

Disclaimer: this document is provisional and is currently under review, and therefore is subject to changes. An updated version will be available upon approval by Graduate Studies at the Schulich School of Music.¹



Applied Performance Sciences, Ph.D.

Program Overview

Situated in a vibrant and multidisciplinary environment of world class performance and research, this program supports original research that aims to expand and/or develop new scientific understanding of human performance in music in its broadest sense, using socially valid and applied methodological approaches, with potential to offer practical contributions to music training and performance in a range of settings. Examples of project topics include the investigation of human factors (e.g., physiological, biomechanical, psychological, social, cultural) in music training and performance, career development and transitions, musicians' health, research-informed practice and performance strategies for artistic growth and performance excellence, and the impact of music on health, wellbeing and social inclusion among a range of populations in community settings. We encourage projects that focus on under investigated music genres, musicians across the lifespan and all career stages, and cross-cultural studies.

We welcome professionals, educators, practitioners, and graduates from a range of disciplines including music, health, sports, business and social sciences, who have a particular interest in exploring topics in the intersections of music and applied sciences.

Access to a multidisciplinary team of world-leading experts, collaboration opportunities, research labs and outstanding library and technology resources enable a thriving and organic interdisciplinary learning experience.

Faculty

Our faculty are leaders in their fields, and are engaged in ground-breaking research and international networks in applied performance sciences, including music and performance psychology, respiratory physiology, music perception and cognition, arts for health, etc. The team works in collaboration with [faculty](#) in Music Performance, Music Research, [CIRMMT](#) researchers, as well as other faculties and universities, nationally and internationally.

For an initial contact about your project ideas, please contact Professors in Applied Performance Science:

[Liliana S. Araújo](#) (Performance Psychology, Performance Strategies, Expertise and Talent Development, Career Transitions, Performer's Health and Wellbeing)

[Isabelle Cossette](#) (Respiratory Physiology, Performance Strategies, Performer's Health and Wellbeing)

[Andrea Creech](#) (Performance Psychology, Performance Strategies, Expertise and Talent Development, Music for Health and Wellbeing, Community Practices, Music Pedagogy)

Resources and Opportunities

Students benefit from:

- An environment of musical excellence and international and multidisciplinary collaboration with composers, performers, educators, and researchers.
- A supportive team environment offering a range of mentoring opportunities
- Career simulation opportunities such as presenting at conferences, engaging with international networks, teaching assistantships, etc.
- Access to learning and collaboration opportunities within performance and research departments, and Faculties of Medicine, Cognitive Psychology, Kinesiology, Physiology, and Education, Teaching and Learning, among others;
- State of the art technology and facilities for studying performance and modeling best practices.

Careers

Graduates will be equipped with advance knowledge and skills to pursuit, develop or sustain successful careers in academic, research and industry-based settings. They can also become leaders in their communities by using music for social transformation (i.e., music programs for senior citizens, students with special needs, in developing countries, etc.), and by applying research-informed strategies for healthy, sustainable, and optimal music making in a range of settings.

Admission Requirements

Apply in 5 Steps

Step 1: Connect

Contact [Prof. Liliana Araújo](#), email performancescience.music@mcgill.ca if you have questions about the program or email our admissions staff if you need help applying.

[Visit or speak with us](#) at anytime about the university and student life in Montreal.

1a. Find a supervisor

Explore the [faculty profiles](#) to find a supervisor before applying. Once you've found someone with whom you are interested in working, contact them to discuss your research interests.

You can find tips about connecting with a supervisor on the [Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies \(GPS\)](#) website.

1b. Bookmark admission dates and deadlines

Application opens	Deadline to apply for fall admission	Admission decisions sent to applicants
October 1	December 1 (all applicants)	February to March

If you've missed the deadline, [email our admissions staff](#). Late applications may be cancelled without refund and may not be considered for entrance scholarships/financial aid.

1c. Meet minimum admission requirements

Acceptance into this program is competitive and the final admissions decision rests with the Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies Office. To be considered, you should have:

- A master's degree in Music, Science or other relevant area from a university recognized by McGill.
- A cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of at least 3.0 out of a possible 4.0, or a grade point average (GPA) of 3.2 out of 4.0 in your last two years of full-time studies.
- [Proficiency in English](#), the primary language of instruction at McGill.

Step 2: Check costs and funding options

Find out about [funding](#) and financial aid opportunities, cost of living and [tuition fees](#).

Step 3: Prepare application materials

You will need to submit the following information and documentation

1. **Transcripts** from each college/university-level institution that you have attended.
2. **Two letters of recommendation** (if you are currently a McGill student, you are exempt).
3. **Personal statement:** Describe your reasons for applying to this program, your proposed topic of research and expected professional directions. Include qualifications, qualities or circumstances that are significant. Outline your educational and professional goals, your expectations and your suitability for acceptance into the program (PDF format, maximum size 5 MB).
4. **Research proposal:** You should have a research project in mind that you've discussed with your potential supervisor. The proposal (2-4 pages, PDF format, maximum size 8 MB) should include a contextualisation of your intended topic of research, a provisional research question or aim you would like to explore and which methodologies you will consider, and potential applied contributions. It should also include a brief reference list and mention the proposed Thesis Supervisor(s).
5. **Curriculum Vitae (CV):** An overview of your experience and other qualifications, including employment, academic credentials, publications, honours, awards, contributions and significant achievements (PDF format, maximum size 5 MB).
6. **Thesis summary/abstract**, if you have completed or are completing a Master's thesis (PDF format, maximum size 2 MB).
7. Your **supervisor** preference.
8. Proof of **English language proficiency**, if required.
9. **Written Work** - Research or course papers on any aspect of music performance science or equivalent evidence of knowledge and experience in a related scientific or performance field. Combine essays into one file and upload to *Written Work(s)* in the application (PDF format, maximum 50 MB).

Useful resources

You may find these resources useful to prepare your research proposal.

- Williamon, A., Ginsborg, J., Perkins, R., & Waddell, G. (2021). *Performing music research: Methods in music education, psychology, and performance science*. Oxford University Press.
- McPherson, G. (Ed.). (2022). *The Oxford Handbook of Music Performance, Volume 1 and 2*. Oxford University Press.

Topics in performance science are often published in the following peer-reviewed journals: *Frontiers in Psychology*, *Music Education Research*, *Psychology of Music*, *British Journal of Music Education*, *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *Music Educators Journal*, *Musicae Scientiae*, *Medical Problems of Performing Artists*.

Step 4: Apply online

- Get your supporting materials together. Please apply by December 1st and upload your documents by December 15th. Documents are uploaded after you file your application.
- If this is your first time using On# (McGill's online application form), create an account. You will be given a username and password for future use.
- Complete the admission application HERE. During this stage, provide the names and valid institutional email addresses of the people providing your letters of recommendation. McGill will contact them directly. Submit your information.
- Pay the non-refundable application fee of \$125.71 online. After this, you will get an email confirming that you have successfully applied and only then you can upload your supporting materials.
- Upload the supporting material to your application.
- Arrange for submission of proof of English language proficiency to McGill, if required.

Step 5: Accept

Already applied and trying to track your application status? Newly admitted? Take the next steps.

For graduate program-related questions please [contact us](#).

After You Apply: Next Steps

Once you have submitted your application, an acknowledgement will be sent to the email address you have included in your application.

Track your application status

- You can track the status of your application online using future.mcgill.ca/apply.
- If you have questions about your application, contact the admissions office through the **communication tool**. We will also contact you if we need more information from you.
- If you are unable to get in touch with us through the application platform, [contact us](#) by email or telephone.

Waiting for news?

After we have reviewed of everyone's applications, we send out decision notifications. You will likely hear from us between mid-February and April 15th.

- We make every effort to notify all applicants as soon as we can. In return, we ask for the courtesy of a response, usually within three weeks of receiving an official acceptance. A prompt response from you allows us to make decisions about candidates on our waiting list.

- First round scholarship offers are typically made within three weeks of receiving an official acceptance; subsequent rounds are offered as they become available. Deadline to accept the offers are final.

Placement Exams

The admissions committee may determine that a candidate needs to take a placement exam to further demonstrate their academic preparation for pursuing a Ph.D. program.

About one month after you accept our offer of admission, and if deemed necessary, placement exam descriptions will be sent to you. You will have three weeks to complete and return them. You are not required to have an invigilator, but you are expected to write these examinations without assistance (internet, textbooks) and within the allocated time for each question. Depending on the exam results, you may be required to take certain remedial or preparatory courses. All of these courses form an additional part of your program of study.

Orientation

As a new student at McGill University, you may have a lot of questions on the resources available on campus to support your academic and personal success. You can contact our [Graduate Studies staff](#) anytime. [Orientation and advising](#) takes place at the beginning of the Fall semester.

Program Requirements and Courses

Time to complete a Ph.D. typically requires 4 to 5 years from entry to the program. The Ph.D. requires a minimum of three years of full-time resident study (six full-time terms) beyond a bachelor's degree. A candidate who holds a master's degree relevant to the area of specialization typically enter Ph.D.2, counting the work done for the master's degree as the first year of resident study.

Students are not permitted to graduate until they have fulfilled McGill University's residency requirement or paid the corresponding fees in their program. McGill University's time limitation policy requires that students complete their Ph.D. degree by the end of Ph.D.7.

Language requirements

As per university graduate admissions and application procedures.

<https://www.mcgill.ca/gradapplicants/how-apply/application-steps/proficiency>

Required Courses

- MUGS 701 Comprehensive Examinations
- MUGS 705 Colloquium

Attendance for four terms of the Doctoral Colloquium, and at least one presentation of the student's thesis research is required.

Complementary Courses (0-30 credits)

Students entering in Ph.D. 1

15 credits of seminars at the 600 level or higher, approved by the Department. 0-15 credits of additional seminars at the 600 or higher, will be assigned by the admissions committee for students in Applied Performance Sciences at the time of admissions.

Students entering in Ph.D. 2

Typically, students with a master degree will join Ph.D. 2. 0-15 credits of seminars at the 600 level or higher will be assigned by the will be assigned by the admissions committee for students in Applied Performance Sciences at the time of admissions.

Doctoral Colloquium

The Doctoral Colloquium is a lecture series organized by the Department of Music Research. Upcoming colloquium events are posted online in the **What's On** section. An electronic announcement is sent out a week before each event.

Objectives

- To provide Ph.D. students with a supportive and stimulating environment to present their research and meet their Ph.D. peers;
- To offer unique opportunities to engage with research presented by guest lecturers and McGill faculty members;
- To encourage students to attend a variety of professional development workshops that serve as a forum in which students can seek advice on professional issues.

For more details consult the information [here](#).

Comprehensive Exams

Comprehensive exams are taken in November or May of Ph.D. 3.

The purpose of comprehensive examinations is to determine whether the student demonstrates the necessary research knowledge and skills to continue in the Ph.D. program. The comprehensive examination must be completed by the end of the second year (i.e., prior to entering Ph.D.4). The comprehensive examination will have two components, written and oral. Students must pass both components.

Deadlines

- End of your first year (Ph.D.2): Finalize dissertation field with your supervisor.
- May 1 (Summer Ph.D.2) or November 1 (Fall Ph.D.3): Notify graduatestudies.music@mcgill.ca of your intent to take the exams.
- After you submit your intention to take the exams, develop a comprehensive dissertation bibliography in consultation with committee members to be finalized and submitted to the committee up to five months before the written exam date.
- After the committee receives your dissertation bibliography, they will send you the exam questions no later than 3 months before the exam submission date.
- Written exam submission: November (Ph.D.3) or May (Ph.D. 3)

See below an overview of comprehensive exams submission deadlines:

	Option 1	Option 2
Finalize dissertation field with supervisor	Winter (Ph.D.2)	Summer (Ph.D.2)
Communicate intention to take exams to graduate studies	May 1 (Ph.D.2)	November 1 (Ph.D.3)
Submit comprehensive bibliography to committee	June 1 (Ph.D.2)	December 1 (Ph.D. 3)
Committee sends exam questions to student	August 1 (Ph.D.2)	February 1 (Ph.D. 3)
Written exam submission	November 1 (Ph.D.3)	May 1 (Ph.D.3)
Oral exam	By December 1 (Ph.D.3)	By June 1 (Ph.D.3)

Written Exam

- Consists of questions exploring the contextual, theoretical and methodological aspects of the proposed dissertation research topic. Questions are intended to develop a broad, multidisciplinary perspective on your topic and answers could form the basis for the

background elements (i.e., related literature) of the Ph.D. dissertation proposal and thesis.

- The exam is written over a three-month period, from the start of the semester. Anticipated length for each question is 5-20 pages (typed, double-spaced, Arial 11pt); total: 40-60 pages (not including References).

Oral Exam

- Duration: 90-120 minutes.
- Structure:

Part 1: 30 minute public lecture presenting an overview of the main dissertation topic, followed by 30 minutes of questions by the committee and public.

Part 2: 30-60 minutes of questions on the written exam in private session with the exam committee.

- Timeline: Typically takes place two to four weeks after the written examination.
- Scope: Opportunity to elaborate, correct and enhance essay answers through questions posed by the committee. Other questions based on related topics may assess breadth of domain-specific knowledge.

Preparation

Begin preparing as early as possible and ensure you take opportunities to:

- Discuss your questions and literature review plan at regular meetings with supervisors
- Prepare and defend mock questions
- Collaborate with other doctoral students who have completed, or are preparing for, their comprehensives.

Committee

The Examination Committee consists of:

- Two full-time staff members from the candidate's area of specialization
- One member from a different area within the Department or McGill as relevant to the thesis research area
- The Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in Music, or an appointed representative, serves as Chair.

Resources

- Williamon, A., Ginsborg, J., Perkins, R., & Waddell, G. (2021). *Performing music research: Methods in music education, psychology, and performance science*. Oxford University Press.
- McPherson, G. (Ed.). (2022). *The Oxford Handbook of Music Performance, Volume 1 and 2*. Oxford University Press.

Topics in performance science are often published in the following peer-reviewed journals: Frontiers in Psychology, Music Education Research, Psychology of Music, British Journal of Music Education, Journal of Research in Music Education, Music Educators Journal, Musicae Scientiae, Medical Problems of Performing Artists.

Required Program Milestones

Students in the Ph.D. in Music program will be required to complete other program milestones. All program requirements and milestones can be tracked on the student's [myProgress page](#).

Research Progress Tracking

Students are required to submit at least one progress report per year. These reports indicate [milestones](#) that are designed to help students and supervisors clarify expectations and set goals, as well as track and monitor progress towards their degree. McGill's Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Studies requires:

"...**annual** tracking of doctoral students' progress toward the degree. The [Graduate Student Research Progress Tracking Form](#) is to be used during face-to-face meetings between the doctoral student, supervisor, and at least one other departmental representative. Having written agreed-upon expectations and clearly defined requirements aids in reduced times to completion and leads to fewer supervisor-supervisee misunderstandings."

Your progress reports are submitted here:  and you will receive reminders of upcoming or missed academic milestones.

Progress Reports and Degree Audit Forms

First year

The first annual progress report meeting should be shortly after doctoral students begin their program, but no later than December 15. In the Progress Report, objectives and expectations for the coming year must be recorded in the OBJECTIVES BOX ON PAGE 1 of the progress form. Additionally, students must complete the Letter of Understanding and Study Plan (Audit Form). The student and all committee members must sign. The **Progress Report, Letter of Understanding and Study Plan** must be uploaded by the student to [myProgress](#) no later than December 15 for approval by the Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in Music. The student will be responsible for setting up the meeting.

Subsequent years of study until degree completion

The student, supervisor (s) and/or another member of the committee must meet to review the progress that has been achieved toward the recorded objectives. Prior to these meetings, the student should record their accomplishments and progress for the year by completing the PROGRESS box on page 1 of the Report form. This completed form is then evaluated by the committee on page 2 of the Report form. All parties sign the form on page 3. At this same

meeting, objectives for the following year should be recorded in the OBJECTIVES box on page 1 of the same form. This Form may also be supplemented with Unit-specific details or documents (see page 2). At the same time, the Letter of Understanding and the Study Plan can be reviewed and if needed, updated and submitted. The progress report and, if applicable, reviewed Letter of Understanding and Study Plan must be uploaded to myProgress. The student is responsible for setting up the meeting no later than July 15th each year. Please see the [Regulations on Graduate Student Research Progress Tracking](#) for more information on unsatisfactory reports and required signatures.

Graduate Progress Report Guidelines, Graduate Student Progress Tracking Report and Audit Forms can be found on the [Schulich School of Music website](#).

Thesis Proposal

Ph.D. thesis proposal will be prepared for presentation and discussion, under guidance of the supervisor and supervisory committee, usually following the successful completion of the comprehensive examinations and required courses.

The goal of the thesis proposal will be to provide an opportunity for the student and committee to discuss constructive feedback on the research protocol and ensure:

- The research questions are relevant, specific and achievable;
- The project has a feasible, reasonable and realistic design and timeline, appropriate for a Ph.D. thesis;
- The student has the opportunity to review the thesis work and receive feedback at an early stage of research design development;
- The student has an opportunity to gain experience in developing and presenting a research protocol.

Prepare the proposal:

- The main body of the proposal is recommended to be about five (5) pages (Arial 11 pt., double space, PDF) including a description of:
 - What? Describe the research question or objectives.
 - Why? Offer a brief rationale explaining the theoretical and practical relevance of the project (review of previous work and existing gaps, and new knowledge to be obtained).
 - How? Describe the proposed research design and methodology in detail, including participants, methods of data collection and analysis, ethical requirements, timeline, expected pitfalls and alternatives. It can also include preliminary or pilot data to assess feasibility.
 - Who? Describe who will be involved in data collection and analysis.
 - So what? Describe how you anticipate the expected findings to result in specific practical applications, including practical outcomes of the research and knowledge mobilization and translation strategy.
- The proposal should also include a reference list including all sources listed in the main body of the proposal.



- You should attach a completed [Ph.D./D.Mus. Dissertation Proposal Form](#) including confirmation of REB Ethics Submission/Approval if required.








Submission and Discussion

The proposal should be submitted in the semester (excluding summer) immediately following the candidate's completion of their comprehensive examinations. The primary readerships of the proposal are the main supervisor and members of the candidate's supervisory committee. After submission, you should agree with your supervisor and supervisory committee a date to discuss and approve the proposal which is to occur in the same semester. Upon final agreement of the proposal, this will be circulated to the Graduate Studies Committee for additional comments.

Yearly Program Milestones

The table below outlines the typical progress of a student enrolled in the Ph.D. in Music, Applied Performance Sciences program. This table serves as a guide and may vary based on course offerings. Students should discuss their program pathway and progress with their supervisor and supervisory committee.

	Fall	Winter	Summer
Ph.D.1	Students in Ph.D. 1 have been accepted into the program without a Master's Degree, or with a Master's Degree in an unrelated field, and complete a series of additional preparatory courses during this year.		
Ph.D.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study plan: Complete and approve plan for degree, including timing of courses and academic milestones (e.g., comprehensive examination, progress tracking). Additional required courses Required seminars Colloquium attendance Select and meet with supervisory committee <p>By December 15:</p>  <p>Progress Report, Letter of Understanding and Study Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional required courses Required seminars Colloquium attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis research (e.g., comprehensive literature review) Notification of intention to take comprehensive exam in the Fall (May 1)
Ph.D.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete coursework Colloquium attendance Comprehensive examinations (November 1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Colloquium attendance Thesis Proposal (for those who completed comprehensive examinations in the Fall) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive examinations (May 1) Thesis research (e.g., research design and ethics application preparation)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notification of intention to take comprehensive exam in May (November 1) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By June 15: Progress report 
Ph.D.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis Proposal (for those who completed comprehensive examinations in May 1)  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis Research (e.g., Ethics approval, data collection) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis Research (e.g., data collection and analysis) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis Research (e.g., Ethics approval, data collection and analysis) By June 15: Progress report 
Ph.D.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis Research (e.g., data collection, analysis and dissemination) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis Research (e.g., data collection, analysis and dissemination) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thesis Research (e.g., data collection, analysis and dissemination) By June 15: Progress report 
Ph.D.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final thesis submission  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> December submission for Spring graduation Or Thesis research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final thesis submission if not yet done, for Fall defense, Winter graduation 	

Useful information about milestones and timelines can be found [HERE](#)

Thesis Submission and Guidelines

The thesis is original scholarship and makes a distinct contribution to knowledge. It shows familiarity with previous work in the field, and demonstrates the ability to plan and carry out research, organize findings, and defend the approach and conclusions in a scholarly manner. It is succinct and reflects the standards of the discipline, recognizing the value of music and music research beyond the “academia”.

Below you will find general thesis information for music students. For more comprehensive guidelines, visit McGill's GPS [website](#) and for writing tips, visit [Student Resources](#).

Thesis Evaluation Criteria

The thesis document will be reviewed by an expert from outside the University (external examiner), and a Schulich School of Music faculty member in discipline expertise (internal examiner).

Each of the following criteria are ranked on the following scale, Excellent, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, Fail.

1. Evidence of originality and creativity;
2. Resourcefulness, alertness to significance of findings;
3. Diligence, care, technical skill in the research;
4. Usefulness of the results to other workers in the field; value as a contribution to knowledge;
5. Grasp of subject, powers of criticism and general adequacy in review of previous work;
6. Quality of presentation (coherence, lucidity, grammar, style, freedom from typographical errors).

Thesis Submission Timeline

Initial submission	Thesis evaluation semester	Final submission deadline	Graduation date
December 15	Winter	April 15	May/June
April 15	Summer	August 15	Fall (October, November)
August 15	Fall	December 15	Winter (no convocation)

NOTE: Should the deadline date (Aug 15, Dec 15, Apr 15) fall on a weekend or a holiday, the effective deadline date will be the next working day.

Initial Submission Steps

Your supervisor may find some useful tips for selecting examiners on the Graduate Supervision [website](#). A useful overview of the Initial submission process can be found [here](#) and you can also find additional information and guidance on the [Next steps for doctoral students here](#).

At least two months before initial submission:

- Students must submit their “Intent to Submit Thesis” through myThesis.
- You will be asked to provide your thesis title, abstract, length of thesis and date of submission.
You will also be asked to nominate examiners (please discuss the examiners with your supervisor(s) prior to submitting the names). Once this is submitted, the request will be sent to your supervisor(s) and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in Music for approval. Then an invitation to the examiner will be sent through myThesis for the examiner to accept or decline. This whole approval process must be completed prior to your submission date.

- Doctoral students can access myThesis through the GPS website. Detailed guidelines and an instructional video are available on this page.
- Verify MyProgress to ensure that all components of the program are complete or components of the program are marked as “Complete” or “In Progress”.

Day of submission:

Submit your thesis through the submission page on myThesis on the date submitted in your “Intent to Submit Thesis” form. Your supervisor(s) and Associate Dean of Graduate Studies in Music will be advised of your submission, and they will be asked to approve it.

Final Submission Steps

- Review the examiner's comments with your supervisor and make revisions if required. Consult the Associate Dean (Graduate Studies) and the GPS website if the thesis has not been passed.
- Submit online as per instructions by the date in the above table.
- Notify your supervisor(s) that this has been completed. Your supervisor will review and issue the final confirmation.
- Check out the convocation website for further details, and prepare to celebrate!

Other Resources

Tools for writing and research