



COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW GUIDELINES

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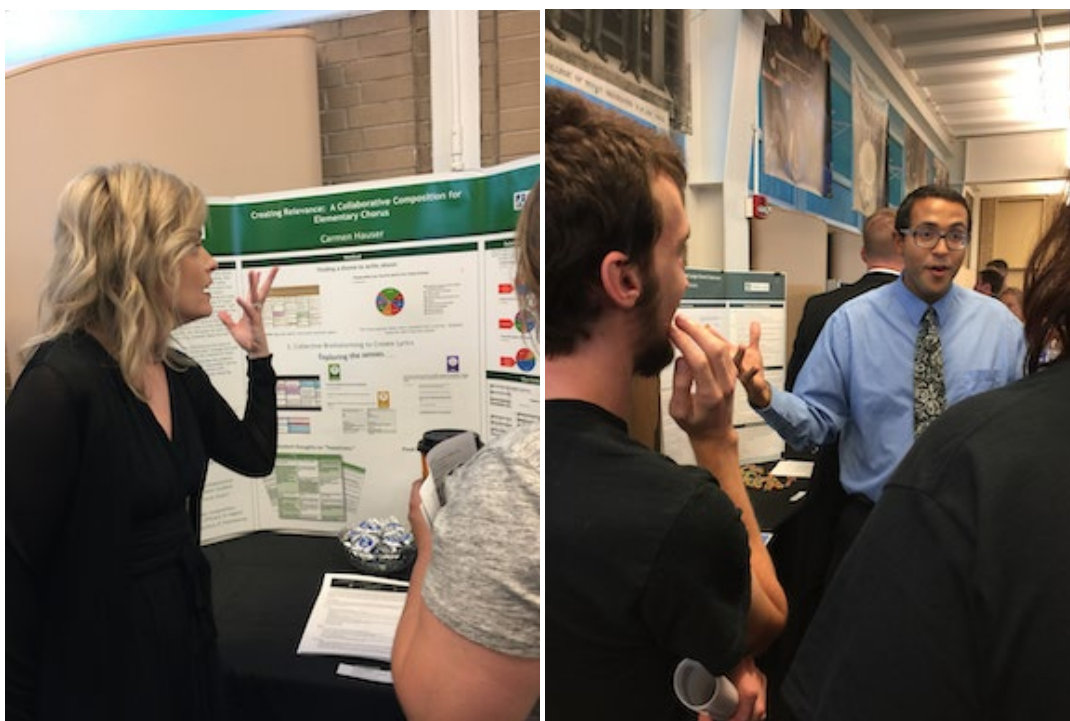


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INTRODUCTION

Each student receiving the master's degree at VanderCook College of Music is required to complete a Comprehensive Review. This entails three aspects:

1. Completion of an independent MMed Project.
2. Presentation of your project at the annual Poster Session.
3. Discussion of your project, your course of study at VCM, and their application to your life and work as a music educator. This will take place in either a small group setting referred to as the Cohort Review, or, in special cases, as a written reflection. During this time, you will be asked to do the following:
 - a. Describe your project, its purpose, and the results.
 - b. Explain how your research, coursework, and teaching guided the decisions you made while developing and executing your project.
 - c. Explain how your research and coursework impacted your development as a music educator.
 - d. Citing specific examples, address ways that your teaching has changed as a direct result of your time in the program.
 - e. Describe specific areas of your professional practice that you will continue to develop because of your course of study at VanderCook.
 - f. Discuss how you intend to continue your growth and improve your teaching after you leave the program.

The purpose of the Comprehensive Review is to help each MMed candidate be prepared to serve as a professional music educator trusted to make wise professional decisions. It is also designed to engender a sense of professional confidence such that each is aware of their strengths and areas in which they may wish to enrich their professional competence.

This document provides guidelines and milestones towards which the candidate may aspire so that they complete their degree in a timely way and in a way that is meaningful to their life and work. The candidate will be supported throughout the process by coursework, faculty, and special events.

WHAT IS A MASTERS PROJECT?

The Master's Project is an independent, scholarly undertaking that addresses a problem in music education that is of interest to the candidate's life and work. The project typically results in a written, composed, or performed product such as a research study, curriculum, test of an instructional method, composition, method book, or other creative work. Ideally, the project will also benefit other music educators who may learn from and apply the outcomes of the project.

The project is independent in the sense that it is the candidate who chooses the topic and completes each phase of the project in consultation with an advisor who is assigned to them. It is expected that all students seek the advice and counsel of their advisor, peers, and experts in the field. It is the candidate, however, who writes the project, directs the timeline for its completion (within the boundaries established by the college), and presents it to others at VCM's annual Poster Night. Ideally, it will also be presented or published in other professional venues and may be selected for inclusion in the [MMEd Masters Project Online Collection](#).

The project is scholarly in that it derives its rationale from a review of the work accomplished by others who have addressed the same problem. It also follows established protocols for organizing, writing, and citing others in the field. The tone of the writing is objective and directed towards an audience of one's peers. The style adopted by the College (known as APA format) is used consistently.

The completed project may take one of several forms, or even a combination of forms.

Examples of projects may be found in the [MMEd Online Masters Project Collection](#) available through VanderCook's Ruppel Library. Candidates seeking models should consult the most recent years' collection and speak with his or her advisor to assure that the model is appropriate.

TYPES OF PROJECTS

MMEd Project candidates typically have different areas of interests that lend themselves to different types of projects. Common types of projects are described below. In some cases, a project may draw on more than one methodology.

ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS.

Many projects are designed to solve a particular problem that the teacher is experiencing in their school or teaching. For example, a teacher might want to know what happens if he or she institutes a new teaching method, curriculum or policy. The action research project documents this process from conception to conclusion. Data collection in these types of projects includes things like interviews, panel discussions, journals or diaries, examples of student work over time, videotaped examples, pretest-posttest comparisons, graphs of change over time and, occasionally, surveys. An action research project could involve an entire class, a small group of students, or a single individual. (A small single-group or single-subject project is sometimes referred to as a case study.)

QUANTITATIVE PROJECTS

Quantitative projects involve the systematic collection, organization and presentation of data designed to measure some phenomena of interest. Quantitative projects are usually in the form of an experiment or a survey. The results of the project are typically analyzed mathematically using descriptive or inferential statistics. Students considering a quantitative project should feel comfortable using a spreadsheet program such as Excel to calculate descriptive statistics, e.g., mean, median, mode, range; to sort and sift data; and prepare graphs and charts from this data. If a program such as *Survey Monkey* or *Google Forms* is used to collect data, students need to understand how the program works and be able to export the data into a spreadsheet.

QUALITATIVE PROJECTS

Qualitative projects typically examine a topic of interest through some combination of observation, interviewing, and examination of materials. For example, if one is interested in a particular teacher or teaching situation, one might sit in on lessons or rehearsals, interview people, or even participate in some way. Common themes emerge and are supported with examples

INSTRUCTIONAL OR CURRICULAR DEVELOPMENT

Projects in this category involve the creation of a curriculum or a unit of instruction. The project involves developing the instruction and, ideally, testing some portion of it in a class or rehearsal. An alternative to testing is to have experienced colleagues review the material and offer their comments and suggestions about its structure and activities.

HISTORIOGRAPHY (HISTORICAL RESEARCH)

Historiography “tells a story” about a person, group of people, or a particular institution from an historical perspective. It involves the collection of original artifacts, e.g., interviews, letters, work samples, newspaper articles, from which the story can be told.

OTHER CREATIVE PROJECTS

Some candidates prefer to complete other types of creative products, e.g., develop and test an app, write a method book, develop a site, or write a musical.

COMPOSITIONS AND ARRANGEMENTS

Some candidates are adept composers or arrangers and would like to bring their skillset to a new level. Compositions and arrangements should be constructed to fill a need in the music education performance and/or pedagogical literature. They should be useful to music teachers working in school or community music classes or ensembles. In general, compositions or arrangements should be at least five minutes long.

LECTURE-RECITALS.

A Lecture-Recital is a presentation in front of an audience that contains both spoken and performed aspects. It is typically presented on the student’s major instrument and developed around a theme of interest to music teachers. A written introduction explains the background for the literature chosen, and typically describes each composition with respect to the recital’s central theme. See the special instructions for Lecture-Recitals at VCM in the Guide to Recitals, Lecture-Recitals and Lectures. *Note that students must complete an audition to undertake a Lecture-Recital.*

LECTURE-DEMONSTRATIONS.

Lecture-Demonstrations provide an opportunity to share special subject matter with an audience in a teaching-oriented atmosphere. In the past, students have compared and contrasted musical styles, demonstrated techniques for teaching jazz improvisation, performed on ethnic instruments, and more. A wide variety of topics are open to students with the only caveat being that it pertains to some aspect of the music teaching and learning process. See the special instructions for Lecture-Recitals at VCM in the Guide to Recitals, Lecture-Recitals and Lecture-Demonstrations.

ANNUAL MILESTONES

Students typically complete the MMed Project, Poster Session and Cohort Review over the course of two or three academic years.

The summer or semester preceding the project year is spent exploring topics and modes of inquiry in the class Introduction to Graduate Study. A project plan is developed. Basic skills in literature review and scholarly writing are developed. During the academic year, the student works independently to complete the project, with the advice and guidance of an advisor. During the second or third summer, the project is presented at the annual Poster Session and may be published as part of the [VanderCook Masters’ Project Collection](#).

Some students prefer more extended approaches. The student should discuss his or her plan with the MEd Dean or the project advisor.

A set of milestones towards completing the project and Cohort Review are listed below. The advisor should approve deviations from these dates. Failure to meet deadlines may result in rescheduling the completion date of the project.

July - August	Assure that you can receive e-mail sent to your VCM account.
September 15	Project proposals are due. If you are interested in completing a Lecture- Recital, complete an audition and have your project pre- approved by your applied teacher. If you are completing a Lecture- Demonstration you do not need to audition but you need pre-approval from the Project Coordinator. Four recitals or demonstrations will be scheduled during the summer session.
October 15 - 30	Advisors will be finalized and e-mailed to students. Contact your advisor shortly after this date to discuss your project and plan. Important: Students are responsible for making the first contact. Cohort groups will be finalized. Arrange at least three meetings with your Cohort group, spaced out throughout the academic year. (See the Advice for Establishing a Personal Timeline, below, for suggestions on when to meet.)
All year	Continue to stay in contact with your advisor and cohort group, finalizing your method and spring timeline.
~ April 1	Partial draft of the project is due at the discretion of your advisor. Be sure to register for the project, recital, or lecture-demonstration when you receive your graduate registration packet.
~ May 1	First draft of the completed project is sent to your advisor. Arrange for Lecture-Recital or Demonstration dates.
May/June	Final drafts of the project are due to your advisor for review and comments sometime in late May or early June, ideally prior to the start of the six-week residency program.
<i>Last on-site week of summer session</i>	Poster Session. Prepare 30 copies of your abstract or a similar handout. Plan to be available throughout the session to answer questions and discuss your project.

Final check list prior to graduation	<p>Paper reviewed for formatting either by your assigned advisor or an APA Checker.</p> <p>Advisor electronically signs the final copy.</p> <p>A PDF copy of the project is submitted to mastersprojects@vandercook.edu</p> <p>The MMEd Project Assessment form is completed and signed by both the advisor and the student.</p>
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ADVICE FOR ESTABLISHING A PERSONAL WORK SCHEDULE

The best projects are the result of careful time management. Create a personal work schedule and timeline that fits the scope of their project. Advisors should review the timeline and both parties should continually adjust it so that projects are completed on time. A suggested year-plan is outlined below. It should, of course, be modified to fit the particularities of each project.

June - September: Determine topic and submit a proposal

- Discuss ideas with colleagues and teachers.
- Read what others in the field have written.
- Set up a project notebook to keep track of articles you have read, ideas, sketches, and drafts.
- Set up a note card or electronic system for keeping track of the literature you read.
- Submit the [MMEd Project Proposal Form](#) by SEPTEMBER 15 in the year prior to the summer in which you plan to complete the project.
- Establish and communicate with your cohort, a group of colleagues who will provide support to you throughout the coming year. (This will be facilitated in Introduction to Graduate Studies.)

September: Develop a personal timeline and work schedule.

- Be sure your timeline enables you to meet the VanderCook schedule of deadlines.

October - December: Review the literature and refine your project.

- Reach out to your cohort group and schedule your first meeting to review each member's progress with respect to the items on this list. Establish a cohort leader (organize meetings and facilitate Zoom or other communication method), a scribe to document the work of the group, and a timekeeper to be sure everyone participates and receives equal time. It may be helpful to establish a shared Google folder.
- Introduce yourself to your advisor and discuss your timeline.
- Read articles and/or review methods and materials to focus your project and enhance your bibliography.
- Refine your project outline and method.
- Set up a meeting or phone call with your advisor and share your plan with your advisor.
- Use a note card or electronic system for keeping track of the literature you read. Code each item with a topic or theme.
- If your project involves students or colleagues (any human participants) complete the [Informed Consent Packet](#) and submit your proposal for review.

Winter Break: Solidify your method.

- Schedule Meeting #2 with your cohort to review progress.
- Submit the revised Introduction (statement of the problem and review of literature) and description of your method to your advisor by January 15.
- Make an appointment (by phone or in person) to review your work so far and to solidify your next steps.

January - Mid-March: Carry out the project.

- Obtain permission from school principals and (if needed) students and parents.
- Obtain copyright permissions as needed. (Save these to include in an appendix.)
- Set up spreadsheets for data collection.
- Complete and test curricula.
- Complete composition/arrangements.
- Run surveys and experiments.
- Keep a log of observations.
- Contact a writing tutor if needed.

Mid-March - Mid-April: Gather and organize results

- Schedule Meeting #3 with your cohort.
- Analyze data or complete arrangements, compositions, curricula and all plans for lecture-recitals or demonstrations.
- Enter data into a spreadsheet or statistics program.
- Summarize data using descriptive and inferential statistics
- Keep a log of the implications of your project, its weaknesses, and areas for future research or writing.
- Use APA format to create tables and figures.
- Write Results section.

Mid-April: Prepare first draft of complete paper.

- Complete the Results and Discussion sections.
- Use the Assessment Rubric (Appendix B) as you proofread your paper.
- Make sure that your style conforms to APA 7th edition.
- Ask two or three cohort members to proofread your work.

May: Make revisions and refine your paper.

- Meet or discuss your project with your Advisor.
- Make revisions as needed.

June: Submit a draft to your advisor for final suggestions and corrections.

- Meet with your advisor to discuss their evaluation and make changes.
- Resubmit.

July: Final touches, poster session and submission

- Submit electronic (PDF) and hard copy of the final draft.
- Prepare Poster and Abstract for distribution at Poster Night.

- Present Poster.
- Celebrate!

August and beyond: Review local, state, and national opportunities for presenting your project.

- Take your place as a contributing member of the music education community.

CANDIDATE AND ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

CANDIDATE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Select and refine a topic and method in consultation with your Advisor.
- Plan out your method carefully. Extra care at this stage pays off in the end.
- Contact your Advisor via e-mail. (Expect up to a three-day turn around on questions.) E-mail again if needed.
- Remain receptive to critique and questions.
- Develop a personal timeline to meet project deadlines.
- Reach out to your Cohort group regularly.

Working through your project

- Follow the project format.
- Assure that the project complies with the formatting standards outlined in APA 7th. (Consult the [Purdue OWL - Online Writing Lab](#) often.)
- Proofread work and receive feedback from at least two members of your cohort group before submitting it to your Advisor.
- Use the Assessment Rubric (see Appendix B) to guide the preparation of the project.
- Speak to your advisor if writing is challenging for you.
- Provide a postage paid return envelope if you ask your advisor to read and make comments on a hard copy draft.
- Label all electronic drafts of your work with your LAST NAME_FIRST NAME and indicate the draft number.

Summer of completion

- Submit a final draft of your paper to your advisor once he or she has given their approval to do so. At this point, the project should not need any major changes.
- Plan to make all revisions suggested by your advisor.
- When you have received final approval from your advisor:
 - Ask your advisor to provide an electronic signature on the cover page.
 - E-mail a PDF of the project, labeled LAST_NAME_FIRSTNAME to <mailto:mastersprojects@vandercook.edu>.
 - If you have produced a stand-alone creative product label it as above and add APPENDIX to the name.
 - Sign the Assessment Form.
- Prepare a poster and hand-out and present it at the annual VCM Poster Night.

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ADVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Oversee the development of the content and overall paper.
- Approve the final draft.
- Complete the MMed Project Assessment.
- Recommend a final grade.
- Respond within one to three days when your Advisee contacts you, even if it means deferring a conversation.
- Have a “fallback” contact system when out of town.
- Alert the project coordinator if a student appears to be struggling with writing, having difficulty focusing, or fails to contact you.
- Help advisees stay on-task to the project timeline.
- Ask that students submit a postage paid return envelope when submitting hard copies of drafts for feedback. Do not return drafts using overnight delivery services unless the student agrees to pay the entire cost. Average expedited delivery charge is \$30.
- Attend the Annual Poster Session (or arrange a proxy) and review your Advisee’s poster.

ETHICS OF RESEARCH

Candidates need to consider the ethics involved in three areas of their work: 1) informed consent and protection of identity of participants, 2) copyright law, and 3) plagiarism. It is easy to make a well-intentioned mistake within any of these areas. If in doubt about the ethics of a decision, ask the project coordinator for help in figuring out what to do. What follows is a general outline regarding issues of ethical concern. More detailed information may be available in individual cases.

INFORMED CONSENT

- All candidates who intend to include data from human participants, regardless of how minimal, **must** complete the [Request to Include Human Participants](#) packet.
- The identity of participants must be always protected.
- Data identifying peoples’ names needs to be stored by the candidate in a secure location for at least five years
- Permission must be obtained from individuals or their parents or guardians to use media containing the image or sound of any individual. The circumstances under which these will be used must be divulged.
- Informed consent means that participants are aware of the following:
 - Nature of the study
 - How data will be used
 - How their identity will be protected.
 - Who to contact if they have questions or concerns about their participation in the study.
 - They have the right to withdraw at any time.
- School principals and other local authorities within a school must grant permission for a study to be conducted under their auspices.
- Parents of children under 18 must grant consent.

COPYRIGHT

General Copyright Law. Copyright laws are designed to protect peoples' intellectual and creative property. The law is fairly complex with many implications for music educators. Students completing a master's project must obtain permission from publishers to print or record music that is currently copyrighted, to copy pages from method books, arrange a copyrighted song, or even to change its lyrics. The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) has compiled a detailed copyright resource customized for music educators on their website at <http://www.nafme.org/my-classroom/copyright/>

In general, to use copyrighted material the candidate should send an e-mail or fax to the publisher stating exactly what will be used. Explain the scope of the MMEd project and mention that the project is not for sale. In many cases, the candidate will receive a message back very quickly granting permission to use the excerpt, requesting that you state that permission was granted, and defining the scope of the permission.

A vast public domain library of music exists and may be used freely by anyone. If, however, the composition has been rearranged, that arrangement is protected.

PLAGIARISM

We all stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us. In academic writing, in particular, it is imperative that credit be given to the author of all words, ideas, music, images, poetry and other artifacts used in one's project. This applies to information that is identified as being in the Creative Commons. Plagiarism occurs when an author presents the work of another in a way that implies that it is his or her original work. The easiest way to avoid plagiarism is to document the source of ideas and cite them when writing. This is true even if it is an idea that was derived from a blog post, Internet site, or video. Both direct quotes and ideas need to be cited. Strive to distill the essence of an idea in your own words when taking notes but, again, always cite the author of the idea.

POSTER NIGHT

Each summer, students completing a Master's Project present their work in a poster session attended by students, faculty, staff and guests. There are typically around 100 people in attendance at some point throughout the evening. The event is designed to be collegial, fun, and focused on sharing the outcomes of students' projects.

Arrive at the Poster Session at least 30 minutes prior to the start time. A place will be marked with your name. Be prepared to stand by your poster for the entire evening. Arrive early to view others' work.

PLANNING YOUR POSTER

Remember that most visitors to your poster will be fellow students, friends and faculty. Most will spend just a few minutes looking at each poster, so brevity, clarity and preparation are important. Nicol & Paxman (2003) recommend the "Four Cs" of a good poster: Concise, Clear, Creative and Clean.

Include the following:

- Title
- Problem or research questions "in a nutshell."
- Method laid out very briefly.

- Key outcomes
- Application or key “take-aways” for music teachers
- Important references. (List a few of the most important pieces of literature that you cited.)

Also ask:

- What elements of the above could be illustrated or demonstrated?
- How can each area be presented in a way that is easily digested?

CONSTRUCTING THE POSTER

- The poster needs to be freestanding and fit into about a four-foot space.
- Many people now use blown-up PowerPoint slides to create their poster. There are numerous templates.

A few hints:

- Use a 20-point font for text.
- Use a 48-point font for the title.
- Use two to three colors. Strong, primary colors are considered best
- Keep the poster uncluttered with lots of open space.
- Run title across the top of the poster.
- Include name and hometown below your title.
- Place the VCM logo somewhere on the poster.
- Make everything visible at four feet.
- Aim for a unified feeling
- Legibility should be your first concern.
- Posters with questions and lift-up covers are fun and effective, but not a necessity.
- Posters made electronically can be printed at the Copy Center in the IIT Student Center.
- Audio and video examples should be brief, i.e., 20 - 40 seconds, and ready to go. It is best to bring a fully charged laptop computer or another playback device. Provide a set of headphones. It is impossible to play audio or video at volume during the session. Access to a power source or the Internet cannot be guaranteed.
- Be creative and have fun.

WHAT TO BRING TO THE POSTER SESSION?

- Freestanding poster and any other needed materials to fit into about a 4’ space.
- Thirty hard copies of either your abstract or a flier containing your abstract. Include your name, hometown, and e-mail address. If you used a digital tool, e.g., PowerPoint, to create your poster, you may be able to print a copy of your poster in lieu of the abstract. Other options include a more detailed pamphlet or flyer. Also, you are free to pass out additional information if you feel it would be of interest.
- Business cards (optional).
- A notepad or electronic device for questions or to list names and e-mail addresses of those who would like copies of your paper.

DISCUSSING YOUR PROJECT WITH VISITORS

- Stay with your poster throughout the evening. Come early to see each other’s work.

- Ask visitors if they would like you to take them through the project. Most will request a quick overview.
- Prepare and PRACTICE a brief (one – three minute) overview of your project. Point to elements of your poster that illustrate your work.
- Word of warning: Past attendees have complained about presenters who talked too much or were unprepared to explain their work! There is just too much to see and do to linger too long.
- Step to the side If someone looks as though they would like to read the poster

COHORT REVIEW

The Cohort Review takes place during the final summer of residency. At this time, each candidate will be assigned to a new group who will meet with an assigned faculty member for approximately two hours. At that time, each candidate will have approximately 30 minutes to provide an oral presentation in which they are asked to:

1. Describe your project, its purpose, and the results. (10 minutes)
2. Explain how your research, coursework, and teaching guided the decisions you made while developing and executing your project? Discuss specific classes, research, and conversations that influenced your project. (10 minutes)
3. Explain how your research and coursework impacted your development as a music educator. Cite specific examples. Address ways that your teaching has changed as a direct result of your time in the program. (5 minutes)
4. Describe areas of your professional practice that you will continue to develop because of your course of study at the college? Explain how you intend to continue your growth and improve your teaching after you leave the program. (5 minutes)

The assigned faculty member will use the following rubric to assess the oral presentation:

	Needs Improvement	Basic	Proficient	Highly Proficient
Project, purpose, results	Project is isolated to candidate's needs. Method is very difficult to replicate. Results and implications lack thorough presentation.	Project is relevant to the candidate with some implications for the profession. Method may be difficult to replicate. Results and implications are discussed briefly.	Project is relevant to the profession and candidate. Method is appropriate to research questions. Results and implications for further work are evident.	Project is relevant to profession and the candidate. Method develops materials in unique ways. Results are well presented and implications are clearly described.
Influence of research, coursework,	Lacks a connection between	Discusses research, coursework, and teaching context in	Demonstrates a connection between	Comprehensive discussion of the research, related coursework, and unique teaching context are

and teaching on project decisions, development, and execution.	research, coursework, and teaching context in relation to the project.	relation to the development and execution of the project, but lacking in coherence.	research, coursework, and teaching context and decisions made in the development and execution of the project.	referenced in the description of the project's decisions, development, and execution.
Impact of research and coursework on the candidate's development as music educator.	No evidence of change in teaching as a result of research and coursework at the college.	Discusses changes to teaching practice in relation to coursework and research at the college, but presents minimal evidence.	Presents evidence of change in teaching practice as a result of candidate's coursework and research at the college.	Presents significant evidence of change in teaching practice as a direct result of the candidate's research and coursework at the college.
Continuing development of the practitioner.	It is difficult to discern how this project and program have or will have a direct impact on the candidate's teaching and future development in future teaching practice.	Discussion demonstrates some impact of this project or program on the candidate's teaching with a plan for future development in teaching practice.	Some specific evidence of the impact of the project and program on the candidate's teaching is presented with discussion of future development in teaching practice.	Detailed evidence of the impact of this project and program on the candidate's teaching is presented as are implications for future learning or professional development by the candidate.

FURTHER INFORMATION

A new Schoology site labeled [Comprehensive Review Related: ALL](#) has been created and will contain materials and links relevant to completion of projects and the comprehensive review.