

School of Music Frequently Asked Questions

Is it true that music performance teaching will disappear?

Untrue. Despite strong rumours that music performance teaching was to disappear, it has always been the intention of the reorganisation to provide an academically and financially sustainable framework in which the valuable elements of the Music School could be safeguarded and added to. The proposed curriculum will contain two program streams. One will be “Performance”, in which it is expected that 50 new students each year will major (with entry to this major being through audition); the other stream is ‘Inquiry’ in which up to 30 new students each year will take the Performance stream as their minor. This compares to the present enrolment of approximately 70 students per year. Hence, the total number of students undertaking music performance will not change significantly.

Is it true that one-to-one teaching will disappear?

Untrue. One-to-one teaching will remain a key feature of the Performance stream of the degree. The University will ensure that all such students receive a minimum of 1 hour per week of one-to-one teaching during semester. This is the same as the present curriculum. In the new program, this teaching will primarily be provided by approved teachers from outside the University. Even in the present curriculum, much of the performance teaching is performed by teachers from outside the University (including on instruments like trumpet, trombone, double bass and cello), with approximately 30 external sessional teachers being engaged.

What will happen to existing students?

Existing students will complete the degree in which they enrolled. Should staff who presently provide one-to-one performance teaching not be available, the University will engage suitably qualified teachers to provide this instruction.

What are the advantages of the Inquiry stream in the new degree?

In addition to the Music Performance stream, students can elect to major in Music Inquiry (which includes composition, technology, musicology, and music education, management and policy). All students will undertake a major in one stream and a minor in the other. Whereas entry to the Performance stream will be through audition, entry to the Inquiry stream will be based on Year 12 results but with a prerequisite of NSW Music 2 of Music Extension (or equivalent). At present, all students enter the Bachelor of Music through audition. This means that only students who have had the opportunity of a high quality music education at secondary school gain entry to the School. The new curriculum will continue to cater for these students but will also widen entry to students from other backgrounds, including more disadvantaged ones.

Is the changed curriculum used by other quality Universities?

Yes. One of the central principles of the proposed curriculum change is to move the ANU Music School from operating as a small and somewhat inadequate conservatorium to a structure more suited to the music school of a great university. The proposed curriculum, with one-to-one teaching being provided principally by approved teachers from outside the School, is modelled on the one used by Harvard, Cambridge and Oxford Universities.

Why can't the University provide a subsidy for Music?

It already does. The University recognizes that there are disciplines which cannot be offered within the funding constraints available. As a result, the University budget provides a subsidy for these programs. In 2012, Music received \$1.4 million, Art received \$1.4 million and Asian Languages received \$2.5 million. The University will continue to provide this support in the future. However, even with this level of subsidy, the present Music program is not financially viable, with the current

deficit running at \$2.9 million, i.e. an additional \$1.5 million on top of the agreed subsidy. The student-staff ratio within the Music School currently stands at 8.2 to 1, compared with the University average of 21.4 to 1.

Why can't the subsidy for Music be increased?

The present subsidy for Music is \$1.4 million per year, with a total deficit of income against expenditure running at \$2.9 million. This is a substantial amount. For the University to fund this total deficit each year would cost more than the total annual budget for the whole School of Philosophy (ranked 6th in the world), which is only \$2.6 million, and the School of History (ranked 12th in the world), which is only \$2.5 million. A further increase in the present subsidy for Music would need to come at the expense of other excellent Schools within the University, and this would directly impact on the educational experience of students in these Schools.

The School of Music has had funding crises in 2004 and 2008. Will these changes actually fix the problem?

The "fixes" in 2004 and 2008 made no significant change to the curriculum but reduced the staffing levels. These staff reductions actually made it more difficult to deliver the program. On this occasion, the cause of the problem is being addressed – the curriculum. It is being changed to a model which can be delivered within the available funds.

Is it true that the changes will impact adversely on the Canberra Symphony Orchestra and the broader Canberra music scene?

The CSO is a part-time orchestra, with a full size of approximately 70, although its complement varies from time to time. Recent concerts have regularly featured only 4 ANU School of Music staff, one of whom is employed half-time by ANU. In addition, 9 current students regularly play in the CSO. Students will continue to be available in the future to play in the Orchestra. Should existing staff leave Canberra, then the present 4 staff-occupied positions may be lost to the CSO, but given the total size of the orchestra that loss should not be significant. It is acknowledged that the CSO is not funded by government in the same manner as other State Symphony Orchestras, and the University certainly supports stronger funding for it.

There are of course many more dimensions to music-making in Canberra than just the CSO. But with six proposed performance staff positions in the new School structure, and performance-trained student numbers expected to be comparable in the future with present numbers, ANU will continue to provide to the Canberra community a strong pool of music-making talent.

How will the changes impact on the programs run by ANU in secondary schools?

There will be no impact on these programs. These programs are separately funded and taught by a separate group of teachers. They are not impacted by these changes.

How will these changes impact Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students?

There is no change to the HDR program. However, it is acknowledged that HDR students may be affected if academic members of their supervisory panel are no longer at the School. In these cases, the Associate Dean (Research Training), the School of Music Postgraduate Convenor and the Head of the School of Music will work with the individual student to identify new panel members, as occurs whenever an academic staff member leaves the institution.

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