

# ENSEMBLE POLICY AND REGULATIONS

## Schulich School of Music Ensemble Policy and Regulations

### Preamble

The ensemble program is designed to provide an enriched and cohesive curriculum in practical musicianship for every student. Much of this training is accomplished in ensembles (instrumental, choral ensemble, or specialized) for the duration of a student's studies.

Students are responsible for checking their program requirements carefully in order to verify and fulfil large and small ensemble requirements; the Performance Department does not follow the particular enrolment of any student's participation in their large or small ensembles.

**Note:** In some documentation, large ensembles are referred to as "basic" ensembles, and small ensembles are referred to as "assigned" ensembles.

For each program's large and small ensemble requirements, students should refer to the appropriate section of the Music Undergraduate section (all undergraduate and licentiate requirements are found under Department of Performance and Department of Music Research: Composition; Music Education; Music History; Theory; Faculty Program. Graduate programs are found in the Music Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies section).

### Small Ensembles

Information on small ensembles for orchestral instruments can be found on the Chamber Music website. Jazz majors should refer to the Jazz Combos section. Additional information on other types of small ensembles can be found on the Other Ensembles section of the School of Music's Ensembles website.

Students should refer to the ensembles website and the program description for clarification on ensemble requirements by program.

**Note:** In all cases where the term "director" of an ensemble is used, it is understood to mean the conductor, director, stage director, or coach of the ensemble.

The following policy and regulations apply to all students performing in all ensembles, large or small, required, complementary, or elective. They apply also to all students who have been assigned to an ensemble for any reason, including conducting students, composers- and arrangers-in-residence, and others.

## Large Ensembles and Small Ensembles

For ensemble purposes, the orchestral instruments include:

- flute
- oboe
- clarinet
- bassoon
- saxophone

- french horn
- trumpet
- trombone
- tuba
- percussion
- harp
- violin
- viola
- cello
- double bass

Voice majors may choose from a group of vocal and choral ensembles appropriate to the level of their development.

In all programs which specify small ensembles, the following are considered small ensembles:

### Small Ensembles

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Course	Title	Credits
MUEN 540	Chamber Music Project 1.	0.5
MUEN 541	Chamber Music Project 2.	0.5
MUEN 553	Vocal Chamber Ensemble.	1
MUEN 556	Introduction to Collaborative Piano 1.	1
MUEN 557	Introduction to Collaborative Piano 2.	1
MUEN 560	Chamber Music Ensemble.	1
MUEN 562	Guitar Ensemble.	1
MUEN 570	Jazz Combo.	1
MUEN 574	Afro-Cuban/Brazilian Jazz Combo.	1
MUEN 578	Song Interpretation 1.	1
MUEN 579	Song Interpretation 2.	1
MUEN 580	Early Music Ensemble.	1
MUEN 581	Introduction to Ensemble Playing for Pianists.	1
MUEN 582	Piano Ensembles.	1
MUEN 584	Studio Accompanying.	1
MUEN 585	Sonata Masterclass.	1
MUEN 591	Brass Consort.	1
MUEN 598	Percussion Ensembles.	1

**Note:** Beethoven Orchestra (MUEN 567 Beethoven Orchestra.) does not count toward small ensemble credits.

## Additional Ensembles

Additional ensembles chosen by students in non-performance programs to reflect their particular interests may, with departmental approval, be applied as music and/or free elective credit. Students in performance may apply a maximum of four ensemble credits as complementary performance courses. Students electing an ensemble will normally be required to participate in the ensemble placement auditions and will be placed accordingly.

## Assignments and Auditions

Auditions for large and small ensembles are mandatory for participation in the ensemble. Information on all auditions for ensembles can be found on the ensembles website.

Students who cannot participate in the ensemble auditions at the times indicated on the website must contact the ensemble resource supervisor at least two (2) weeks before the date of the audition. The students must submit—in writing—reasons for their lack of availability and, if applicable, submit a recording of their audition materials prior to the day of the auditions. If students miss an audition with an accepted reason, but do not deliver the audition materials to the department, or if students miss an audition for reasons unacceptable to the Performance Department, they will not be allowed to audition and their assignment will be left entirely to the discretion of the Performance Department. The students may also be subject to grade penalties in the ensemble to which they are assigned.

Students will be notified of their assignments by email from either their instructor or the Ensemble Resource Office. Reassignments may be made from time to time during a term and will be communicated to students. Students registered in an instrumental program who are not assigned a large ensemble following the ensemble placement auditions should take a choral ensemble as their large ensemble.

## Commitment

Ensembles are courses. Each student who has registered for an ensemble, or who has been assigned to an ensemble, has made a commitment to the ensemble and is required to be available to attend all rehearsals, concerts, performances, field trips, recordings, and other activities, which constitute the course requirements of that ensemble. If rehearsals outside of class meeting times occur, advance notice will be given. These additional rehearsals will be avoided when possible.

## Failing Grade

A failing grade in any of the ensembles (large, small, complementary, or elective) obliges the student to make up the credit during a later semester. A subsequent failure in the same course may result in the student being required to withdraw from the program.

## Request to be Excused from a Rehearsal

Musicians are required to inform the Ensemble Resource Administrator at [ensembles.music@mcgill.ca](mailto:ensembles.music@mcgill.ca) of any possible professional engagements before they get placed into ensembles. Any student who cannot attend a Large Ensemble rehearsal is required to fill out an Absence Request Form as soon as they learn of their conflict.

**Note:** For Opera McGill policies, please contact [patrick.j.hansen@mcgill.ca](mailto:patrick.j.hansen@mcgill.ca). For jazz and early music large ensemble policies, please contact the instructor.

If a student has been excused for a rehearsal, they are responsible to find a substitute to cover their part during the absence, unless discussed with the Director.

**Important:** Only two absences in the entire concert cycle will be permitted (excused or unexcused); if a student foresees they will need to miss more than two rehearsals, efforts should be made to

be reassigned into a different program. No permission is given to be excused from a dress rehearsal or the concert itself.

Missing more than two rehearsals per concert cycle will prevent the student from participating in that concert cycle. In such a situation, the student will either receive a lower grade, be reassigned to another program when possible, or be asked to complete additional work to make up for the missed concert cycle. If a student has a legitimate excuse (e.g., an illness) that results in more than two absences, they should contact Student Affairs at [studentaffairs.music@mcgill.ca](mailto:studentaffairs.music@mcgill.ca) to explore whether they are eligible for a late withdrawal.

Students who are unable to play/sing because of an injury or illness should still attend the rehearsal when possible.

Students who are experiencing academic or physical barriers and have a documented disability, mental health condition, chronic health condition, or other impairment are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility and Achievement.

Absences or tardiness without an approved Ensemble Excuse Form will result in a final mark deduction as follows:

- Excused absences (up to 2 per concert cycle) result in no loss of grade<sup>1</sup>
- A tardy (10 minutes or less) to rehearsal without approval will result in loss of one grade point (i.e., B to B-)
- An absence (more than 10 minutes late) without approval will result in the loss of one entire letter grade (i.e., A to B)

<sup>1</sup> Please note, arriving after or during the warm-up or the tuning note is considered tardy.

Students may be excused from a rehearsal of an ensemble for the following reasons; however, submitting a form with one of these reasons does not guarantee approval of a request:

Reason for Absence	Actions Required
• Sickness, or emergency medical or dental work	Submit online form in advance (if possible) or within three (3) days of returning to school.

**Important Note:** Any student who is experiencing pain while playing or singing should inform their practical teacher and the Director of their ensemble(s), and should seek appropriate medical attention. Students should not be reluctant to admit to injury; it is entirely acceptable for students to be excused from ensemble rehearsal(s) for health reasons. The School does not want students to perform with pain or injury. If students are experiencing pain while playing, then they are permitted to sit in rehearsal in their assigned place without playing in the rehearsal.

Email the ensemble director and manager before the absence.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An audition for a permanent professional engagement, graduate school, or a summer program</li> <li>• A master class</li> <li>• A major competition</li> <li>• A professional engagement deemed by the Music School to be very important for a student's developing career</li> <li>• Family emergency or an especially important family occasion (e.g., weddings, funerals)</li> <li>• A field trip for another ensemble or class</li> <li>• An authorized McGill function</li> <li>• Religious Holy Days and Commitments</li> </ul> | <p>Submit online absence request form in advance and within 48 hours (two days) of the missed rehearsal. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence.</p> <p>Email the ensemble director and the manager before the absence.</p> |
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- their practical teacher;
- the Area Coordinator;
- the director of the ensemble; **or**

2. The student must have completed all program requirements except the final exam on their instrument; **or**
3. The student must have completed all musical requirements of their program, having only non-music and/or free electives remaining; **or**
4. The student must have a significant medical reason.

**Note:** Permission to not participate in a required or complementary ensemble for a term or part thereof is not an exemption and does not satisfy any credit requirements for a degree.

## Rotation in Large Ensembles

When possible, and to help ensure equal opportunity and experience for students in the large instrumental ensembles, the seating of students in these ensembles may be rotated periodically throughout the term or year. The director of the ensemble, along with the guidance of the Area Coordinator and/or practical instruction teachers, will determine whether or not rotation is possible.

## Transfer Credits

The previous ensemble participation of students coming to McGill from other universities will be recognized if their ensemble experience was similar to that required by the Schulich School of Music; determination of this experience will be approved by the Area Coordinator and the Department Chair. In general, transfer credit is made on a term-for-term basis (not by credits) and usually does not exceed two (2) terms. Students are normally not permitted to reduce the large ensemble training requirements of their McGill program to less than the number of terms required for them to complete the rest of their program. In such cases, transfer credit may be given as music and/or free elective credit for students in non-performance programs. Students in performance may apply a maximum of four credits as complementary performance courses.

## Large Ensemble Extra Credits

Based on the admitted program, large ensemble credits accumulated above the minimum may be applied as music and/or free elective credits. In addition, students in performance may apply a maximum of four MUEN credits as complementary performance courses. Participation in additional large or small ensembles implies that the same policies will apply.

## Performance Library

Students are responsible for the music that has been loaned to them for their use, and for its return in good condition to the Gertrude Whitley Performance Library. Students will be required to pay for the replacement of any music that has been lost, stolen, or damaged, and a hold on a student's Minerva account can be placed by the Performance librarian should music or fines not be handed in to the library.

## Preparation

If the director of an ensemble is not satisfied with the quality of the student's preparation for rehearsals, the director shall first warn the student. This warning shall be communicated by the director to the Ensemble Resource Supervisor and Area Coordinator, who shall inform the student in writing. If, in the director's opinion, this lack of preparation continues, further action will be taken to remedy the situation.

For any particular performance, if—after a written warning to the student(s) with copies to the Ensemble Resource Supervisor, practical instruction teacher, Area Coordinator, and Department Chair—the director, in consultation with their sectional coaches, feels that the performance of a student or group of students will not meet a certain minimum standard established by the director, the director may cancel a student's participation in a performance.

Students who are required to withdraw from an ensemble for reasons of lack of preparation will be given a grade F, which will be reflected in their grade point average (GPA).

## Withdrawal

Withdrawal for any reason obliges the student to make up the credit(s) during a later term.

## Exemption from a Required Ensemble

In order to be given permission not to participate in a required ensemble for a term or part thereof, a student must meet one of the following four criteria:

1. The student must be a participant in a major national or international competition, or (in the case of voice students) be given a significant role with a recognized performing arts ensemble, and (in the case of all students) have completed the minimum number of required terms of the ensemble, and have the permission of: