

Updated August 2026

VOICE DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK

Carnegie Mellon University, College of Fine Arts

Welcome to Carnegie Mellon! We, your faculty, are so pleased to have such fine singers enroll at our school each year, and we expect you all to make strong musical and academic progress through the course of your studies with us. The School of Music seeks to graduate every student accepted into its program. Therefore, much care is given to the selection process. Many of our alumni of the School of Music are currently performing with orchestras and opera companies around the world, as well as performing on Broadway. We pride ourselves on preparing each of our students for professional careers in opera and on the concert stage.

This handbook has been created specifically for the students within our prestigious voice department, to help answer questions regarding departmental policies, juries, recitals, coachings, and more. Remember, you're responsible for knowing what's in this handbook and using what applies to you. Revisions made during the academic year will be implemented by updating the online version of this document at [Voice Department Policies - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](https://www.cmu.edu/music/department/policies). Meanwhile, please keep abreast of the goings-on within the voice department and the School of Music at large by:

- Reading your email. Each week, you will receive a departmental email with news about upcoming events, auditions, seminars, and all things 'vocal.'
- For more information on Production check out [Opera - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](https://www.cmu.edu/music/department/production)
- Check out our social media and online links: [Carnegie Mellon University School of Music - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University](https://www.cmu.edu/music/school) and our Instagram page at https://www.instagram.com/cmumusic?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet&igsh=ZDNlZDc0MzIxNw==

And now, without further ado, here is your Voice Department Faculty:

Jennifer Aylmer, Associate Professor of Voice, soprano

Marianne Cornetti, Artist Lecturer in Voice, mezzo soprano

Dr. Jocelyn Dueck, Associate Professor in Collaborative Piano and Vocal Coaching

Sari Gruber, Assistant Teaching Professor in Voice, soprano

Roseanna Irwin, Associate Teaching Professor of Vocal Coaching and Accompanying

Crystal Manich, Director of Opera Studies

Billie Jo Miller, Special Faculty in Collaborative Piano and Vocal Coaching

Maria Spacagna, Associate Professor of Voice, soprano

Daniel Teadt, Associate Teaching Professor of Voice, baritone

Mark Trawka, Director of Choirs

William Woodard, Assistant Teaching Professor of Collaborative Piano and Vocal Coaching

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Lessons

At the CFA, Major Studio Lessons are given weekly and are **50 minutes in length**. This structure is intentional, providing a **10-minute period between classes** to allow students time to travel between buildings and arrive promptly at their next lesson or class. Lessons are generally structured in two parts: the first 30 minutes are with your studio instructor alone, and then a pianist joins you for the last 20 minutes of your lesson, facilitating work on repertoire. Lessons are accompanied by collaborative student pianists and faculty, as assigned.

Private Studio Attendance

Private studio lessons are exactly that – private! An unexpected absence leaves the professor with a wasted hour. It is, therefore, NEVER acceptable to miss a lesson without contacting the professor as far in advance as possible. Emergencies will count as excuses only when they are clearly emergencies. Unexcused absences are lost opportunities which **do not need to be rescheduled** by the teachers. Such absences will adversely affect the students' grades (please check your studio syllabus).

Change of studio teacher

The relationship between you and your studio teacher is crucial. Ordinarily, the teacher and student will work together throughout the student's residence in the School of Music.

On the rare occasion when a student wishes to make a change, there is a strict policy for the order in which such a change is requested. Each step below must be completed with a signature obtained before the next step in the process:

- a. Discuss your request with the Head of the School of Music if the change will be between school years. Requests for change between the semesters of a school year, especially during the freshman school year, may only be approved based on individual emergency circumstances.
- b. Discuss your request with your present studio teacher. Failure to do so may jeopardize the student's request for a studio change.
- c. Fill out a Studio Preference Form with up to 3 teacher preferences and return it to the Director of Recruitment & Admissions. Requests will be processed after May 1 (if the change is between school years)
- d. Submit this petition to the Head of the School of Music.

A request for change of studio teacher for the following fall semester is finalized after the end of the preceding spring semester; it may not be possible to honor a request which is submitted later than May. Because space **MUST** be available on the proposed new studio teacher's roster to be granted a place in that studio, it is recommended that all students petitioning to change studios **ALSO** fill out a "Studio Preference Form" in Kate Ganczarz's office.

NOTE: It is considered unethical to study voice with more than one teacher concurrently. It is important for singers to build a technical foundation without 'too many cooks in the kitchen.' We faculty will not poach students from other studios. *Voice students **MUST NOT** approach other teachers for possible studio availability or sample lessons*, regardless of the circumstance.

Vocal Studio Performance Class

“Seminar”

Voice seminar is considered an integral part of the studio training. (Similar seminars exist in many other instrumental and composition studios.) Although this class is not taken for credit, it is required of all undergraduate and graduate voice performance majors, BXA students taking major lessons, and those graduate students with a concentration in voice. Seminar is a hybrid type of class, where performance meets master class (via written critique from voice faculty). Students experience performing before their peers, while those in the audience are expected to behave in a supportive and respectful manner, in a sense, practicing acceptable concert etiquette. Most seminars are open to any music majors, visiting parents/students, teachers, etc.

Singers are assigned to sing for Seminar on specific weeks, grouped by coaching studio. When participating in Seminar, **singers are required to fill out 7 repertoire forms** – one per voice faculty member. Forms can be found on Mezzanine level of CFA, just outside room 155. Because singers are gaining valuable experience walking onto and performing on a stage, appropriate dress is REQUIRED. If you have a question as to whether your outfit is appropriate for a seminar performance, it likely isn't. Here are a few suggestions:

Dresses and Skirts:

Dresses and skirts must be below, *not above* the knee. Why? You are singing on a raised stage, knees being eye-level with your audience. Doing a simple turn on stage in a mini skirt could result in disaster. In other words, what you see in the mirror is very different from what an audience sees: they are looking UP. Necklines should be considered as well. Choose a neckline that is flattering but not distracting. Consider avoiding evening wear during a day-time seminar.

Suit or no suit:

In performance, you will never go wrong wearing an elegant, tailored suit. These days, auditions are a bit more relaxed, and singers may opt to wear a pants + dress shirt/sweater or skirt + dress shirt/sweater combination in lieu of a suit. Keep in mind:

- If the audience can see your belt loops (i.e. wearing a dress shirt without a jacket or wearing a sports coat open) you **MUST** wear a belt.
- If you ask yourself, “Should I iron these pants before walking on stage?” – the answer is YES. Always be mindful of ironing, fit, and length of dress pants.
- Consider avoiding evening wear during a day-time seminar
- Jeans, shorts, and athletic wear are **NOT** permitted!

Shoes:

The stage can be very slippery. Choose footwear that provides ease of movement, support, as well as a polished look. Avoid stiletto-heeled shoes, for safety as well as posture-related issues pertaining to singing. No beat up sneakers, please!

Attendance and Participation:

You may not have more than one absence from seminar. Two late arrivals equal one absence, so be mindful of your time. If you are ill/unable to sing, you must give at least 24 hours' notice. Failure to be in attendance or give appropriate notice may result in your failing Voice Seminar.

Coaching

At Carnegie Mellon, singers are given the unique opportunity to coach with faculty pianists on a weekly basis. All undergraduates receive weekly 25-minute coachings with an assigned faculty pianist, while graduate and ASM students receive 50-minute coachings weekly. It is your responsibility to provide music for your coach and (if different) your lesson pianist.

Working with a coach differs slightly from working with a voice teacher but is no less important! Your voice teacher, especially during your formative years, is primarily concerned with healthy voice production, appropriate repertoire assignment, and other technical aspects of your instrument. While coaching does not address technical matters of voice production, it DOES touch on

- Diction
- Performance practice and style
- Rhythm
- Interpretation and deeper understanding of the poetry you are singing, and more!

Before you go to your coaching, it is expected that you will have *already learned your notes and rhythms* in the PRACTICE ROOM. A coach may point out discrepancies in intonation, or rhythmic mistakes, but **it is NOT the job of a coach to:**

- Teach you a piece of music from scratch. A singer may need help in the beginning stages of a song or aria, simply by being able to hear the accompaniment being played. However, it is expected of all voice majors that after an initial coaching on a song or aria, they will practice it *on their own* before taking it back to the coach the following week. Progress is expected.
- Record the accompaniment, or solo vocal line, of any given piece of music. Students are encouraged to record any or all complete coaching sessions, but a coach is not a karaoke machine and should not be treated as such.

Please note: Coaches can dismiss students from coaching if students consistently come ill-prepared or showing no concerted effort from one week to the next. Grades in coaching will directly reflect the level of preparation students bring to their coaching.

Coach Assignment:

Just like the studio teacher-student relationship, the relationship between coach and singer is of utmost importance. Voice majors are carefully matched with faculty pianists based on what we feel would best benefit the student's temperament, skill level, musical compatibility, etc.... This pairing is decided at the end of the spring semester, by the larger voice faculty (teachers and faculty pianists, alike).

Recordings:

The CFA is equipped with a state-of-the-art recording facility, which students are encouraged to take advantage of! Students may find more information at [Recording Services - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](https://www.cmu.edu/music/recording-services/). Faculty pianists set their own rates for recording services (\$80/hour in 2026-27). Student pianists set their rates in consultation with their primary teacher. Because a booked session is typically 2 hours in length, students may want to double up with the same pianist, to save some money and rehearsal time.

Productions

Carnegie Mellon stands apart from most American universities in many ways, but especially regarding the performance opportunities afforded to our Vocal Performance students. In addition to opera scenes, choir concerts, etc. our program produces three fully staged, orchestra-accompanied productions per year, cast from among the singers at the CFA. Occasionally, one of the productions is comprised of operatic scenes, semi-staged with full orchestra, to provide more varied performance opportunities for our students. Undergraduates are required to take 24 units of "Production: Performance," while graduate students are required to register for 12 units of "Performance Electives" which may include "Production". The Opera page with general information and syllabi can be found here: [Opera - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](https://www.cmu.edu/music/opera/).

Casting:

To be cast in the School of Music Productions, singers must be students in good standing, studying with a Major Voice Teacher at the CFA, and currently working with a faculty coach within the School of Music. AMS and BXA students may on rare occasion be considered for roles in productions, but only if the student's curriculum is designed to include production and does not deprive a voice major of the opportunity to be cast. Students who are enrolled in the BXA program may also participate in Production with special permission in a "non-role" capacity; while BXA students are not eligible to be stage managers, they may be considered as Crew, only as needed on a show-by-show basis.

Crew:

All 1st year undergraduate voice majors are required to take and complete Crew within their first year. Please see [Syllabus Fall 26-27 Production Crew class](#) for more information.

Musical Preparation for Opera:

In the two weeks prior to any given opera production, students are either assigned individual/ensemble coaching time or are required to sign up for coachings on their respective roles in the productions. These rehearsals are built into the master calendar for the year and can be viewed at [Production Information - 2026-2027 Season - CMU Drama](#) with all three School of Music opera production links listed on the left side.

Before the coaching process begins, every student is required to have all notes, rhythms, words, and a word-for-word translation with IPA fully learned. Please read the [Coaching Syllabus](#), which outlines the precise requirements for your grade level. If the opera coach determines that a student is not adequately prepared, the coach has the right to stop the coaching session and make further recommendations to the voice faculty. Lack of preparation at any point during the coaching process may result in dismissal from the cast, with forfeiture of all Production credits.

Absences:

Any absence during Opera Production MUST be pre-approved by the Director of Opera Studies. Please see the Production syllabus for more information about release requests and a link to the release form.

Production Content:

In this art form, it is not uncommon to encounter sexually and/or politically provocative content within libretti or in the staging of certain productions. For this reason, the voice department has a required Audition Form (see p. 16) for all singers, which assists us in knowing how we can best accommodate students wishing to abstain from using certain language, wearing immodest costumes, or participating in intimate staging. Additionally, the voice department will provide an Intimacy Coordinator for productions with sensitive content.

Discriminatory Harassment

(Taken from CMU's "The Word": [The Word: Student Handbook - The Word - Student Handbook - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](#))

"Carnegie Mellon is firmly committed to intellectual honesty, freedom of inquiry and expression, and respect for the dignity of everyone. Acts of discriminatory harassment or intimidation by a student directed toward any member of the community are inconsistent with this commitment and will not be tolerated. Consistent with the University's Statement of Assurance, prohibited acts include harassment and intimidation motivated by discriminatory intent based on race, color, national origin, birth sex, gender identity, handicap or disability, age, sexual orientation, religion, creed, ancestry, belief, veteran status, or genetic information. Any such harassment or intimidation of or by a student should be referred to the dean of students or designee for resolution."

If students experience discomfort as a result of harassment, assault, or other illegal activity, the university's Title IX Office must be contacted immediately.

Taken from www.cmu.edu/title-ix/:

"The Office of Title IX Initiatives is dedicated to promoting gender equality at Carnegie Mellon University, which included coordinating the University's efforts to prevent and effectively respond to all forms of gender discrimination (including gender identity discrimination) and sexual misconduct impacting community members, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating and domestic violence, and stalking"

Accommodations

If you have a disability and have an accommodations letter from the Disability Resources office, our faculty will work with you to ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided. If you suspect that you may have a disability and would benefit from accommodations but are not yet registered with the Office of Disability Resources, please contact them at access@andrew.cmu.edu

Please note that accommodations do not carry over from one semester to the next, nor are they retroactive within a semester or year. Please plan accordingly to ensure your accommodation is in place as early as possible.

Student Wellness

It is more important than ever before to take care of yourself. Forgive yourself when things do not go well and try your best to maintain a healthy lifestyle this semester by eating well, exercising, avoiding drugs and alcohol, getting enough sleep, and taking some time to relax. Not only will this help you to be a better singer and musician, but adopting positive behaviors will help you cope better with the stresses of being a student.

There are many helpful resources available on campus; an important part of the college experience is learning how to navigate our website for valuable information. We are here to assist you in any way we can.

If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal or in danger of self-harm, call someone immediately, day or night:

Counseling and Psychological Services (CaPS): [412-268-2922](tel:412-268-2922) and <http://www.cmu.edu/counseling/>.

Re:solve Crisis Network: [888-796-8226](tel:888-796-8226)

If the situation is life threatening, call the police

On campus: CMU Police: [412-268-2323](tel:412-268-2323)

Off campus: 911

Guidelines for Voice Faculty

Missed Lessons:

Any lessons canceled by the teacher for any reason will be made up. However, it is important to note that teachers are NOT required to make up lessons missed because of student illness, university days off ("Democracy Day" for example), or other absences. Missed lessons due to extra choir rehearsals will be made up. Make-up lessons due to teacher absence must be scheduled in a way that fits the student's schedule and does not penalize the student academically or financially.

Faculty who must be absent from lessons for a week or more are required to notify the department chair or school head, and make necessary arrangements to reschedule missed lessons, either before or after the anticipated absence. Teachers and students may opt to utilize zoom for lessons, but only if the teacher's absence is extensive (due to illness, out-of-town gig, etc.), and only if permission to do so is granted by the School Head. Online lessons are ONLY to be used in this type of emergency circumstance and may only be given if both teacher and student agree.

Required Attendance:

Major Voice Teachers must be present for degree recitals, seminar performances, and end-of-semester juries of their students.

VOICE CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS:

Seminar, Juries, Recitals

First Year Voice Majors:

Emphasis is on basic vocal technique and the sung Italian and English languages. Repertoire is selected by the studio teacher, and the assignment of operatic arias will be limited during the Freshmen year.

Minimum Repertoire Requirements:

SIX memorized and performance-ready selections per semester: three selections to be performed in seminar, and three selections to be presented at Juries. Songs/Arias sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at the Jury without special permission from the studio teacher.

Sophomore Voice Majors:

Study of a second foreign language, German, is added. Emphasis during Sophomore year will be on German repertoire (Lieder), and the continued study of the Italian and English repertoire.

Minimum Repertoire Requirements. FALL semester:

EIGHT memorized and performance-ready selections: three selections to be performed in seminar, and five selections to be presented at Fall Juries. Songs/Arias sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at the Jury without special permission from the studio teacher.

Minimum Repertoire Requirements. SPRING semester:

NINE memorized and performance-ready selections: three selections to be performed in seminar, and six selections to be presented at SOPHOMORE REVIEW. Songs/Arias sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at Sophomore Review without special permission from the studio teacher.

Each year the Chair will review required elements for Sophomore Review. Please see the syllabus for more information.

Junior Voice Majors:

Study of a third foreign language, French, is added. Emphasis during the Junior year will be on the French repertoire (Chansons, Mélodies), the continued study of the Italian, German and English repertoire, and a new focus on operatic arias to be assigned at the discretion of the studio teacher.

Minimum Repertoire Requirements:

EIGHT memorized and performance-ready selections per semester: three selections to be performed in seminar, and five songs to be presented at Juries. Songs/Arias sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at the Jury without special permission from the studio teacher.

Junior Recital:

Junior voice majors will sing a solo recital with a duration of 25-30 minutes (musical timings, not including pausing in between sets), focusing on English and at least two of the following languages: Italian, German, or French. Recital repertoire should reflect the course of study to date, and may include Baroque, Classical, 18-20th century and/or contemporary composers (repertoire written after 1975). Standard operatic arias and musical theater selections are not considered acceptable recital repertoire at this juncture. Singers giving a recital do not need to sing a jury the same semester.

Recital repertoire may be offered in seminar or during juries, however: additional repertoire, at the discretion of the studio teacher, is encouraged for voice seminar, juries, and practice within the studio.

- Students are encouraged, whenever possible, to present joint recitals in groups of two or three. Because Junior recitals are only 25-30 minutes long, and are presented jointly, encores are discouraged.
- If the student has met the minimum time requirements stated above for the recital, the remaining available time may be used to sing repertoire of other styles and genres, with the approval of the studio teacher.
- It is understood that, except for chamber music requiring more than one accompanying instrument, the recital will be performed from memory.
- If a student fails his/her Junior recital, a Recital Hearing may be recommended, taking place during Jury week of the semester in which the Junior recital took place. Students who fail may not register for their Senior recital until a "Pass" has been granted by the Recital Hearing panel.

Rescheduling a recital does not reset performance expectations or evaluation standards. Please refer to individual studio syllabi for more information.

Senior Voice Majors:

Seniors will continue to add repertoire in all four languages and will also be actively preparing repertoire for graduate school auditions, if the studio teacher feels this is the appropriate path for their individual students.

Minimum Repertoire Requirements:

EIGHT memorized and performance-ready selections per semester: three selections to be performed in seminar, and five songs to be presented at Juries. Songs/Arias sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at the Jury without special permission from the studio teacher. Singers giving a recital do not need to sing a jury the same semester.

Senior Recital:

Senior voice majors will also sing a solo recital with a duration of 50 minutes (musical timings, not including pausing in between sets), focusing on English, Italian, German and French. This repertoire will be chosen in conjunction with the studio teacher. If the student has met the minimum time/language required elements stated above, the remaining available time may be used to sing repertoire of other styles and genres, with the approval of the studio teacher. It is understood that, except for chamber music requiring more than one accompanying instrument, the recital will be performed from memory.

- A 10 to 12 minute intermission is encouraged for Senior recitals
- The studio teacher retains the right to veto any repertoire deemed inappropriate for individual students (whether based on pedagogical reasons, content, or other)
- In the case of student composers, the completed work must be submitted at least 6 weeks before the recital date
- If a student wishes to petition for an exception to any of the above, a written letter must be submitted to the studio teacher 6 weeks before the scheduled recital and must be approved by the studio teacher and the School Head.
- If a student fails his/her Senior recital, a Recital Hearing may be recommended, taking place during Jury week of the semester in which the Senior recital took place.

Rescheduling a recital does not reset performance expectations or evaluation standards. Please refer to individual studio syllabi for more information.

Graduate Voice Majors:

The primary goals for graduate voice majors are to prepare vocally and mentally to enter the highly competitive music world as a young artist by working to advance their technical understanding of their instruments, to delve deeper into both song and operatic repertoire, and to build vocal stamina and confidence.

Minimum Repertoire Requirements:

Minimum of three selections to be performed in seminar (2 in seminar, 1 in studio class), and 15 minutes of music to be presented at Juries. Jury repertoire must include an aria from an oratorio as well as an aria from an opera. Songs sung in seminar may NOT be repeated at the Jury without special permission from the studio teacher. Singers giving a recital do not need to sing a jury the same semester. Recital repertoire may be offered in seminar or during juries; however, the performance of additional repertoire is encouraged for voice seminar, juries, and practice within the studio at the discretion of the studio teacher,

Graduate Voice Recital:

Graduate voice majors must sing a solo “lecture” recital with at least 50 minutes (musical timings, not including pauses in between sets), focusing on repertoire chosen in conjunction with the studio teacher. Repertoire may include songs, secular cantatas, and chamber music in Italian, German, French, English, and/or other foreign languages. The programming of operatic or oratorio arias is discouraged, unless there is a strong (thematic, historical, linguistic, or dramatic) argument for including it on the recital. Depending on the focus of the program, fewer languages may be considered appropriate (if for example, half the program were dedicated to an extended song cycle or opus). It is understood that, with the exception of chamber music requiring more than one accompanying instrument, the recital will be performed from memory.

Comprehensive Review is tied to the students’ “lecture” recital and must be submitted in order to graduate. Students may find more information regarding the required elements at: <http://music.cmu.edu/pages/insidemusic-graduate-curricula-and-information>

Excerpts from students’ comprehensive review may be included as program notes for the lecture recital.

Rescheduling a recital does not reset performance expectations or evaluation standards. Please refer to individual studio syllabi for more information.

Additional Requirements in Performance:

Voice graduate students at CMU are required to take “Performance” (18 units), and include performances where you are appearing in a public performance as “soloist.” These opportunities may be a CMU-sponsored event (as winner of the Philharmonic Soloist Competition, or soloist in a CMU choir oratorio, etc...), your required Lecture-Recital or other recital, or other professional organization (Pittsburgh Opera, etc...).

“Performance” units are separate from your “Performance Electives” (12 units) which encompass performances in CMU-productions, Opera Workshop/Scenes (Spring), or other independently produced performance, taking place under the supervision of a studio teacher, acting teacher, or other faculty advisor.

For additional required elements of your master’s degree, including information on *Outreach Performances, please visit [Current Students - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](https://www.cmu.edu/music/current-students) or speak with your graduate advisor.

Recital Procedures

Below are the procedures for putting on your undergraduate or graduate degree recital:

1. Planning:

Please check [Recitals - School of Music - Carnegie Mellon University \(cmu.edu\)](https://www.cmu.edu/music/recitals) for official procedures. You are required to confirm possible recital dates with your teacher, coach, and pianist BEFORE submitting your recital request. Due to venue availability, students are not guaranteed their preferred date/time, so it is important to discuss a few options with your team ahead of your eligibility window.

2. Scheduling:

An email to all students and faculty will be sent sometime during the early fall semester, with details on when students may request recitals. Please plan on attending the Recital Planning Convocation session in early September.

3. Dress rehearsals:

Dress rehearsals may be scheduled for up to 8 weeks prior to the recital date. Those students performing recitals during the fall semester should schedule their dress rehearsal at their initial scheduling appointment. Please consult with your teacher and pianist before scheduling dress rehearsals. It is recommended that students reserve at least 90 minutes of time for their dress rehearsals.

4. **Publicize your recital:**

The Marketing and Communications office of the School of Music can accept your programs at any time after your recital date and time is scheduled. The Office of Marketing and Communications advises a two-week minimum for submitting all materials. Be sure to include location, date, and time on all materials you choose to promote your program!

Grading

The studio grade reflects both talent and effort. To receive an “A”, you must have a consistent record of hard work, have made substantial progress during the semester, and be performing in juries, convocations and/or recitals at a very high level of proficiency in comparison to your particular level of conservatory training. A student should not receive an “A” just because he/she works hard; nor will a student receive an “A” just because he/she has native ability.

For all required Junior, Senior and Graduate Recitals, students must register to receive a grade, which is separate from the studio grade.

The following scale reflects what each grade means for undergraduate students:

A	4.0	Excellent
B	3.0	Good
C	2.0	Satisfactory/Average
D-	1.0	Passing
R	0.0	Failing
W		Withdrawal
I		Incomplete

The following scale reflects what each grade means for graduate students:

A+	4.33	
A	4.0	Excellent
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.0	Good
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.0	Satisfactory/Average
C-	1.67	
D+	1.33	
D-	1.0	Passing
R	0.0	Failing
W		Withdrawal
I		Incomplete

Studio is the heart of your professional training as a musician. Since “Average” playing or composing is not sufficient to sustain a career in music, the faculty consider a “C” grade in the major studio as a symptom of either insufficient talent to continue as a performance major or inadequate work during the semester. A student will receive a letter of concern from the School Head whenever they receive a “C” or lower in the studio area. If “Cs” continue to be given in

studio, the student may, at the discretion of the faculty, and upon evidence of problems in other professional courses, be asked to withdraw from the program. At the point of withdrawal, the student will be advised carefully and personally of the options available: to transfer to another music program in another setting, to transfer to another School at CMU, perhaps continuing in music as a minor, or to become a transitional student for one semester while taking university courses in preparation for a transfer to another college or university. In any case, the Director of Student Services and the School Head will work very closely with the students, and often with the parents, to ensure a healthy transition.

The faculty will continue to make a careful assessment of each student during the first year of study and will attempt to decide regarding his/her suitability for our program by the conclusion of the sophomore year, via a SOPHOMORE REVIEW. (Please see "Sophomore Review Guidelines" page for more information)

Once a student enters their junior year, it is our policy to do everything we can to bring their program to a successful conclusion. Only under extraordinary circumstances will a junior or senior be dismissed from the School of Music; reasons for such action may include a lack of progress, emotional or physical illness or injury, lack of practice or sufficient learning of required repertoire, and/or an overall lack of cooperation or willingness to be taught. Although the studio grade serves as the most important criteria for determining each student's suitability for our program and for a possible career in music, this grade will not be the sole determinant in dropping a student from the school.

Incomplete Grades

Any time a student is unable to complete a course or a group of courses due to unavoidable circumstances, an "I" grade may be given for the incomplete work. If this becomes necessary, the student should discuss this grade option with each professor. It is ultimately the individual teacher's decision as to the appropriateness of the "I" grade. "I" may not be given in instances where the student just did not do the work or chose to miss too many classes. All incompletes must be made up during the following semester, or the "I" grades revert to default grades. While it is the professor's responsibility to fill out a "change of grade" form for the student at the time that the required work is completed, it is the student's responsibility to determine exactly what needs to be done to complete the course and to follow through.

Studio Grades

As per the departmental syllabus, your grade in studio is made up of two elements:

- 75% determined by the studio teacher
- 25% determined by the average of jury grades from the adjudicating faculty.

Grades in the studio are determined as follows, as recommended by the CFA:

- 50% Preparation. Preparation consists of completed assignments, quality of score preparation/study, independent thought, and understanding of style and text.
- 50% Participation. Participating in the studio includes attendance, technical understanding and mastery, performance, application of diction and language study, memorization, completed assignments, quality of music preparation and study, independent thought and understanding of style and text.

These recommended guidelines for teachers may be supplemented in your private voice teachers' syllabus, so you are responsible for reading all materials carefully and thoughtfully.

Concert Attendance

Concerts held in Mellon Institute and Carnegie Music Hall are particularly important to the visibility and the reputation of our School. These concerts include our major ensembles, faculty, and guest artist programs. All music events are free to music School faculty, staff and students. Attendance at these concerts is expected of everyone in the School! A small audience in a large concert hall reflects poorly on the School of Music and on the performers. Understandably, we may not be able to attend every single concert, due to unforeseen circumstances, student recitals, evening opera rehearsals, etc. In those rare instances when you cannot attend a live concert, webcasts may be available for viewing at [Carnegie Mellon University School of Music - YouTube](#)

*Voice students are REQUIRED to attend all on-campus voice recitals given by your voice faculty, and at least those recitals given by the members of your studio. It is recommended that each voice major attend (not watch on webcast, be in attendance live) a MINIMUM of 10-15 voice recitals per year, however, each studio teacher is responsible for student attendance, so please check your individual studio syllabi carefully. In the off chance that a recital conflicts with Production or Crew, prioritize those commitments over recital attendance.

Convocation Attendance

Typically, School of Music Convocations are held every Thursday in Kresge Hall. These meetings bring the entire School together once a week for special programs designed to enrich the educational experience. The yearly schedule of convocations includes faculty recitals, student performances, guest artists, guest lecturers, career seminars, and departmental meetings. All School of Music students are required to attend Convocation! (Three unexcused absences are allowed.) A full house is essential for the effectiveness of these programs. Attendance is taken in order to give students Pass or Fail grades, which will be carefully considered before merit and special external scholarships are assigned to School of Music students. Please check for updates on attendance during the academic year.

GRADUATION

To be eligible to receive your diploma, you must have accomplished the following:

- ✓ Completed all your required classes with final passing grades posted on your transcript and with a minimum 2.00 QPA (for undergraduate students) or a minimum 3.00 QPA (for graduate students)
- ✓ Performed all your required recitals and opera roles
- ✓ Passed all your required proficiency tests
- ✓ Clear your financial account

You can check the status of your classes and your financial account on the Student Online system at any time. See "Student Information Online" at <https://s3.as.cmu.edu/sio/index.html>.

CMU Opera Auditions

Student Information

Name (please print)	
Voice Type	
Classification as of Fall 2026 (Jr, Sr, Grad)	
Phone/Email	

PRODUCTIONS

Have you read the libretti and/or listened to:	[show]	YES/ NO
	[show]	YES/ NO

What character(s) are you interested in portraying, and why?
(You may also opt to write "any")

Additional Questions

- | | |
|--|---------|
| 1. Are you confident about your ability to perform an opera role? | YES/ NO |
| 2. Are you open to using profanity onstage if it is a part of the libretto? | YES/ NO |
| 3. Is there anything that would preclude you from being in any given production? List reasons here: _____ | YES/ NO |
| 4. Are you open to performing intimate scenes with others, such as kissing, caressing, or touching? Please note that an Intimacy Coordinator will be provided for productions with intimate content. (Please scan the QR code for more info on what an IC does!) | YES/ NO |



Agreement and Signature

I understand that one or more productions may contain adult language and intimate situations that will be performed as indicated in the original text. If cast, I agree to perform the work as written, understanding that I am part of an open and professional collaboration. I also understand that I may contact the Director of Opera Studies with any concerns at cmanich@andrew.cmu.edu.

Signature	
Date	

Our Policy

It is the policy of this audition panel to provide equal opportunities to our voice students at CMU, without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability. TOI TOI TOI!

PETITION for a Change of Studio Teacher/Coach

Signed, (*student's name*) _____

New Studio Teacher/Coach _____ Date _____

Head of the School of Music _____ Date _____

Notes:

To change your studio teacher or coach, you must receive the permission of your present studio teacher/coach, your proposed new studio teacher/coach, and the School Head. A space must be available on your proposed new studio teacher or coach's roster. Before formally requesting a change in studio, students must discuss their concerns with their present studio teacher/coach. Failure to do so may jeopardize the students' request for a studio change. The order of the procedure is as follows:

*In this business, it is considered unethical to study voice with more than one teacher concurrently. For this reason, students wishing to change studios **MUST NOT** approach other teachers for sample lessons, or regarding studio availability.