Large Ensemble Requirements

All Wind, Percussion, and String music majors are required to be registered for a large instrumental ensemble each semester of full-time residence. For purposes of satisfying this requirement, the following ensembles qualify as Large Ensembles:

Jazz Band 1 (maximum of 2 total credit hours toward degree requirements)
Marching Band
Orchestra
Symphonic Band
Wind Symphony

These ensembles are open to all university students, by audition. Music majors receive one (1) credit for each ensemble, up to a total of sixteen (16) over a four-year period. A maximum of two ensemble credits per semester will be allowed. A maximum of 7-8 credit hours may be counted toward the minimum requirements for the degree.

Large Ensemble Rehearsal Times

Jazz Band I and II: 1:00 – 2:50 Tuesdays and Thursdays
Jazz Band III: 6:00 – 7:15 Tuesdays and Thursdays
Marching Band: 6:30 – 8:30 MW eve, 3:00 – 4:30 F
Orchestra: 3:10 – 5:00 Mondays and Wednesdays, F 3:00-4:50 sectionals
Symphonic Band: 3:30 – 5:15 Tuesdays and Thursdays
Wind Symphony: 1:00 – 2:50 Mondays and Wednesdays

Large Ensemble Auditions (Orchestra, Symphonic Band, Wind Symphony)

Required Auditions will occur on the Friday, Saturday, and Sunday preceding the beginning of classes each semester. Students will be assigned to ensembles on the basis of their demonstrated musical abilities at the time of their audition. Every effort will be given to providing a balanced and varied ensemble experience for students during their tenure at Northern Iowa. Each student must audition each semester even if he/she may wish to perform only in the Marching Band or Jazz Band One.
Each student is asked to prepare approximately four (4) minutes of material which best exhibits his/her musical abilities. The audition material should show a variety of musical skills: playing range, technical ability, phrasing, dynamic contrasts, legato style, etc. This material can include solos, etudes, technical studies . . . whatever you believe best demonstrates your abilities. Those wind players who wish to be considered for orchestra placement should prepare two contrasting orchestral excerpts. The remaining time will be used for sight-reading! Percussionists will not be asked to sight-read, but will be expected to have pieces prepared for snare drum, timpani, and a mallet instrument.

Auditions will be heard by a panel of music faculty which includes conductors of the large ensembles and invited members of the studio faculty. Specific audition dates and times for each semester will be posted on the School of Music Homepage and on the bulletin board outside Davis Hall. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that they are present for these auditions. If you do not receive an audition time, please contact the Music Office at 319-273-2025 to be connected to the appropriate faculty member.

Jazz Auditions

Wind majors who play traditional jazz wind instruments (saxophone, trumpet, trombone) will be assigned a time to audition for jazz bands (big band and combo). Students who do not wish to audition for a jazz band are asked to contact Professor Chris Merz at least one week prior to auditions. Auditions are held each fall on the Friday and Saturday preceding the beginning of classes. These are scheduled concurrently with the other large ensembles. Jazz ensemble rosters are set for the full academic year. Spring auditions are held only to fill vacancies left by players with scheduling conflicts in the second semester. Students not majoring in, but wishing to audition on, saxophone, trumpet or trombone may request an audition time by contacting Professor Chris Merz via e-mail one week prior to auditions.

Rhythm section auditions (piano, guitar, bass, drum set, percussion) are held in the evening of the first day of classes (Monday), beginning at 7 PM. There are no assigned times for these auditions. Students will be heard in the order in which they arrive.

Jazz band auditions will consist of sight reading and improvisation. Rhythm section auditions will also include demonstration of instrument-appropriate rhythm section techniques such as constructing walking basslines, comping, and performance of various grooves and tempi. Students will audition for a panel of jazz faculty members and their teaching assistant(s).

Returning students have the option of assembling their own combos. A group spokesperson must submit a roster (names, instruments, e-mail addresses) to Professor Merz via e-mail by the first day of classes. Other students expressing a desire to participate in a combo will be placed according to ability and available resources (coaching staff and rhythm section players being two of the most common limiting factors).
It is important that these auditions be completed in a timely manner so that there is sufficient time to make part assignments, prepare folders, etc. for the beginning of the semester. If the scheduled time assigned for you presents an unsolvable difficulty, please call 319/273-6058 and leave a message. We will try to contact you as time permits. In special and unusual circumstances, it may be possible that auditions can be heard prior to the close of the previous semester. It will NOT be possible to hear auditions on the Sunday after scheduled audition times. Except in unusual or emergency situations, it is expected that each student will be present for their designated audition time.

**Important Notice**

Failure to appear for assigned auditions at designated times (or failure to prepare for the audition as prescribed elsewhere in this document) may result in one or more of the following actions (to be determined by faculty in the Large Ensemble Division):

1. The student will NOT be assigned to an ensemble for that semester. This action may result in removing the student from the official designation as a music major. This could, in turn, require an additional semester to complete the degree program.

2. If the recipient of a music scholarship, the student may lose scholarship funding for the designated semester.

All music majors are expected to be familiar with School of Music policies and procedures . . . including the above policy of ensemble auditions and placement.