

N.B.: These four motions were passed at the Winter 2014 General Assembly of the Music Graduate Students' Society (MGSS) of McGill University, held on April 15, 2014 at the Schulich School of Music. A majority of MGSS members present voted in favour of each of these four motions (quorum was met for all four motions).

Motion on placement examinations

WHEREAS placement examinations are part of the degree requirements in several areas within the Schulich School of Music;

WHEREAS poor performance on placement exams can lead to an increase in the number of courses music graduate students are required to take, which can lengthen the amount of time it takes students to complete their degrees, causing significant academic and financial stress, and;

WHEREAS it has become a standard practice to provide students with practice exams to help them prepare for major tests (e.g.: SAT, GRE, MCAT, LSAT, etc.) and many students have come to rely on practice tests as an integral part of their study process:

BIRT MGSS advocate for the music faculty to mandate that each area requiring its graduate students to take placement exams give students access to the questions and prompts for at least one complete set of practice exams in the same format as the area's actual placement exams, and that the existence of and access instructions for these practice placement exams be advertised in communications notifying students of their placement exam requirements, and;

BIFRT MGSS advocate for the music faculty to mandate a minimal amount of time areas must give their students to study between notification of their placement exam requirements and the actual taking of the exams (preferably one month) and a minimal amount of time for students to take the exams (preferably one month).

Motion on comprehensive examinations

WHEREAS comprehensive examinations are part of the degree requirements in several areas within the Schulich School of Music;

WHEREAS poor performance on comprehensive exams can lead to graduate students being required to retake exams, which can lengthen the amount of time it takes students to complete their degrees, causing significant academic and financial stress, and;

WHEREAS it has become a standard practice to provide students with practice exams to help them prepare for major tests (e.g.: SAT, GRE, MCAT, LSAT, etc.) and many students have come to rely on practice tests as an integral part of their study process:

BIRT MGSS advocate for the music faculty to mandate that each area requiring its graduate students to take comprehensive exams give all students currently enrolled in the area access to the questions and prompts for at least one complete set of comprehensive exams in the same format as the area's actual comprehensive exams, and that the existence of and access instructions for these practice comprehensive exams be advertised alongside the comprehensive exam requirements listed in the Graduate Music Handbook, and;

BIFRT MGSS advocate for the music faculty to mandate a minimal amount of time areas must give their students between notifying students of possible comprehensive exam dates and the earliest possible exam date (preferably two months).

Motion on graduate student finances

WHEREAS the cost of attending McGill for a graduate degree in music depends on many factors (including citizenship, residency status, length of time to degree completion) and can therefore be challenging to determine, and;

WHEREAS having an accurate portrayal of the cost of attendance is often crucial for prospective graduate students when deciding whether or not to apply to or enroll at McGill, and when negotiating funding offers:

BIRT MGSS advocate for the music faculty to make information publically available (on the internet and in admissions materials) on the approximate total tuition and fees graduate students can expect to pay while enrolled at the Schulich School of Music, taking into account differences in tuition and fees between programs (master's vs. doctoral, performance vs. research), differences in tuition and fees for Québécois, out of province, and international students, and the average amount of time it takes students to complete their degrees.

Motion on employment opportunities for graduate students

WHEREAS many graduate students wish to gain work experience in their field while studying at the Schulich School of Music;

WHEREAS having relevant work experience in addition to a degree is often crucial in obtaining jobs in music;

WHEREAS the Schulich School of Music has few instructor, teaching assistant, and research assistant positions tailored to performance and composition students;

WHEREAS the provincial government has recently cut McGill's budget substantially, which has limited the amount of scholarships McGill can offer and has required graduate students to increasingly turn to other means (such as paid work) to finance their studies, and;

WHEREAS information about employment opportunities for graduate students within the Schulich School of Music is not centralized, and some students are likely not aware of opportunities they could take advantage of:

BIRT MGSS advocate for the music faculty to establish a centralized source (a website, ideally) where graduate students can find information about all the employment opportunities available for them within the Schulich School of Music, and;

BIFRT MGSS advocate for the music faculty to work to establish more paid teaching opportunities tailored to graduate students in performance and composition.