

**Master of Music Degree (MMus)  
Music Division, Wits School of Arts**

**Information for Applicants**

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The Master of Music (MMus) degree is a postgraduate degree in creative work and research that can be undertaken full-time or part-time. Traditionally, the creative work has taken the form of music performance or composition. But the MMus also allows for work in other areas such as, but not limited to, arrangement or a combination of transcription, analysis and performance.

The MMus consists of the creative work and a written research thesis that is related to the creative work.

The University Rules (2013, p. 310) stipulate the following requirements for the MMus:

A candidate shall:

Pursue such research as the Senate may determine under the guidance of one (or two, where appropriate) supervisor(s). The research shall comprise 50% original creative practical work and 50% dissertation. The dissertation must include an analysis of the practical work. Such practical work shall, unless the Senate otherwise determines, commence only on first registration for the programme. A permanent record of the practical work must be available for the scrutiny of the examiners at the time of the examination of the dissertation. This may be achieved by presenting records such as scores and audio and video recordings, together with each copy of the dissertation.

Admission criteria

Applicants for the MMus must typically have graduated with a BMus, BMus Honours, or other undergraduate music degree, *having specialised in the area in which they tend to do the creative work*. Typically, the MMus has been pursued by early- or mid-career professionals rather than by recent graduates. In addition:

- a) Applicants who tend to pursue performance in the MMus will be required to perform an audition consisting of at least two different works of a combined duration of 15 minutes for a panel; a guide to the standard of performance required is that of a Performer's Licentiate of the external examining bodies: ABRSM, Unisa, Trinity. Applicants who wish to pursue creative work under the rubric of composition will be required to present a portfolio consisting of three different samples of original work with a combined duration of 15 minutes; the applicant should have had public performances of some of his/her compositions.
- b) Applicants who have not recently completed an undergraduate or postgraduate course or degree that involves written research, such as a long essay or mini-dissertation, may be required to present a sample of writing and/or successfully complete, as a co-requisite, a research

methodology course within the University; a co-requisite course is not part of the MMus itself, but in addition to it.

### Application

Applicants should, in the first instance, initiate discussion of their proposed plans for the creative work and research with relevant Wits Music staff. See the Wits School of Arts website (<http://wsoa.wits.ac.za/music/staff/>) for staff and their contact details.

Once it has been established that there is supervisory expertise within the area of creative work the applicant wishes to pursue, the applicant should complete a Faculty of Humanities Application for Postgraduate Study form, obtainable from the Wits School of Arts' postgraduate administrator Mrs Sao Mendes (Sao.Mendes@wits.ac.za, 011 717 4617), or apply online at: <http://www.wits.ac.za/postgraduate/>. In addition, *as an attachment to the form, applicants should include a one-page statement outlining their intended creative work and research.*

If applicable, applicants may have to fulfill one or more of the requirements detailed in the Admission section above. Candidates will be informed of this once their application has been processed by Faculty.

### Registration

Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. If a candidate is accepted to the degree they may register either at the start of the academic year, in January/February, or mid-year, in July.

The typical period of registration for the MMus for a full-time candidate is two years, and three years part-time.

### Fees

The fee of the MMus R39 710-R41 840 per annum (full-time) and R8 286-R16 333 per annum (part-time). Financial assistance and scholarships are available—please see the following website for more information: <http://www.wits.ac.za/postgraduate/student-finance/>

### Supervision

The MMus is a research degree that is undertaken through supervision, which includes performance lessons for performance candidates, rather than formal taught courses. Notwithstanding this, and depending on the nature of the creative work and the intake of candidates, there may from time to time be seminar-type classes, attendance at and participation in which will be compulsory.

The nature of the MMus implies that most candidates will need more than one supervisor. The School will only accept candidates for whom a suitable supervisor(s) are available and will attempt to involve expertise from other divisions within the School or from outside the University where necessary. In the case of co-supervision one of the supervisors will be appointed as primary supervisor.

### Relationship between creative work and thesis

There must be a coherent relationship between the creative work and the thesis. This does not necessarily mean that the thesis must be a direct commentary on the creative work. It must, however, serve to contextualise the creative work critically.

By way of example, in the field of performance the candidate may choose to write a thesis containing an analysis of the compositions that are performed and/or a critical commentary on previous performances. The research could focus on one or more of the following: a critical exploration of the history, theory and practice of the creative work; the development and creative application of new materials and technologies; the relationship between the performing arts and society; and the relationship between the performing arts and other disciplines.

Depending on the nature of the project, and taking into consideration examiners' competencies, the creative work and thesis may be examined separately or as an integrated whole.

In the Research Proposal as well as the thesis the candidate must demonstrate how the scholarly work informs and elucidates the creative work.

### Scope of the creative work

The appropriate scope of the creative work is, in the first instance, discussed with the supervisor(s). This is then tabled for further discussion by Music staff. Finally, it is outlined in the Research Proposal, for approval by the Faculty.

Guidelines include the following. In the field of performance, candidates will typically perform two 70-minute recitals in an appropriate and approved performance venue (noted in the Research Proposal), within or without the University. In the area of composition, candidates typically present a portfolio of work of approximate duration of 60 minutes.

Note: If the candidate's creative work is presented outside the University or uses human and/or non-human resources beyond those available within the University, the cost of such is borne by the candidate.

### Scope of the thesis

The length of the thesis should be between 25 000 and 30 000 words.

#### Submission of creative work

In some instances, for example in the field of performance, a MMus candidate will have to present part of the creative work in public at the University (such as at a lunch-hour concert or at a “combined practical”), to assess readiness of the work for examination.

All creative work forming part of the MMus must be submitted in the form of retainable documentation – video recordings, audio recordings, scores, transcriptions, and other appropriate visual and audio forms of documentation. In order to avoid any dispute around this matter, the Research Proposal must indicate for approval what documentation would be submitted.

#### Submission of dissertation

The deadline date for dissertation submissions is mid-February. Students will need to complete the required forms and obtain written permission and approval from the supervisor before submitting the work.

#### Annual report

It is important to meet regularly with your supervisor and draw up a schedule that suits your particular study. You will also be expected to submit an annual report to your supervisor which outlines the progress you have made and your plans for the next registration period.