



American College of Music

Education Reimagined

ACM Frequently Asked Questions

About ACM

The American College of Music (ACM) was founded in 2019 by music educators whose primary purpose is to offer a 100% Online graduate education that is affordable and academically valued by utilizing student-centered, hands-on instruction. Through teaching and learning, ACM empowers students to develop critical and creative thought as a starting point in acquiring fact-based knowledge, resulting in favorable outcomes and informed solutions. At graduation, each student will have the ability to live, adapt, and lead in an ever-changing, interconnected world.

1. What is ACM's Purpose?

The American College of Music aims to provide exceptional graduate education to music educators via an online environment that strives to advance knowledge, musicianship, inquiry, and academic achievement.

2. What is ACM's Mission?

- Develop passionate educators, reflective scholars, and life-long learners.
- Provide heuristic, hands-on training with student-centered, project-based instruction.
- Promote learner-centered pedagogy, critical thinking, and problem-solving as a personal development framework.

3. What are the issues/problems that ACM is trying to address?

- ACM offers a 100% Online master's degree program for working music educators to further their educational goals, academic knowledge, and pedagogical skills. Due to out-of-school preparation time and extra-curricular activities such as rehearsals, performances, and competitions, in-service music practitioners have difficulty attending traditional brick-and-mortar graduate programs.
- For the past twenty years (2000-2019), public and private graduate education tuition has increased 250%, while inflation has hovered around 2.1%.¹ Currently, one out of four Americans has a student loan, with a US student loan debt totaling 1.7 trillion dollars. According to a study by Leslie and Gray, higher education's sky-rocketing tuition rates are due to the introduction of government-secured student loans into the market, negating free-market competitiveness.²
- Teacher preparedness is a significant issue, especially among new, untenured music educators. A 2011 survey by the US Department of Education reveals that fifty percent of teachers are not prepared to meet the challenges of their profession.³ Although there have been mitigated attempts to remedy this problem through pre-

¹ U.S. Department of Education. *Average and Percentiles of Graduate Tuition and Required Fees in Degree-Granting Postsecondary Institutions*. Washington, DC: Digest of Education Statistics, 2021.

² Leslie, Larry L., and Gary P. Johnson. "The Market Model and Higher Education." *The Journal of Higher Education* 45, no. 1 (1974): 1-20.

³ National Center for Education Statistics. *Teacher Quality: A Report on the Preparation and Qualifications of Public School Teachers*. Washington, DC: USDOE, 2011.

service and in-service professional development and workshops at the college/university and school district levels, the results have been mixed due to presented lectures by experts on topics music teachers may have little or no interest in. What music educators want is practical, hands-on content that covers subjects like musical repertoire, advanced instrument techniques, and technology utilization, to name a few. Most importantly, K-12 music practitioners seek mentorship programs with experienced master teachers.⁴

4. What methods will be used to alleviate these problems?

- Music educators designed ACM's 100% Online master's program for music educators with no required residency or out-of-state tuition. The program consists of 5-ten-week quarters, graduating students in 15 months, expediting class time and program length to accommodate working educators' demanding schedules.
- One of ACM's main priorities is to help music educators achieve their educational goals by keeping tuition rates affordable and providing low-interest private financing, culminating with a debt-free degree. Maintaining a cost-effective overhead and seeking individual donations and grants facilitates the program's success.
- ACM Online curriculum is designed to increase the music educator's effectiveness in the classroom by incorporating heuristic (hands-on) learning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and mentorship into every offered course. As a result, ACM students will be able to overcome their educational challenges, have successful programs and become master teachers.

5. What is ACM's track record of accomplishment?

In August of 2021, ACM was granted permission to operate by the California Bureau of Private Postsecondary Education for admitting students. Present and potential students are attracted to ACM due to its affordable tuition, the convenience of online access, relatively short program length, and emphasis on collaboration and mentorship.

6. How qualified are your board, staff, volunteers, and community alliances to tackle these problems?

- The American College of Music's Board of Trustees is duly qualified to: define and maintain the mission of ACM, ensure that the goals and objectives of ACM are implemented, establish and review fiscal and administrative policies, approve an annual budget, monitor finances, and ensure that adequate resources are available to run ACM. The board members represent individuals of diverse backgrounds, professions, and education and are listed in the college's catalog. They are dedicated to ACM's mission of developing passionate educators, reflective scholars, and life-long learning.
- ACM's faculty signifies the highest levels of education and knowledge with over thirty years of K-12 experience. They are fully committed to empowering students to develop critical and creative thought as a starting point in acquiring fact-based knowledge, resulting in favorable outcomes and informed solutions.

⁴ Bush, Jeffrey E. . "Importance of Various Professional Development Opportunities and Workshop Topics as Determined by in-Service Music Teachers." *Journal of Music Teacher Education* 16, no. 2 (2007): 10-18.

7. Who are the beneficiaries of the ACM's Master in Music Education?

The primary benefactors of the ACM's Online Master in Music Education program are the educators themselves in their acquisition of knowledge, heightened use of current educational strategies, methodologies, and pedagogy skills. Most importantly, however, are the students of the educators who will be the recipients of their instructor's acquired knowledge and skills, regardless of demographics, race, or abilities. It is these students who will obtain life-long learning to achieve life-long goals. As recently stated by the president of the National Association of Music Educators: "Music and the other arts foster in our students the characteristics employers want to see in the people they hire."⁵

8. What resources are needed to advance your efforts?

Going beyond current needs, ACM will require additional capital to increase academic infrastructure and staffing needs as future student loads increase. ACM will be adding a Ph.D. program to the existing master's program shortly, thus increasing its reliance on donations and grants to keep tuition rates affordable and academic standards high.

9. How will you raise the needed funds?

Raising enough funds to maintain ACM's purpose and mission will always be challenging. However, with the commitment and support of the board of trustees, administration, and faculty, acquiring funding via dedicated donors and philosophic foundational giving will be successful.

10. Is ACM Accredited?

ACM is currently seeking accreditation by a national music organization approved by the US Department of Education. More details will be available as the process continues.



⁵Odegaard, Denese. "Ode to Orchestrating Success: Music Education Is Key to Success in School and Life." *Music Educators Journal* 103, no. 2 (2016): 6-7, p7.