Advising

Philosophy

The School of Music seeks to graduate every student accepted into its program. Much care is given, therefore, to the selection process. While an emphasis is placed on the audition, the academic profile of each student is considered carefully before acceptance into the program is granted. Students are accepted as music majors only when the professional faculty feel they have potential for careers in music, and their high school or college record and standardized test scores indicate they are also capable of succeeding academically at Carnegie Mellon.

Once enrolled, a student is expected to make strong musical and academic progress. The faculty as a group discusses every student experiencing difficulty in the program in special grades meetings at the conclusion of each semester. Students who fall short of the school standards are placed on academic action.

Occasionally it is determined by the faculty that a student is not succeeding in the program. The School administration will advise a student of this concern as soon as it can be determined, but for undergraduate students, certainly before the conclusion of the sophomore year. At the point of being dropped, the student will be advised carefully and personally of the options available: to transfer to another music program in another setting, to transfer to another department at Carnegie Mellon University, perhaps continuing in music as a minor, or to become a CFA transitional student while taking university courses in preparation for a transfer to another department, college, or university.

Structure

The School of Music has a three-tier system of advising: Professional Advisor, Academic Advisor (Director of Student Services for undergraduate students, Director of Graduate Studies for graduate students), and School Head.

Also, any student with an applicable academic status is assigned an additional advisor. For example, a student who is taking a double major is assigned an external advisor for the non-music major; a student who is taking music education in addition to performance or composition is assigned a School of Music advisor for music education.
**Academic Advisor**

The School of Music’s Director of Student Services and Director of Graduate Studies follow the students from the beginning of their association with the School through their graduation - overseeing the student’s registration, providing guidance and advice on the selection of required courses and electives; approving course overloads; checking progress towards completion of curricular requirements; auditing all requirements for graduation; and certifying the student’s degree.

As academic advisors, the Director of Student Services and the Director of Graduate Studies monitor the student’s progress in the School, and alert the administration if problems develop.

One of the services offered through the Student Services Office is the dissemination of information about music competitions, summer work and summer music festivals, scholarship and fellowship opportunities, and permanent job postings. Information is also collected about other graduate schools in music. Assistance is provided in applying for all of these opportunities.

**Professional Advisor**

The private studio teacher is the student's primary professional advisor; this person provides ongoing professional and career guidance as well as specific feedback on the student's level of talent and potential for work in the profession. Every student in the School of Music studies privately with a member of the performance, composition, or conducting faculty; this provides at least one hour per week of one-on-one instruction. Since studio is the focus of the music major's training, students often select a school because of their desire to study with a specific master teacher.

Other music faculty may also be the student's professional advisor; this person provides ongoing professional and career guidance in his/her area of expertise, in response to the student’s interest in that area and in a mentor relationship. For example, a student who is interested in Dalcroze Eurhythmic may also be advised by one of our eurhythmics faculty; a student who is interested in conducting may also be advised by one of our conducting faculty. Students and faculty may enter into mentor relationships directly or with the facilitation of the Director of Student Services.

**School Head**

The final level of overseeing for the School of Music's advising system lies in the office of the School Head, as is the case for all aspects of the School's operations. Any student
who is exhibiting difficulty in their program is actively counseled by the Professional Advisor, the Director of Student Services or Director of Graduate Studies, and the Head of the School.

For example, each semester when grades are issued, a list is made of all undergraduate music students who have a "D" or "R" in a course or a "C" in major studio. This list is compiled by the Director of Student Services and sent to the Head. Depending upon the seriousness of the situation, the student is asked to see either the Director of Student Services or the Head.

The process for freshmen is even more proactive. Freshmen experiencing serious difficulty at mid-term are called in to see the Head of the School in October. Sometimes, the discussions lead to an indication that the student has chosen the wrong major or the wrong school; when this evolves into a decision to make a change the Director of Student Services is alerted to help the student explore other options.