

So, You Want To Be a Music Major

Before applying to schools: complete your FAFSA (with parents) and apply for as many scholarships as possible. OSAC (Office of Student Access and Completion) has a *ton* and is easy to use. U of O has Pathway Oregon, which is a full ride for students with financial need.

Applying to the university/college: the general admission office at the school can help with this. Your high school's college admission person can help with this part as well.

**Having a strong GPA, transcript, and extracurriculars will help greatly with the above steps.*

Applying/auditioning for the music school itself: do your research. They'll have all the details online. There will be an audition (in-person with an accompanist preferred). The details for that will be online, but generally they'll ask you to feature both lyrical and technical playing. Sight reading and scales (by memory) may also be required.

Choosing your school:

There are many considerations to make. Apply to your top 3-5 so you have options. Things to consider when choosing a school:

- the specific degree offered and the necessary time to complete it,
- your private instructor,
- other faculty (specific to your preferred major), facilities (practice rooms and performance venues),
- job placement of alumni,
- location of school (Portland, Monmouth, etc.), and
- cost (but remember scholarships may vary from school to school--don't dismiss a school entirely just because the initial tuition is higher than others).

Create a pros/cons list with all of these traits in mind. Think about your priorities and pick your preferred schools. Add any others that stick out.

Other specifics about choosing: Contact the admissions person specific to the school of music and ask to make an appointment. *They want to recruit you.* They will show you around, tell you about the application/audition process, and try to pitch their school to you. **Important:** contact the instructor for your particular instrument. Ask for a demo lesson. Most will offer one for free. Henry (Oregon trombone professor) was like a

second father to me--I wouldn't be where I am without him. They'll be with you an hour every week, (plus ensembles and masterclasses) for the next four+ years. This is probably the most important factor in choosing a school.

Possible careers in music: Each option has varying degrees of pay, sustainability, quality of life, and growth in the field. Do your research and see what your chances of success are with the particular major you choose. Music education, music therapy, composition, digital audio technician, instrument technician/builder, jazz studies, music performance, are just some options out there, but there are more. I could put you in touch with someone in a particular field if you're interested.

Final considerations about being a music major: most music programs will require the same basic "core" of classes. The core includes theory, aural skills (ear training, singing, etc.), keyboard skills, music history, large ensembles, and master classes. There will be proficiency tests in the beginning, but you don't necessarily have to be at a high level in those areas from the beginning.

Final-final: At least at the U of O, music majors had one of the most time-demanding schedules of all bachelor degrees. Law and architecture had us beat, but not by much. If you have something else you would love to do for the rest of your life (and you can make stable money doing it), *pursue that*. You gotta love it! Best of luck, and I'm always here to help!

Good schools to start with: U of Oregon, Oregon State, Western Oregon, George Fox, Lewis and Clark