Percussion Department
Graduate Audition Requirements

Prescreening:

All Percussion applicants are required to submit an audio recording for prescreening purposes in order to receive an invitation to a live audition. It is not required that the format be a professional or studio recording, but the sound quality must be as good as possible.

Required materials for prescreening:

Applicants must submit recordings of two contrasting pieces that demonstrate their drumset performance ability. Any style of music is acceptable but keep in mind it should be a strong representation of the applicant’s ability, and should support the contemporary nature of the program.

Applicants should submit two musical samples to their admissions representative. Email containing digital audio files is preferred (mp3, mp4, aac, etc.), but mailed CDs will also be accepted. Individual pieces should not exceed a file size of 10 MB.

Audition:

Applicants who pass the prescreening portion of the audition will be invited for a live audition. All auditions are approximately 30-60 minutes in length. Each applicant to the Master of Music in Performance program with a major in Percussion will be required to present the following elements at an audition.

Required materials for live auditions:

1. Three selections in contrasting styles with a rhythm section composed of graduate faculty. Applicants must provide charts/lead sheets for Bass, and Guitar or Keyboards. Styles presented must include Jazz (medium swing or Jazz waltz: use brushes and sticks for either option), a Latin style (Samba, Mambo, Bossa Nova, Songo, or 6/8 Afro-Cuban grooves), and a Funk or R&B tune (8th or 16th-note style). Applicants must also solo over the form and/or trade 4’s or 8’s on each selection.
2. Various “music-minus-one” recordings (provided by the College). Styles may include, but not be limited to: Medium Swing, Jazz Waltz, Ballad (brushes), Blues Shuffle, Bossa Nova, Mambo or Cascara/Clave, Samba, Songo, 6/8 Afro-Cuban, and Shuffle Funk or Triplet Feel.

3. A transcribed drum solo (i.e. a solo over a song form, or an example with 4’s or 8’s). Applicants must submit the transcription in advance of the audition (either hand-written or in Finale or Sibelius) to Dr. David Schmalenberger and perform the transcribed material at the original tempo for the audition. Transcriptions must be approved in advance by Dr. Schmalenberger.

4. All music and charts, including the transcription, must be received a minimum of two weeks prior to the desired audition date, and should be sent to: David.Schmalenberger@mcnallysmith.edu