

Study Guide for Music Theory and Piano Placements

Music Theory:

All music majors, musical theatre majors, and music minors are required to take the music theory placement; this placement determines which classes in written music theory and theory lab (ear training and sight singing) each student should take to begin his or her studies at Samford. (The placement does not factor into recommendations for acceptance into the School of the Arts.)

Based on their placement results, students may be assigned to the following courses:

Music Theory

MUSC 1500: Music Fundamentals*

MUSC 1510: Theory I, Section 1

MUSC 1510: Theory I, Section 2

Music Theory Lab

MUSC 1501: Music Fundamentals Lab**

MUSC 1511: Theory Lab I, Section 1

MUSC 1511: Theory Lab I, Section 2

*Students who place into Music Fundamentals will complete Theory I during January Term and enroll in Theory II during the Spring Term. Students who place into Music Fundamentals also will not enroll in Class Piano until after the completion of Music Fundamentals.

**Students who place into Fundamentals Lab will complete Theory Lab I during Jan Term and enroll in Theory Lab II during the Spring Term.

The placement covers topics such as notation in treble and bass clefs, key signatures, notational signs, intervals, and triads. There are written and listening components to the placement.

Websites that provide drill practice for the skills covered in the music theory placement include

www.musictheory.net

www.emusictheory.com

Students who have completed courses in music theory prior to their enrollment at Samford should contact Arts Recruiter Rachel Lim at arts@samford.edu or 205-726-4524; additional placements for more advanced courses in music theory typically are administered during the week before the beginning of the fall semester. (Advanced Placement scores or music theory courses taken at another institution do not automatically place students out of the first semester of music theory at Samford.)

Piano:

All music majors with vocal or instrumental performance areas and musical theatre majors enroll in Class Piano to satisfy piano proficiency requirements for their respective degrees. Depending on a student's background in piano, he or she may elect to take a piano placement to begin his or her studies at Samford in a higher course level than Class Piano I. (The placement does not factor into recommendations for acceptance into the School of the Arts.)

Students without previous piano study may elect to begin in Class Piano I without completing the piano placement; if they choose this option, they should still meet with the Coordinator of Class Piano during the audition and interview weekend to receive general information regarding piano proficiency requirements.

Students with previous piano study who can meet the following requirements may be eligible to begin their piano studies at Samford in Class Piano II or a higher level and should take the piano placement:

- All major scales and arpeggios, 2 octaves, hands separately
- At-sight harmonization of a melody with primary chords, using lead sheet notation and Roman numerals
- Sight reading, hands together

A sample harmonization exercise to place into Class Piano II is provided below.

A sample harmonization exercise in 4/4 time, F major. The exercise consists of four lines of music. The first line has chords F, F, C7, and F. The second line has chords F, F, C7, and F. The third line has chords C7, C7, F, and B^b. The fourth line has chords F, F, B^b, and F.

A sample sight reading exercise to place into Class Piano II is provided below.

Allegretto

A sample sight reading exercise in 2/4 time, D major. The exercise consists of two systems of music. The first system has measures 1-4 with fingerings 1, 2, 4. The second system has measures 5-8 with fingerings 1, 2, 1. The piece is marked *mp*.

Students with previous piano study who meet the following requirements may be eligible to begin their piano studies at Samford in Class Piano III or a higher level and should take the piano placement:

- Major and minor scales and arpeggios, 2 octaves, hands separately
- At-sight harmonization with all diatonic chords, using lead sheet notation and Roman numerals
- More difficult sight reading