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A Content Analysis of Graduate Degrees in Music Education in NASM Accredited Institutions

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Cover Page Footnote

A Content Analysis of Graduate Degrees in Music Education in NASM Accredited Institutions Karen Koner
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine graduate degree programs in music education in NASM accredited institutions with the specific areas of degree and institution information, admissions, and curricula. For this content analysis, I collected data through the websites of NASM accredited institutions that offered graduate degrees in music education, including master's degrees ($N = 203$) and doctoral degrees ($n = 53$). The institution and degree information for these graduate degree programs included types of degrees offered, format of degrees (e.g., summers only, distance learning), location where the programs were located, and Carnegie Classifications (American Council on Education, 2023). The admissions category included degrees and materials required for admittance (e.g., teaching videos, writing samples). For the third category, curricula, I established the frequency of coursework that was required and optional for graduate programs. The results from this study indicate that graduate programs in music education were predominately in public institutions, in a fall/spring semester format, and required students to complete coursework to develop research skills. Additionally, the Master of Music (MM) and the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) were the primary graduate degrees offered for advanced degrees in music education. The results from this study provide a platform for music teacher educators to examine current practices and curricula of graduate programs throughout the United States.

Keywords

curriculum, graduate studies, music education, music teacher education

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Music education graduate degrees are integral to the music education profession and can be traced back to beginning over 100 years ago. Master's degree programs in music education emerged in the mid-1920s throughout the United States in Indiana, Illinois, and New York, while doctoral programs began a few years later. The University of Iowa initiated one of the first Ph.D. programs in music education in 1939 (Donathan, 1982) and over the next 50 years, additional doctoral programs in music education appeared. For example, The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign approved an Ed.D. in music education in 1951 and Michigan State University launched a Ph.D. in music education in 1952 (Hash, 2019). With the emergence and growing popularity of graduate programs, the National Association for Music Education, formerly the Music Educators National Conference, created The Committee of Graduate Study in Music Education in 1954 to discuss graduate studies in this area. This Committee of Graduate Study in Music Education stated that the growth of PK-12 music programs across the United States caused a higher demand for graduate degrees for music educators. They stated this demand for graduate degrees was for two reasons. The first reason was for administrative items (e.g., academic rank, tenure) and the second was for the demand for advanced study of music (The Committee on Graduate Study in Music Education, 1954).

THE PURPOSE OF A GRADUATE DEGREE

Scholars have examined different topics regarding the master's degree in music education including perceptions and views of music education program directors and faculty regarding master's degrees (Conway et al., 2020b; Springer et al., 2022), curricular issues and supervision of graduate students (Madsen, 2003), the effects of a master's degree on teaching practices and students (Conway et al., 2009), and skills developed in a master's program (Phillips, 2008). Scholars have stated that a primary purpose of a Master of Music Education degree program is to improve teaching skills (Conway et al., 2020a; Springer et al., 2022) and discussed that this master's degree should require students to study on their applied instrument throughout their entire degree program (Madsen, 2003).

For the curriculum for doctoral students, Madsen (2003) believed that students should self-select music courses that align with their strengths and work on making up for any deficiencies. Phillips (2008) held a different viewpoint and stated that doctoral students in music education should focus on and continue to explore their musicianship skills, as in his experience these students hope to find a collegiate job that includes conducting an ensemble. Phillips also stated that the doctoral curriculum had little emphasis on building teaching skills. When surveying faculty at institutions offering a Ph.D. in music education, Kelly and VanWeelden (2017) found the faculty placed less value on the students interacting with public school teachers, teaching graduate music education courses, and participating in school/college committees. These participants

believed Ph.D. students should observe and assist in undergraduate classes, supervise field-teaching experiences, and conduct scholarly activities.

Educators who enter a doctoral program often hope to pursue a position in higher education as a music teacher educator upon graduation (Martin, 2016; Teachout, 2008), and music teacher educators typically have K-12 teaching experience prior to entering higher education (Brewer & Rickels, 2012; Hewitt & Thompson, 2006). Among 342 music teacher education faculty, Hewitt and Thompson (2006) found that 95.3% had previously taught in a K-12 setting and in a sample of 236 music teacher educators, Brewer and Rickels (2012) reported that 96.4% had K-12 teaching experience. However, the path to transitioning from K-12 education to higher education can present challenges such as creating a research agenda (Vasil & McCall, 2018) and the cost associated with gaining a doctoral degree including attending research conferences (Vasil & McCall, 2018), the reduction of income while working on the degree, and receiving little to no financial assistance (Teachout, 2004).

RESEARCH IN THE MUSIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The topic of the role of research in a master's of music education degree program is also an important curricular topic (Herbert, 2008; Madsen, 2003; Phillips, 2008; Springer, 2023). For example, Madsen (2003) discussed how music education master's degree programs should include a research component; however, it does not need to include a final research project more than a 12–15-page topical paper. Phillips (2008) shared a similar viewpoint, stating that most people who finish a music education master's degree will not pursue a doctorate; therefore, the curricula should not be focused on developing scholars but rather on developing improved music educators who will stay in their PK-12 teaching jobs.

Master's students in music education seem to have positive attitudes and experiences towards research expectations found in a master's degree program (Conway et al., 2009; Dorfman & Lipscomb, 2005; Springer, 2023). Springer found that graduate students ($N = 140$) had positive attitudes towards research and believed their degree program improved their teaching and research skills. Springer also noted that participants who indicated they planned to pursue a doctorate in the future had significantly more positive attitudes towards research than those who did not plan to pursue a doctorate. When exploring the perceived impact of a master's degree in music education on teaching practices and student achievement, Conway et al.'s (2009) participants stated the final exam and thesis of their master's degree directly impacted their teaching practices. This final research allowed participants to reflect upon their own teaching and student practicing experiences, and apply research ideas to their teaching.

Throughout the past decade, the number of doctorates awarded in music education from an institution accredited through The National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) has remained somewhat consistent with 93 doctorates awarded

between 2009-2010 and 89 awarded between 2019-2020 (Higher Education Arts Data Service Project, 2023). The doctoral curriculum has been traditionally viewed as introducing students to the field of research (Gilbert, 2004). Music education scholars have expressed ideas and thoughts about the research expectations for a music education doctoral student. Herbert (2008) stated that music education doctoral students are expected to be producers of new knowledge, and Phillips (2008) stated that the primary focus of a doctorate program is to produce research scholars. The culmination of these research skills built in a doctoral curriculum is typically the final research dissertation. In a survey of doctoral music education students enrolled in institutions accredited by NASM, most participants (86%) stated that they did not have options for the format of their final dissertation, and it needed to be completed as the traditional book-length monograph (Sims & Cassidy, 2016). Madsen (2003) stated the dissertation topic should be chosen and within the capabilities of both the student and the primary major professor.

FLEXIBLE LEARNING IN GRADUATE DEGREES

Perhaps one of the largest impacts on graduate programs in music education was the growth and expansion of the worldwide web (Hash, 2019). For example, in 1999, The University of Hawaii at Manoa began offering an online component for master's degrees to assist students who were living farther away from campus. By 2001, students could enroll in the first fully online master's degree in music education that was offered through a NASM accredited institution (Hash, 2019). This led to a shift in the early 2000's, when alternative approaches to graduate music education, such as summer programs and distance learning options, became more mainstream (Teachout, 2004; Walls, 2008). As these formats began to gain popularity, scholars discussed the need for flexible learning in graduate studies in music education (Fung, 2004). Reasons a person may elect to enroll in a flexible learning option for graduate school, include taking care of family members, distance to the campus, scheduling (Fung, 2004), or to remain teaching in their PK - 12 classrooms while pursuing higher education (Albert, 2015; Conway et al., 2009). However, these programs may also come with challenges. For example, students who attend a summer or distance learning graduate program may miss the lack of performance opportunities that they may have experienced in a traditional academic year program (Albert, 2015; Conway et al., 2008; Conway et al., 2009). Additionally, Gonzalez-Moreno (2012) discovered students in distance learning programs may have a negative experience due to the environmental factors, such as lack of peer collaboration and communication, integrating as a new student, and having inadequate communication with faculty.

NASM GUIDELINES

While there is no specific guide to a required curriculum for a graduate degree in music education, NASM produces a yearly handbook that provides standards and

guidelines for their membership including sections devoted to music education (NASM, 2022). NASM stated that master's students should review contemporary issues and problems in music education including reviewing curriculum development and teaching methodologies and innovations. For master's students, NASM acknowledged that institutions may have a practice-oriented or research-oriented music education degree program. NASM recommended for the practice-oriented, the student completes a final project in performance and/or pedagogy and for the research-oriented degree, students should be required to complete a research project or thesis. For doctoral students, NASM recommended they study the philosophical and psychological foundations and the pedagogy of teaching and learning music (NASM, 2023).

While NASM (2023) provides this outline for graduate degrees and scholars have published opinion pieces on graduate work in music education (Herbert, 2008; Madsen, 2003, Phillips, 2008), there is a lack of empirical research examining the full curricula and degree information of graduate studies in music education. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine graduate degree programs in music education in NASM accredited institutions with the specific areas of degree and institution information, admissions, and curriculum.

METHODOLOGY

Design

For this content analysis, I collected data through the websites of NASM accredited institutions offering graduate degrees in music education. I compiled a list of all 639 institutions accredited by NASM (NASM, 2022) and visited the profile of each institution to see if they offered a graduate degree in music education. According to their NASM profiles, 229 institutions offered a Master of Music Education Degree, and 54 institutions offered a Doctorate in Music Education. My unit of analysis was the website for the NASM accredited institution during the 2022-2023 academic school year. NASM's 2022-2023 handbook stated that "published materials concerning the institution and the music unit shall be clear, accurate, and readily available" (p. 74); therefore, I believed this would be an appropriate method for data collection.

Sample

I divided the 229 institutions into the six geographical divisions as defined by the National Association for Music Education (NAfME); Western ($n = 15$); Southwestern ($n = 44$); Southern ($n = 63$); Northwest ($n = 12$); North Central ($n = 52$) and; Eastern ($n = 43$) (NAfME, 2022). Once the institutions were divided by state and NAfME division, I ensured they were listed in alphabetical order by state. Neuendorf (2019) stated that decisions on variables, the measurement, and coding rules need to be made prior to the final measurement process, thus I created this 10% systematic subsample ($n = 24$) to explore the institutions' websites to arrive at a priori codes to create the data

collection protocol. I chose this method to arrive at a 10% subsample as I wanted to ensure I had equal representation from institutions across the United States.

Using this systematic sample (Neuendorf, 2019), I explored the NASM accredited institutions' websites to create a data collection protocol. This methodology has been used previously by scholars in music education (e.g., Nichols, 2013; Palkki et al., 2016; Stambaugh & Dyson, 2016) and through this step I created the coding frame of three main categories:

Institution and Degree Information: Institution and degree information included: (a) location of institution, (b) type of institution (private or public), (c) degree offered, (d) degree format (e.g., fall/spring, distance), (e) teaching certification with Masters, (f) credits required, and (g) emphasis or cognate required of the degree.

Admissions: Admission requirements included requirements for entrance into the program: (a) grade point average, (b) years of teaching experience, (c) Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score, (d) bachelor's or master's degree major, (e) state teaching certification, (f) auditions, and (g) supplemental materials (e.g., teaching videos, writing samples).

Curriculum: I compiled a list of courses that are required for each graduate degree program, including required coursework and optional coursework. I labeled a course as required if all graduate students needed to complete the course to graduate with the degree. I labeled the course as optional if the student may select the course as an option.

During this step I made a few adjustments. First, I decided to gather the data for the Carnegie Classification (e.g., R1, R2) of each institution from the Carnegie website directly (American Council on Education, 2023), rather than from the institutions' websites. Second, I removed the elective credits required for each degree, as this became a challenge to codify as institutions may have electives within the music education coursework, from any music class, or electives outside of the area of music. Finally, I removed examinations required for the degree program (e.g., oral exams), as this information was not typically attainable from the university website. Following the creation of data collection protocol, I met individually with two music education scholars to review my methodology and examine the protocol to support the validity and reliability of the study (Neuendorf, 2019; Shaw & Potter, 2021).

Data Collection

To collect data for this content analysis, I explored the website of the School of Music or the Music Department of the 229 NASM accredited institutions that listed a graduate degree in music education on their NASM profile (National Association of Schools of Music, 2022) throughout the 2022-2023 academic school year. During this process, I removed 26 institutions from the list for master's degrees for the following: (a) the graduate degree was housed in the College or School of Education, and

therefore, does not have the music education specific coursework ($n = 5$); (b) the graduate degree was a fifth year added onto the undergraduate degree to result in a fifth year masters option, which resulted in a large overlap of coursework between the master's and the bachelor's degree ($n = 3$); (c) the institution only offered a master's with a teaching certification which resulted in a large overlap of coursework between the master's and the bachelor's degree ($n = 2$); (d) the degree was considered a post baccalaureate ($n = 1$); (e) the graduate degree was suspended ($n = 2$); and (f) the institution did not offer a graduate degree despite it being listed on the NASM website ($n = 13$). Additionally, during this process, I eliminated one institution for the doctoral degree, as despite it being listed on the NASM website as offering a Ph.D. in music education, this degree was not available according to the institution's website. The final sample included NASM accredited institutions with a master's degree ($N = 203$), in which 26.10% ($n = 53$) also offered a doctorate in music education.

RESULTS

Master's Degrees in Music Education

Institution and Degree Information

For NASM accredited institutions that offered a master's degree in music education ($N = 203$), 161 were public institutions (79.31%) and 42 were private institutions (20.69%). Seventy-two institutions (35.46%) required 30 units for completion of a master's degree, 38 institutions (18.71%) required 32 units, and 28 institutions (13.79%) required between 30-39 units, which was dependent upon the student's cognate area. Of the master's degrees offered, 62.06% ($n = 126$) were listed as a Master of Music or MM with the second largest being the Master of Music Education (MME) ($n = 40$, 19.70%). Six (3.55%) universities offered two different options, such as a MM or a MA depending upon if the student completed a final research thesis or a final practitioner-based project. In these instances, both degrees were included in the data. Among 65 institutions (32.01%), music education was a track or a cognate of the master's degree path. This means an institution may offer a Master of Music (MM), and students will choose an emphasis within the MM, such as conducting, music education, or performance.

The Carnegie Foundation classified 74 institutions (36.45%) as very high research activity, or R1, and 48 institutions (23.64%) as high research activity, or R2 (American Council on Education, 2023). When examining data by Carnegie classifications, 37 of the 74 R1 institutions (50.00%) offered a fall/spring academic year degree program (e.g., coursework in-person during fall and spring semesters), 10 institutions (13.51%) offered the option of a fall/spring academic year or a distance learning degree, and five of the R1 institutions (6.75%) offered a distance only degree format option. A complete list of the institution and degree information is in Table 1 and by location is Table 2.

Most institutions ($n = 106$, 52.21%) required students to choose an emphasis or cognate area within the music education degree program. Examples of these cognate areas included instrumental or choral, practice- or research-oriented, and elementary or secondary focused. The largest cognate area ($n = 76$, 37.43%) was research or practice-oriented, where a student could choose to pursue a research or a practitioner cognate of the degree. When I examined data according to their Carnegie classification, 29 R1 institutions (39.19%) offered the option of research-or a practice-oriented cognate. A complete list of these cognate areas is in Table 3. Although it was beyond the scope of this research to specifically examine master's programs that also led to a teaching certification, it is noted that 27.58% ($n = 56$) of institutions offered a separate option to achieve either a post baccalaureate, a separate degree track, or a different graduate degree that would lead to a teaching certification in music education.

Admissions

Most institutions had a specific undergraduate degree required for admittance ($n = 114$, 56.15%): (a) music education ($n = 47$, 23.15%), (b) music ($n = 53$, 26.0%), (c) music or music education ($n = 6$, 2.95%), (d) from a NASM accredited institution ($n = 6$, 2.95%), or (e) an appropriate degree ($n = 2$, .09%). Fourteen institutions (6.89%) required GRE scores to be submitted and 31.03% ($n = 63$) required a teaching certification or credential to enter the master's degree program. Fifteen institutions (7.38%) required at least one year of teaching experience, while 11 institutions (5.41%) required a minimum of two years of teaching experience. Additional requirements for admittance included a written personal statement (36.94%, $n = 75$), a written teaching philosophy (11.33%, $n = 23$), an interview (29.55%, $n = 60$), a scholarly writing sample (22.66%, $n = 46$), a teaching video (24.63%, $n = 50$), an audition on the applicant's primary instrument (14.77%, $n = 30$), and state teaching certification test scores (e.g., PRAXIS) (4.43%, $n = 9$).

Curricula/Coursework

Nine of the institutions (4.43%) did not have their coursework or curricula listed on the website. Twelve institutions (5.91%) stated "music education coursework" but did not list the specific courses. Outside of music education coursework, institutions largely required music theory ($n = 155$, 76.35%) and music history ($n = 140$, 68.96%) coursework. For music theory, 17 institutions (8.37%) required two semesters of music theory and 15 institutions (7.38%) required two semesters of music history. One hundred and seventy-nine institutions (88.17%) listed a required course in research methods. Three of those institutions had the research methods course requirement taught in the College of Education, rather than in the School/Department of Music. Thirty-two institutions (15.76%) required a second semester of a research course. Fourteen of the institutions (6.89%) required one semester of research methods completed with other music graduate students (e.g., conducting, performance) and the second semester of research coursework with music education graduate students only.

I examined data of music performance course options of applied lessons and/or ensembles based upon the format of the degree program. For fully distance programs that offered applied lessons, two required (.09%) applied lessons and four (1.97%) had the option of applied lessons, while one (.04%) required ensemble participation and two (.09%) had the option of ensemble participation. For summer only programs, two (.09%) required applied lessons and two (.09%) had the option of applied lessons, and two (.09%) had a requirement of ensemble participation. For a fall/spring academic year program, 25 (12.31%) required applied lessons, 16 (7.88%) had the option, 23 (11.33%) required ensemble participation, and 13 (6.40%) had participation in an ensemble as optional. A complete list of curricula can be found in Table 4.

Doctorate Degrees in Music Education

Institution and Degree Information

Of the confirmed NASM accredited institutions that offered a doctorate degree in music education ($n = 53$), 84.90% were public institutions ($n = 45$) and forty-three of the institutions (81.13%) offered a Doctor of Philosophy or Ph.D. Four institutions (7.54%) offered more than one type of doctoral degree (e.g. a Ph.D., a D.M.E.). Of the 53 institutions, 98.11% ($n = 51$) offered a fall/spring semester model and two institutions (3.77%) proposed a completely online degree program. The Carnegie classifications (American Council on Education, 2023) for institutions that offered a doctorate in music education were 83.01% ($n = 44$) very high research activity (R1) and 9.43% ($n = 5$), high research activity (R2). Most institutions categorized as R1 ($n = 42$, 95.45%) offered a Ph.D., except for two (4.54%), both of which offered a D.M.A. Florida housed the most doctorate programs in music education ($n = 4$, 7.54%). Nineteen states did not offer a doctorate in music education in a NASM accredited institution. A complete list of the degree and institution information is in Table 1 and a list of doctorate degree programs by state is included in Table 2.

Table 1

Institution and Degree Information for NASM Accredited Institutions that offer Graduate Degrees in Music Education

| | Masters Degrees ($N = 203$) | % | Doctorate Degrees ($n = 53$) | % |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| Public or Private: | | | | |
| Public Institution | 161 | 79.31 | 45 | 84.90 |
| Private Institution | 42 | 20.68 | 8 | 15.09 |
| Degree Offered | | | | |
| Master of Music (MM) | 126 | 62.06 | -- | -- |
| Master of Music Education (MME) | 40 | 19.70 | -- | -- |
| Master of Arts (MA) | 29 | 14.28 | -- | -- |

| | | | | |
|--|----|-------|----|-------|
| Master of Science (MS) | 8 | 3.94 | -- | -- |
| Master of Education (M.Ed) | 2 | .09 | -- | -- |
| Master of Music (MMU) | 2 | .09 | -- | -- |
| Master of Arts in Education (MAE) | 1 | .04 | -- | -- |
| Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) | 1 | .04 | -- | -- |
| Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) | -- | -- | 46 | 86.79 |
| Doctor of Musical Arts (D.M.A.) | -- | -- | 4 | 7.54 |
| Doctor of Arts (DA) | -- | -- | 3 | 5.66 |
| Doctor of Music Education (D.M.E.) | -- | -- | 2 | 3.77 |
| Doctor of Education (Ed.D) | -- | -- | 1 | 1.88 |
| Carnegie Classification | | | | |
| Research 1 (R1) | 74 | 36.45 | 44 | 83.01 |
| Research 2 (R2) | 48 | 23.64 | 5 | 9.43 |
| Other | 81 | 39.90 | 4 | 7.54 |
| Degree Format | | | | |
| Fall/Spring Academic Year | 88 | 43.34 | 51 | 96.22 |
| Distance (fully online) | 26 | 12.80 | 2 | 3.78 |
| Fall/Spring or Summer (student choice) | 24 | 11.82 | -- | -- |
| Distance with a summer requirement | 19 | 9.35 | -- | -- |
| Fall/Spring or Distance (student choice) | 16 | 7.88 | -- | -- |
| Fall/Spring with summer requirements | 9 | 4.43 | -- | -- |
| Summer only | 8 | 3.94 | -- | -- |
| Fall/Spring and Distance (hybrid) | 3 | 1.47 | -- | -- |
| Fall/Spring, or Summer, or a Hybrid (including distance) | 3 | 1.47 | -- | -- |
| Fall/Spring or Distance (either with a summer component) | 2 | .09 | -- | -- |
| Distance or Distance/ Fall/Spring Hybrid (student choice) | 2 | .09 | -- | -- |
| Fall/Spring, or Summer, Or Hybrid (student choice) | 1 | .04 | -- | -- |
| Unknown | 3 | 1.47 | -- | -- |

Table 2*Music Education Graduate Degrees in NASM Accredited Institutions by State*

| State | NAfME Division | Masters Institutions (N = 203) | Doctor Institutions (n = 53) |
|------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Alabama | Southern | 7 | 2 |
| Alaska | Northwest | 0 | 0 |
| Arizona | Western | 2 | 2 |
| Arkansas | Southwestern | 3 | 0 |
| California | Western | 7 | 0 |
| Colorado | Southwestern | 4 | 2 |

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------------|----|---|
| Connecticut | Eastern | 2 | 1 |
| Delaware | Eastern | 1 | 0 |
| District of Columbia | Eastern | 1 | 0 |
| Florida | Southern | 7 | 4 |
| Georgia | Southern | 5 | 2 |
| Hawaii | Western | 1 | 1 |
| Idaho | Northwest | 2 | 0 |
| Illinois | North Central | 9 | 1 |
| Indiana | North Central | 4 | 2 |
| Iowa | North Central | 2 | 1 |
| Kansas | Southwestern | 4 | 1 |
| Kentucky | Southern | 7 | 1 |
| Louisiana | Southern | 4 | 1 |
| Maine | Eastern | 2 | 0 |
| Maryland | Eastern | 2 | 1 |
| Massachusetts | Eastern | 4 | 2 |
| Michigan | North Central | 6 | 3 |
| Minnesota | North Central | 3 | 1 |
| Mississippi | Southern | 6 | 3 |
| Missouri | Southwestern | 6 | 2 |
| Montana | Northwest | 2 | 0 |
| Nebraska | North Central | 3 | 1 |
| Nevada | Western | 2 | 0 |
| New Hampshire | Eastern | 0 | 0 |
| New Jersey | Eastern | 6 | 0 |
| New Mexico | Southwestern | 2 | 0 |
| New York | Eastern | 8 | 2 |
| North Carolina | Southern | 2 | 1 |
| North Dakota | North Central | 3 | 1 |
| Ohio | North Central | 11 | 3 |
| Oklahoma | Southwestern | 4 | 1 |
| Oregon | Northwest | 1 | 1 |
| Pennsylvania | Eastern | 9 | 2 |
| Rhode Island | Eastern | 2 | 0 |
| South Carolina | Southern | 5 | 1 |
| South Dakota | North Central | 2 | 0 |
| Tennessee | Southern | 4 | 1 |
| Texas | Southwestern | 17 | 3 |
| Utah | Western | 3 | 1 |
| Vermont | Eastern | 0 | 0 |
| Virginia | Southern | 6 | 2 |
| Washington | Northwest | 4 | 0 |
| West Virginia | Southern | 2 | 0 |
| Wisconsin | North Central | 3 | 0 |
| Wyoming | Northwest | 1 | 0 |

Admissions

Three (5.66%) institutions did not list any admissions requirements. Seven institutions (13.20%) stated that the applicant must have at least one degree (either undergraduate or graduate) in music education for admittance. Five institutions (9.43%) had a requirement of the applicant having a Master of Music Education degree. Eleven institutions (20.75%) listed a requirement that the applicant must be a certified or credentialed music educator. Most institutions ($n = 30$, 56.66%) required applicants to have prior teaching experience to be admitted to a doctorate program. Four institutions (7.54%) required at least two years of teaching experience in a K-12 setting and 20 institutions (37.73%) required at least three years of teaching experience. Of the institutions that required three years of K-12 teaching experience, two institutions' websites listed that five years of teaching experience was preferred.

Thirty-one institutions (58.49%) required a personal statement for admittance and 36 (67.92%) required a writing sample (e.g. research paper). Thirteen institutions (24.52%) had a requirement of GRE scores and three institutions (5.66%) stated it was optional to submit GRE scores. Of the institutions that required the GRE for entrance ($n = 13$, 24.52%), 12 (92.30%) were R1 institutions. Twenty-six institutions (49.05%) required an interview with music education faculty, 29 institutions (54.71%) required a teaching video, and two institutions (3.77%) listed a required audition on a primary instrument.

Table 3

Cognate Area Options for Master Degree in Music Education (N=203)

| Cognate Area | Frequency | % |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Administration (e.g. Arts, Education) | 1 | .04 |
| Applied/Performance | 14 | 6.89 |
| Band | 3 | 1.47 |
| Choral | 38 | 18.71 |
| Composition | 6 | 2.95 |
| Conducting | 12 | 5.91 |
| Created by Student | 3 | 1.47 |
| Elementary General | 20 | 9.85 |
| Ethnomusicology | 2 | .09 |
| Instrumental | 36 | 17.73 |
| Jazz | 6 | 2.95 |
| Kodaly | 5 | 2.46 |
| Musicology | 3 | 1.47 |
| Music Technology | 3 | 1.47 |
| Music Theory | 4 | 1.97 |
| Orff | 4 | 1.97 |
| Pedagogy | 9 | 4.43 |
| Research/Practitioner | 76 | 37.43 |
| Secondary Education | 2 | .09 |
| Studio Faculty | 1 | .04 |

Table 4*Coursework Frequency of Graduate Level Coursework at NASM Accredited Institutions*

| | Masters Required (N = 203) | Masters Optional (N = 203) | Doctorate Required (n = 53) | Doctorate Optional (n = 53) |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Administration & Supervision | 12 | 16 | 1 | 0 |
| Advanced Studies in General, Choral, or Instrumental Methods | -- | -- | 3 | 2 |
| Advocacy and/or Policy | 3 | 1 | -- | -- |
| Aesthetic of Musiking | -- | -- | 0 | 1 |
| Applied Lessons | 40 | 35 | 1 | 0 |
| Arranging | 1 | 6 | -- | -- |
| Arts Integration | 0 | 3 | -- | -- |
| Assessment | 38 | 5 | 8 | 0 |
| Behavior/Classroom Management | 3 | 4 | -- | -- |
| Capstone (Thesis, Project) | 147 | 7 | -- | -- |
| Choral Methods | 5 | 40 | -- | -- |
| College or University Teaching/Pedagogy | 5 | 5 | 17 | 2 |
| Community Music | -- | -- | 0 | 1 |
| Composition | 4 | 10 | -- | -- |
| Conducting/Rehearsing | 23 | 58 | -- | -- |
| Curriculum | 62 | 9 | 5 | 1 |
| Dalcroze | 0 | 2 | -- | -- |
| Diction | 1 | 0 | -- | -- |
| Ear Training/Aural Skills | 2 | 2 | -- | -- |
| Courses in the College/School of Education | 22 | 13 | -- | -- |
| Elementary Music Methods | 5 | 37 | -- | -- |
| Ensembles | 37 | 23 | -- | -- |
| Entrepreneurship | 0 | 2 | -- | -- |
| Exceptional Learners | 4 | 16 | -- | -- |
| Experiential Learning | 1 | 0 | -- | -- |
| Foundations in Music Education | 71 | 7 | 5 | 2 |
| Guitar | 0 | 4 | -- | -- |
| History of Music Education | 54 | 7 | 10 | 4 |
| Historical Research | -- | -- | 4 | 0 |
| Innovations in Music Education | 1 | 0 | -- | -- |
| Instrumental Methods | 5 | 40 | -- | -- |
| Jazz based coursework | 3 | 17 | 0 | 1 |
| K-12 Methods | 6 | 4 | -- | -- |
| Kodaly | 1 | 9 | -- | -- |
| Learning Theories | 14 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| Literacy | 0 | 2 | -- | -- |
| Literature | 18 | 40 | 0 | 1 |

| | | | | |
|--|-----|----|----|----|
| Marching Band Methods/Techniques | 1 | 9 | -- | -- |
| Mixed Methods Research | -- | -- | 1 | 1 |
| Music in the Schools | 6 | 0 | -- | -- |
| Music History | 140 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| Music Technology | 26 | 18 | 0 | 2 |
| Music Theory | 155 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| Music Perception | 1 | 0 | -- | -- |
| Orchestration | -- | -- | 0 | 1 |
| Orff | 1 | 15 | -- | -- |
| Pedagogy | 12 | 27 | -- | -- |
| Philosophy of Music Education | 65 | 5 | 15 | 5 |
| Philosophical Research | -- | -- | 1 | 0 |
| Power, Marginalization and Privilege in Music Ed | -- | -- | 0 | 1 |
| Psychology of Music Education | 58 | 21 | 18 | 7 |
| Qualitative Research | 4 | 4 | 17 | 5 |
| Quantitative Research | 7 | 1 | 13 | 4 |
| Religious Based Music | 1 | 4 | 2 | 0 |
| Research Methods | 179 | 0 | 22 | 2 |
| Research Seminar/Colloquium | 8 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| Secondary Music Education | 1 | 3 | -- | -- |
| Seminars in Music Education (rolling topics) | 38 | 16 | 20 | 1 |
| Social Justice in Music Education | 2 | 1 | -- | -- |
| Sociology in Music Education | 19 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Socio/Emotional Learners | 2 | 0 | -- | -- |
| Statistics | 3 | 4 | 17 | 1 |
| Topics in Music Performance | 3 | 0 | -- | -- |
| Trends/Current Issues in Music Education | 46 | 16 | 10 | 2 |
| Vocal Techniques/Diction | 1 | 7 | -- | -- |
| World Music/Ethnomusicology | 12 | 14 | -- | -- |

Curricula/Coursework

Thirteen of the institutions (24.52%) did not have their coursework or curriculum available on the website. An additional three institutions (5.55%) had their coursework only offered through their education department and not music education. The most frequent course seen as a requirement for a doctorate in music education was Research Methods ($n = 22$, 41.51%), followed by Seminar in Music Education ($n = 20$, 37.73%). Additional courses that appeared frequently throughout the content analysis were Psychology of Music Education ($n = 18$, 33.96%), Music Teacher Education or Collegiate Education ($n = 17$, 32.08%), Qualitative Research Methods ($n = 17$, 32.08%), and Statistics or Analytical Techniques ($n = 17$, 32.08%). A complete list of courses required or optional in NASM accredited institutions is in Table 4.

For the institutions that offered two options for a doctorate degree in music education ($n = 4$), I examined the differences between the degree programs, to see if

they were curriculum based. The institution that offered a Ph.D. and an Ed.D. did not have the information listed on the website. However, for the institution that offered a D.M.A. and a Ph.D. in music education, the D.M.A. included four or five semesters of applied lessons on a primary instrument, whereas the Ph.D. did not require any applied lessons. Instead of applied lessons, the Ph.D. degree option had at least 10 credits of electives to be completed. For the institutions that offered a D.M.E. and a Ph.D. in music education ($n = 2$), one did not list any curriculum differences but did state on their website the D.M.E. typically had a more scholarly focus. For the other institution, the Ph.D. required an additional 15 credits to be completed over the D.M.E. The additional 15 credits were research-based coursework (e.g., literature review). Additionally at this institution, the D.M.E. required a thesis to be completed, whereas the Ph.D. required a dissertation.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine graduate degree programs in music education in NASM accredited institutions with the specific areas of degree and institution information, admissions, and curriculum. As I examined the institution information, I noticed that public institutions predominantly offered graduate degrees in a fall/spring academic year and offered a MM for the master's degree or a Ph.D. for the doctorate. Of note was that over half of institutions with a Master of Music Education degree offered some sort of alternative format (e.g., summer only, distance education). These same flexible learning options were not as readily available for doctorate programs in NASM institutions. Flexible learning options can be helpful for master's programs (Fung, 2004) so educators can keep teaching in the classroom (Albert, 2015; Conway et al., 2009) or because of location challenges (Hash, 2019); however, this might not be as desirable or necessary for doctorate students as being in a fall/spring in-person program.

Scholars have discussed the different purposes of graduate music education, as they have stated the purpose for a master's is to improve teaching skills (Conway et al., 2020a; Springer et al., 2022) and the purpose of a doctorate is to produce researchers in the field (Herbert, 2008; Phillips, 2008; The Committee on Graduate Study in Music Education, 1954). This research focus of the doctorate was evident in the data for the doctorate degree of NASM accredited institutions with the most required course being Research Methods. Additional highly required courses being Qualitative Methods and Statistics. This research focus is also evident in the requirements to be accepted into these programs, as a majority required a writing sample for admittance.

The specific music content areas outside of music education coursework that continue to be emphasized in these degrees are music theory and music history. As outlined by NASM (2023), the coursework of music theory and music history are foundational in a music education master's degree. However, the aspect of music performance, such as applied lessons and ensembles was not as prominent in the data

for NASM accredited graduate programs. Consistent with previous literature (Albert, 2015; Conway et al., 2008; Conway et al., 2009), results from this study support the idea that there are fewer options for master's graduate music education students to be active in applied lessons and ensembles if they are to complete the program in a summer or distance learning format. Only 19.70% of institutions ($n = 40$) required applied lessons and 18.22% required ensemble participation ($n = 37$). This was a shift from previous literature (Madsen, 2003; The Committee on Graduate Study in Music Education, 1954), which discussed the importance of performance skills in a graduate music education degree program. Applied lessons and ensemble participation were even less involved in the curriculum for a doctorate in music education, as only one institution required applied lessons and no institutions required or had listed an optional ensemble participation. This curricula choice may relate back to the stated purpose of a doctorate to produce new researchers in the field (Herbert, 2008; Phillips, 2008; The Committee on Graduate Study in Music Education, 1954), therefore the curricula is not as focused on music performance opportunities.

Music education scholars continue to discuss and explore the balance between pedagogy and research as part of the curricula in a master's degree program in music education (Conway et al., 2009; Conway et al., 2020a; Madsen, 2003; Phillips, 2008; Springer et al., 2022). In this study, 37.43% of institutions allowed students to choose between a research- or a practice-oriented cognate area, which were outlined and discussed through NASM (2023). Research skills may have a positive impact on an educator's own teaching and pedagogy practices (Conway et al., 2009; Springer, 2023) and results from this content analysis support the importance of graduate students developing research skills as 88.17% ($n = 179$) of institutions required a research methods course in the master's curriculum.

When reflecting upon the preparation and training of future music teacher educators, it is interesting to note the requirements for PK-12 teaching experience to enter a doctorate program. Most institutions required applicants to have prior teaching experience, and a majority required at least three years of teaching. Music education scholars have defined a novice music educator as being between 1-5 years of teaching experience (Bauer & Berg, 2001; Goolsby, 1999) and novice music educators may struggle with feelings of being overwhelmed (Blair, 2008), classroom management efficacy (Potter, 2020), and experience praxis shock (Ballantyne, 2007), where the novice teachers experience the gap between reality and expectations of teaching. Thus, one might argue that these novice music educators need additional teaching experience prior to entering a doctorate program and instructing pre-service educators.

Limitations

The primary limitation I had for this content analysis research was the data used was found through institutions' websites. Websites may not always have the most up to date information, despite the NASM handbook (2022) requirement of keeping the

website current. Additionally, there was certain information about graduate programs that was not available online, such as what types of assistantships were offered or the exam requirements (e.g., comprehensive exams, thesis defense). Finally, the data for this study was limited to NASM accredited institutions and does not include data from non-accredited degree programs.

FUTURE RESEARCH AND CONCLUSIONS

Future researchers may continue to explore what coursework and content is important and applicable to continue improving teaching skills (Conway et al., 2020a; Springer et al., 2022) for master's students in music education. For example, NASM (2023) stated that music theory and music history are foundational in a music education master's degree, however, future researchers may wish to explore if current PK-12 music educators agree, and if these courses are assisting their current teaching skills and positions. In this study, these courses seemed to take precedence over performance-based coursework and opportunities (e.g. applied lessons, ensemble participation) in master's degrees in music education, however is this aligning with the needs of our practicing PK-12 educators? Could non-traditional programs have alternative options for musical performance opportunities, such as summer programs offering graduate students conducting opportunities with summer music camps or distance education institutions offering ensemble credits to perform with local community ensembles?

Future researchers may wish to continue to explore the differences in coursework, assignments, learning outcomes, and requirements between the research- and practice-oriented cognates and final projects to continue to discuss the balance of pedagogy and research for master's students in music education. For example, an examination of final thesis versus final project requirements would benefit the community and future graduate students to know expectations and make decisions about the right program for their future goals. Future researchers may also explore these differences of learning objectives and final thesis/project requirements between flexible learning programs and fall/spring programs.

Future researchers may wish to survey former graduate students themselves to examine if the current coursework and curricula are meeting the needs of our PK-12 music educators and our university faculty who obtained doctorates in music education. Professional organizations, such as the Society for Music Teacher Education with their Area of Strategic Planning and Action (Society for Music Teacher Education, 2023) that focuses on music teacher education may wish to facilitate more outreach to previous or current graduate students to explore these ideas.

Most doctorates in this study were housed in R1 institutions ($n = 46, 86.79\%$). As music teacher educators prepare future researchers, it is important to note that not all graduates of doctoral programs will be employed at R1 institutions. Future researchers may continue to explore teaching requirements for music education positions at all types of colleges and universities (e.g. R2, Liberal Arts Schools) to ensure

as a community we are not only preparing future scholars and researchers but also future music teacher educators to fit the demands of all university positions.

Future researchers may also replicate this study with programs outside of the NASM accredited institutions. For example, do programs that are not NASM accredited also have the music theory and music history requirements for master's degrees? Additionally, there are doctorate programs for music education that may be housed under a college or department of education that are not NASM accredited that would be worth exploring their coursework and requirements.

Music education graduate degrees are integral to the music education profession, and it is important for scholars to keep having these conversations to discuss best approaches and practices for such programs. This study provides a foundation of what is currently being offered in NASM accredited institutions and can assist future researchers to further explore topics related to graduate curriculum, requirements, needs, and expectations. Additionally, the data from this study can assist university faculty who may be making decisions regarding graduate degree curricula and requirements. Music education scholars should continue to have these open discussions to reflect upon the best curricula and preparation for graduate programs to best serve our prospective students and profession at large.

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