

Piano Proficiency

An important tool for public and private school music educators is the ability to play the piano. For this reason, “Piano Proficiency” is required for all Music Education students. Piano Class I [and optional Piano Class II] is included in CCRI’s music curriculum to help prepare students for piano proficiency testing after transferring to a four-year college or university. This is a standard nationwide. The following information is included to help CCRI students plan ahead to meet this requirement.

At Rhode Island College:

All students in Music Education must complete a piano proficiency exam before entering Music Practicum. The exam will include:

1. Sight-read a single melodic line with chord symbols and improvise a simple accompaniment based on the chord symbols. The melody will be chosen from a 3rd grade series music book.
2. Play in any of these keys – C, G, D, Bb, and F – a song chosen from:
America
Polly Wolly Doodle
This Land Is Your Land
Marching to Pretoria
Silent Night
3. Play in a steady, secure tempo, any of the major and harmonic minor scales with 2 hands, parallel motion, 2 octaves, correct fingering.
4. Play a harmonic progression of Primary Triads with both hands (each hand plays the triads simultaneously) in the keys up through 5 sharps and 5 flats.
Practice/know the cadence formula: I IV6/4 I V6 I

At the University of Rhode Island:

Students must complete either Option I or Option II of the piano proficiency requirement.

Option I: students must pass all seven requirements listed below by the end of their junior year. (appointments may be scheduled periodically for a few of the seven, to be performed before a faculty examination committee)

1. Nomenclature. Answer questions which deal with terms concerning the piano as well as terms such as tempo, dynamic markings, and/or other elements of music.
2. Scales. Perform all major scales, 2 octaves, hands together, by memory, at a tempo of M.M. = 144 per note. Correct fingering is required.
3. Harmonize at sight. Read two melodies in any major or minor key, chosen by the examination committee. Improvise a suitable accompaniment for each melody by using diatonic triads and secondary dominants, and by reading chord symbols.

4. Transposition. Transpose at sight two melodies selected by the examination committee. Be able to transpose the melodies up or down by a half-step or whole-step.
5. Patriotic Songs. Play *America* --or-- *The Star-Spangled Banner* in a manner suitable for accompanying community or school singing. Both accompaniments are to be prepared in advance.
6. Sight-read Accompaniments. Be able to play at sight a four-part song and an accompaniment for a vocal or instrumental soloist.
7. Repertoire. Play two piano pieces by contrasting composers, prepared in advance. The pieces must be approved in advance by a member of the piano faculty or a class piano instructor.

Option II: Take Piano Class I, II, III, and IV and successfully pass each with a grade of C or better.

Failure to pass Option I or Option II will require reexamination in succeeding semesters. No one will graduate with a Bachelor of Music degree from URI until the Piano Proficiency requirement is fulfilled.