

Article

Curriculum Analysis of University Music Departments in Taiwan

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Abstract: This study analyzed and compared the curricula of university music departments in Taiwan through time. The curricula were collected from each university before and after the abolition of Martial Law (c.1987) as well as Education Reform (c.1997). The curricula were created by the music departments of Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA), National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU), and Soochow University (SCU) which represent arts university, normal university, and comprehensive university, respectively. The trend of the curriculum in the three universities reflected the changes of music departments through time. Arts universities, normal universities, and comprehensive universities share commonalities but differentiate by specialties.

Keywords: Curriculum, Music Department, University

1. Introduction

Arts universities, comprehensive universities, and normal universities are three types of universities in Taiwan. The music departments in the universities design and provide their curricula according to the mission of the departments and universities. The implementation and abolition of Martial Law from 1949 to 1987 had also a critical influence on the curricula of universities. Martial law was implemented in 1949 and restricted the freedom and basic human rights of Taiwanese people. The rights of assembly, association, speech, publishing, and tourism were limited, and the bans on the political party, newspaper, sea, and export were put. The freedom of speech was generally restricted, and the curricula of all educational institutions were also affected.

The university curriculum was supervised and controlled by the Ministry of Education. Eventually, Martial law was abolished in 1987 (Chang 1991), which made Taiwanese education stepped into a new era. Freedom and diversity were core values of the education reform after the abolition of Martial law. The education became student-centered, in other words, changed from “centralized” to “decentralized” and finally “individualized.” Since the education reform in 1994, University law proclaimed the independence of universities. Thus, curricular planning or fund usage became more autonomous for the universities than before (Tu, 2010). Therefore, the curricula of the music department in higher education had transformed, too, since then. The education reforms in 1994 also raised the appeal of “widely established universities,” which led to the increase of the number to more than 160 universities in Taiwan in 2005. The number of college students in 2005 was about three and six times higher than that of 1985 and 1970. Higher education became a universal education from an elite education. However, when the university transforms the universal education, it was difficult to maintain the academic standards of the former elite education. The knowledge that students acquired from universities has a great gap from the demand of the industry, which led to the unemployment of college graduates. Unlike other fields, music is hard to link to a specific industry. Many music graduates have difficulties in finding jobs and unstable incomes due to the uniqueness of their majors.

The trend of curriculum development changes over time. Thus, this research analyzed and compared the curricula of Taipei National University of the Arts (TNUA), National Taiwan Normal University (NTNU), and Soochow University (SCU) as representing arts universities, normal universities, and comprehensive universities, respectively.

2. Materials and Methods

We applied the historical/comparative method for this research. Taiwanese universities publish their curriculum and syllabi every year and instruct students to make their course plans according to the requirement for bachelor’s degrees. Thus, we collected the curricula of TNUA, NTNU, and SCU, and analyzed them through the years for comparing among universities.

3. Curricula Before and After Abolition of Martial Law

3.1. Curriculum of TNUA

The department of Music in TNUA addressed its mission as “Based on Chinese tradition, we cultivate talents for performance and composition, in order to create Chinese music for world. Our teaching goals are exploring traditional Chinese music, understanding the Eastern and Western music cultures, cultivating composing and performing talents, strengthening music analysis and interpretation, enhancing humanities, strengthening the training of related performing arts, and implementing interdisciplinary integration and communication.”

TNUA used to be the *National Institute of the Arts* when it was founded in 1982 and later changed to *Taipei National University of the Arts* in 2001. The university now provides a seven-year course of professional dance, four-year undergraduate course, and graduate school programs. Several research centers and educational and performance facilities have been established for educating arts and other academics. TNUA is one of the influential educational organizations of the arts in Taiwan. When TNUA was founded, Taiwan was experiencing historic development in ideas, public policies, and the overall social environment concerning art and culture. Since then, TNUA has been leading the shaping of contemporary Taiwanese arts and culture. The past curricular of TNUA were perfectly preserved even those before the abolition of Martial law. Their curriculum in 1985 included the mandatory course by the Ministry of Education (MOE) (28 credits), by the university (4 credits), and the department mandatory course by MOE (46 credits) with music courses (credits varied by majors), and electives. Mandatory courses occupied three out of five categories while two out of three were regulated by MOE. Apparently, the higher education curriculum was centralized by MOE before the abolition of Martial law.

Table 1. The curriculum of TNUA in 1985.

Category	Credits
MOE required courses	28
University mandatory courses	4
MOE department mandatory courses	46
Electives	

MOE required 46 credits for the music department. In other words, those courses were core subjects identified by MOE. They were *Sight-singing and Ear-training I, II, II* (6 credits/12 hours), *Harmony I, II* (8 credits), *Counterpoint I* (4 credits), *Musical Form* (4 credits), *Introduction to Western Musical Instruments* (4 credits), *A History of Chinese Music* (4 credits), *A History of Western Music* (8 credits), *Chinese Reading and Singing* (2 credits/4 hours), *Introduction to Chinese Traditional Musical Instruments* (2 credits/4 hours), and *Graduation Work* (4 credits). Music courses comprised eight groups by major, including composition, conducting, keyboard, vocal, string, wind, percussion, and traditional instrument. For example, composition and conducting were compulsive with 58 credits and strings with 44 credits. For all the subjects, the students needed to earn 152 to 164 credits for a bachelor's degree. Although most subjects of the music department were compulsive by MOE, the idea of taking courses on different majors was developed in its time. TNUA had the curricula in Chinese-English in the 1980s.

3.2. Curriculum of NTNU

The curricula of normal universities were composed of educational, professional, and specific curriculum according to the Teacher Education Law (Yang, 2010). When teacher's colleges changed to universities in 2003, dual-track departments tried to reduce the ratio of the educational curriculum to the professional curriculum, and some assigned courses in both professional curricula (Yang, 2010). The curricula of NTNU before the abolition of Martial law were not available. Instead, we used the transcript of the graduates in 1991 for the analysis. As the graduate enrolled in 1987, the curriculum was formulated in 1986 before the abolition of Martial law.

The graduate took 154 credits in total for earning a bachelor's degree in music education. Music-related subjects offered 86 credits. Though the total credits of NTNU were similar to that of TNUA, the number of music-related subjects was less than that of TNUA (86 credits to 104 credits). The difference came from teacher education courses. Then, the student was obliged to enroll in teacher education courses, and different majors required different courses. For instance, composition major required to take *Advanced Harmony*, and instrumental major required *Orchestra* while vocal major required *Choir*.

3.3. Curriculum of SCU

The obtained earliest year of the curricular syllabus of SCU was 1990. The curricula from 1990 to 1996 were collected, and the curriculum of the Music department had a critical change in 1990 and 1991. The minimum credits to complete the music courses were 132 in 1990, including 108 credits for the mandatory and 24 for the electives. Among 108 credits, the university mandatory demanded 32 credits, while the music courses did 76 credits. In other words, the ratio of mandatory subjects to elective subjects in music was about 3:1. Mandatory music subjects comprised *Performance*, *Theory*, and *History*, in a proportion of 53, 34, and 13%, respectively. Performance subjects mainly belonged to the mandatory subjects (one-on-one subject, instrumental or vocal) up to 24 credits, which was more than half of the total mandatory subject credits. The rest of the performance subjects were *Choir* and *Ensembles*. *Ensembles* included *orchestra*, *wind*, and *string ensemble*. Theory course provided *Sight-singing and Ear Training*, *Harmony*, *Counterpoint*, *Musical Form*, and *Music Analysis*. Among the subjects, *Harmony* had the highest credits followed by *Sight-singing and Ear-training*. History subjects were *A History of Chinese Music* and *A History of Western Music*, and the credit proportion was 4:6.

The music department offered various elective subjects in the categories of theory, history, performance, language, general education, and others. There were two subjects related to contemporary music, which were *Introduction to Music in Twentieth-Century* and *Music Ensemble of Twentieth Century*. *Jazz music* was offered as Contemporary music along with *Movement for Songs* and *Stage and Administration and Management of Arts*, which were first seen in the music curriculum. Even now, the curriculum planning of SCU was still prescient.

Since 1991, the music curriculum had changed for including majors of keyboard, vocal, theory, percussion, string, and wind. Each major was indispensable to take different subjects. The total credits for obtaining a bachelor's degree increased. Meanwhile, the elective credits relatively decreased. The mandatory music subjects for all majors were modified slightly. *Kulturregeschichte in Western Countries* and *Arts and Music* was added to the curriculum, to enhance students' learning in a cultural context. Credits for mandatory subjects for the majors and minors (as one-on-one subjects) were decreased to 16 and 4 credits from 24 and 8. Different majors were required to enroll in certain subjects. For example, keyboard majoring students had to enroll in *Harmony for Keyboard*, *Chamber music for Piano*, *Piano Pedagogy*, *Piano Accompaniment*, *Score Reading I*, and *Piano Literature*, in a total of 16 credits.

Credits of music subjects in SCU remained the same from 1990 to 1995, but the proportion of the mandatory and elective courses varied dramatically. Comparing to the curriculum of 1991 and 1995, the credits for wind major remained the same while other majors presented tremendous changes. The mandatory subjects of keyboard major decreased to 6 credits from 84 to 78, and string major had 2 credits less for the requirement. The other three majors had more mandatory credits. For instance, *Theory* had 90 credits increased from 80, and *Vocal and Percussion* had 92 credits increased from 80 credits in 1991. *Vocal and Percussion* had the most mandatory subjects among 6 majors with more than 100 credits in 1990.

There were interesting subjects in the electives in 1995. For example, *Introduction to Performance Medicine*, *Music and Multimedia*, *Introduction to Music Therapy*, *Marketing and Management of Music*, *Administration and Management of Arts*, *Music Communication*, and *Music and Image*. We observed the curriculum changes before and after the abolition of Martial law. One was the decrease of mandatory credits to allow flexibility of students for learning. In contrast, an increase in the elective credits and choices of the subjects also provided opportunities for students to explore different disciplines.

4. After Education Reform

Education philosophies of the education reform were introduced to Taiwan around 1994 and inspired (Tu, 2010). Not only compulsory education but also higher education went forward to an open and diverse curriculum. From 1994 to nowadays, the curriculum of music departments demonstrated different appearances in universities.

4.1. Curriculum of SCU

In 2013, the Ministry of Education changed the minimum credits to obtain a bachelor's degree to 128 credits. Most universities adjusted the university mandatory courses to lower the credits. For instance, SCU lowered the number of credits for the university mandatory subjects from 35 to 28 credits, and the department mandatory credits from 35 to 32 credits. In 2014, every major lowered the mandatory credits and gave flexibility in electives. The one-on-one courses lowered credits from 16 to 8 credits. Other mandatory courses almost remained the same in every major, namely, *Piano* (changed from *Keyboard*) with 16 credits, *Vocal* with 26 credits, *Composition* (changed from *Theory*) with 22 credits, *Percussion* with 34 credits, *String* with 38 credits, and *Wind* with 34 credits.

In the curriculum of 2017, the department mandatory subjects were *Sight-singing and Ear training* (4 credits), *Harmony* (8 credits), *Counterpoint in 18th century* (4 credits), *A History of Western Music* (8 credits), and *Music Analysis* (8 credits), 32 credits in total. The one-on-one subjects in every major remained as 8 credits, while the mandatory subjects varied for majors, namely, *Piano* with 14 credits, *Vocal* with 14 credits, *Composition* with 22 credits, *Percussion* with 34 credits, *String* with 38 credits, and *Wind* with 34 credits. According to the curriculum of 2011, the music department allowed students to take subjects from other departments in a maximum of 16 credits. As mentioned above, the section of the electives was flexible and diverse. Reviewing the subjects in the electives, the courses related to education were added to the list, such as *Dalcroze*, *Kodaly*, and *Orff*. Nevertheless, there were newly added subjects as *Piano Tuning and Maintenance*, *Computer Scoring*, *Jazz Theory and Improvisation*, *Contemporary Music Ensemble*, *Art of Music Theater*, *Introduction to Contemporary Exhibition*, *Piano Performance*, and *Interpretation of Twentieth Century*.

Table 2. Mandatory and Elective Credits by Majors in 2011 to 2016.

Major	Mandatory/ Electives	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
		136 credits		128 credits			
Piano	Mandatory	64	64	64	56	56	56
	Elective	37	37	36	44	44	44
Vocal	Mandatory	74	74	74	66	66	66
	Elective	27	27	26	34	34	34
String	Mandatory	74	74	74	66	66	66
	Elective	27	27	26	34	34	34
Wind	Mandatory	74	74	74	66	66	66
	Elective	27	27	26	34	34	34
Percussion	Mandatory	76	76	76	66	66	66
	Elective	25	25	24	34	34	34
Composition	Mandatory	74	74	74	62	62	62
	Elective	27	27	26	38	38	38

4.2. Curriculum of NTNU

NTNU maintains the mission for training professional musicians and secondary school music teachers, even though the school system changed several times over years. In the undergraduate curriculum, NTNU provides different course plans for seven majors. They are *Piano*, *Vocal*, *String*, *Wind*, *Percussion*, *Theory*, and *Chinese traditional instruments*. *Chinese traditional instruments* have been included in the curriculum since 1983, but the instruments were limited to Chinese flute, Zheng, Pipa, and Er-hu. From 2013

to 2016, the mandatory subjects contained three sections: university mandatory (28 credits), teacher education mandatory (26 credits), and department mandatory (66 credits). From 2017, the curriculum was changed to include the university mandatory subjects of 28 credits, department mandatory subjects of 30 credits, music electives of 35 to 43 credits, and free electives of 27 to 35 credits. Total credits for obtaining a bachelor's degree remain 128 credits.

Based on the mission statement, music education courses were always included in the curriculum. In 2013, music education courses had five subjects (12 credits), but *Introduction to Music Education* was taken out in the next year, so 2014 had only four subjects (10 credits), namely, *Test and Measurement in Music Education*, *Music Teaching Method and Materials*, *Research to Music Teaching Method and Materials*, and *Music Practicum*. However, all the music education courses were no longer mandatory but electives after 2017. In the electives, more subjects were added to music education courses, such as *Computer and Music Teaching*, *Learning Assessment*, *Curriculum Development and Design*, and two more *Seminars on Educational Issues*.

In 2016, the mandatory subjects for music included three parts: performance with 21 credits, history with 16 credits, and theory with 30 credits. Performance subjects were one-on-one subjects (*Major and Minor*) with 9 credits, and group subjects with 12 credits including *Conducting*, *Choir/Ensemble*, and *Choral or Ensemble Teaching Methods*. History courses offered 16 credits including *A History of Taiwanese Music*, *A History of Western Music*, and *A History of Chinese Music*. Theory courses had 30 credits, including *Harmony*, *Intermediate Harmony*, *Advanced Harmony*, *Counterpoint*, and *Musical Form and Analysis*.

As a teacher training institute, it is reasonable to include *Choral Teaching* and *Ensemble Teaching* as mandatory to enhance the ability of pre-service teachers. In instrument learning, students who were not majoring in piano had to take the course as a minor. Besides, students who were not majoring in vocal performance had to take it as a minor or a second minor.

In 2017, the curriculum had minor changes, The department mandatory subjects had 22 credits, including *History* subjects (16 credits for Chinese Music, Taiwanese Music, and Western Music), *Musical Form and Analysis* (4 credits), and *Conducting* (2 credits). All the mandatory performance subjects were changed to the electives. One-on-one subjects were only allowed to offer 8 credits. The modification of the 2017 curriculum seemed to weaken the function of teacher training but toward multiple developments in curriculum design.

NTNU provided 63 subjects as electives from 2013 to 2016. There were interesting subjects that were rarely seen in other universities. They were *Introduction to Music Library Science*, *Theory of Music Performance*, *Applied Music*, *Performance Practice of Orchestra Excerpts*, *Recording Engineering*, and *Digital Recording Engineering*. Jazz became a theme in the electives. There was a 4-credit *Jazz ensemble*, and *Research in Jazz Music and Performance* offered 4 credits too. Teaching related subjects included *Creativity and Music Teaching*, *Music Education and Music Behavior*, *String Teaching Method*, *MIDI and Arrangement Software Applied in Teaching*, *Research in Piano Pedagogy*, *Research in Contemporary Music Teaching Methods*, *Teaching Techniques*, and *Applications of Orff Approach*. Those who aimed to obtain teaching licenses needed to take *Introduction to Arts and Aesthetics*. If they wanted to obtain an additional license in performing arts, they needed to take *Theater Directing Practice* and *Creative Dance*.

The 2017 curriculum was similar to the past. Newly included subjects were *Introduction to Music Therapy*, *Popular Music*, *Introduction to Electronic Keyboard*, and *Electronic Keyboard*. Besides *World Music*, *Introduction to World Music* was added to the curriculum. *Basic Recording Engineering* was also included on the subject list instead of *Recording Engineering*. In the category of music education, newly added subjects included *Community Music Education*, *Research of Teaching Singing*, *String Pedagogy*, *Instruction of Chinese Instruments (String/Bamboo)*. *Introduction to Music Education* was brought back to the subject list.

4.3 Curriculum of NTUA

The curriculum of NTUA was ahead of other universities before the abolition of Martial law. After 30 years, the curriculum of NTUA is still prominent among music departments in higher education.

The curriculum of 2015 to 2018 included three sections: university mandatory, department mandatory, and department electives. The university mandatory included general and physical education with 28 credits in total. Department mandatory subjects were grouped into six. Thirty years ago, there were eight major groups but *Conducting* and *Chinese traditional instruments* were

excluded. Six major groups included *Theory, Piano, Vocal, String, Wind, and Percussion*. The mandatory credits varied by majors: *Theory* for 116 credits, *Piano* for 102 credits, *Vocal* for 104 credits, *String* for 106 to 108 credits, *Wind* for 106 credits, and *Percussion* for 106 credits.

The department mandatory contained the mandatory for major students. The subjects were *Basic Musicianship* (2 credits), *Music Theory* (10 credits), *Twentieth Century Music Theory* (4 credits), *A History of Western Music* (8 credits), *A History of Taiwanese Music (Traditional/Contemporary)* (4 Credits), *A History of Chinese Music* (chose from General or Musical Genre) (2 credits), and *Traditional Music* (8 credits). The total credits were 38. According to the mission statement of TNUA, “Based on Chinese tradition, ..., in order to create Chinese music for world,” the music department kept its promise to make *A History of Chinese Music* and *Traditional Music* a mandatory subject. As the Chinese traditional instrument major was excluded, the College of Music established the Traditional Music Department in 1995, to “cultivate professional traditional music talents for inheriting, researching, and developing traditional music.”

There were 54 elective subjects. Twelve *Traditional Music* subjects were included as electives but ignored them as they were the part of department mandatory. The rest of the electives included ensembles, such as *String, Wind, Orchestra*, as well as *Research of the literature of different instruments*. There were special subjects as follows: *Gamelan Ensemble, Music Improvisation and Interdisciplinary Thinking, Mandolin Classics, and New Music Performance Workshop*. TNUA has the Traditional Music Department with the courses for *Gamelan Ensemble*. Therefore, teachers and instruments were needed to prepare for the subject. *Music Improvisation and Interdisciplinary Thinking* as well as *Mandolin Classics* were offered for students from orphanages or nursing homes to fulfill the required service of the university. *New Music Performance Workshop* was designed for students who played the composition for *Theory* majors.

5. Comparison of Three Universities

The curricula of NTNU, SCU, and TNUA in 2017 required 128 credits for program completion. Except for the university mandatory, the music department courses offered 100 credits for all three universities, though the proportion of the mandatory and electives varied. The mandatory music courses of NTNU and SCU were 30 and 56 credits while TNUA required 102 to 116 credits depending on majors with the department mandatory of 38 credits. The curriculum of the mandatory music courses of SCU comprised the department mandatory subjects (32 credits), major instrument (8 credits), and other subjects by majors (14 to 38 credits).

Table 3. A Comparison of Department Mandatory Courses in 2017.

NTNU	SCU	TNUA
History of Chinese Music (4 credits)	Sight-Singing and Ear Training (4 credits)	Basic Musicianship (2 credits)
History of Taiwanese Music (4 credits)	Harmony (8 credits)	Music Theory (10 credits)
History of Western Music (8 credits)	Counterpoint of 18 th Century (4 credits)	20 th Century Music Theory (4 credits)
Musical Form and Analysis (4 credits)	History of Western Music (8 credits)	History of Western Music (8 credits)
Conducting (2 credits)	Music Analysis (8 credits)	History of Taiwanese Music (4 credits)
		History of Chinese Music (2 credits)
		Traditional Music (8 credits)
22 credits	32 credits	38 credits

The department mandatory courses defined the core domain of the profession. In other words, mandatory music courses reflected the core capability of music majors. The credits of the mandatory subjects of three universities were lowest at NTNU, then SCU, and TNUA in increasing order. A History of Western Music was the only common of the three universities with 8 credits as it provides the core knowledge of classical music. In the history courses, both NTNU and TNUA offered Taiwanese and Chinese music history though the credit hours varied. SCU and TNUA requested students to enroll Sight-Singing and Ear Training (Basic Musicianship) with 4 credits and 2 credits, while NTNU did not include this subject in the mandatory. In the theory courses, SCU had most subjects and credits, such as Harmony (8 credits), 18th Century Counterpoint (4 credits), and Music Analysis (8 credits).

TNUA offered 14 credits in total for the subjects such as Music Theory (10 credits) and 20th Century Music Theory (4 credits). NTNU provided the least credits for one subject, Musical Form and Analysis (4 credits). Nevertheless, NTNU required 2-credit for Conducting which the other two universities did not offer.

According to the mandatory music courses, TNUA precisely reflected its department mission, especially providing Traditional Music (8 credits). SCU valued music theory greatly, therefore its credits were the highest among the three universities. Only SCU offered 18th Century Counterpoint. Conducting was only provided by NTNU with the purpose of training teachers for secondary school education. The graduates of NTNU had a chance to be secondary school music teachers and lead music ensembles. Thus, the related knowledge and techniques of conducting were certainly necessary.

More credits of the mandatory subjects decreased that of the electives. Other than the department mandatory, music mandatory credits of TNUA were 102 to 116 depending on majors. In other words, with all music courses with the university mandatory, music majors already reach the maximum credits for completing the degree program. As any more credits are needed for the degree, elective courses were only offered for interesting students in TNUA.

NTNU had the least credits of the music mandatory subjects while the credits of the electives were up to 70 including the department and free electives. Most majors required 30 to 35 credits for the electives. Only the composition major required 43 credits for department electives and 27 credits as free electives. More credits in free electives provided students with the flexibility to explore their careers or carry out professional development. Teacher education was not shown in the curriculum. If students hoped to be secondary school teachers, they needed to enroll in the teacher education course that required completing the courses of the music department and teacher education for 148 credits. The curriculum of NTNU had diversity but was not focused on music education alone.

The curriculum of SCU was more selective than the other two universities. SCU demonstrated its idea of fostering music talents in the balance between mandatory and elective subjects.

In the curriculum planning, TNUA presented its goal in professional performance, and every major created its mandatory courses. In this case, the mandatory credits were many which limited the electives. SCU as a comprehensive university, had the curriculum for foresight and surpassing other normal universities, such as NTNU, National Taipei University of Education (NTUE), National Taichung University of Education (NTCU), and so on. Although we did not include the curricula of NTUE and NTCU for the analysis, their curricula were reviewed for this study. Normal universities are responsible for training future teachers. Thus they need to provide courses related to educational and pedagogical training. Unfortunately, music education courses in music departments did not change significantly. As teacher education loses interest from students these years, the number of music education courses of the music department decreases accordingly. The decrease in the number of students majoring in music education does not relate to the increase of other professional music courses. This needs continuous attention for the professional education of music.

However, according to the trend of the curriculum in the three universities, we could observe the change of university music education through time. Owing to being career-oriented and the uniqueness of music as an art, the music department of universities demonstrate ideas and goals regarding music in their curricula for providing the basic competency as professionals, especially with the department mandatory courses. Regardless of the type of university, the universities have common courses as well as differentiated ones as their specialties. Elective subjects not only reflect the distinguishing features of each university but also the expectations for their graduates.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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