

MUSIC

CAREER GUIDE

Fine Arts Career Services

The University of Texas at Austin

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FINE ARTS CAREER SERVICES OFFERS:

ONE-ON-ONE ADVISING

Resume and cover letter reviews, mock interviews, graduate school advising and general career exploration. Call us for appointments!

JOB BOARD

Fine Arts Works is exclusively for COFA students and alumni. Check it out at bit.ly/fawjobs

PROGRAMMING

Tips and Tiffs professional development workshops, *Creative Exchange* guest speaker series and info sessions on FACS-specific initiatives

FUNDING

Intern Scholarship, Professional Development Travel Initiative (PDTI), New York Seminar Scholarship and more. bit.ly/facsfunds

AND MORE

Online internship classes, New York Seminar spring break trip, Networking Night and more!

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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on taking the next step in thinking about your career as a musician! Whether you are a freshman or nearing graduation, now is a good time to think about your future. This career guide is meant to give you broad information as you picture yourself working in different environments. As a musician, you may work as a performer, educator, or administrator, or likely a combination of all three.

You are welcome to meet with Fine Arts Career Services for further guidance! We are here to brainstorm different career paths, give guidance on professional documents or help you find the right job or internship for your goals.

CAREERS IN MUSIC

As we talk about your future as a professional musician, let's consider your options in three broad categories:

Music Education

Classroom Music Teacher
Private Lesson Instructor
Music within academia/
universities
Education within arts
organizations
Education Manager

Music Therapy

Music Therapist
Licensed Professional of the
Healing Arts

Music Performance

Full-time Ensemble Musician
Freelance (Gigging) Musician
Recording/Session Musician
Military Musician
Liturgical/Church Musician
Forming a chamber ensemble

Music Administration

Music Business
Music Library/Publishing
Arts Administration
Commercial Music Production
Music Venue Manager

VIEW YOURSELF MULTI-Dimensionally

In the modern arts world, the more you can see yourself as a multi-faceted artist, the better. Whether your goal is to teach primarily, or win a full-time orchestra job, the more that you can combine the aforementioned skills, the more opportunities you will have.

Teaching gigs lead to playing gigs. Developing arts administration skills could improve your portfolio as a music educator. We encourage students to diversify their skill set! Every opportunity can be used as a chance to grow.

MUSIC PERFORMANCE

In the form of freelancing or seeking full-time employment in an ensemble, finding a career in music performance can be challenging but rewarding. If you wish to go down this path, seeking opportunities in summer music festivals (such as Aspen or Brevard) while you are in school is a great place to start. Many professionals audition to get on “sub lists” early in their career, as well as playing in smaller regional ensembles.

The process of auditioning for a first full-time position can sometimes take years, so many musicians subsidize their income as a freelance musician, teacher and administrator while they are on the audition scene. All of these opportunities give you exposure to more networking opportunities and more income.

Freelance musicians work in theatres, clubs, private events and religious settings. Pay for freelance work can vary and work schedules can fluctuate greatly. Freelancing is an industry that is built on strong relationship-building, so networking for future work is crucial. Working as a freelance musician also comes with viewing yourself as a small business: keeping track of income taxes, business expenses, your calendar and maybe even some marketing.

Many musicians also audition for ensembles within the U.S. Military. These opportunities are well-paid, and come with many of the benefits that are associated with being in the military. While you will have to complete basic training and meet certain health requirements, many musicians are enrolled in the military in a manner where they will never see combat.

Many music auditions are based solely on your playing/singing ability. Some performers seek graduate studies to study with certain people or gain more experience, but graduate degrees are not necessary to land a full-time ensemble job.

MUSIC EDUCATION

For the purpose of this guide, we are defining music education as more than just jobs within a school district. Music is taught in many places and musicians can become educators, even if their degree is not in music studies.

To get a job as a school music teacher, you will need to hold a state teaching certificate. If you are a music studies major, this process will be laid out by your faculty, but it usually involves student teaching, a criminal background check and the passing of licensing exams. If you do not earn a degree in music studies but want to become a teacher after graduation, certification programs outside of universities exist. Through a combination of coursework, exams and student teaching, it is possible to become a credentialed teacher after you graduate.

Working as a school music teacher is a highly rewarding career that combines musicianship, pedagogy and advocacy. Music teachers find great joy in sharing their passion for music with young people. The experience of teaching music at the elementary, middle and high school level varies widely, so it is essential that you explore your strengths and interests when it comes to teaching different populations.

If your goal is to work in schools, get in front of students while you are still in college. You could help with after-school rehearsals, work as a sectional instructor or teach private lessons. Many of these opportunities pay, and could be a very useful part-time job while you are still in school. Gaining these experiences early will strengthen your resume and prepare you for your first teaching jobs.

The Texas Music Educator's Association (TMEA) maintains a large and thorough job board at www.tmea.org. Many other state music education agencies maintain similar job boards.

MUSIC EDUCATION *(cont.)*

If you enjoy being your own boss and teaching, building a studio as a private music instructor could be an enjoyable career. Most school music teachers maintain lists of lesson teachers, which can serve as a source for clients. Teaching privately involves preparing students for concerts, auditions and overall development on their chosen instrument.

Working as an academic in a university combines a musician's passion for research and teaching. Professors often possess a doctoral-level degree, either a DMA or PhD, based on the discipline.

There are many opportunities for music educators to work for community or arts organizations. Most symphony orchestras have education departments with staff whose purpose is to educate patrons and consumers. Some nonprofits exist to support music education in low-income regions. Often concert halls and performing arts centers have education initiatives of their own. These positions combine strong administrative and advocacy skills, as well as a drive to bring music to all audiences. While these positions may not involve making music every day, they certainly require a passion for it.

MUSIC ADMINISTRATION

Music administration requires high organization and methodical skills to ensure quality music experiences. Professional music organizations have departments that focus on marketing, development (fundraising), education and operations. For more information, check out our Arts Administration Career Guide!

LET'S TALK ABOUT MONEY

Any conversation about potential earnings for musicians starts with deciding if you seek full-time employment or more of a freelancing lifestyle. In some cities, the local chapter of the American Federation of Musicians may post some salary information. Music educators can often look up salary scales on school district websites. Our office's favorite resource for salary research is Glassdoor (www.glassdoor.com). The Occupational Outlook Handbook compiled by the U.S Department of Labor (www.bls.gov/ooah/) is also a great resource that provides average salary ranges, estimated growth for various industries and more.

If you are a freelancer, it is wise to sit down with a certified financial planner and develop a plan for how you will process payment from various organizations and venues, and how much you need to put aside for income tax.

FURTHERING YOUR EDUCATION

The *Master of Music (MM)* is a degree that students often use to gain more experience, build their resume or study with a new mentor after the bachelor's degree.

The *Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA)* degree is a performance-based degree that culminates in a recital or large-scale performance project.

A *Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)* in music culminates in a dissertation, and is common for the disciplines of music theory, musicology and music education. Doctoral-level degrees are necessary if you are interested in pursuing an academic career at the university level.

...NOW WHAT'S NEXT?

Maybe reading this has left you with even more questions, and feeling even less sure about what career opportunities you may want to explore.

That is okay!

Setting up an appointment with Fine Arts Career Services is a great place to brainstorm possible career pathways and help to make your application materials reflect you in the strongest way possible.

