

College for Music Students: Vastly Different from High School

No matter what area of music you focus on, high school is vastly different from college for music students. The collegiate life comes with a whole new set of responsibilities.

To give prospective music majors an idea of what to expect once they get to college, we asked several current and former music majors to describe their college experiences. Based on their responses, here are a few important distinctions between studying music in high school and college.

- **Your schedule:** Your high school schedule is typically dictated by other people. You spend up to 7 hours in classes. In college, you're mostly responsible for your own schedule. You may have no classes or just a couple on any given day. And then rehearsals, performances, midterms or finals all at the same time.
- **Time management:** One of the hardest skills for college students, especially music majors. Juggling music and non-music classes, study time, more practice time than ever before, time to meet personal needs (eating, sleeping, laundry, social life, etc.).
- **Your professors:** Your professors can become great mentors. But it's up to you to use their office hours to develop professional relationships.
- **Homework:** Less structured than in high schools. Often assigned a month or more from the deadline, and it often consists of writing compositions, arranging pieces, listening to and analyzing scores, performing for others, preparing class presentations, or writing research papers.
- **Practicing:** A big chunk of the time is spent in the practice room. Your practice hours increase drastically. Learning how to practice efficiently is essential.
- **Ensembles:** Music majors are typically expected to perform in a variety of performance groups in addition to everything else they're required or choosing to do.
- **Social life:** A good social life can provide college music majors great connections and relationships with other musicians and arts majors that will impact their future lives in music.

Don't worry - help is available!

There are plenty of people and resources available at every school to help you figure this all out. Many schools have freshman programs for this purpose. Many offer classes in mindfulness, Meditation, yoga, Alexander Technique, Body Mapping, and other stress-relieving techniques. All schools have counseling offices to assist with emotional and psychological issues that arise. They also have what's often called the Office of Disabilities to support students with learning differences and physical/ emotional challenges.

Adapted from an article by Ashley Eady on [MajoringInMusic.com](https://majoringinmusic.com) at <https://majoringinmusic.com/college-for-music-students/>