
EKU SAXOPHONE STUDIO

Handbook and Policies 2019 (version 3.1)

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the EKU Saxophone Studio. This handbook is an attempt to cover in some detail necessary and helpful information to enable saxophone students to be successful in their academic career, in present and future professional opportunities, and in finding (and keeping) a job in their field. It will cover a great deal of material, some of which may seem obvious or of questionable value; hopefully, the usefulness of the information will become apparent over time if it does not seem so now. Please help improve the handbook by asking questions about anything that seems unclear or by pointing out missing, inaccurate, outdated, or otherwise “bad” information. Thank you for your help.

While every attempt will be made to make sure the information contained in the handbook is accurate, please remember that:

- this handbook is not intended to replace the official EKU Undergraduate or Graduate Catalogs (currently available at <http://catalogs.eku.edu/>). In case of a discrepancy, the catalog is the correct source of information; please point out any errors or discrepancies to the applied instructor so that the handbook can be updated.
- various useful forms and other information can be found at <https://music.eku.edu/student-resources> on the EKU Music web site.
- some of the information in the handbook represents the opinion of the applied instructor.

The “end-in-mind” of applied lessons, master classes, and studio ensembles such as the saxophone quartets and Saxophobia is the growth and development of the student’s musicianship, both as a performer of the music and as one who appreciates the music in its most literal sense. Within the studio, the basic assumption will be made that each student – whatever his/her major concentration (i.e., performance, education, industry, etc.) – is dedicated to attaining the highest possible level of musicianship and is committed to the process necessary to reach their goals. It is understood that students have multiple priorities, that their course load makes demands (often high) on their time, and that the balance between academics, jobs, social life, and other pursuits is seldom easy to maintain. Nevertheless, a career in any facet of music is a rewarding yet demanding endeavor; competition in music fields is very stiff (as it is in most other career areas), and any kind of skill development requires constant attention. It is vital that practice time and attendance at lessons, master classes, and ensemble rehearsals stay toward the top of the priority list.

APPLIED LESSONS

Applied saxophone lessons are designated MUS x46e (the “x” is replaced by a number indicating the level – “1” for freshman, etc.). One credit hour of lessons indicates that the student meets with the instructor one half-hour per week and is expected to be practicing at least one hour per day on lesson materials. Two or more credit hours of lessons means that the student meets with the instructor one hour each week and is expected to be practicing at least one hour per day for each credit hour on lesson materials. Generally performance majors register for two credit hours of lessons, other majors sign up for one credit hour. Students should be prepared to submit a copy of their course schedule to the instructor, who will assign a weekly lesson time (or, the instructor may elect to offer available times on a “first-come, first-served” basis). Lesson material will vary from student to student, but it will typically include scales, etudes, and pieces from the standard repertory (i.e., “classical” pieces). Depending on student interest and skill level, it may also include jazz etudes or pre-transcribed solos, new transcriptions of recorded solos, and work on improvising. Practicing ensemble music and/or other material is to be in addition to lesson practice.

As stated in the lesson syllabus, lessons will be on alto saxophone unless the needs of a particular piece dictate otherwise. Students are expected to come to lessons with their instruments in proper working condition, appropriate mouthpiece(s), properly functioning reeds, and all necessary lesson materials. Consider the purchase of reeds and other accessories part of the textbook requirement. Although not needed at lessons, students are expected to obtain a metronome and use it in practice. Etude books, solo literature, and other materials as assigned are also to be considered textbooks for the class and purchased in a timely manner. Accompaniment music must be made available to assigned accompanists in a timely manner as outlined below. Students will be expected to account for practice time; this may involve the purchase of a practice planner.

Weekly grades for applied lessons are primarily based on a combination of overall progress, completion of weekly assignments, and master class participation (discussed below). Lessons may be rescheduled at the discretion of the instructor depending on available time and if arranged prior to the lesson time. Lateness to a lesson may result in a lowering of the lesson grade or cancellation of the lesson. Absences may be excused in case of:

- university-approved performances or other activities.
- emergencies (must make contact with instructor as soon as reasonably possible).
- sudden and significant illness (requires Doctor's excuse at the discretion of the instructor).

Please consult the Applied Saxophone course syllabus for more specific information on grading, absence policy, etc.

ACCOMPANISTS

At some universities, saxophone students are left to their own devices when it comes to finding (and paying for) accompanists. Fortunately, ECU provides accompanists to applied students. Saxophone students should consider accompanists and the time spent with them in rehearsal and performance a valuable resource (especially given the relative difficulty of saxophone literature) ; to this end, please bear in mind the following:

- students are responsible for obtaining originals of the pieces assigned to them in a timely manner, usually within two to three weeks of the date assigned. Best practice is for students to purchase their own, although borrowing someone else's is permissible. Bear in mind that both the instructor and the student will be making marks in the music.
- immediately upon receiving the music, students should deliver any accompaniments to the person assigned (ask the instructor if there are any questions about the accompanist(s) or how to contact them). Please put name and contact information on the music so that the accompanist will know whose music it is. If the student does not personally hand the music to the accompanist (i.e., if the music is put in the accompanist's mailbox), contact to make sure that the music was received is highly advisable.
- by department policy, accompanists are allowed at least three weeks to work on the music before being asked to be present at a rehearsal or performance. In some cases, students may be able to negotiate with the accompanist for a shorter preparation time, but this is at the discretion of the accompanist.
- as appropriate and assigned, students will be expected to arrange for accompanists to be present at all or part of their lessons, especially as performances get close.
- performance dates/times – including Friday recitals, junior/senior recitals, and juries – should be cleared with the instructor, who will make appropriate arrangements as needed.

MASTER CLASS

Students taking applied saxophone lessons will be expected to attend master classes as scheduled (typically weekly). Master classes will generally involve playing for one another, discussing topics related to the saxophone or

saxophone performance, or hearing from a guest. Although master class does not always require preparation apart from work that is already assigned for lessons/ensembles, some additional work may be assigned. Master class participation is reflected in the applied lesson grade.

“MILESTONES”

Students taking applied lessons are generally working toward a combination of short-term and long-term goals:

- weekly lesson – the most short-term goal; preparation toward mastery of assigned materials.
- “juries” – the applied equivalent of a final exam for the semester; typically 5-8 minutes in length, students play scales as assigned and all or part of pieces assigned during the semester (currently scales are performed at a separate “scale jury” time to be determined by the instructor). Students who do a junior or senior recital during the semester may be excused from juries at the discretion of the instructor. Students should bring 5 copies of the jury form to their jury. Juries take place during finals week; a sheet will be posted prior to finals week for students to sign up for a time.
- sophomore comprehensive exam – the performance portion of sophomore comps is similar to a jury; it typically takes place at the end of the fourth semester of applied lessons. Passing the sophomore comp is a necessary step to being able to take the 300 and 400 level music classes. The sophomore comp application form, which contains information on additional requirements, is available online at <http://music.eku.edu/sites/music.eku.edu/files/files/2014/app-DOM-scholarship.pdf>.
- junior recital – typically a “half-recital,” approximately a half hour of music; most often two students do their junior recitals together. For performance majors (who are also required to do a senior recital) this should be done during their junior year, preferably in the fall semester. For those who do not have to do a senior recital, the junior recital is best done during the student’s senior year. Students doing a junior recital register for MUS 399.
- senior recital (performance majors and selected others) – this is an hour-long recital, comprised primarily of solo pieces from the standard repertory but may also include small ensemble pieces, jazz combo pieces, or other works with the permission of the instructor. Students register for MUS 499.

MAJOR ENSEMBLE AUDITIONS AND PARTICIPATION

Music majors are expected to participate in at least one major ensemble every semester; scholarship recipients may be required to participate in at least two. Available ensembles are symphonic band, concert band, marching band (fall semester, at the discretion of the applied instructor), and jazz ensemble (not a major ensemble but can be counted as such by saxophone majors). Saxophone students may be assigned as needed to play in the pit orchestra for musical theater. On occasion, as repertory permits, saxophone majors may be invited to perform with the orchestra, which may also count as a major ensemble.

Participation in symphonic band, jazz ensemble, and studio ensembles (discussed below) is by audition. For the saxophone studio, one audition consisting of both “classical” and jazz excerpts will be used for placement in large and studio ensembles. This audition will take place at the beginning of each semester; audition music, date and time, and other information will be made available via the ECU Bands web site.

SAXOPHONE STUDIO ENSEMBLES

In addition to applied lessons, saxophone students are expected to participate in studio ensembles such as a saxophone quartet or Saxophobia. Which ensembles will be offered in a particular semester will be determined by the needs of the studio and the outcome of ensemble auditions. Participation in a studio ensemble is by audition as noted above.

Saxophone quartets and Saxophobia meet with the instructor once a week for a 50-minute period. Ensembles are expected to meet at least one additional time each week to rehearse without the instructor in addition to personal practice time spent on the music.

CONCERNING PRACTICE

Consistent practice is necessary for any type of skill development; mastery of the saxophone, as with any instrument, comes through time. Author Malcolm Gladwell in his book *Outliers: The Story of Success* suggests that it takes about 10,000 hours of practice to achieve mastery of a field (not all of which needs to happen in college, of course). It is essential for students to set aside time for practice in their schedule and to use the time. It is extremely difficult to do this by willpower and determination alone; it is easier (although not necessarily easy) to establish a regular schedule and make it a habit.

It is also important to be efficient in the use of practice time. Some of the ways this can be accomplished are:

- having a specific plan for a practice time; for example, how much time to spend on warm-ups, or which scales to practice and how much time to spend on them. It may be helpful to “build in” a certain amount of flexibility to account for unforeseen challenges or issues in the material being practiced.
- some people work more efficiently in “smaller doses;” consider having two half-hour practice sessions instead of one hour-long practice time, for example.
- keeping a log of practice plan and goals and of actual accomplishments during practice. Periodically comparing the two helps to maintain a more accurate sense of what can be accomplished in a given amount of time.

According to pianist Kenny Werner in his book *Effortless Mastery*, there are four components to mastering a particular piece or etude:

- effortless playing.
- perfect playing (making no mistakes).
- fast playing (increasing the tempo, particularly in the case of technical passages).
- playing the whole piece (as opposed to short sections of a longer piece).

According to Werner, our minds are not equipped to work on all of these at once. We are always working on effortless playing; at any given time we should pick two of the other three and focus on them. For example, in a given practice session (or portion of the session) we might focus on playing a piece perfectly and playing the whole piece; in this case we should not try to also increase tempo. At another time we may focus on playing the whole piece and increasing tempo, in which case we should allow (for the moment at least) a few errors or “roughness.”

CONCERNING BASIC TIME MANAGEMENT

A proverb attributed to various sources says “Four things come not back: the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life, and the neglected opportunity.” Of all the resources at one’s disposal, time and opportunity – once lost – cannot

be regained. It is crucial to success in college as in other facets of life to make the most of one's time and opportunities.

STUDY AND PRACTICE TIME

The following is a personal perspective on time management in school. It is not written in stone, and there is certainly room for flexibility, but I have found the numbers and the "picture" they represent to be helpful. Many people equate attending college full time with a full time job. A full-time job is generally considered to be 40 hours per week (although it is not uncommon to find people working far more than that). 12 credit hours per semester is a minimum to be considered a full-time student, 15 hours is a more practical minimum to achieve 120 credit hours (the typical minimum for most degrees) in 4 years. Not taking into account the peculiarities of ensembles, labs, and other oddities faced by music students, 15 credit hours means – roughly – about 15 hours per week in the classroom. If a student spends an hour and 15 minutes studying or otherwise preparing for each hour spent in the classroom – a total of 3 hours and 45 minutes per week for a typical 3-credit-hour class, for example – the student would be spending roughly the same amount of time (in class and preparation combined) per week as someone in the work force holding down a full-time job.

This does not exactly equate for music majors, of course. Most ensembles require more time than the credits would indicate, lessons require more preparation than this formula accounts for, and many students take more than 15 credit hours. On the other hand, some classes or ensembles may be less demanding and not require the level of outside work that others do; for example, someone may already have some piano skills and would not have to spend as much time in preparation for class piano as someone who has never played the instrument.

Each student's needs will be different depending on the difficulty of a particular class, the student's study habits and classroom "skills," and a number of factors. Below is one possible allocation of weekly hours spent in classroom/rehearsal and in preparation based on expectations for lessons, an assumption of about an hour per week on ensemble material (more or less may be required, of course), and about 45 minutes of outside preparation for each hour spent in the classroom:

Course	Time in Class	Preparation Time	Total
[Typical 3 credit hour class]	150 min. (2.5 hrs.)	2.25 hr.	4.75 hr.
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[Typical 3 credit hour class]	150 min. (2.5 hrs.)	2.25 hr.	4.75 hr.
Symphonic Band	5 hr.	1 hr.	6 hr.
Jazz Ensemble	150 min. (2.5 hrs.)	1 hr.	3.5 hr.
Applied Lesson (1 credit hr.)	.5 hr.	7 hr.	7.5 hr.
Master Class	1 hr.	.5 hr.	1.5 hr.
Saxophone Quartet	1 hr.	2 hr.	3 hr.
Introductory Piano	2 hr.	1.5 hr.	3.5 hr.
Computer Skills/Musicians (2 credit hr.)	150 min. (2.5 hrs.)	2.25 hr.	4.75 hr.
15.5 Total Credit Hrs.	22.5 hrs.	22 hr.	44.5 hr.

In this hypothetical example a student would spend about 22-3 hours per week in class or rehearsal and about 22 hours in preparation. In "real life" the amount of time demanded by various classes and ensembles will change from week to week, and each student needs to examine their study habits and progress to see how this applies to their situation.

ADOPTING A WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Financial advisor Dave Ramsey stresses the need for a budget, which he describes as a “way to make your money behave.” In the same way, it is highly advisable to create and keep to a weekly schedule, not as a strait jacket (although it may seem so at times) but as a way to make time behave. Days with a heavier class schedule may not have as much study/practice time built in, while lighter days provide more opportunities. While it is not advisable to completely skip a day without practicing saxophone, the expectations to a certain extent can be taken as averages. Also, remember that a day’s practice allocation does not necessarily have to happen all at once.

The more that following a schedule can become a habit, the easier it will be to maintain.

CONCERNING INSTRUMENTS, MOUTHPIECES, REEDS, AND OTHER GEAR

There was a time when the distinction between beginner, intermediate or “step-up,” and professional levels of horns was fairly clear. Recent changes in the industry and the introduction of several new manufacturers and distributors have blurred some of these distinctions. The primary expectation for students in the saxophone studio is that they have a professional or near-professional quality alto saxophone; owning a tenor, soprano, or baritone in addition to the alto is fine but not essential. A horn that is not good quality or in poor repair makes it more difficult for a student to develop the necessary technique or proper tone and intonation.

EKU owns a number of professional-quality instruments for use in large and studio ensembles. Students that use instruments owned by EKU are expected to keep them secure when not in use and to treat them with the proper care. Students are responsible for any damage to the instrument (which may include normal wear and tear depending on Music Dept. policy) while checked out to them. Students who check out the “pro” studio instruments and/or accessories must not use them in marching band, whether in practice or performance, without the express consent of the instructor. Further, school instruments are to be used for school functions only. Any outside use (such as gigs, performances with ensembles not under the direction of the Music Dept.) is allowed only with the instructor’s express permission, which must be obtained for each instance of a performance. A fee may be assessed for such “outside” use.

As with the instrument itself, the proper combination of mouthpiece and reeds is an important part of a saxophonist’s tone production and technique. Appropriate mouthpieces for “classical” playing include the Selmer C* or Selmer Larry Teal. Choices for jazz playing are somewhat more personal and beyond the scope of this handbook; one excellent choice as a first jazz alto mouthpiece is a Meyer 6M, small chamber. Several companies, including Rico and Van Doren, make excellent reeds for both jazz and classical scenarios. Students are expected to have multiple reeds in good playing condition at lessons, ensemble rehearsals, and (of course) performances. The instructor does not have reeds for purchase; they can be obtained online or at local music retailers.

COMMUNICATION

Students are responsible for checking the bulletin board outside Foster 207 daily for announcements and other important information. Lesson grades will be posted on Blackboard (<https://learn.eku.edu>). According to EKU policy all official communication is to be via EKU email. The instructor will make every effort to respond to student emails within 24 hours of receipt during the work week; response over the weekend will be on an "as able" basis.

INSTRUCTOR'S CONTACT INFORMATION

Larry Nelson – 207 Foster Music Building; office phone 859-622-5006

mailing address:

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RECORDING WAIVER

All public performances recorded by the EKU performance ensembles are the sole property of Eastern Kentucky University. Any student registered for a course involving performance or listed in the program for any concert or recital waives all claims on any future income generated from these recordings.