

## MINIMUM STANDARDS AND MUSIC THEORY

# Music Theory at Valparaiso University

In order to help you "hit the ground running" as a student in this basic required music course, we are providing you with the following list of skills required of incoming students before beginning Music Theory I (course number: MUS 163).

## Minimum Standards for Knowledge of Music Fundamentals for Students

Students who plan to be music majors or minors (and others who choose Music Theory as an elective study) will already need to be fluent in basic music rudiments before being allowed to enroll in Music 163. Many high school musicians already have complete mastery of these rudiments. Others may not have had opportunity yet to focus on this information.

You may have been directed to this page on the basis of the placement exam given at your audition. Attaining these skills (as measured by a diagnostic re-test in the fall) will not only allow you to register for Music 163, but will help you go on to succeed in the core theory sequence.

Incoming students should already be able to:

- read and write pitch notation fluently in treble and bass clefs
- understand the use of meter signatures and read basic rhythmic notation
- locate specific notes on a keyboard, and know the difference between half steps and whole steps both on the keyboard and in notation
- identify and write key signatures for the major keys

If you can already meet the minimum standards listed above, here are some optional, more advanced skills you could practice before beginning Music 163.

- spell the major scales in music notation using notes and accidentals
- spell and identify musical intervals
- spell and identify major, minor, diminished, and augmented triads

### Concentrate on achieving fluency!

It is not enough to be able to "figure out" the answer; you should know it automatically.

If you are unfamiliar with these terms and exercises, we urge you to consult first with a music teacher or director at your school or church for some guidance in getting started. There are many basic music rudiments books for sale in music stores, but many are expensive. These exercises can usually be mastered without the purchase of special books.

In addition, there are many useful websites that provide free instruction and drill on aspects of music fundamentals. You can develop your skills with tutorials and drills at the following recommended sites:

- Department of Music - Valparaiso University
- Ricci Adams' Musictheory.net ([www.musictheory.net](http://www.musictheory.net))
  - Teoria Music Theory Web ([www.teoria.com](http://www.teoria.com))
  - Dolmetsch Online (more advanced theory)  
([www.dolmetsch.com/introduction.htm](http://www.dolmetsch.com/introduction.htm))

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