheduled in-class presentations, students should contact the instructor as soon as they know they will miss class. In exceptional cases, if there is a circumstance preventing submission of an assignment on-time, the student must contact the instructor well in advance. Malfunctioning computer equipment is not an acceptable excuse for late assignments. Students can use the MUW computer equipment in McDevitt Hall. Students are encouraged to purchase a jump drive (maybe more than one!) and regularly save important assignments and documents. Any assignment over one week late will not be accepted and students will receive a failing grade for that assignment.

Policy for Submitting Assignments Electronically:

Refer to individual course syllabi for that professor's preferences and instructions.

Advising:

Approximately 1 month before the end of each semester, the university holds formal academic advising and registration for the next semester. Ms. Osburn and Dr. Fessenden will make arrangements for individual consultation with each student and issuance of student RAP numbers. However, students are encouraged to take personal responsibility for knowledge of what courses are required for their major.

Special Accommodations

The University is committed to providing equitable access to learning for all students. The Student Success Center is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities (e.g. physical, sensory, chronic health, learning, attentional, mental health) and arranges for reasonable accommodations to be implemented. It is the responsibility of students requesting accommodations to make an appointment with the Student Support Specialist to review specific needs, participate in the development of an Accommodation Plan by providing appropriate documentation, and discuss with the instructor how the Accommodation Plan will be applied in the course. Accommodations are not retroactive and a new Accommodation Plan must be reviewed, signed and presented to instructors each semester. The Student Support Specialist is located in Reneau Hall, Room 101(B), and may be contacted by phone at 662.329.7138 or email at ada@muw.edu.

Counseling Center

Stress, anxiety, and depression are the three most frequently reported mental health issues experienced by college students. The MUW Counseling Center provides individual and group services to address all of these as well as many other issues you might be experiencing. You can find out about the services provided at <https://www.muw.edu/centers/counseling>. To set up an appointment, please call 329-7748. Take care of your mental health early, before it becomes a crisis. Dr. Fessenden and Ms. Osburn want you to come to them with your struggles and issues, but they cannot serve as a mental health counselor or therapist for you. Seek out the mental health services provided for free by the university.

Academic Honesty

Mississippi University for Women insists on academic honesty. Unless the assignment explicitly is a group project, all of the work in music therapy classes must be your own. The source of all information in any written assignment must be cited properly, including the Internet. APA Style citations are required in writing all reports, not just research papers, so just a listing of references at the end of a paper is not enough. Plagiarism is theft and deceit and will not be tolerated in an academic setting. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment, and a report to the Chief Academic Officer. It is your responsibility to be aware of and abide by the rules governing plagiarism, fraud, and cheating found in the Undergraduate Bulletin under the section "Academic Dishonesty Policy." If you have any questions about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it, please talk with a reference librarian, ask a professor, or refer to a writing handbook. Websites that discuss types of plagiarism and how it can be avoided through evaluation and proper

documentation of sources can also be found for student use. References will be checked! Refer to course syllabi for the W's Academic Integrity Policy.

Writing Center

If you would like to seek help with your writing, the MUW Writing Center is located in Rm 106 of Painter Hall. They are open afternoons Monday-Thursdays. You can also submit questions to muwrites@muw.edu, but they go by the 48-hour rule, meaning that students should not expect a reply before 48 hours after submission, not counting weekends.

Privacy

In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), students must authorize contact between faculty members and their parents/guardians. You will be notified via email and asked to reply in that format or in writing to grant this authorization if your parent/ guardian contacts a faculty member. Because you are adults, you have the right to deny your parents access to your academic record. Faculty will not communicate about your class performance with your parents unless they receive written permission from you.

Title IX

Mississippi University for Women recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. The University is committed to creating an educational and learning environment that is free from discrimination based on sex, including sexual violence (assault, domestic violence, dating violence and gender-based stalking). To learn more about the University's policy on sexual misconduct, how to make a report, or confidential resources, go to www.muw.edu/titleix. The Title IX Coordinator is located in Cochran Hall, Room 405, and may be contacted by phone at 662-241-6083 or email at titleix@muw.edu.

Grievances

Students are strongly encouraged to meet with faculty members if they need help with course content. If questions arise about assignments and/or course grades, students have the freedom to appeal. The MUW Student handbook outlines the steps students should take for an appeal. See the Handbook for the entire policy.

http://bulletin.muw.edu/content.php?catoid=39&navoid=2403#Academic_Grievances

“7.3 ACADEMIC GRIEVANCES A student who wishes to appeal a grade received for a project, paper, course, etc. should first attempt to resolve the issue with the instructor. If an agreement cannot be reached, the student should next appeal to the department chair/program director of the course and then to the Dean/Associate VPAA. Grievances should be brought to the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) only after these preliminary options have been exhausted. The student has only 45 days to appeal the grade in writing. This period begins at the conclusion of the term in which the grade was assigned. If a grievance hearing is required, the process will be initiated by the CAO.”

Practicum

The American Music Therapy Association requires that every student complete a minimum of 1200 hours of clinical training, with at least 15% (180 hours) in pre-internship experiences and at least 75% (900 hours) in internship experiences. Academic institutions may opt to require more than the minimum total number of hours, and internship programs may opt to require more hours than the referring or affiliate academic institution. Most internships are 1040 hours. When a student is unable to demonstrate required exit level-competencies, additional hours of internship may be required of the student by the academic institution in consultation with the internship supervisor.

Sophomore, junior, and senior music therapy majors, and equivalency students who are eligible for music therapy clinical practicum will be assigned to work with clients in either individual or group music therapy sessions for the duration of the semester. Music therapy students may register for the following clinical practicum courses:

MUS 253 Music Therapy Observation (optional, not required for graduation)	1 credit
MUS 353 Clinical Practicum I	1 credit
MUS 354 Clinical Practicum II	1 credit
MUS 453 Clinical Practicum III	1 credit
MUS 454 Clinical Practicum IV	1 credit
MUS 455 Advanced Clinical Practicum (not required for graduation)	1-3 credits

Students may only register for one clinical practicum per semester unless they have received permission from the Director of Music Therapy. In addition, students must pass all sections of the Music Therapy Proficiency Exam (voice, piano, and guitar) before they will be able to take the 400 level music therapy courses and clinical practica.

MUS 253, Music Therapy Observation, is an optional class, and not required for graduation. However, faculty strongly encourage students to take this class before registering for the Practicum I course. It is designed to introduce practicum protocols and documentation to students in a more thorough manner than is presented in other pre-practicum courses.

MUS 455, Advanced Clinical Practicum, is designed to allow students to acquire the total of 180 hours needed for internship eligibility if the total number of hours from the other 4 practicum courses is not sufficient. It is also available for students who are taking extra semesters of study beyond the required amount.

Placement

Practicum placements provide supervised opportunities for hands-on experiences with clients in music therapy sessions. Practicum experiences are designed to assist you in learning to assess, plan, and implement objective-based music therapy interventions with clients having a variety of emotional, physical, social, and cognitive needs. Students will receive experience in both individual and group sessions with both child and adult clientele. Students will be expected to place priority on the scheduling of practicum sessions, adapting your schedule as needed to accommodate available placement options. Students are required to successfully pass and

complete each consecutive practicum before advancing to the next class. Refer to the Clinical Practicum Handbook for specific details. Students initially receive this manual upon enrollment in MUS 353, Clinical Practicum I or MUS 253, Music Therapy Observation, but it is also included with each practicum course syllabi.

Background Checks and Immunizations: Some clinical settings may require a criminal background check, drug screen, and/or proof of immunizations before beginning sessions. Students will be advised of these at the start of the semester. If students refuse or fail these screenings, other clinical settings may be offered, but are not guaranteed. Please speak with the instructor if you have concerns about these processes.

All students are required to complete the “Minors on Campus” training provided by the University every year.

Cell Phones

Students are encouraged not to take their cell phones into clinical sessions. Students should wear a watch to each session, and not depend on the phone to check the time. If using a phone to play recordings, the phone should be set on “airplane mode” or other setting that does not allow calls or notifications to be received. Students with smart watches must also take care to set them on silent during sessions. Students may not have access to WiFi at clinical facilities, so any recordings needed for sessions should either be downloaded to the phone, CD, or jumpdrive and/or played with an alternate player. Although there are portable speakers available for student use, students are encouraged to invest in an inexpensive device of their own. Practicum session grades will be severely affected if a student’s phone rings during a session, and/or if they answer the phone. Your entire focus should be on the client.

Clinical Internship

Once students have finished all course work, they are required to complete an internship (MUS 460) which is typically 6 months or 1040 hours. There are two options for internship: National Roster and University Affiliated.

National Roster Internships have been pre-approved by AMTA. Students are able to choose from nearly 200 internships around the country. A current listing can be found at the AMTA website (www.musictherapy.org) under the “Education and Careers” link. There is an application and selection process that must be followed.

University Affiliated Internships are tailored to the student’s specific needs. They are based on individual contracts between the University, the Internship site, and the student. This option may be better suited to students who need, for various reasons, to stay in an area of the country where there are few, if any, internship opportunities. There is an application and selection process for these internships as well.

**** Students must get approval from both faculty members before applying to a University Affiliated Internship. These must be vetted before students will be allowed to apply.**

There are guidelines which are provided in detail on the AMTA Website under the “Education and Careers” link. A thorough investigation of internship application processes and opportunities will be done as part of MUS 303 Professional Skills, but students are encouraged to begin looking at internship options early in their college life. Although faculty will assist with some details, it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to secure an internship position through application, interview, and audition.

Every internship facility is different. Some will provide stipends, housing or meals, others will not. Some will require you to provide your own transportation to and from clinical sites, other won’t. Internships usually have pre-determined starting dates, and each may be different. Some starting dates may be negotiable, but others will be fixed. Students are encouraged to begin an internship as soon after the end of their last semester of coursework as possible. You are eligible for graduation from MUW at the completion of the internship. If an internship ends before December, students can graduate then. If, however, the internship carries over into the next semester, students will be eligible for May or August graduation. Students register for the course MUS 460, during the semester they begin the training, and MUS 461 in the semester they will complete the internship experience.

Students can have only four (4) internship applications active at one time. When students accept an internship placement, it is their responsibility to inform the other sites they have applied to and ask to de-activate the application. If a student receives notification they were not accepted to an internship, they can immediately submit an application to another site.

Letters of Recommendation

Students are encouraged to ask faculty for letters of eligibility and recommendation for internship applications. Such requests MUST be in written form (email), include all the contact information for the internship director, and any special information that is requested to be included in the letter. Students should request such letters well in advance of any due date. Please give faculty members 2 weeks notice.

Delayed Internship

Students are encouraged to begin an internship as quickly after their last semester of coursework as possible. However, there are many reasons why the start of an internship may be delayed. Faculty are available to assist students in securing an intern position even after coursework has been completed and students may have left campus. The same guidelines for recommendation requests apply throughout a student’s search for internship placement.

Students who do not begin an internship within 18 months (3 full semesters) of the completion of on-campus coursework will be required to complete the course MUS 455, Advanced Clinical Practicum before faculty can continue to recommend the student for internships. This requirement is to ensure that the student continues to have appropriate clinical and functional music skills needed for a successful internship experience.

Certification Board for Music Therapists

Once you have completed an internship, and graduated, you must take an exam to become board certified which is the credential expected when hiring music therapists. The credential Music Therapist-Board Certified (MT-BC) is granted by the Certification Board of Music Therapists (CBMT) to identify music therapists who have demonstrated the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to practice at the current level of the profession. The purpose of board certification in music therapy is to provide an objective national standard that can be used as a measure of professionalism by interested agencies, groups and individuals. Students are strongly encouraged to take the BC Exam as soon after graduation as possible to aid in retention of information and knowledge.

The CBMT administers a computer-given multiple choice, objective examination, based on a nationwide music therapy job analysis that is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect current clinical practice. Once Board Certified, a Music Therapist must re-certify every five years. The purpose of re-certification is to encourage the MT-BC to maintain skills and to continue professional growth and development. New certificants will receive a packet from CBMT that thoroughly explains the re-certification process. The Board Certification program is accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

The CBMT is an autonomous certifying agency that grants recognition to music therapists who have met predetermined CBMT standards and who continue to engage in professional growth and development through the CBMT Recertification Program. Although it is separate from AMTA, the two agencies maintain very close ties and work together to maintain high standards. You can access more information about CBMT on their website www.cbmt.org

Beginning in January of 2026, Music Therapists working in Mississippi will be required to have the Board Certification and be licensed by the State of Mississippi.

American Music Therapy Association

All Music Therapy students are strongly encouraged to become members of the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA). Student membership in AMTA is \$60 for a calendar year (Jan-Dec) and entitles you to access the Journal of Music Therapy, Music Therapy Perspectives and the online newsletter, Music Therapy Matters. It also gives you access to the “Members Only” section of the AMTA website and the Southeastern Region of AMTA’s (SER-AMTA) website. It is strongly recommended that you join AMTA as a student and become involved in the student organization AMTAS on the regional and national level. To join and see the many other benefits of membership, visit www.musictherapy.org. One of the best advantages that membership provides is discounted fees for national and regional conferences, as well as discounted prices on AMTA publications, many of which are used in MUW courses.

Conferences and Events

Professional conferences are important events in both a student's and professional's career. It is an opportunity to learn from therapists around the world, acquire new ideas for clinical interventions, learn new music techniques, meet and mingle with textbook authors, make peer contacts, buy fun instruments and supplies, see new sites, eat new foods, and possibly win prizes!

Food for thought: The more students who attend conferences, the less expensive it is for everyone, as hotel room and transportation costs can be split between many people. At times, there may be financial assistance available from the Department of Music, but usually students will be expected to fund their own travel.

Coastal Harmony Student Music Therapy Conference, September 20, 2025 And February 21, 2026. Coastal Harmony, a Music Therapy Private Practice in Gautier, MS owned by one of our MUW Alumni Katlin Ross, is hosting an Online Student Conference. Registered attendees can watch as many sessions live as they want, or they may wait to view them at a later time. Recordings will be available within 48 hours after the completion of the conference, and they will remain available for attendees to view after the conference ends. Sign-up information will be provided as the date gets closer. This is an optional event for MUW students. Early Bird rate is only \$15!

Baddour Center Music Therapy Student Conference

The Baddour Center in Senatobia, Mississippi sponsors a student conference on a Friday afternoon and Saturday in the Spring Semester. This conference will provide breakout sessions with various presentation options throughout the weekend. Students will have networking opportunities with fellow music therapy students and professionals from the Mid-South area. **All students are required to attend.** More details to come...

Music Therapy Clinical Forum

Every semester Senior music therapy students in practicum courses present a case study of their current clients in a lecture/recital format. Juniors present intervention demonstrations. This is a formal Department of Music event and attendance is required of all music therapy majors.

AMTA National Conference

The AMTA National Conference is held every year in the fall. Students are strongly encouraged to attend, but are responsible for providing their own funding. The Department of Music has a fund for students to access to reimburse conference registration. See Jennifer Dowdy in the office for the forms. Students who are members of AMTA will receive a discounted rate for conference registration. Students should go to at least 1 National Conference before graduation. If a national conference is within 5-6 hours driving distance, all MT Students will be expected to go.

Since 2020, AMTA has held a virtual conference, the AMTA Symposium. Students are encouraged to participate, but are not required to do so. The registration cost is FREE!

2025 National AMTA Symposium - September 14-17. <https://amta-u.thinkific.com/>

Southeastern Region of AMTA Conference

Mississippi is part of the Southeastern Region of AMTA. Other states included are: Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Louisiana, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, and North Carolina, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. We are one of the largest regions in AMTA. The SER Conferences are held in the spring. The regional conference usually has specific sessions and social activities for students, so students are encouraged to attend as many regional conferences as possible. They are also much less expensive than typical in-person national conferences, and students can also get reimbursement from the Department of Music. If a regional conference is within 5-6 hours driving distance, all MT Students will be expected to go.

2026 SER-AMTA Conference – Charlotte, NC, March 20-22