Admission Requirements

Students with a Bachelor of Music (or equivalent) degree can apply and audition for entrance into the program in either the fall or spring (January) semesters. Their GPA must be 2.75 or higher. The TOEFL is required for all students whose first language is not English. Students must also submit a goals statement and three letters of recommendation.

The audition will be judged on the student’s technical ability, musicality and potential for success at the graduate level. An interview with graduate and area faculty will also provide an opportunity for students to describe their past experiences and future plans in music. Those who complete their application and audition before the Jan. 31 deadline may be considered for a graduate assistantship during the following fall semester.

Degree Requirements

After completing advisory exams in music history and theory, students are offered a mixture of courses devoted to their area of interest, alongside academic core requirements in history, analysis and research. A typical degree plan might include applied lessons each semester, repertoire courses for professional development and independent studies on topics of the student’s choice. All degree plans in music offer the opportunity to perform a recital, write a thesis or both. Every student can gain a breadth of experience through a variety of electives and performing ensembles (including chamber music) each semester. Upon the completion of all coursework, all students take comprehensive exams in the core requirements, as well as in the student’s main area of interest.

Career Opportunities

WIU’s Master of Music programs leads to a multitude of possibilities. The goal of the WIU School of Music is to prepare students for the professional world, whether it be performing in a professional ensemble, at the regional or national levels; teaching music in an elementary, secondary or college environment or further study—performance certificates or doctoral programs—at universities throughout the world. Our faculty provide the first steps in forming a student’s professional network with training that focuses on the needs of today’s job market. In addition, our elective courses—electronic music or jazz history, for example—can help give a student’s résumé a boost with broader experience.

Assistantship Opportunities

All students who complete a successful application and audition before the Jan. 31 deadline will be considered for a graduate assistantship. These will be awarded on a competitive basis, reflecting the individual student’s achievements, and the current needs of the School of Music. Assistantships can be held for either full (20 hours/week) or two-thirds (13 hours/week) appointments and include a full tuition waiver and a monthly stipend. Typical duties may include assisting faculty in an area of ensemble preparation, administrative tasks, grading or tutoring undergraduate students. Students with assistantships are expected to retain good grades in full-time coursework for both semesters of an academic year. Non-English speakers without TOEFL will not be considered.

Welcome to the School of Music at Western Illinois University. Our two-year Master of Music program offers 10 areas of specialization, and a wide assortment of course offerings. Whether it is professional training in performance, conducting, education, composition or musicology you are seeking, WIU can provide opportunities to work with musicians at the top of their fields. Our majors include Music Education (online program), Performance, Piano Pedagogy, Choral and Instrumental Conducting, Music Composition, Jazz Studies and Musicology: Students can experience a high level of applied performance and academic study on a flexible schedule that includes classroom and individual instruction. The graduate program offers a challenging and exciting environment to assist you in realizing your professional goals.

Questions about the program:
School of Music
Professor Anita Hardeman,
graduate coordinator
A-Hardeman@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/music

General admission questions:
School of Graduate Studies
(309) 298-1806 or (877) WIU GRAD
Grad-Office@wiu.edu
wiu.edu/grad

Contact Information

Program Location:
Macomb

Western Illinois University is an Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity employer with a strong commitment to diversity. In that spirit, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from a broad spectrum of people, including, but not limited to,
minorities, women and individuals with disabilities. WIU has a non-discrimination policy that includes sex, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression, religion, age, marital status, national origin, disability and veteran status.

Distinctive Features
Students have the opportunity to observe—and occasionally participate in—faculty ensembles, including the Lamoine Brass Quintet, the Camerata Woodwind Quintet, the Hopper Jazztet and the Julstrom String Quartet. In addition, the School of Music sponsors a variety of festivals and special events throughout the year. The direct Amtrak service to Chicago and the proximity to other Midwestern centers allows students to experience a variety of concerts, including world-class orchestral, chamber, operatic and jazz ensembles.

Faculty Expertise
The School of Music presents a rare phenomenon: students can study with full-time professionals for every voice type, instrument and field of music. The student-teacher ratio is half the national average, and instruction is geared toward the individual student’s needs. Our faculty members perform at regional, national and international levels, participate in professional conferences and publish research and criticism in scholarly journals devoted to their respective disciplines.

Facilities
Instruction in the School of Music is divided between Browne and Sallee halls on the Macomb campus. Our facilities include rehearsal spaces for large and small ensembles, classrooms with “smart” technology, computer labs with notation software, practice rooms and an electronic music studio. Sallee Hall also includes a large lecture hall and a music library with thousands of scores and recordings, managed by a helpful and knowledgeable staff. Most of our performances occur in the College of Fine Arts and Communication Recital Hall, a beautiful space that seats an audience of 500, adjacent to the University’s other facilities.

Accreditations
WIU’s School of Music is accredited with the National Association of Schools of Music—one of the first schools in Illinois to achieve this status. Our faculty also maintain memberships in a wide array of music organizations at the regional and/or national level. Graduate students are often encouraged to join and/or attend the conferences of these associations as part of their professional development.

Featured Alums
Many of our alumni from the Master of Music degree program have gone on to achieve great things in multiple areas of music or related disciplines. Kimberly Keim (MM, Piano Pedagogy, 2013) maintains a full piano and oboe studio, accompanies choral and vocal programs and has served on the executive board of the Greater Louisville Music Teachers Association. Keim recently published an article in American Music Teacher based on her master’s thesis at WIU.

“The skills I learned while at WIU fully prepared me for post-graduate school life. I was able to bring my teaching, performing, scholarly writing and secondary instruments to a professional level, working side-by-side with colleagues in my field. WIU didn’t just give me a degree; it was a jumpstart on my career as a full-time piano pedagogue.”

Isidora Miranda (MM, Musicology and Violin Performance, 2011) recently completed her doctorate in Historical Musicology at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She has presented her research on German and Filipino musical theatre at conferences in the Midwest, as well as the University of Vienna. Miranda currently teaches violin and performs in both Madison and Manila, Philippines and in 2016, was the recipient of the prestigious Mellon Fellowship for Doctoral Research.

“My graduate experience at WIU remains foundational in my career as a musician, scholar and pedagogue. The faculty challenged me in many ways, whether in performance or critical thinking, about music’s cultural value. The small, yet diverse student population provided an engaging environment for collaborative work.”

Isidora Miranda

“The master’s program at WIU helped solidify the foundation of what I was already doing in the ‘real world’—playing and teaching. . . . All of my success is due to the education I received at WIU.”

– Toby Curtright, BA, 1985; MA, 1998
Jazz Teacher and Performer