

Questions for Prospective Teachers

Choosing a music teacher is an extremely important decision. There is not one teacher who is perfect for all students. Before searching for a teacher, think about the qualities that are most important to you. Use this list of questions to help you determine how a prospective teacher would measure up to your expectations.

Do not settle for the first teacher who accepts you. Interview several teachers and find someone who will work well with you. You should expect a prospective teacher to meet with you. In such an interview the student should perform for the teacher. The teacher may ask the student to sight read/sing an unfamiliar piece of music. A personal meeting is especially important when a student transfers from one teacher to another. Just knowing where a student is in a book does not tell a teacher how well that student plays/sings. A teacher needs to assess the student's current level of musicianship, so plans can be made for the transition into the new studio.

★Teacher background

What music training do you have?
Where did you receive your training?

How many years have you taught?
What types/ages/levels of students have you taught?

★Organization

How do you communicate with parents?
How often do you communicate with parents?
Do you have a studio policy?
Do you give out newsletters?
Do you send out emails with announcements?

What are the tuition and fees?
How and when are tuition/fees paid?
Do you issue a schedule of dates your studio is closed?
How do students know what their assignments are for the week (assignment book, etc.)?

★Practice

Do you encourage or require students to document their practice time?
Do you teach practice techniques to individual students and for specific pieces?

When the student leaves the lesson, does he/she have a clear understanding of what to practice during the week?

★Activities

Do you participate in the National Federation of Music Clubs Gold Cup Festival?
Do you participate in Syllabus?

Do you participate in Piano Guild Auditions?
What other activities do you offer your students?

★General

Do you require participation in activities outside the lesson?
How often do you hold recitals?
Do you teach lessons during the summer?
Do you have references from current/past students?
How do you determine when a piece has been sufficiently mastered?
Do you offer group lessons to your private students?

Do you provide opportunities for your students to perform with others (duets, etc.)?
Do you expect your students to become professional musicians?
How do you motivate students to practice and work hard?
What books/series do you use?

★Student qualities—if these pertain, ask!

How do you work with a student who fidgets or has a short attention span?
How do you work with a student who is a perfectionist?
How do you work with a student who is shy?
How do you work with a student who memorizes music instead of reading the notes?
How do you accommodate non-traditional students?
What do you do to prepare a student for a college or other audition?

How do you work with a student who has difficulty practicing/does not like to practice?
How do you respond when a student says he/she does not enjoy lessons/wants to quit?
How do you work with a student who has a learning disability/learns slowly?
How do you work with a student who learns quickly?

REMEMBER YOU ARE INTERVIEWING THE TEACHER JUST AS MUCH AS THE TEACHER IS INTERVIEWING YOU!