

MICHIGAN STATE SPARTAN MARCHING BAND

2025 Audition Information

The Spartan Marching Band (SMB) will have in-person auditions in Spring/Summer 2025. All applicants should review the audition procedures and requirements below before submitting an audition.

Further questions about the specific audition requirements should be directed to the following staff members:

- **Hornline & Big Ten Flag** - Dr. Thornton: dt@msu.edu / Dr. Golden: goldenar@msu.edu
- **Drumline** - Dr. Weber: drumline@msu.edu
- **Color Guard** - Emily Rogers: michiganstatecolorguards@gmail.com

Summer audition timeline:

- All applicants (regardless of section) should register for an audition using the following form – [Registration Form](#).
- All drumline applicants should ALSO complete the following form for complete access to [audition materials, here](#).

Audition Results:

The fall 2025 season information mailing, including all audition results, will be sent no later than Wednesday, July 2nd. This mailing will answer all questions regarding the upcoming year.

2025 season information for prospective members:

All students who audition successfully for the Spartan Marching Band (SMB) will be expected to report to campus on Friday, August 15th. All new drumline members will be expected to report to campus on Wednesday, August 13th. Any changes to our season, reporting dates, etc., will be communicated via email and D2L.

Students cannot be accepted into the SMB unless they have been fully admitted to Michigan State University (MSU).

All students must enroll for credit in MUS 114 - Spartan Marching Band. When scheduling your classes for the fall semester, you should communicate to your advisor that you are planning to participate in the SMB (even if you have not heard about results). Rehearsals are every day from 4:30-6pm, with sectionals from 4:00-4:25pm on Wednesday/Friday, and an additional Monday night rehearsal from 7-9pm. Drumline has additional rehearsals Monday / Wednesday / Friday from 3:30 - 4:30 pm. **Class conflicts are not permitted for first year members. You should plan the rest of your schedule around these times.**

Once audition results are released, you will be contacted by our section leaders. They will be a great resource for you. Please utilize them and communicate all your questions!

Good luck and Go Green!
#answerthecall



Spartan Marching Band Audition Requirements

Hornline Audition Information (Saxophone and Brass Instruments)

The hornline auditions will take place on campus on Saturday, June 7th.

Schedule

8:30am Registration/Meeting (Music Building)

9:00am Music Auditions

Lunch Break

1:30pm Marching orientation (SMB Turf Field – corner of Shaw Lane and Chestnut Road)

3:00pm Dismissal (approximate)

Audition Details

The instrumental audition should include one prepared solo piece or etude involving contrasting styles (3 to 5 minutes in length); a piece that you might perform at a “Solo and Ensemble Festival” would be appropriate. This piece does not need to be memorized. The piece should demonstrate the best of your musical ability - think of this as an opportunity to “wow” the adjudicator.

Please also prepare the following major scales: C, F, B flat, E flat, A flat, G, D, A, E. (Note these are not listed in concert pitch. C major scale should be started on “C” for every instrument) All of these scales should be performed from memory. Candidates are encouraged to play as many octaves as possible. The pattern can be of your choosing, again, with the goal to demonstrate the best of your musical ability.

Your music audition will be evaluated using the following criteria: tone, intonation, rhythm, articulation, technique, expression, and overall musicality.

The afternoon session will consist of a marching orientation. During the session, individuals will be introduced to a series of SMB marching fundamentals. The goal is to be the best version of yourself and learn these fundamentals to the best of your ability. While there is no formal evaluation during the orientation session, staff members will be assisting with fundamental posture, precision, timing, and monitoring engagement and effort through the learning process.

All auditions will be reviewed by Dr. Thornton, Dr. Golden, visual staff members, and graduate teaching assistants.

Virtual Option

In the event that you are not able to be with us in-person, we are able to accept audition videos virtually. While this is an option, each person auditioning is **strongly encouraged** to come to East Lansing for an in-person audition.

The music video audition should contain the following:

- Introduction of yourself (first name, last name, where you are from, and potential section)
- Solo piece/etude from beginning to end
- All scales listed above from memory

Please make sure that your face and hands are visible in your video while you are performing the required elements.

The visual video audition must contain:

- Display of marching technique on a football field – 10 yards of forward march “8 to 5” and 5 yards of backwards march “8 to 5” at tempos of quarter = 120 and quarter = 156 (If you do not have access to a field, please find the next best solution)

Students should utilize their schools' marching technique when submitting videos. Your visual audition will be evaluated using the following criteria: posture, body control, timing, technique, overall visual performance. Please make sure that your entire body is visible for the whole performance, so that the viewer can best see all of the required elements.

All virtual auditions will be reviewed by Dr. Thornton, Dr. Golden, and graduate teaching assistants.

Once registered for an audition, you will receive e-mail communication on where to submit your audition. You may also use the following link, if needed: [VIDEO SUBMISSION LINK](#)

A note for brass and saxophone music majors:

If you have been admitted as a music major (on an instrument in the SMB), your MSU College of Music audition will satisfy for automatic membership in the Spartan Marching Band. All new music majors will receive an invitation letter from the Band Office in early May. If you would like to participate in the SMB as a music major, simply fill out the form in the early May mailing and return it to the MSU Band Office. You will then be included in our July mailing for all new SMB members. Questions about this process should be directed to Dr. Thornton (dt@msu.edu).

Drumline Audition Information

Please read ALL the information below if you are considering an audition for the MSU Drumline. Any updates to the 2025 MSU Drumline Auditions will be posted on the MSU Drumline website at <https://www.spartanmarchingband.com/drumline-audition>.

There are two rounds of auditions for the MSU Drumline. Both rounds will take place in-person on April 26 and May 10. If you are unable to participate in either audition for any reason (out-of-state, major event conflict), then you may contact Dr. Weber at drumline@msu.edu to check on the possibility of a video audition. If you live out-of-state and cannot travel for both dates, we recommend sending a video for the first round and attending the second round on May 10. To receive the most helpful feedback, please send in your audition video sent in by April 23rd, 2025. You will need to communicate with Dr. Weber for the video content. In past years, any video audition contains the majority of the exercises and the copyrighted audition pieces. Returning drumline members will attend both audition dates.

You will receive feedback on audition standing (placement), what you need to work on, and if you have made it to the second round of the audition on that instrument. If you are not chosen for your first instrument, you may have the option to play the second audition on another instrument. (For example, if you audition for snare and are not selected after the first round, you may have the opportunity to audition for cymbals at the second audition.) Results of the audition will be announced at the end of the second audition date (May 13).

Any updates to the audition process will be posted on the drumline website and communicated by email to all who submit the [help session form](#).

You may audition for any instrument you wish. Each instrument is auditioned separate from the others. Some pieces are not online due to copyright protection. To obtain these pieces, please fill out the help session form linked on the drumline website (link above). It is important to observe this copyright; do not share these works.

The help sessions will help you prepare for auditions and are free and online for the spring semester. Details are on the drumline website: <https://www.spartanmarchingband.com/drumline> . For those who live at a distance and cannot attend, there are video options available for feedback.

If you are auditioning for bass drum, please choose the drum you would most like to play and learn that part (with unisons). Based on need and results, we may move you to a different drum for the second audition.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Weber at drumline@msu.edu!

Color Guard Audition Information

The Spartan Marching Band Color Guard (SMBCG) auditions will take place on campus, Saturday, June 28th.

It will be set-up in a clinic format where participants will learn parts of the SMBCG technique book, as well as a routine. We strive to have a welcoming, open, and honest approach to teaching and learning, trying our best to look at both current ability and future potential. We will be evaluating the following for all potential members:

- Work Ethic
- Response to Constructive Feedback
- Posture & Performance
- Hand Placement/Free Arms
- Technique & Execution
- Awareness of Flag Angles/Relationship Between Flag and Body
- Lower Body Placement/Awareness
- Timing & Fulfillment of Technique and Choreography

The audition will culminate in performance opportunities that allow each potential member to showcase their growth throughout the day.

Please register for auditions using the link below so further details regarding the time and location of the auditions will be sent to interested individuals - [Register Here](#). (If you have not already done so above)

Virtual Option

Each person auditioning is **strongly encouraged** to come to East Lansing for an in-person audition. If you are unable to come to campus on June 28th, we ask that you email [Emily Rogers](#) to discuss options for submitting materials electronically.

Any specific questions about the SMBCG audition process should be communicated to Emily Rogers at: michiganstatecolorguards@gmail.com

Big Ten Flag Audition Information

The Big Ten Flag Corps auditions will take place on campus on Saturday, June 7th.

Schedule

- 8:30 Registration/Meeting (Music Building)
- 9:00 “Get to Know You” Interviews (Music Building)
- 11:30 Lunch Break
- 1:30 Marching orientation (SMB Turf Field – corner of Shaw Lane and Chestnut Road)
- 3:30 Audition/Dismissal (approximate)

Following the registration, you will meet as a group with the leadership to allow us to get to know you and your interest in the Big Tens. The morning orientation will serve as an introduction to the afternoon session and formal audition. These are all skills that will be reviewed again in preseason. You should do your very best to perfect them as well as you can throughout the day.

During your audition, please be prepared with a metronome at the bpm outlined below. We are using this format to simulate a more robust audition atmosphere that parallels an in-person audition to determine who will succeed in the fast-paced SMB atmosphere.

The following will be part of the audition:

- Toe-Knee-Toe-Heel, Breakdown Drill (2 times for each leg, 16 counts total, quarter note = 124)
- 16 counts of Mark Time (quarter note = 124)
- 8 counts Forward March (8 to 5) into 8 counts Prance (quarter note = 156)

Your audition will be evaluated on the following criteria: posture, body control, timing, foot/leg technique, physical fitness, and overall visual performance. If you have any questions, please reach out to our Big Ten Flag Corps section leaders, Julia Crane (craneju3@msu.edu) and Paige Plunkett (plunke21@msu.edu).