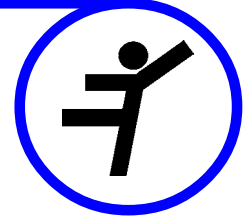


Music Teachers



Occupational Brief Title Codes:

- D.O.T.: 152.021-010
- G.O.E.: 01.04.01
- S.O.C.: 25-3021
- O*NET™: 25-3021.00
- N.A.I.C.S.: 611610, 6111, 6112, 6113
- H.O.C.: AES

Work Classification Based Related

D.O.T. Occupations:

- Arrangers
- Composers
- Instrumental Musicians
- Music Directors
- Orchestra Conductors

Interests Based Related

G.O.E. Occupations:

- Artists and Repertoire Managers
- Choral Directors
- Copyists
- Orchestrators
- Singers

Skills Based Related

O*NET Occupations:

- Graduate Teaching Assistants
- Health Educators
- Teacher Assistants
- Vocational Education Teachers, Postsecondary

Noteworthy Quote:

"In many ways, music touches everyone. Music provides a way to express a wide variety of human emotions. Becoming a music teacher is fulfilling and rewarding in many ways too because one can bring beauty and joy to the lives of others. A music teacher enhances the quality of peoples' lives. If you love making music and genuinely love working with people, consider sharing your talents with others as a music teacher."

—Mark Fonder, Professor and Conductor, School of Music, Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York

Music teachers ('mu-sic 'teach-ers) teach general music, choral music, and/or instrumental music classes and give private lessons in elementary, middle, and high schools, colleges, universities, schools of fine arts, conservatories, and music stores that sell instruments, as well as independently in a studio, their own home, or their clients' homes.

Music is an important component in the development of children. Some recent studies suggest that students who learn rhythms, melody, and music appreciation tend to achieve higher grades in math, reading, and writing. They also develop a higher level of confidence, increase imagination and creativity, and improve reflexes.

Many students meet a music teacher for the first time in kindergarten or elementary school. Through general music classes, bands, instrument classes, orchestras, choral groups, and private lessons, music teachers introduce people to a wide range of music. Serious music students generally augment their music education with private instrument or voice instruction from music teachers after school hours. Students who wish more individual instruction may also study with a private music teacher.

Work Performed

Music teachers are equally skilled in teaching and music. In other words they are both musicians and teachers. They are licensed or certified teachers with one or more degrees in music education that include at least thirty-six credit hours for music studies. They may teach students from preschoolers to graduate students in a university. Since the needs and abilities of the students differ with their ages, prospective music teachers focus on different kinds of instruction for different age groups.



Music teachers teach general music, choral music, and/or instrumental music classes and give private lessons. Photo by School of Music, Ithaca College

Music teachers instruct students in kindergarten and primary grades in basic music concepts, and lead them in group performances on simple instruments. With younger students, music teachers often play games that teach children about rhythm and melody. They may also help them learn about various kinds of music.

Grade school music teachers may give elementary students instruction in vocal music, instrumental music, music reading, and music appreciation. Many grade school music teachers produce programs for school functions and special occasions. They may organize elementary school pageants and plays.

Some music teachers in middle and high schools teach music theory, music history, music literature, music appreciation, music reading, as well as general music courses. Music instruction centers on improving the skills students acquired in earlier lessons. They may teach small groups of students to play one or more musical instruments, including band or orchestral instruments. They may also instruct or conduct an orchestra or band.

Teachers often concentrate on instruction in specific instruments. They may teach classes for string instruments, wind instruments, or percussion instruments. They have the students practice scales and exercises to develop tone quality or to improve their technique. They work with the students on sight reading, and the learning of musical terms, abbreviations, and signs. They might also assist students in learning improvisation, composition, or other creative music activities. In these classes, they critique performances to diagnose errors and prescribe solutions, and to reinforce musical values.

Middle and high school music teachers also direct ensembles and prepare them for performances at graduations and school sporting events. They may rehearse the orchestra and/or choral groups for school concerts to demonstrate musicianship learned. They may help students prepare for competitions. They may also work with groups on term projects such as operettas or musicals. Rehearsals are held both during and after school hours.

Regardless of whom they teach, however, all music teachers in schools also have administrative tasks. Music teachers plan daily classroom lessons following a teaching outline meeting state or local curriculum requirements. They assess student learning. They may be assigned a home room and keep attendance records for these students. They may order, store, and inventory musical instruments, music, and supplies. They meet with parents of students to discuss the progress of their children.

College music teachers tend to be specialists. They often teach a specific instrument or teach courses such as harmony and theory, composition, conducting, sight singing, counterpoint, voice, and other music-related courses. They teach both those planning to become teachers and those interested in becoming professional performers, composers,

or researchers. These teachers may also supervise student music teachers when they do their practice teaching.

Full-time music teachers in public and private schools, colleges, and conservatories may also give private or group lessons outside of school hours. Some teachers offer group instruction through music stores.

Private teachers are often self-employed. They give private or group lessons to students at their home, in a studio, or in the homes of their students. They teach them how to play an instrument or how to sing. These music teachers may arrange with a private school or college to give private lessons to students. They might organize music recitals for their pupils. They may also take part in local musical events.

Many public and private music teachers live and work in cities big enough to support a symphony orchestra and other music groups. Some teachers play in these orchestras, or they perform with musical groups in catering halls, nightclubs, or restaurants. They may also direct municipal bands, orchestras, and church and community choirs.

Working Conditions

Music teachers have varied working conditions. They usually work indoors, and they spend many hours standing. Grade school music teachers may teach in one school, or they may teach in several schools in one system. They may teach in a large urban school and conduct five to seven different classes each day. If they work for a rural school district, they may spend much time driving from school to school. Many music teachers accompany groups of students on field trips to musical performances. Private music teachers work full-time or part-time out of their home, in a separate studio, or the homes' of their clients.

Hours and Earnings

School music teachers work the average school day, but they often work nights and weekends on chorus, band, or orchestra rehearsals and concerts. Most school and college music teachers work nine to eleven months a year. They may also conduct summer school classes and music camps. About one half of the faculty in colleges and universities work part-time.

Self-employed music teachers set their own hours. Many of these teachers follow school year schedules. Since most of their students are in school during the day, private teachers often begin their working day after the school day ends and on weekends.

Earnings vary with experience, employer, and geographic location. The earnings of self-employed music teachers, for instance, vary widely with the number of lessons they give and the price they charge for a lesson. The price may be as low as \$15 or as high as \$100 a

lesson. The fee may depend on the reputation of the teacher and the clientele. For instance, many professional musicians who give lessons to students charge large fees.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, earnings for music teachers were generally similar to those of other self-enrichment education teachers. In 2004, these teachers earned an average of \$35,210 a year. Overall, earnings ranged from a low of around \$16,000 a year to well over \$60,000 a year. Some high school teachers receive a stipend for the work they do with students beyond the regular school day.

Full-time music teachers in schools and institutions get the same benefits as those of teachers of other subjects. Among these extras are pensions, tenure, health insurance, sick leave, and paid holidays and vacation time. Similar benefits are available to music teachers in colleges, universities, conservatories, and fine arts schools. Those who work part-time or self-employed receive few benefits or none at all.

Education and Training

High school students interested in teaching music should learn the basics of music theory and harmony while in high school. They should learn to play the piano as well as one or more other musical instruments. The study of English, and other languages, speech, and drama will also prove useful to future music teachers.

Those who plan to teach music in grade school must have at least four years of college with a major in music and a state license to teach. Those who teach in high school must have at least a bachelor's degree in music education, but many have a master's degree.

Music courses should include music history, music literature, and music appreciation. Students preparing to teach in elementary schools should study the techniques of Orff, Suzuki, Kodaly, and Dalcroze. Music teachers must be qualified to teach and coach voice and instruments, as well as to conduct and direct band, orchestra, and choir.

Instructors in colleges and universities must have at least a master's degree. More often they need a doctoral degree to get an appointment to teach. Some higher education institutions also require several years of teaching experience before they hire or appoint a music teacher to a college position.

Licensing, Certification, Unions and Professional Societies

Future music teachers should get the facts on licensing and certification in the state where they plan to teach. They can get this information from state education departments and from the music education departments of the colleges that offer degrees in music.

As public school teachers, music teachers may be required to belong to one of the teacher unions. The two

largest are the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers.

One of the largest organizations of music teachers is MENC: the National Association for Music Education. Formerly called the Music Educators National Conference (MENC), it now has a membership of nearly 120,000 music teachers, administrators, students, and music lovers. MENC developed the National Standards for Music Education and offers various professional, educational, technical, and networking resources.

This organization also has affiliations with music educators' associations in nearly every state, as well as other organizations including the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers, Inc., the American Composers Forum, College Band Directors National Association, and the Barbershop Harmony Society, among others.

Another organization is the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA). It is a nonprofit organization of independent and collegiate music teachers with over 24,000 members. MTNA offers numerous professional, educational, technical, and networking resources, and maintains a professional certification program for music teachers. Qualified applicants must meet a set of five standards to be granted the designation Nationally Certified Teacher of Music (NCTM).

Personal Qualifications

Music teachers should be excellent musicians and sing or play at least one instrument well. They should enjoy working with people, particularly the age group for which they intend to teach. They should be creative and should have good speaking and leadership skills.

Music teachers should have the ability to motivate students and a talent for making the subject interesting. Patience and the ability to explain and instruct students at a basic level are important as well, particularly when working with children.

Occupations can be adapted for workers with disabilities. Persons should contact their school or employment counselors, their state office of vocational rehabilitation, or their state department of labor to explore fully their individual needs and requirements as well as the requirements of the occupation.

Where Employed

Most schools and colleges have one or more music teachers. Almost every town and city in the United States has at least one private music teacher who works out of his or her home or studio. The greatest number of music teachers work in or near large cities. Others work in performing arts centers that present programs to the public.

Employment Outlook

Prospects for a career in teaching music are expected to be very good in elementary schools, but at a slower rate

in secondary schools and colleges. Some public schools have limited the size of music programs, making competition for music teaching jobs keen. Competition is further heightened by the number of performing musicians who turn to teaching because of the oversupply of performing musicians. Many performing or instrumental musicians who cannot find work become private or school music teachers, either full-time or part-time.

However, a large number of music teachers will reach retirement age over the next decade, creating many openings for future teachers. A growing public awareness of the enriching quality of art programs in education will create a demand for more music programs. More people are also embracing lifelong learning, especially baby boomers who are beginning to retire and have more time to take classes. Currently, the outlook is best for music teachers who complete a formal music education program, and who are geographically mobile.

Entry Methods

After they finish college or music school, students may choose either to become school music teachers or to engage in private teaching. Individuals may learn of job openings through college placement offices, employment firms, newspaper advertisements, and networking with other teachers. Professional associations frequently list openings. Job seekers can also apply directly to schools. Local music shops sometimes advertise for teachers in the local newspapers.

Individuals planning to take up private instruction should start while holding another job. The most popular instruments currently are the piano, the keyboard, and the guitar. If the local school has a band, teachers may find students wanting to learn trumpet, clarinet, saxophone, flute, and drums among other instruments. A teacher wanting to start a private practice can send out flyers or advertise in a trade paper or local paper. They may also post notices on school, church, or community bulletin boards.

Advancement

Tenured teachers can count on a steady job and regular pay raises. Those with a graduate degree and years of service can advance to supervisory work. They may become directors of a music department, or they may find supervisory work in a local or statewide school system. Administrators, however, deal with budgets, schedules, and public relations more than with students and music instruction.

Others may go into private practice. Private music teachers can advance as far as their skills and clientele allow. Excellent teachers may be so much in demand that they have to turn down students seeking music lessons.

For Further Research

MENC: the National Association for Music Education, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191. Web site: www.menc.org

Music Teachers National Association, 441 Vine Street, Suite 505, Cincinnati, OH 45202-2811. Web site: www.mtna.org

National Association of Schools of Music, 11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21, Reston, VA 20190-5248. Web site: nasm.arts-accredit.org

Acknowledgments

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