

Degree Programs

This information sheet is a general description of the degrees offered at Oberlin. For more precise information about the requirements, see the Oberlin College Course Catalog.

I. The College of Arts and Sciences

A. Liberal Arts: Bachelor of Arts

The Bachelor of Arts (BA) is a liberal arts degree that certifies both the breadth and the depth of a student's work. The Oberlin BA degree tells the rest of the world that a graduate has spent four years pursuing a rich and balanced curriculum in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. Because of Oberlin's belief in the importance of residential education, the BA is largely earned in residence at Oberlin, though some students transfer college-level credits earned at other institutions before attending Oberlin, and many students, of course, include study away, whether in the United States or elsewhere, in their BA work. Ordinarily, most students finish their BA degree with a final semester in residence.

To help students achieve knowledge of the growing scope and substance of human thought, Oberlin students in the BA are required to achieve breadth through coursework in a number of areas. Therefore, students must complete certain requirements for breadth in the BA degree (often called distribution requirements); must demonstrate proficiency in certain key skills (writing and quantitative reasoning); and must take courses that engage cross-cultural knowledge and analysis.

To achieve intensive training in a chosen area of knowledge, BA students also must pursue a major in one of more than thirty areas of specialization. Although only one major is required, some students pursue more than one major in order to broaden the ways in which they prepare for life and careers after Oberlin. The major allows students to pursue their learning beyond the introductory level, through advanced courses in a discipline and in seminar or small research courses. There is no general thesis requirement at Oberlin, but many majors require students to accomplish the

equivalent of a thesis – an advanced, extended project of research or creative activity.

Most of the departments in the College of Arts and Sciences offer majors, as do a number of interdisciplinary committees such as Latin American Studies. Students also can pursue an Individual Major in an area that cannot be encompassed in an existing major (recent majors have included such areas as Sub-Saharan African Studies, Psychomusicology, and The Sociology of Women in Sport). The Admissions Office has information sheets similar to this one on most of the departments and majors.

Because of the importance of breadth in the BA degree, students are not expected to declare their major until after three semesters at Oberlin. Normally, the first semesters are exploratory periods during which a student takes courses potentially leading to several possible majors, and at the same time works to fulfill his or her distribution requirements for graduation.

In many departments, students may also declare a minor, which involves less coursework than the major. The minor is a useful way to focus and record a significant area of a student's work (it is listed on the transcript), without the more stringent requirements of a major in that field.

If students show special ability and independence in their major, the department may offer them a chance to become a candidate for Honors at Graduation. The nature of honors varies from one department to the next, but its purpose is always to involve extended individual work under the supervision of faculty. This work may be done in seminars, in private readings and research, or in the preparation of papers, reports, exhibitions, or performances. An honors candidate whose performance demonstrates the requisite degree of excellence is awarded the BA degree with Honors, High Honors, or Highest Honors in his or her major.

Occasionally, a student pursues the option of Senior Scholar, applying to pursue a full-time senior-year program of individual, supervised, research and writing. Normally Senior Scholars do not enroll in any classes senior year.

B. Liberal Arts and Engineering: Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science

This joint degree, called the 3-2 Engineering Program, allows students interested in engineering to develop not only a grounding in science and math, but also the creativity, effectiveness in communication, and sensitivity to real-life problems that are the hallmarks of successful engineers. Oberlin has cooperative arrangements with three engineering schools: the California Institute of Technology (Cal Tech) in Pasadena, Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, and Washington University in St. Louis. Students pursuing both a liberal arts degree and a technical degree in engineering receive both the Bachelor of Arts degree from Oberlin and the Bachelor of Sciences degree from one of these engineering schools. Normally, a student studies at Oberlin for three years, and then an additional two years at the other school.

II. The Conservatory of Music

All Conservatory programs are designed to prepare students for careers in music. Within that general framework, the Conservatory acknowledges the breadth and diversity of musical possibilities and student career goals and offers a variety of degree options. The curriculum is comprehensive to assure musical excellence and is flexible to meet individual needs. Conservatory programs of study lead to the Bachelor of Music degree or, in conjunction with the College of Arts and Sciences, a five-year Double Degree program leading to the Bachelor of Music and the Bachelor of Arts degree. The Conservatory also offers several five-year degrees that combine certain undergraduate Oberlin programs with graduate study in Conducting, Opera Theater, Music Education, and Historical Performance. A two-year master's program in performance on historical instruments is also offered and available to students with undergraduate degrees from schools other than Oberlin. In addition, the Conservatory offers two performance-oriented, non-degree courses of study, leading to a Performance Diploma at the undergraduate level and an Artist Diploma at the graduate level. In choosing between majors and degree options at

Oberlin College and/or Conservatory of Music, the student should be guided by his or her professional aspirations.

A. Bachelor of Music

Most students in the Conservatory pursue a program of study leading to a Bachelor of Music degree. Bachelor of Music degree curricula, consisting of 124 credit hours, are musically rigorous, pre-professional programs that emphasize intensive work in the major applied study area augmented by course work in other areas of music and in the liberal arts. Major concentrations are offered in Performance, Composition, Music History, Technology in Music and Related Arts, Jazz Studies (in Composition or Performance), Individual Majors, Music Theory (as part of a double major), and a double major in Piano Performance and Vocal Accompanying.

The principal applied study for Performance majors may be one of the following: flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, saxophone, French horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, violin, viola, violoncello, double bass, classical guitar, harp, percussion, voice, piano, organ, harpsichord, recorder, lute, Baroque flute, Baroque oboe, Baroque violin, or Baroque cello/viola da gamba. The principal applied study for jazz studies majors in performance may be one of the following: saxophone, trumpet, trombone, piano, guitar, percussion, and double bass.

Students who major in Music History must also study privately with an applied faculty member. Music History majors most often pursue careers in scholarly research and teaching.

Many students with strong interests in more than one area of music elect to pursue two majors within the Bachelor of Music degree program. Possibilities include two Performance majors or a combination of majors in Performance, Composition, Technology in Music and Related Arts, Jazz Studies, and Music History. A major in Music Theory is also offered as part of a double major program. Minors are offered in the following performance areas: piano, organ, voice, horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, harpsichord, recorder, lute,

Baroque flute, Baroque oboe, Baroque violin, Baroque cello, and viola da gamba. Minors are offered also in Composition, Music History, Music Theory, and Community Music.

B. Performance Diploma

This program, offered only in certain performance departments, is an undergraduate program designed for the small number of performers who seek a narrowly focused program of study leading to a performance-oriented career. The Performance Diploma program requires two years to complete and allows students to concentrate almost exclusively on performance-related coursework.

C. Graduate Programs

Master of Historical Performance. This is a two year program that leads to a Master of Music Degree in Historical Performance. This degree track is available to both Oberlin graduates and students who have received undergraduate degrees from other institutions. Oberlin students may also pursue a five-year program that integrates a Master of Historical Performance with an Undergrad major in Performance or Modern Instruments.

Master of Music. The major emphasis may be in Conducting, integrated with an Oberlin Bachelor of Music Degree with a major in Performance, Composition, or Music History; or may be in Opera Theater, integrated with an Oberlin Bachelor of Music Degree in Voice Performance.

Master of Music in Teaching. The M.M.T. degree program is available as part of a five-year program integrated with undergraduate study at Oberlin. Major in Music Education, integrated with an Oberlin Bachelor of Music degree with a major in Performance or Composition.

D. Artist Diploma

The Artist Diploma is intended for performers who plan to pursue professional performance careers. The program is limited to a small number of advanced students who hold Bachelor of Music Degrees or who possess equivalent

qualifications with significant professional or semi-professional experience and who wish to concentrate on applied studies without additional course requirements. Candidates must possess a highly advanced level of technical proficiency and artistic qualifications as well as demonstrate a substantial and varied knowledge of repertoire. The Artist Diploma is a four-semester course of study that includes applied study, performance ensembles, performance projects, and two solo recitals.

For more detailed information about major programs and degree requirements, interested students should consult the Conservatory section of the Oberlin College Course Catalog, or the website at: www.oberlin.edu/con.

III. The Double Degree: College of Arts and Sciences and Conservatory of Music

A. Liberal Arts and Music: Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Music

Oberlin offers an exceptional opportunity for those students who wish to combine rigorous pre-professional music training with a broad liberal arts education. Double Degree students complete work for the Bachelor of Music degree from the Conservatory of Music and the Bachelor of Arts degree from the College of Arts and Sciences in as few as five years. Approximately 35 to 40 students enter into the Double Degree program each year. Students in the program must complete a major in each division. Majors may be closely interrelated, such as Voice and French or German, or quite unrelated, such as Piano and Politics. Prospective Double Degree students apply for admission to each division separately. Oberlin students already enrolled in one division may enter the Double Degree program if accepted for admission to the other division.

B. Taking Classes

Although students must enroll in either the College of Arts and Sciences or the Conservatory of Music, they may take courses in the other division to the extent that their

schedules and qualifications permit. Applied music study is available to liberal arts students through auditions which are held during the first week of each semester. Music Theory, Music History, and other course offerings of the Conservatory are also open to College students. Conservatory students may, depending on their specific programs, elect at least one liberal arts course nearly every semester.

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