

# MUSIC at MSU DENVER

## Music Theory Placement Exam Levels

The Music Theory Placement Exam is for students who have taken formal music theory training either through college-level classes (including AP Music Theory) or private instruction and wish to place into Music Theory I or higher. Transfer students with prior music theory credits are required to take the Music Theory Placement Exam before those credits can be applied to their degree. Students who do not test into Music Theory I or higher will be required to take MUS 1010 Essential Music Theory Skills.

To help determine which level of theory placement is best for you, refer to the guidelines below. Students are highly encouraged to meet with a [Music Department Intake Advisor](#) prior to scheduling a Music Theory Placement Exam to help determine the most suitable level of theory placement.

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### What You Need to Know to Test into Music Theory I

#### Written Assessment:

- Identify and notate major key signatures on the staff
- Identify and notate minor key signatures on the staff
- Identify and notate various intervals, i.e., P4, m3, m7, A6, etc.
- Know time signatures/rhythmic note values, including beat divisions and counting syllables
- Identify and notate major scales on the staff
- Identify and notate all forms of minor scales, i.e., natural, harmonic, and melodic
- Identify and notate all forms of triads, i.e., major, minor, augmented, and diminished
- Identify and notate all inversions of triads, i.e., root position, first inversion, second inversion

#### Ear Training and Sightsinging Assessment:

- Intervals (size and quality)
- Rhythmic dictation
- Melodic dictation
- Triads
- Sightsing simple diatonic melody

If the placement exam to test into Music Theory I is not passed, the student must register for MUS 1010 Essential Music Theory Skills. If the student is already registered for Music Theory I, Theory Lab I, or Class Piano I, these courses must be dropped.

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### What You Need to Know to Test into Music Theory II

#### Written Assessment:

- All the requirements for Theory I Placement plus...
- Roman numeral analysis using all diatonic triads with inversion symbols
- Four-voice part writing

#### Ear Training and Sightsinging Assessment:

- All the requirements for Theory I Placement plus...
- Rhythmic dictation up to four measures
- Melodic dictation up to four measures
- Harmonic dictation using all diatonic triads
- Sightsing melodies that outline diatonic triads

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### What You Need to Know to Test into Music Theory III

#### Written Assessment:

- All the requirements for Theory I and II Placement plus...
- Knowledge of cadences
- Knowledge of non-chord tones
- Knowledge of diatonic seventh chords
- Knowledge of secondary dominants

#### Ear Training and Sightsinging Assessment:

- All the requirements for Theory I and II Placement plus...
  - Rhythmic dictation longer than four measures
  - Melodic dictation longer than four measures
  - Harmonic dictation using sevenths and possibly a secondary dominant
  - Sightsing longer melodies that may include minor keys and/or chromatic alterations
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### What You Need to Know to Test into Music Theory IV

#### Written Assessment:

- All the requirements for Theory I-III Placement plus...
- Knowledge of secondary leading tones
- Knowledge of all chromatic harmony including borrowed chords
- Knowledge of Neapolitan, augmented sixths, and modulation

#### Ear Training and Sightsinging Assessment:

- All the requirements for Theory I-III Placement plus...
  - Longer dictations using elements of chromatic harmony
  - Sightsing melodies with chromatic alterations
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### What You Need to Know to Test Out of Music Theory I-IV

#### Written Assessment:

- All the requirements for Theory I-IV Placement plus...
- Knowledge of serialism
- Knowledge of modes
- Knowledge of set theory

#### Ear Training and Sightsinging Assessment:

- All the requirements for Theory I-IV Placement plus...
- Sightsing with lots of chromatics and outlined seventh and ninth chords