



EASTMAN INSTITUTE FOR MUSIC LEADERSHIP

Office of Careers & Professional Development

Sample Interview Questions

Compiled by Blaire K.S. Koerner

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

- Tell us about yourself.
- Why would you like to work for our school/organization/non-profit?
- Which five words would you use to describe yourself? Why?
- What have you learned from your experiences outside the workplace?
- What are your career goals? Where do you want to be in five years? Ten?
- What will it take to attain your goals and what steps have you taken toward attaining them?
- What is an accomplishment you are most proud of and why?
- Who inspired you as a musician?
- Why do you think our organization is a good fit for you?
- In what ways do you think you can contribute to this organization?
- What are three of your strengths? Three weaknesses?
- What is the one experience you think has best prepared you for this position?
- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time?

MUSIC TEACHING

Overall

- Tell us about your experiences as a teacher.
- What is the role of a teacher?
- What is your philosophy of teaching?
- Describe your teaching style.
- How would your students describe you?
- How do you know if a student understands what you are teaching?
- How do you evaluate student progress?
- How do you get students excited about learning?
- How do you individualize your teaching?
- How do you handle a student who is constantly misbehaving?
- How do you handle a call from a parent who is upset with their child's grade?
- A student is constantly late or absent in class, how do you handle the situation?
- Describe an ideal curriculum in music.
- How do you introduce career education into your music class?
- What is the most important part of learning - content, outcome, or process?
- Describe a positive music teaching experience. A negative experience?
- If you weren't able to teach music, what would you do for a living?
- What is your philosophy of grading?
- How are you diverse and inclusive in your teaching?

Eastman School of Music
26 Gibbs Street
Rochester, NY 14604
iml.esm.rochester.edu/careers/



MUSIC TEACHING (cont.)

Studio Teaching (Performance, Composition, Conducting)

- As a performer/composer/conductor, why do you like to teach?
- Describe how you typically teach an hour lesson.
- Describe a recent student recital program.
- How much practice time do you expect from your students?
- Describe several attributes of a successful studio teacher.
- What are some ways a studio teacher can interact with the ensemble directors to benefit and enhance the overall music program?
- Name some repertoire and etude books that you use when teaching students.
- Name 5-10 outstanding contemporary compositions for your instrument written in the last 20 years.
- If you were to give a recital in your first year, what would be the repertoire and why?
- Why would students in this area come to study with you versus other teachers?
- How would your syllabus differ teaching music majors vs. non-music majors?
- What are your recruitment strategies? How would you adjust this based on regional, national or international areas?
- What other areas might you be able to teach?

Ensemble Conducting

- How would you organize a beginning conducting course?
- How would your syllabus differ teaching music majors vs. non-music majors?
- What is your favorite composer for band/orchestra/choir/opera and why?
- What would be a sample program for your ensemble in the first year?
- How do you aim to increase the level of the ensemble? How do you assess that?
- How do you divide your rehearsal time?
- How do you approach seating an ensemble?
- What do you currently do to make your ensemble inclusive and diverse?
- Say you are low on a particular instrument or voice part, i.e. bassoon or tenor, what are your steps to fill that seat?
- What activities do you expect the ensemble to perform/participate in, both within and outside of the school?

History & Theory

- What is your research specialty or focus? What are you currently working on?
- What critical approaches do you find most persuasive?
- How would you organize a beginning history or theory course?
- How does your research and teaching influence each other?
- What texts, readings, or concepts do you enjoy weaving into your course and why?
- What is your experience recruiting majors in your field?



MUSIC TEACHING (cont.)

- In what ways do you stay active in your field?
- What is your musical background and how did that influence your current career path?
- How would your syllabus differ teaching music majors vs. non-music majors?
- Describe some of the major projects that you assign in your classes.

K-12 Music Education

- What techniques do you use to keep students actively involved and motivated during class and rehearsals?
- How will you incorporate technology into your lessons?
- How do you engage a parent in the music education of their child?
- How would you recruit students for ensembles? How do you retain them?
- How much practice time do you expect from your students?
- What do students gain from studying music?
- What would you do if a student could not afford to purchase or rent an instrument/materials?
- How do you handle the different ability levels in your classroom?
- If you had a 45-minute class period, how would you divide that time?
- How often will your marching band be expected to rehearse and who would assist you in these rehearsals?
- What are some topics you would cover in general music classes?
- What do you currently do to make your class inclusive and diverse?
- Provide a program sample for your spring concert.

ADMINISTRATION & LEADERSHIP

- Describe a situation where you triumphed during a challenge.
- What is your experience supervising a team? What about training colleagues?
- How do you feel about weekend or evening events and activities?
- What is your philosophy concerning fundraising and interaction with donors?
- How would you work towards engaging a younger audience?
- How would you broach a difficult subject with the Board of Trustees?
- How do you prioritize projects and tasks?
- What do you do to stay on top of the industry?
- What are your comments about musical trends and the industry today?
- What types of professional development activities do you pursue?
- Describe your musical background and it impacted your choice to become a musical leader.
- What are some transferable skills you learned from being a musician and how do you apply them?



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QUESTIONS YOU COULD ASK

- What would you like to be accomplished in the next 6-12 months?
- What do you feel would be the major problems or challenges I could be facing in this position?
- Who will be my supervisor? Could you tell me about them?
- What qualities do you look for most in your employees?
- What kind of growth opportunities exist in this position?
- Could you please describe the typical schedule of this position?
- How many classes will I be expected to teach?
- What textbooks or curriculum does this district/school use in this subject area?
- How do the parents and the community support your school/organization?
- Does your school use teacher aides or parent volunteers?
- What resources will be available for me to use?
- What are some current projects or initiatives the organization is working on?
- What level is the ensemble currently at?
- Do I have a budget? If so, how is it typically spent?