

Employability Resources

B.A. in Music
Eastern Connecticut State University

Section 1: Employability Skills

What is Employability?

“Employability is a set of achievements—skills, understandings and personal attributes—that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, benefiting themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.”

– From “Learning for Life and Work Report of the Commission on Higher Education & Employability” (NEBHE, March 2018, p. 11)

https://nebhe.org/info/pdf/policy/Learning_for_Life_and_Work_Report.pdf

General Employability Skills *These are skills acquired by all Eastern students through the completion of the Liberal Arts Core and their individual major.*

- Organizational Skills
- Written Communication Skills
- Oral Communication Skills
- Technology Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Research Skills
- Critical Thinking

Additional Employability Skills *These are skills acquired through the study and performance of music as an academic discipline.*

- Teamwork
- Leadership Skills
- Focus
- Discipline
- Resilience
- Creativity
- Entrepreneurial Skills
- Analytical Skills
- Problem-solving
- Self-motivation
- Adaptability



Section 2: What Do Music Majors Do?

Graduates of the Music Major have pursued careers in a variety of fields, including...

- Arts Administration
- Instrumental Performance/Pedagogy
- Sound Engineering
- Music Therapy
- Music Education
- Musicology & Ethnomusicology
- Vocal Performance/Pedagogy

...as well as careers in many related fields like social services, sales, and entrepreneurship!

Graduate Study

Many of the careers above require education or training beyond an undergraduate degree in Music. Graduates of the music major have been accepted to graduate study at universities throughout the country in the fields of music education, music therapy, performance, pedagogy, and musicology/ethnomusicology. Many received scholarships or graduate assistantships that help finance their studies.



University of Colorado
Boulder



Section 3: How can I add to my employability skills?

Whether your goal is a career in music or another field, the experiences below can enrich your undergraduate experience and build the skills that employers across many different industries are looking for in their employees (Ex: leadership, critical thinking, written and oral communication skills, teamwork, resilience, self-motivation).

I. On Campus Experiences: Pre-Professional Opportunities/Experiential Learning



Participate in ensembles and performance opportunities

For students interested in pursuing performance or pedagogy beyond Eastern, there is no better way for performance experience than your participation in ensembles as well as the preparation and performance of solo recitals. These experiences will enhance your résumé, expand your repertoire list, and help you build confidence as a performer.

Travel with an ensemble or take global field course

Traveling is one of the best ways to meet new people, experience new cultures, and expand your understanding of the world. Many ensembles tour locally, regionally, or internationally, and each of these experiences can provide valuable life experiences that may be attractive to future employers. Global field courses are offered through a variety of departments on campus and offer additional opportunities to travel and study abroad.



Complete faculty-mentored research

A variety of courses and independent studies culminate in a self-directed research project. Exceptional projects may be further developed for submission to undergraduate research conferences or other opportunities to present your research publicly.

Collaborate on a production

Students interested in event management or production elements like lighting, live sound or recording can receive credit for working on productions. This real world experience can translate into a professional internship.



Present research and creative activity

Exceptional projects may be nominated for presentation at local, regional, and national conferences including Eastern's CREATE Conference, the annual COPLAC conference, or national conferences like NCUR.

II. Off Campus Experiences

Internships

Music majors are encouraged to pursue a professional internship for academic credit. Internships can be in a variety of fields and may be completed during the Fall/Spring/Summer/or Winter sessions.

Fellowships/Apprenticeships

Many performing arts organizations offer fellowships and apprenticeships for students interested in the behind-the-scenes aspects of the performing arts, including operations, marketing, development, education/outreach, administration, scenic design/construction, lighting design, and sound.

Summer Festivals/YAPs

One of the primary ways young musicians build their performance résumés and gain professional experiences is through auditioning and participating in summer music festivals or young artist programs.

There are festivals and YAPs for every stage of your career and it's never too early to start looking. Your primary lesson instructor would be the best resource for helping you choose the right program and navigate the audition process.



Employment

Undergraduate musicians can often gain valuable career-related employment experience while still students. Students are often employed as musicians at places of worship (soloists, cantors, section leaders, pianists), hired as professional musicians for weddings and other celebrations, or hold standing gigs at vineyards, coffee houses, and festivals. Others work in music sales or teach beginning lessons from their private studio or community music school, or work as ushers or stagehands for the university or local performing arts venue.

III. Volunteer (on and off campus!)

- Serve on the board of a student club or organization
- Organize a fundraising concert for a cause that is important to you
- Volunteer at a summer music camp or after-school program
- Help a local arts organization with a fundraising campaign
- Look for opportunities to volunteer as an usher for the Concert Hall, Proscenium Theatre, or other local performing arts venue

IV. Add an Additional Area of Study (by adding a minor, double-major or completing an additional concentration)

One of the greatest benefits of a liberal arts education is the opportunity to pursue multiple fields of inquiry. Students in the liberal arts find creative ways to blend various areas of interest and passion while still being able to complete their undergraduate experience in 4 years.

Examples of related fields include:

Art and Art History
Business
Communication
Education
History
Psychology
Marketing
New Media Studies
Social Work
Theatre
World Languages



Section 4: What to do next?

Start with your advisor

In the Music Program you are paired with a faculty advisor in your primary area of focus/study (i.e. performance, musicology, composition, theory). This faculty member is someone who is knowledgeable about the current landscape of the field, including internship and graduate programs, and can offer the best career advice throughout your time at Eastern. In collaboration with the Center for Career and Internship Development (CICD), your advisor can also help you research and develop your professional materials for career options outside of music.

Visit the Center for Career and Internship Development

The CICD offers helpful tools including a résumé builder and a mock-interview tool, and sponsors annual career and internship fairs for students in all disciplines. They also offer professional career counseling services. Appointments are available with our Music Program liaison Lana O'Connor. Walk-in hours are available in the career studio, where you can research job and internship opportunities, get feedback on your professional materials, and more!

<https://www.easternct.edu/career/index.html>

Visit the Job/Internship/YAP board in the FAIC

The Music Program regularly receives mailings announcing a range of opportunities including internship, apprenticeships, young artist programs (YAPs), and more. These opportunities are posted to the “Job Board” outside the Performing Arts Office.

Attend Career Workshops (as hosted by the Music Program)

Every Fall: Building your Professional Materials (Required for Juniors/Seniors)

Every Spring: Creating for 4-year Career Plan (Required for Juniors/Seniors)

Consider an Internship

While an internship is required for students in the Music Industry and Leadership concentration, all music majors are encouraged to consider incorporating an internship into their plans of study. Contact the Music Program Internship Coordinator: Dr. Emily Riggs (FAIC 238) to set up an initial appointment to discuss the internship option. Both the music program website and the CICD host internship tools (<https://www.easternct.edu/career/internship-and-job-search-resources/credit-vs-non-credit-internship.html>) that can help you identify an internship of interest and prepare your materials for your application.

Section 5: Conclusion

Whether your career objectives include music or another industry all together, the skills you gain as a musician at a liberal arts university are attractive to employers. These “soft skills” are highly valued by employers across each and every industry, and are achieved through the study of music at Eastern:

- Communication with coworkers
- Critical thinking
- Ethics
- Resiliency
- Ability to solve problems
- Understanding your role within the team
- Making responsible choices

Though “hard skills” (clearly defined, measured, and quantifiable) are a valuable asset, soft skills allow you to progress in your chosen field and are critical to your success in the workplace:

- Emotional Intelligence
- Team Player Attitude
- Growth Mindset
- Openness to Feedback
- Adaptability
- Active Listening
- Work Ethic

Reflection:

Consider how your experiences so far could help you answer some of these sample interview questions. Imagine these questions are coming from a potential employer at a company/organization that you may be interested in applying to in the future.

1. I see you were a Music Major in college. How have these experiences shaped you as a person and potential employee?

2. What skills do you have as a musician that could be of benefit to this company and this position?

Goal Setting:

Set a few goals for how you can enhance your employability skills during the remainder of your time at Eastern.

1.

2.

3.