

# WHEATON CONSERVATORY of Music

## *Piano Proficiency FAQ*

*“Everything you wanted to know about Piano Proficiency but were afraid to ask.”*

**Piano proficiency – what exactly is that?** If you’re not a piano major, you must be able to play piano at a certain level as part of your professional music training. During Conservatory orientation week, you’ll be assigned a short time slot to play your best piece (memorized) and scales/arpeggios.

**By when do I have to be proficient?** As soon as possible, preferably by the end of your sophomore year. At the very latest, by the time you graduate.

**What are the options for meeting piano proficiency?** There are three options: 1) test out during orientation week, 2) take (and pass!) the Class Piano sequence, or 3) study privately and then take (and pass!) a Jury Validation Exam at the end of any semester.

**I’m going to try and pass out of all my piano requirements – what do I need to prepare?** Piano proficiency is reached at level 4AB in the Piano Technique and Piano Literature syllabus requirements from the Conservatory Handbook. Check out the details:

<http://www.wheaton.edu/Conservatory/handbook/index.html>

**I can’t play piano at all -- now what?** You’ll be assigned to Class Piano I.

**I’ve never taken formal lessons, but I can play a little bit – what should I do?** Do your best to practice between now and when you arrive. We’ll assess your proficiency through the placement audition during orientation week. The text we use for the Class Piano sequence is *Alfred’s Group Piano for Adults*. Take private lessons if possible.

**What’s the best way to prepare for the orientation placement test?** If you’re currently taking private lessons, show the requirements from the handbook to your teacher. If you’re not currently taking lessons, seriously consider starting lessons. Remember, one of your pieces must be memorized.

**I’m a Music Education major – Are there different/additional requirements?** Yes. BME majors do have some additional requirements, but they will not be assessed during orientation. Every degree option requires one memorized piece and technique of appropriate level of difficulty. For BME majors, additional competency must be demonstrated in sightreading, harmonizing a melody at sight, accompanying a soloist (prepared in advance), playing a familiar piece by ear, and one of the following patriotic songs (scores may be used): *America the Beautiful*, *The Star Spangled Banner*, or *My Country 'Tis of Thee*.