



TEMPORARY UPDATE TO RECITAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Providing Students and Faculty with Flexibility in an Emergency Situation
while Supporting Student's 21st Century Music Skills (incl. creativity, flexibility and initiative)

SPRING 2020

*Shenandoah Conservatory Dean's Office
APPROVED by Provost & Registrar*

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The below language temporarily replaces previous guidelines related to all undergraduate and graduate recitals (including those outlined in Shenandoah Conservatory's Recital Policies & Procedures Guide). This temporary change is effective from March 23, 2020 until COVID-19 related emergency measures are suspended.

This document is built with the input of a core group of Shenandoah Conservatory music faculty and students. That core group includes Associate Dean Jeff Marlatt, Profs. Kathryn Green, Byron Jones, John O'Connor, Timothy Roberts, Jonathan Snowden, Karen Walker, and Garrick Zoeter, and keyboard students Mathilde Handelsman and Eoin Fleming, instrumental students Sean McGinley and Sarah Saul, and voice students Franchesca Henry and Elizabeth Holmes.

TEMPORARY UPDATE TO RECITAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES (MARCH 2020)

A. CONTEXT & OBJECTIVES

The current emergency situation, with its mandate for dispersion and social distancing, is impacting conservatory students in multiple, significant, and *unequal ways*. Additionally, the strict requirement of social distancing (unlikely to stop anytime soon) makes some earlier options for remote work (e.g., working directly with a regional accompanist, performing from within a retirement community, etc.) impossible now.

At the same time that the current situation is complex and challenging, it also represents an opportunity. Indeed, the work of creatively navigating this exceptional circumstance **in a way that is highly creative and useful to students will serve students** well for their future careers (whether as teachers, performers, or collaborators). The 21st century musician, after all, is expected to possess creativity, flexibility and initiative – qualities especially needed to react to exceptional circumstances (which seem to occur more frequently in our society and era).

B. THE PERSONAL MUSICIANSHIP PROJECT (PMP)

The replacement project for recital — the Personal Musicianship Project (PMP) — acknowledges the complex and inequitable challenges faced by different students registered for recital, aligns with each of the realities outlined in Appendix A, and gives students and their studio teachers greatest opportunity to shape work that is best-possible given the circumstances.

To confirm, the PMP is shaped to be useful to all students, from those wishing and able to do a slightly modified recital program (performed and streamed online), to those who are facing exceptional barriers to delivering a traditional recital-type program, and who (supported by their studio teacher) wish to undertake a differently shaped project.

C. STUDENT & STUDIO TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Student: It is the students' responsibility to creatively shape a PMP in close coordination with their studio teachers, **specifically by**

- completing the PMP Declaration Form (described and linked below),
- having it approved by the studio teacher, and
- submitting that form electronically to both the relevant studio teacher & division chair preferably one week prior to the PMP, but definitely before the PMP.

NOTE for Students Originally Scheduled for a LECTURE RECITAL: DMA students registered for a Lecture Recital are encouraged to work with both their applied teacher and their document advisor when designing the PMP.

Please note that some students may wish to include their original committee in the PMP process. The student should navigate that option with the studio teacher's assistance.

Studio Teacher: It is the applied teacher's responsibility to help ensure the student has the opportunity to achieve a successful learning outcome. Towards that end, the studio teacher is expected to offer guidance, timely feedback, and relevant support, ensuring that the student's PMP is appropriate in scope/complexity. (Some students may be tempted to undertake a too-large project.)

If the student in question is a DMA student who was registered for a Lecture Recital, the Studio Teacher is encouraged to bring the document advisor into the PMP planning process. (The resulting PMP can certainly be very similar to the originally intended Lecture Recital.)

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A Note regarding Withdrawals and Incompletes:

- Students always have the right to withdraw from a course, but that action should be CAREFULLY considered as it may impact the student's academic progress.
- For a number of difficult and practical reasons (beginning with the fact that this emergency situation may extend into and through the summer, even impacting the start of fall), an incomplete option for non-graduating students does NOT seem prudent at this time and is discouraged.

D. THE PMP DECLARATION FORM

Planning for the proposed PMP is shaped by the completion and submission of the PMP Declaration Form. The PMP Declaration Form serves as a guide and contract, affirming what the student has agreed to do, and what criteria will be used to grade the PMP (including whether a panel of faculty will be involved or not). To confirm, Shenandoah University's flexible grading policy (to be announced afternoon of Wednesday, March 25) means that ALL students will have the option of choosing either the assigned letter grade or a P/NC notation for each course (including recital) at the end of the spring semester.

Again, it is important that both the student and studio teacher agree that the proposed PMP is appropriate in scope and complexity.

To the fullest extent possible, the PMP Declaration Form should be completed and submitted by at least one week prior to the planned PMP, but definitely before the PMP. It MUST be submitted prior to the actual date of the planned PMP. (The identified date/time may be the same or different than the original scheduled recital date — that is for the studio teacher and student to confirm.) **No PMP can be approved to serve as a substitute for the originally scheduled recital without proper completion and submission of the PMP Declaration Form.**

APPENDIX A

Requirements for a New & Temporary Policy

Any temporary and new policy MUST necessarily address each of the current realities outlined below.

1. **Respects the Mandate for Social Distancing.** The current health emergency (with its many accompanying regional, state, and federal requirements restricting travel, interaction, and co-location) makes a traditional in-person recital impossible for the remainder of this semester.
2. **Aligns with SACS Accreditation & is Approvable by Provost/Registrar.** We cannot give students full credit for a course if there is some substantial portion of that course remaining incomplete or has not been replaced by an appropriate substitution. (Simply giving students the grade they received during midterm, for example, or another grade shaped by the studio teacher, is NOT aligned with SACS guidelines and was rejected as an option by the Provost and Registrar.) For students to have access to a potential grade and complete this course, their ONLY option is to complete some *substituting project/program/activity*.
3. **Acknowledges that Students face Extraordinarily Diverse Circumstances.** Our students face idiosyncratic and widely varying obstacles, including radically different levels of access to resources (ranging from high-speed internet access to instruments to places to practice). Our ability to impact that disparity is extremely limited. This is not fair. And it is the reality. (We can be of some help in only a limited number of resource areas.) Many of our students are not even able to do a slightly modified version of a recital.
4. **Privileges Each of the Following:**
 - a. **The Student & Studio Teacher Relationship.** Any model should respect and defer to the student–studio teacher relationship, especially around the issues of musicianship and development of performance skills on the instrument under focus.
 - b. **Musicianship.** The recital is about many things, but few are more central to its purpose than the demonstration of a student’s musicianship; the qualities of which are typically best known by the studio teacher and student performer.
 - c. **Adaptability.** The work of navigating this exceptional circumstance in a way that is highly creative and useful to students will serve students well for their future careers (whether as teachers, performers, or collaborators). The 21st century musician, after all, is expected to possess creativity, flexibility and initiative — qualities especially needed to react to exceptional circumstances (which seem to occur more frequently in our society and era). Put differently, few things are more useful a lesson for life and professional success than the experience of turning a challenge into an opportunity.
 - d. **Reality of Current Circumstance.** Again, the delivery of an online and modified version of a traditional recital — an event and ritual cherished by students and faculty — may be possible for a small percentage of our students, but it is impossible for many. For those for whom it is impossible, a substituting project must be created.

For a policy to be worthy of our conservatory and its people, it must not only illuminate the best that we can do in face of ALL the above constraints and values, but must be as generous with our students and faculty as our current circumstance is cruel.

APPENDIX B

Illustrative Scenarios Revealing the Range of Obstacles Faced by Students

The following three scenarios are offered to illuminate the range of issues facing our conservatory students, and *to further reveal creative PMP ideas*. Each scenario is a pastiche, offered as illustration.

- Scenario A — High Access to Needed Resources: Doctoral student X (she) is back at her family home. Because she is a pianist (and her original recital program did not include a concerto), she has no need for an accompanist. She is fortunate that her family home not only includes a piano in good playing condition, but also has high-speed internet. She is working with her studio teacher on shaping a fairly traditional lecture-recital program, to be performed for faculty and audience from her home via livestream. Part of her PMP is to advertise the upcoming livestream recital event not only to her family and friends, but also to her former classmates from her undergraduate and high school years, and a few couples who have become donors/patrons. She will use her personal laptop, but has added a USB mic (the budget pick from the recent [Wirecutter review](#) of best USB microphones) so that the sound quality of her stream is significantly better than possible if using the inbuilt laptop mic.
- Scenario B — Limited Access to Needed Resources: Undergraduate voice student Y (they) is back at their family home (with no internet access or piano). Social distancing means they cannot work closely with an accompanist. Determined to do a PMP, this student and their studio teacher are currently deciding between two ideas; doing a livestream of them singing to a recorded track of accompaniment (played in the background over a boombox); or them working (with feedback from their studio teacher and building on ideas gleaned from how-to videos) in creating two good quality YouTube videos. (Using their SU-issued MacBook to capture audio/video and stream, the videos would be of them singing two different unaccompanied pieces which illuminate many aspects of their vocal skills and range.)
- Scenario C — Very Limited Access to Needed Resources. Undergraduate senior percussion student Z (she/he) is staying at a friend's crowded family apartment where he is discouraged from playing his percussion instruments. (For multiple reasons, he cannot get back to his family, who live overseas.) He has no internet access where he is staying, and has only a few smaller percussion instruments with him. He is working on a two-part PMP with his teacher. The first part will include a recorded video he will make performing two pieces on the instruments he has with him. (He will record that on his SU-issued MacBook during the time she can get into the basement of a local church.) The second part will be a scheduled and live interaction with his faculty committee which he will do on his smartphone (or laptop if there is access to a locale where internet access is available). That interaction, to be guided by his studio teacher, will involve them observing a few YouTube videos of percussionists (selected by his studio teacher, but not known by the student ahead of time), and with him answering questions posed by faculty related to the performers and aspects of the performances in those YouTube videos. He and his teacher have figured out a fairly simple mechanism for how a grade will be calculated for each of the two parts of her PMP.