

# FAQ for New Music Students at Bowdoin College

## **Do I need to be a music major or minor to participate?**

Nope! All students are welcome to take music classes, participate in ensembles, and sign up for lessons—regardless of major or class year.

## **What ensembles are available?**

Bowdoin offers a wide variety of ensembles, including:

- **Orchestra**
- **Concert Band**
- **Chamber Choir**
- **Chamber Ensembles** (strings, winds, brass, etc.)
- **Jazz Combos**
- **Electro-Acoustic Ensemble**
- **Middle Eastern Ensemble**
- **South Asian Performing Arts Ensemble**
- **Beyond Borders Percussion Ensemble**

You'll find repertoire from jazz, contemporary, and Western classical traditions, along with musical styles from around the world.

## **Do I need previous experience to join an ensemble?**

Not always! The **Middle Eastern Ensemble**, **South Asian Ensemble**, **Bowdoin Electro-Acoustic Ensemble**, and **Beyond Borders Percussion Ensemble** are open to all students, including those with no prior experience.

## **Are there auditions? What do I need to prepare?**

Yes, most ensembles hold auditions during the **first week of the semester**. You don't need to prepare specific repertoire—just show up and be ready to play or sing.

Auditions help ensemble directors place students in the right group or part. They're meant to be welcoming, not stressful.

## **How do I register for ensembles?**

Register in Workday Student **after auditions** in the section assigned to you by the ensemble instructor (if there are multiple sections). Instructors will approve your registration in Workday Student after you request the course.

## **How often do ensembles perform?**

Each ensemble gives at least **one on-campus performance per semester**—in Studzinski Recital Hall, the Chapel, or the Tillotson Room in Gibson Hall.

There are also **off-campus performances** at other colleges and venues, and international **tours** have included trips to Russia, Chile, and Western Europe.

## **What classes are available?**

Bowdoin offers courses in music theory, history, performance, composition, music technology, and more. Check the course catalog for what's offered each semester.

**Do I need to take a placement test for music theory?**

Yes. The **theory placement test** is available on **Canvas** and should be taken **before course advising and registration**. It helps you and your advisor figure out which level of theory is best for you.

**How do I register for lessons?**

Register during your normal registration window. You'll be placed on a **waitlist** initially, and the department allocates seats based on the capacity of the lesson studios. Priority in lesson placement will go to **music majors and minors** first, then to students in each class year based on the order of the waitlist.

**What kinds of lessons are available?**

Bowdoin offers **group lessons** on piano and guitar and **individual lessons** in voice, strings, woodwinds, brass, piano, guitar, harp, pipe organ, drums, and more—across classical, jazz, and contemporary styles.

**Are lessons and ensembles for a full year or one semester?**

Both lessons and ensembles are semester-based and can be repeated. Each one earns **0.5 credit** and is graded **Credit/D/Fail**.

**Can I borrow instruments from the college?**

Yes! Instruments are available to students for lessons and ensemble participation. Just know that you're responsible for their care and any damage. Contact Delmar Small with questions regarding instrument, equipment, and storage locker availability.

**Are practice rooms and pianos available?**

Definitely. All students may access most practice rooms in Gibson and Studzinski Halls, many of which are equipped with **Steinway grand pianos**. Limited access to drums, amplifiers, is provided once you're registered.

**Who do I contact with questions?**

Reach out to **Jason Holmes**, the department coordinator. He's a great first point of contact for any music-related questions or logistical help.