

# Northwest Missouri State University

## Department of Fine and Performing Arts

### Piano Proficiency Examination

The piano proficiency examination is administered at the end of the fall and spring semesters during regular keyboard jury examination times. It is administered only one time per semester. The minimum passing score is 80 out of 100 points. One point is deducted for each incorrect pitch, incorrect rhythm, pause/irregular beat, or restart. The minimum tempo for each example is 60 to the quarter note unless otherwise noted in the score.

The examination consists of the following:

1. **One prepared piece.** The piece must be prepared without help from any faculty member. Copies of the required piece will be available in the music department office one week prior to the exam. The piece is typically a minimum of 16-32 measures in length and is about the difficulty level of repertoire in level 6 or 7 of the Piano Syllabus published by the Royal Conservatory Music Development Program ([weblink](#)). The key is usually limited to no more than four sharps or flats. This portion of the examination is worth **40 points**.
2. **One sight-reading piece.** The student will sight-read an example from the piano literature that is about the difficulty of repertoire in level 2 or 3 of the Piano Syllabus published by the Royal Conservatory Music Development Program ([weblink](#)). Approximately one minute will be allowed to visually scan the piece (silent fingering is not permitted). The piece is typically a minimum of 16-32 measures in length. The key is usually limited to no more than four sharps or flats. This portion of the examination is worth **20 points**.
3. **One melodic harmonization with marked chording.** The student will play a given melody in the right hand while providing the indicated harmony in the left hand (the use of blocked chords in closed position is acceptable). Approximately one minute will be allowed to visually scan the piece (silent fingering is not permitted). The melody is typically a minimum of 16-32 measures in length and about the level of difficulty found in Harmonization-Transposition at the Keyboard by Alice Kern ([weblink](#)). The key is usually limited to no more than four sharps or flats. This portion of the examination is worth **20 points**.
4. **One melodic harmonization without marked chording.** The student will play a given melody in the right hand while providing an improvised harmony in the left hand (the use of blocked chords in closed position is acceptable). The harmonic progressions must be a logical, tonal progression to receive credit. Approximately one minute will be allowed to visually scan the piece (silent fingering is not permitted). The melody is typically a minimum of 16-32 measures in length and about the level of difficulty found in Harmonization-Transposition at the Keyboard by Alice Kern ([weblink](#)). The key is usually limited to no more than four sharps or flats. This portion of the examination is worth **20 points**.