

An Assessment of Currently Used Piano Technical Exercises for Incoming Freshmen

How are music schools training their first semester piano students?

From 41 responses, 17 do have requirements, while 24 did not. However, there was some discrepancy because individual studios have their own requirements that were not universal among the department. Some schools required written exercises; Hanon and Czerny were by far the most common. For the most part professors said that they customize to the needs of each student.

First Semester Scale/Arpeggio Requirements				
	Scale Speed	Scale Specs	Arpeggio Speed	Arpeggio Specs
Loyola		Major, 4 Octaves		Major/Minor, 4 Octaves
MSU (MS)		Major, 4 Octaves		Major, 4 Octaves
Radford		Major, Harm. & Mel. Minor, 2 Octaves		2 Octaves
UMASS		Parallel/Contrary, 4 Octaves		Dominant and Diminished
MNSU	80	Major/Minor		
WVU	80	Major, Harm. & Mel. Minor, 4 Octaves	72	Major/Minor, 4 Octaves
PSU	88	Major, Harm. Minor	72	White triads
Indiana	96	White Major/Minor, 4 Octaves	88	White Major/Minor, 4 Octaves
Oakland	100	White Major/Harm. Minor, 4 Octaves		White Major/Minor, 4 Octaves
Baylor	100-116 (4 years)	Major, Harm. & Mel. Minor, 6ths, 10ths, 4 Octaves	90-112	Major/Minor/dim7 All inversions

Notable Responses -

Helen Marlais – Grand Valley State University: Uses the California certificate of merit tests, requires 15 minutes a day of “pure” technique away from the repertoire, requires a log book for practice

Charles Timbrell – Howard University: Requires scales in 6ths and 10ths and 3 against 4 rhythm, assigns from Czerny, Clementi, Hanon, Pischna, Brahms, or Plaidy

“I prefer simple coordination exercises ... found in the Schmitt Preparatory Exercises, along with Hanon exercises.” **Thomas Lanners – Oklahoma State University**

“It is impossible to standardize repertoire or technical development when every student is unique.” **Theresa Bogard – University of Wyoming**

“Every student presents a different situation so I think it is not wise to have an inflexible approach to these issues.” **Martin Canin – Julliard School**