

Student Handbook for the UTEP Symphony Orchestra

This handbook is designed to help outline policies and procedures for the UTEP Symphony Orchestra concert ensembles. It is the responsibility of each member of an orchestra concert ensemble to read this handbook thoroughly. If a student has additional questions after reading this handbook, please consult with the ensemble conductor.

Registration

Orchestra string students will register for MUSA 1261 (freshmen and sophomores) or MUSA 3261 (juniors and seniors). Orchestra Wind and Percussion students will register for MUSA 1162 (freshmen and sophomores) or MUSA 3162 (juniors and seniors). All students are expected to register for class.

Rehearsal Expectations

Each student is expected to be in his/her chair with their instrument ready to play at the beginning of the class. Anyone not seated and prepared to perform at that time will be considered tardy. Each student is expected to have their folder with all instructional materials (music, rehearsal technique books, etc.) and a pencil for every rehearsal. No baseball caps or similar head wear will be allowed during rehearsal. Each student is responsible for the preparation of his/her ensemble music outside of scheduled rehearsals. Rehearsals are for developing ensemble concepts, not individual practice. If a student has not prepared his/her music within an acceptable timeframe, grade point reductions will result. Talking and/or discussions that do not concern the betterment of the music will not be allowed in rehearsal. Conduct that is not conducive to a good rehearsal environment will not be allowed. Each student is expected to strive for improvement in every rehearsal. Failure to do so may result in grade point reductions and/or removal from a rehearsal or ensemble.

Ensemble Attendance and Grading Policy

Concert ensembles are graded using the same letter grading system as classroom courses. Concert ensemble grades are based primarily on the following four factors, all of which are considered when assigning ensemble grades:

- Performance and preparation
- Contribution to the ensemble
- Cooperation and professionalism
- Attendance

Due to the importance of regular attendance by every member of the ensemble in creating a unified and consistent ensemble sound, each student's attendance record will be a major factor – but not the only factor – in determining their grade. Unexcused absences or tardies to ensemble services will cause a student to accrue grade reduction points as indicated below:

Late to a regular rehearsal: 2 points

Absent from a regular rehearsal: 4 point

Late to a dress rehearsal: 3 points

Absent from a dress rehearsal: 6 points

Late to a performance call: 5 points

Absent from a performance: a grade of F for the semester and a loss of scholarship/service award

If a student receives an ensemble grade of C or less for the semester, the service

award/scholarship for that student will be reduced the following semester. The amount of reduction will be determined by the ensemble conductor.

Any student who misses a dress rehearsal, or who misses a week or more of rehearsals in preparation for a program, may also be removed from the concert at the conductor's discretion. Also, any student who misses a dress rehearsal or a concert may be expelled from the ensemble for the remainder of the semester. Willful neglect of ensemble responsibilities may also subject a student to expulsion from the ensemble.

Concert ensembles will have occasional rehearsals that fall outside of the ensemble's regular rehearsal days and times. These out-of-sequence rehearsals are usually very critical rehearsals, such as dress rehearsals or combined orchestra/chorus rehearsals. All out-of-sequence rehearsals are in the schedule from the very beginning of the school year and students are expected to make note of them and plan to attend them.

Ensemble members arriving at rehearsal after tuning has begun will be marked late. Leaving a rehearsal prior to its scheduled completion is considered the same as being late in terms of the grade reduction points assessed.

To request permission to be excused from a concert ensemble rehearsal, or to be excused from being late or leaving early, students are required to fill out and submit an Excuse Request Form. Paper versions of the form are available in the Orchestra Office. These requests are reviewed by the conductor of the ensemble who will either approve or deny the request. Any absences or tardiness not documented by an approved Excuse Request Form will be considered unexcused. Forms submitted later than the day following the date of the absence or tardiness will not be approved.

In accordance with Ensemble policy, absence or tardiness due to schedule conflicts with classes or private lessons are not excused. This also applies to make-up lessons. Department faculty is aware of this policy and should not attempt to schedule a lesson that would conflict with your large ensemble rehearsals. It is each student's responsibility to arrange their schedule to avoid conflicts with ensemble services. It is particularly important that students schedule their recitals so as to ensure that no conflicts are created with any ensemble rehearsal or performance, as no excuse requests will be approved under these circumstances.

Outside Employment

Outside employment will not be considered an excuse to miss a UTEP ensemble rehearsal or performance (this includes performances by musical organizations other than UTEP ensembles). Students must realize that they are students first and their obligation is to their university studies. If a student chooses to miss a rehearsal or performance because of outside employment, the result may be dismissal from the ensemble and the associated consequences.

Medical Leave

Students with physical conditions requiring short-term medical leave involving up to a week of rehearsals, but who still expect to perform in the program, are required to attend rehearsals even if they cannot play, unless they are confined to bed or pose a risk of exposing other ensemble

members to a contagious disease. Students requesting absences of longer than a week which they expect will prevent them from performing on a program must submit suitable medical documentation, in English, from a licensed care practitioner to the Orchestra Office in a timely manner.

Tendonitis and other similar repetitive motion injuries do not exempt students from fulfilling the ensemble requirements for their degree programs. Instrumentalists who are suffering from such repetitive motion injuries on a long-term basis may be assigned to a choral ensemble during their recovery at the discretion of the Chairman.

In case of sudden illness or a medical emergency, it is the student's responsibility to notify the ensemble conductor immediately. If possible, instrumentalists other than string players should make arrangements for their music to be delivered to the Band Office prior to the start of the rehearsal. The student should submit an Excuse Request Form to the Orchestra Office within one week of the incident.

Students who miss a dress rehearsal, performance, or two or more consecutive rehearsals due to illness or other medical reasons must submit suitable medical documentation, in English, from a licensed care practitioner, along with their Excuse Request Form.

Instrument Problems

Missing a service due to an instrument being repaired will not be considered an excused absence. If a student's instrument is being repaired or is in sudden need of repair, they should contact the Orchestra Office so that a substitute instrument can be provided.

Other Emergencies

It is recognized that there are sometimes unforeseeable and uncontrollable circumstances which can prevent a student from being on time, or even making it to a rehearsal at all. These occurrences are rare, however, often independently verifiable, and are considered on a case-by-case basis. They can include, but are not limited to, extreme weather conditions, family emergencies, traffic accidents, legal matters, and other situations over which the student has little or no control. They do not include things like oversleeping, failing to allow enough time to arrive, having to get something to eat, and so on. Students should notify the Orchestra Office immediately, if it is safe and possible to do so, if they will be late or absent from a rehearsal due to a legitimate emergency, and should submit an Excuse Request Form along with any supporting documentation within one day of the lateness or absence.

Fines

A \$10.00 late fee will be assessed and records will be placed on hold if music is returned late. Music is generally due immediately after the concert. An additional fee of \$2.00 per day will be assessed for each day after the initial due date. A fee of \$5.00 will be charged for each piece of lost music.