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Music Commencement Examination Components
January 2019

Students must complete ALL components of the NYCDOE Music Commencement Exam and earn a total score of 65 or higher in order to receive the Arts Endorsement in Music.

Failure to properly complete any ONE of the components will automatically nullify eligibility for endorsement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>60%</th>
<th>I. WRITTEN EXAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50% A. Multiple Choice &amp; Short Answer Questions, including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening Analysis: up to 15 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History and Culture: up to 10 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theory and Musicianship: up to 30 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10% B. On-Demand Essay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

30% II. NYSSMA SOLO ADJUDICATION (Levels 3-6)

*Students will be disqualified if they do not participate in a NYSSMA solo adjudication.*

- NYSSMA *solo adjudication fees* for students taking the Music Commencement Exam will be paid by the Office of Arts and Special Projects (OASP).
- Teachers will support students and *hold them accountable* for showing up to their adjudications.
- Teachers will register students to be adjudicated in the *borough of their school*.

10% III. PORTFOLIO

*Students will be disqualified if portfolio is incomplete or improperly submitted.*

- **Performance Documentation** for a total of FOUR performances during the four years of high school, specifically required as follows:
  - TWO (2) *SCHOOL* performances
  - TWO (2) *OUT-OF-SCHOOL* performances
    - *i.e.*, performance in a location other than school AND not duplicating school concert repertoire
- **Reflective Essay**
  - 2 full pages
  - Typed
Sample Point and Percentage Breakdown
2019 Music Commencement Exam

Below is a representation of how many points and how many questions may appear in each section and sub-section of the exam. While the actual number of points and questions will be similar to the representation below, they may not be exactly the same.

Please refer to the chart on p. 2 of this handbook for each section’s weight (%) and the maximum number of points for each sub-section of the exam’s written component.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SECTION I: WRITTEN EXAM</th>
<th>57 QUESTIONS* + 1 ESSAY (50 POINTS + 10 POINTS)</th>
<th>60 POINTS</th>
<th>60%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Listening Analysis</td>
<td>15 questions (1 point each)</td>
<td>15 points</td>
<td>15/50 = 30% of non-essay written section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. History &amp; Culture</td>
<td>14 questions (1/2 point each)</td>
<td>7 points</td>
<td>7/50 = 14% of non-essay written section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Theory &amp; Musicianship, Multiple Choice</td>
<td>20 questions (1 point each)</td>
<td>20 points</td>
<td>20/50 = 40% of non-essay written section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Theory &amp; Musicianship, Short Answer</td>
<td>8 questions (1 point each)</td>
<td>8 points</td>
<td>8/50 = 16% of non-essay written section</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. Essay

10 points

SECTION II: NYSSMA SOLO ADJUDICATION (Levels 3-6)
*For Levels 3-4: Score will be converted to %. e.g., A score of 26 will be entered as 93 (26/28 = 92.86).

All students must perform a solo at NYSSMA Level 3, 4, 5, or 6 and have the opportunity to earn the maximum 30 points for this section of the exam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>30 POINTS</th>
<th>30%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

SECTION III: PORTFOLIO
- 2 x In-School Performances
- 2 x Out-of-School Performances (NO PARTIAL CREDIT)
- Reflective Essay

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10 POINTS</th>
<th>10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*not including pilot questions
Content is created for the Written Exam according to the following

**GUIDING QUESTION:**

*What are the enduring understandings that students need in order to be functional, literate musicians?*

The following are examples of the topics that may be included in the written portion of the exam.

**A. Listening Analysis, including Melodic and Rhythmic Notation**

- Time Signature, Meter, Subdivisions (duple/triple)
- Tonality (major/minor)
- Chords, chord progressions
- Error identification, rhythmic and melodic (recording vs. notated example)
- Intervals
- Form
- Instruments (Western and non-Western) & Instrumentation
- Voice types
- Musical style, genre
- Historical era, cultural origin

*Sample Tasks – Students will listen to musical excerpts to identify:*
  - melodic and/or rhythmic error on the corresponding score.
  - cultural origin.
  - tonality (major/minor) and type of subdivisions (duple/triple).
  - where the tonic chord occurs (i.e., in measure(s)…).

**B. History and Culture**

- **Western Musical Eras** *(e.g., Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Modern)*
  - Landmark compositions, composers, events, and ideological movements
- **Non-Western Traditions** *(e.g., African, Asian, South Asian, Music of the Americas)*
  - Associating instruments and genres/styles with their geographic and/or cultural origins *(e.g., tabla – Indian Classical music)*
- **Contemporary American Music** *(20th Century forward)*
  - Landmark compositions, composers, artists, eras, and ideological movements

**C. Theory and Musicianship**

- Grand staff
- Meter and rhythmic values
- Accidentals and enharmonic equivalents
- Scales – Major and minor
- Key signatures – Major and minor
- Intervals
- Chords and inversions/voicings
- Chord progressions
- Dynamic markings
- Tempo markings
- Articulations *(e.g., staccato, tremolo, con sordino, glissando)*
- Form *(e.g., binary, ternary, rondo, sonata, AABA)*
- Instruments, Voice Types, and Ensembles *(e.g., families, characteristics, practice)*

*Sample Tasks – Students will:*
  - Identify musical terms.
  - Identify the key of a notated excerpt.
  - Write out a scale.

*N.B. Sharps and flats in key signatures must be clearly written on the correct staff lines and spaces.*
On-Demand Essay
Students will listen to recordings of student rehearsals (instrumental or choral) and write a critical essay of the performance.

- Students will hear each recording **three** times.
- Instrumentalists will respond to the instrumental selection.
- Vocalists will respond to the choral selection.
- Students will mark the measures of the score where performance issues occur.
- Issues identified and discussed may include:
  - Phrasing
  - Intonation
  - Accuracy/Precision
  - Balance
  - Dynamics
  - Any other areas related to the student musicians’ technique and artistry.

As indicated in the exam:

Write a well-organized essay of **at least 150 words** to critique the performance using the notes you have taken. **Your critique must make reference to the specific measures in which performance issues occur.** Writing from either the conductor’s or performer’s perspective, suggest strategies and techniques to improve the ensemble’s overall performance of the selection.
**NYSSMA Solo Performance Component**
**January 2019 Music Commencement Exam**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival Dates</th>
<th>SCHOOL REGISTRATION DATES</th>
<th>FESTIVAL LOCATION</th>
<th>Solo Prices: LEVEL 3 OR HIGHER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 9-10</td>
<td>January 25, 2019</td>
<td><strong>BRONX</strong> @ Celia Cruz HS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>TBA</td>
<td>LaGuardia High School <strong>in-house ONLY</strong></td>
<td><strong>Non-Piano</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 11</td>
<td>March 29, 2019</td>
<td><strong>BROOKLYN</strong> @ Marine Park JHS 278</td>
<td>Levels 3-4 $16 \ Levels 5-6 $24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 17-18</td>
<td>April 5, 2019</td>
<td><strong>STATEN ISLAND</strong> @ Tottenville HS</td>
<td><strong>Piano</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 31 – June 1</td>
<td>April 19, 2019</td>
<td><strong>QUEENS</strong> @ Corona Arts &amp; Sciences Academy</td>
<td>Levels 3-4 $22 \ Levels 5-6 $30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 7-8</td>
<td>April 26, 2019</td>
<td><strong>MANHATTAN</strong> @ Talent Unlimited High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The NYSSMA solo performance assessment is mandatory for all students who wish to receive the Arts Endorsement in Music. Students who are absent from their scheduled NYSSMA performance assessment OR who do not receive a numerical assessment grade are automatically disqualified. Students who miss their initial NYSSMA solo appointment may apply to attend another festival at their own expense. However, rescheduled appointments are always problematic; while the ability to reschedule presents a “second chance,” OASP remains obligated to pay for all initial appointments that are missed.

IMPORTANT: The dates listed in the 2nd column above are the final dates that a school can submit one single list of all registrants to the NYSSMA Festival site. Your school will provide a deadline to you that may be significantly earlier than this date. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO ABIDE BY YOUR SCHOOL’S INTERNAL DEADLINE. According to NYSSMA policy, students are not permitted to register independently; students will be registered directly by their teacher.
STEPS TO TAKE IN ADVANCE OF YOUR NYSSMA SOLO ADJUDICATION FOR THE 2019 COMMENCEMENT EXAM:

1. Follow internal registration deadlines set by your school.

2. **BY THE SPECIFIED DEADLINE, schools will register all participating students directly with the NYSSMA adjudication site corresponding to the borough of your school.**

   
   With teacher assistance, check the Manual for:
   
   - percussion rudiments.
   - scale requirements.
   - improvisation requirements (jazz solos only).
   - sight-reading guide aligned with each level.

4. If you are performing a jazz solo, you must bring the specified CD accompaniment to solo adjudication.

5. You must have two copies of your music, one of which must be an original copy to present to the judge, even if it is memorized.

6. You must obtain and retain your original adjudication form before departing the festival.

7. If you are performing a vocal solo, you must have an accompanist or arrive prepared with a recorded accompaniment in the key in which you will be singing. If you will be using a recorded accompaniment, you must provide a means to play the recorded accompaniment. **If a vocal soloist performs without accompaniment, the soloist will be adjudicated for “Comments Only” and will, thus, be disqualified.**

8. If you are performing a multi-movement work and no specific movements are specified in the manual, you must perform two contrasting movements.
# Music Commencement Examination 2019

## PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS GUIDE

**ALL** of the following are **REQUIRED** for a student to remain eligible to receive the Arts Endorsement in Music.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MANDATORY ITEMS</th>
<th>REQUIRED SPECIFICATIONS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES of acceptable school performance ensembles:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **1. DOCUMENTATION** for: TWO (2) SCHOOL PERFORMANCES | School will submit a SINGLE PRINTED COPY of ALL CONCERT PROGRAMS from the past three school years. | • Band  
• Orchestra  
• Chorus  
• Small Instrumental Ensemble  
• Small Vocal Ensemble  
• Musical Theater Productions  
• Solo Performances  
• Piano Accompanist for School Ensemble |
| | School official will sign statement to verify that every student sitting for the exam has participated in a *minimum* of two school performances.  
School concert programs should include *all* of the following information:  
a. school name  
b. name of the event  
c. name and address of venue  
d. date and time of the performance  
e. listing of student performers’ names | |
| **2. DOCUMENTATION** for: TWO (2) OUT-OF-SCHOOL PERFORMANCES | Performance in a location other than school AND Different repertoire from school performances | Examples of acceptable out-of-school performing ensembles:  
• All-City High School Music Program ensembles  
• All-State Band, Orchestra or Chorus  
• Borough Arts Festivals (*if* the repertoire performed was *not* performed at a school concert)  
• New York Citywide Honors Music Festival (HS only)  
• Church/Synagogue Events  
• Community Musical Events  
• Youth Symphonies, Bands or Choruses  
• Pre-College Programs e.g., Juilliard MAP, Young People’s Chorus, InterSchool Orchestras  
• 1 NYSSMA solo adjudication sheet from a prior year, *i.e.* 2016, 2017, 2018, where repertoire performed does not duplicate 2019 NYSSMA solo adjudication repertoire |
| | For EACH out-of-school performance, submit one of the following ONLY: | |
| | a. **Printed concert program** that includes:  
• sponsoring organization  
• name of the event  
• name and address of venue  
• date and time of the performance  
• candidate’s name, circled and/or highlighted  
• program open to page where candidate’s name appears | 
| | b. **NYSSMA Score Sheet**  
We will accept only one prior year score sheet, *i.e.* 2016, 2017, 2018, *i.e.*, Freshman, Sophomore, or Junior year.  
**Repertoire must be different from NYSSMA solo repertoire adjudicated in 2019.**  
Examples of acceptable out-of-school performances:  
• All-City High School Music Program ensembles  
• All-State Band, Orchestra or Chorus  
• Borough Arts Festivals (*if* the repertoire performed was *not* performed at a school concert)  
• New York Citywide Honors Music Festival (HS only)  
• Church/Synagogue Events  
• Community Musical Events  
• Youth Symphonies, Bands or Choruses  
• Pre-College Programs e.g., Juilliard MAP, Young People’s Chorus, InterSchool Orchestras  
• 1 NYSSMA solo adjudication sheet from a prior year, *i.e.* 2016, 2017, 2018, where repertoire performed does not duplicate 2019 NYSSMA solo adjudication repertoire  
| | c. **Video Recording**  
Submitted online, on DVD or flashdrive ONLY in mp4 or mov formats ONLY  
**All video submissions must begin with the required recorded statement appearing on the next page**, spoken by the student in front of the camera  
**Students must verify that their recorded format plays before submitting.** | 
| **3. REFLECTIVE ESSAY** | The reflective essay should demonstrate the degree to which the student:  
1. moves beyond simple description of their learning experience and provides an explanation of how the experiences contributed to an understanding of themselves as a musician.  
2. explains the importance of the school concerts and outside performances in developing musicianship.  
3. reveals an awareness of the arc of their growth and the ways in which peers, the school and greater community were contributing factors to this growth.  
4. provides concrete evidence, relevant and descriptive details for the above.  
5. uses a narrative voice that is appropriate and engages the reader.  
6. uses language that is clear, expressive and makes sense to the reader.  
7. demonstrates a command of grammar, syntax and spelling. | **Student Directions:** You must write a reflective essay describing the significant learning experiences you have had over the course of your 4 years as an active, high school musician. A reflective essay is not a resume. Your narrative should describe:  
• your musical growth  
• ways in which your outside performance experience differed from your classroom experience and in-school concerts  
• ways in which you were influenced by your music teachers and other musicians  
• the musical successes and challenges you encountered  
• musical experiences that were particularly meaningful (e.g., performances you attended or participated in, classroom experiences)  
• how you plan to continue your musical growth and participation when you graduate  
• any other thoughts or content you consider relevant learning |

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**
- Repertoire must be different in each of the two out-of-school performances.  
- Students may perform on a secondary instrument at the out-of-school performances (e.g., flutist may play guitar in at a community center).  
- The time for students to start collecting portfolio work is now.

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**Office of Arts and Special Projects**

**Elizabeth M. Guglielmo, Director of Music**
IMPORTANT PROGRAM NOTES FOR ALL PERFORMANCES:
1. Printed programs created specifically for the Exam documentation will not be accepted.
2. Written verification from teachers, musical directors or coordinators of events and performances will not be accepted.

TROUBLESHOOTING: OUT-OF-SCHOOL PERFORMANCES
- Street performances are not accepted.
- Video documentation of out-of-school performances must show a group in attendance that can be described as an audience.

IMPORTANT VIDEO NOTES FOR DOCUMENTING OUT-OF-SCHOOL PERFORMANCES:
1. ALL video submissions must begin with the following recorded statement spoken by the student in front of the camera:
   
   *My name is____________________. Today’s date is_________ and I am using this video recording of my performance at [location]____________________for my Commencement Music Exam Portfolio submission.*

2. For large ensemble recordings, the student must also include in their introductory statement a brief description of identifiable clothing or an ensemble position for the viewer to easily locate the student in the video.

3. The student and the audience must be clearly visible in the video during the entire performance.

4. If the student submits two video-documented out-of-school performances, they must be recorded at different locations with different repertoire performed.

5. The student must verify that the format plays properly on a computer before submitting.

REASONS WHY PORTFOLIOS WERE PREVIOUSLY REJECTED INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:
- performances on the street in front of fellow high school students, friends or family
- performances in a home in front of family and friends
- performances singing to a camera with no audience in view
- two performances clearly recorded at the same venue
- performances clearly organized by the student’s teacher or school
- performances documented with no-longer-acceptable documentation (signed letter) or with poster, etc, that does not include the student’s name
- reflective essay related as a biography or a description of music courses taken without focusing on and discussing the four years of musical growth during high school
Timeline for 2019 Music Commencement Examination

IMPORTANT: The dates listed in the timeline below are the final dates that a SCHOOL can submit/register for specified exam components.

Your school will provide a deadline to you that may be significantly earlier than this date*. YOU ARE REQUIRED TO ABIDE BY YOUR SCHOOL’S INTERNAL DEADLINE.

According to NYSSMA policy, students are not permitted to register independently; students will be registered directly by their teacher.

Monday, November 26, 2018  Administrators and Music Teachers Receive:
- Electronic Student Roster Template for 2019 Candidates
- Music Commencement Exam Permission Form
- Exam Order Link

- Student names will be removed from your exam roster in cases where a:
  - signed permission slip has not been submitted.
  - student does not sit for the written exam.
- The final roster will be used by OASP to submit payment to NYSSMA for each student-candidate’s solo adjudication fee.

Wednesday, January 2, 2019  NYSSMA Registration opens

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 2019* SCHOOL DEADLINE: SUBMIT EXAM ROSTERS AND PERMISSION SLIPS TO OASP

TUESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2019  MUSIC COMMENCEMENT EXAM: WRITTEN EXAM
1:15 PM – 4:15 PM

Friday, January 25, 2019* SCHOOL DEADLINE: Bronx NYSSMA Registration

Monday, February 11, 2019  Pre-labelled, Portfolio envelopes are mailed to schools for each student whose name appears on the exam roster.
On a date pre-determined by the school, students will place the contents of their Portfolio documentation in this envelope and return to designated person in charge of Music Exam arrangements. Sufficient time must be allowed to meet the required due date to OASP (04/15/19).

TBD 2019* SCHOOL DEADLINE: LaGuardia In-House NYSSMA Registration

March 9-10, 2019  Bronx NYSSMA Festival

Friday, March 29, 2019* SCHOOL DEADLINE: Brooklyn NYSSMA Registration

Friday, April 5, 2019* SCHOOL DEADLINE: Staten Island NYSSMA Registration
April 6, 2019 LaGuardia In-House NYSSMA Festival

**MONDAY, APRIL 15, 2019**

**SCHOOL DEADLINE: COMPLETED STUDENT PORTFOLIOS MUST ARRIVE TO OASP NO LATER THAN THIS DATE**

Friday, April 19, 2019* **SCHOOL DEADLINE: Queens NYSSMA Registration**

Friday, April 26, 2019* **SCHOOL DEADLINE: Manhattan NYSSMA Registration**

Friday, April 26, 2019

Portfolio grading is completed.

May 11, 2019 **Brooklyn** NYSSMA Festival

May 17-18, 2019 **Staten Island** NYSSMA Festival

May 31-June 1, 2019 **Queens** NYSSMA Festival

June 7-8, 2019 **Manhattan** NYSSMA Festival

**INTERNAL SCHOOL DEADLINES TO REMEMBER:**

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

Friday, April 19, 2019

**SCHOOL DEADLINE: Queens NYSSMA Registration**

Friday, April 26, 2019

**SCHOOL DEADLINE: Manhattan NYSSMA Registration**

Friday, April 26, 2019

Portfolio grading is completed.

May 11, 2019

**Brooklyn** NYSSMA Festival

May 17-18, 2019

**Staten Island** NYSSMA Festival

May 31-June 1, 2019

**Queens** NYSSMA Festival

June 7-8, 2019

**Manhattan** NYSSMA Festival
2019 Commencement Examination in Music

(Please Print Clearly)

Student Name: __________________________________________________________

School Name: __________________________________________________________

Student Cell Phone: _____________________________________________________

Student Email Address: _________________________________________________

Parent Cell Phone: _____________________________________________________

Parent Email Address: _________________________________________________

I, the parent/guardian of the student named above, hereby give my permission for my child to take part in the 2019 Music Commencement Examination in Music.

a) I understand that my child’s NYSSMA adjudication fee has been paid for by the Office of Arts & Special Projects and my child is expected to attend their assigned NYSSMA Adjudication date and time.

b) I understand that the Office of Arts & Special Projects may send email and text message reminders regarding exam components and adjudication dates.

c) It is my child’s responsibility to complete all necessary components of the 2019 Commencement Exam in Music, including traveling to and/or from the adjudication and submitting a complete portfolio.

____________________________________________
Name of Parent/Guardian

____________________________________________
Signature of Parent/Guardian                      Date

STUDENT DECLARATION

I have read this form, and I understand my responsibility regarding the 2019 Commencement Exam in Music. I also understand that I may receive text message reminders from the Office of Arts & Special Projects regarding the exam.

____________________________________________
Signature of Student                      Date