

Messiah University – Piano Proficiency Exam Requirements

(rev. 08/24)

1. Warmup patterns: five-note scale + 1-octave arpeggio + chord (HT, played chromatically in major and minor keys)
2. Scales (all major and harmonic minor scales, HS, 2 octaves)
3. Lead sheets (RH melody, LH accompaniment)
4. Chord charts (2-hand comping with slash chords)
5. Transposition (choose one of the following: instrumental melody, lead sheet, or piano solo); 3 keys assigned for each example
6. Sight reading (minimum score of 500 on the Piano Marvel SASR test)
7. Repertoire performance (choose 2 from provided list or request approval; 1 should be at least intermediate level)
8. Accompanying (suggested repertoire will be provided based on major emphasis)

All music students enrolled in accredited NASM institutions are required to demonstrate keyboard competency as related to their individual professions. The keyboard lab or group piano program at Messiah University is designed to prepare students to acquire these skills and be able to use them effortlessly in their chosen careers. All music students are required to either complete and pass all proficiency components of the group piano sequence or test out via a placement exam. Students who complete and pass all curriculum in the one-year sequence will have successfully passed the Piano Proficiency Exam. All skills must be performed cleanly, with correct fingering, appropriate tempos, steady pulse, and musicality. A minimum score of 90 is required to pass each component. If a student completes the course(s) but does not pass each component with the required score, they must enroll in applied piano lessons to continue to master those specific skills. Students who wish to re-take portions of the Piano Proficiency Exam will do so at the scheduled time at the end of each semester or through a requested appointment with the PPE coordinator. All PPE requirements should be completed by the end of the sophomore year. Any questions can be directed to Dr. Olivia Ellis, Director of Keyboard Studies, at oullis@messiah.edu. Contact Dr. Ellis for a complete list of testing information.