

Weeks Studio Policy Handbook

Preface

The University of Miami's School of Music was the pioneer music school to establish a four-year degree in music engineering. Ted Crager, Associate Dean, along with Bill Porter, who was Elvis Presley's engineer, worked to accredit the curriculum and obtain enough equipment to outfit a small recording facility. In addition, much of the growth of the department is accredited to former department head, Ken Pohlmann. It was his dream of creating the first Music Engineering Graduate degree, coupled with his unlimited passion and knowledge in audio technology that gave the MuE (Music Engineering) program the momentum it needed to make the University of Miami one of the world's premier institutions for studying Music Engineering.

The success of the MuE program comes not only from our own efforts, but also from support both from within and from outside the University. Whether it is funding from the University or donations of equipment from outside companies, support is only offered when that support is put to good use, and when that support produces good results. The high reputation of our program has come from the hard-won achievements of past graduates who have made their mark in the industry. This, in turn, validates our program to others. Continuing to provide the best education and experience possible requires that we have first-class facilities, which in turn requires the active effort of everyone who uses the facilities.

The purpose of this manual is to outline the policies and organization of our facilities and allow a newcomer to view the big picture so that he/she can be a positive influence. It should be noted that this document cannot cover everything, but there are obvious generalities that can be extended to the various situations that may arise. If in doubt, it is wise to consult with staff members and music engineering faculty, as opposed to interpreting the rules for yourself. You will find that most rules are refinements of the "Golden Rule", which in our case means "just as you rely on the facilities to be organized and working properly, do your part to maintain and improve things for the next person, who also relies on the facilities."

Mission

The Music Engineering Program consists of both undergraduate and graduate degree offerings and covers many facets of music/audio production and technology. The Electrical Engineering Audio program (EAN) is allied with the MuE program. These students have many courses in common and also participate in the use of the facilities; their privileges are the same as those of the MuE's.

An outstanding privilege of the program is that keys are available to students in order to use delicate and expensive equipment at night without supervision. This privilege can be offered only if students conduct themselves in a responsible fashion. Individual revocations of these privileges will occur if the faculty or student staff members feel that the user is performing in a

manner that may jeopardize studio operations. It is also important to note that this is an educational, and not a commercial facility. Engineers may not be paid for studio time, and neither may recordings made in the Weeks Studio be sold or used for commercial releases.

Our studios and auditoriums are the showcase facilities of the music school and a "must see" for visitors, prospective students, and their parents. For this reason, we must keep the rooms clean, presenting a professional appearance. As long as the School of Music administration is proud of our facilities, they will not hesitate to support them.

Within the MuE and EAN programs and without, we promote and encourage peer to peer learning, primarily in the form of letting other students observe the work of their classmates and colleagues. It is never required for a student to teach another student during a studio session, but it is common practice to allow fellow engineers to learn by observation.

Faculty and Staff

Director of Music Engineering

The Director of Music Engineering is the ultimate authority concerning all matters of the MuE program. All matters of admissions, suspensions, course content, grading fairness, etc. are ultimately overseen by the Director. The Director also functions as the main spokesperson of our program to the deans and outsiders.

Director of Production Services overseas all audio technology and production in the Frost School of Music. It is their job to oversee all employees and student staff and manage their scheduling and responsibilities as they relate to concert production, studio management, and audio equipment.

Production Engineer

The Production Engineer is the manager of all Frost Recording Studios, including Weeks. It is their job to maintain smooth operation of all studios on campus. The Production Engineer's responsibilities include but are not limited to: managing the MuE Staff in functions pertaining to the Weeks Studio, maintaining studio documentation, overseeing maintenance and upkeep, scheduling, and more. They are on call 24/7 for any studio malfunctions.

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LICENSING PROCEDURES

Before a student may use the Music Engineering facilities, the student must demonstrate a certain level of responsibility, technical competence, and session organization. This includes proper miking techniques, organization of the studio, session flow, and DAW competence. You must obtain a license before booking time in Weeks Studio. Students are strongly encouraged to get licensed before Junior year.

In order to obtain the Weeks Studio License, you must complete the following steps in order:

1. Take and pass the Weeks Studio Policy Exam

Before pursuing any license, the student must first pass the Music Engineering Policy exam. All beginning students are urged to pass the policy as soon as possible. The exam is based on material from this policy manual, and day-to-day functions within the Music Engineering program. Note that the test **will not** cover the history of the program.

In order to motivate students to read this manual and learn the rules and regulations, test taking of any exam is limited to a maximum of four times per semester. The exam may be taken regardless of the student's academic level. The Policy exam consists of 20 multiple choice questions, and to pass a student cannot get more than 2 wrong (90%). If they miss 1 or 2 questions, they will be given one chance to correct the question(s). If both are corrected, they pass, but if either one is wrong, they will be required to take the test again. If the test is failed, the trainee must wait one week before taking the test again.

2. Take and pass the MMI 201 Introduction to Music Recording course

This course can be taken before taking the Music Engineering Policy Exam.

In order to continue the process of obtaining the license, all undergraduate students must have taken and passed the MMI 201 – Introduction to Music Recording course offered by the Music Engineering department.

Special cases may be studied and/or approved in order to complete this requirement (i.e. another course instead of MMI 201). If a student does not have the knowledge of microphones,

outboard processing gear basics, and other information taught in MMI 201, a special training session will be offered twice a semester which the trainee must pass before continuing training.

3. Book two training sessions with the Production Engineer

These two training sessions will be with the Production Engineer and at most 5 students in the process of obtaining licenses. The first session will cover studio signal flow and studio organization. This will cover the technical aspects of the consoles and outboard gear. The second will cover detailed training in software, clock changing, digital patching, and more.

Trainees should expect training sessions to last 2 hours each. These trainings may be booked as far as 1 month in advance. The production engineer will reach out to all trainees who are at this point in the process to book the training sessions.

4. Attend at least 2 shadowing/assistant sessions

Two shadowing sessions are required after being trained in the studio. These sessions give trainees the opportunity to see how a session is run and ask questions along the way. The lead licensed engineer on the sessions should give the trainees tasks that are common in a studio session so trainees get hands-on experience before proceeding with tests.

Engineers can start their shadowing sessions after their first training session, but still must complete their second training session before they take the Weeks Technical Exam.

If the engineer has completed at least half of MMI 160 (Tracking) then they only have to take one shadowing session

Trainees may attend more sessions if they like before continuing onto the next step.

5. Take and pass the Weeks Technical Exam (Written)

After completing the two training sessions, the trainee may then take the Weeks Technical exam (Written Test). Passing requires a minimum score of 90%, and it may be taken a maximum of four times per semester. If the test is failed, the student must wait 1 week before taking the test again. The administrator of the test will let students know the correct answers to missed questions.

The topics on this test consists of what the trainee learned in the training sessions. The trainer should have taken the exam before and therefore have knowledge of what is the content of the exam. A good quality training guarantees the passing of this exam.

6. Take and pass the Weeks Hands-on (practical) Exam

After passing the Weeks Technical exam, the hands-on exam is administered by the Production Engineer, in which the license candidate and the Production Engineer meet in the Weeks control room at a prearranged time and the candidate must demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the studio by successfully performing a series of operations commonly encountered during a typical recording session.

Failing the hands-on exam results in a remedial training session with a licensed engineer, booked by the trainee. It is only after this remedial session that they may retake the hands-on exam.

7. Book a session with a trained engineer shadowing the trainee

Once the hands-on test is passed, a trainee will be placed on a session that works for both the trainee and a licensed engineer. The licensed engineer is there to assess the trainee in their ability to handle a session in a skilled, professional, and timely manner. They are also there to make sure the session runs smoothly so the artists time is used properly.

If the licensed engineer does not help (or helps very little) the trainee during the session and believes the trainee has a thorough understanding of the studio, then the trainee will have completed the licensing process.

If the licensed engineer has to help the trainee a substantial amount to complete the session and does not believe the trainee can run a session professionally then the trained engineer can either request the trainee have another session with a shadowing engineer or request them to take another training session.

8. Obtain the Weeks Studio License

If the trainee passes the shadowed session, then the student becomes fully qualified to use the Weeks Studio and book sessions. As a Licensed engineer you will be granted one priority session per month as well as booking privileges (explained in Booking Procedures).

Booking Procedures

In order to book time in the Weeks studio, the student must have secured a Weeks license.

It should be stressed that engineers are only allowed to be in the studio if they have booked that time according to the below procedures. Anyone found using the facilities without going through the official booking procedures will face severe penalties, up to and including losing their license.

A calendar is available on the MuE website (<http://mue.music.miami.edu/weeks-studio/studio-calendar/>). Everyone should check this calendar before sending in booking requests.

1. Booking Requests for Licensed Engineers

All booking requests must be sent through email the form located under the “Book a Session” tab on the Mue website (<http://mue.music.miami.edu/weeks-studio/booking/book-a-session/>). All requests will be reviewed to ensure the studio is being scheduled for proper purposes that fit the studio’s capabilities. **NO** booking request is final until the engineer receives a *confirmation email AND it appears on the booking calendar*.

2. Booking Timeline

To allow ample time for ensembles to prepare both music and schedules, as well as making the best use of available space, different size ensembles and session purposes have different booking periods.

During the first two weeks each semester, classes and school ensembles will have a chance to book sessions

- All classes that take place in the Weeks Studio will be placed on the calendar
- Any school ensemble that would like to schedule a recording session anytime during the semester should send an email to weeksstudio@gmail.com within the first two weeks of classes following the guidelines above.

The first two weeks will be off-limits for booking Licensed Engineers’ personal projects or student bookings. Special requests may be made but will be reviewed for necessity. Licensed engineers can begin sending booking requests at the beginning of the semester but will only be considered after the classes and school ensembles are scheduled. This two-week period allows for extended training sessions for incoming students and refreshers for licensed engineers. During this time there will be sessions booked for prepared ensembles which provide shadowing sessions for trainees.

All licensed engineers are granted one priority booking session per month. These sessions are booked before everything else as a privilege to Licensed Engineers and can be used for whatever purpose (within reason).

All booking requests after the first two weeks of classes during a semester, regardless of who they are from, will be handled as follows (the number of weeks/days listed is how far in advance the type of session can be booked):

- **8 weeks: Licensed Engineer priority sessions**
 - All licensed engineers can book one priority session per month. These must be submitted through email like any other session but should be labeled with “Priority Session”.
 - These will still be reviewed. Note that if your session request is for “listening to music” on a Saturday for 8 hours it will be denied
- **6 weeks: Large Ensembles**

- Because multiple member ensembles need more time to plan schedules, plan rehearsals, and sessions normally must occur before late hours, these sessions will be booked first.
- Examples of Large Ensembles: Jazz band, 4 or more-piece jazz combo, brass quintet, rock band. In general, groups with multiple members needing to coordinate as well as groups that need the full functionality of the studio: multi-tracking, multiple headphone mixes, isolation booths.
- **4 weeks: Small Ensembles/Solo Work**
 - Examples of Small Ensembles/Solo Work: string duo, solo piano, solo wind instrument, guitar overdubs. In general, groups where planning among multiple members is easy. Also, groups that could possibly record elsewhere in the school but would prefer to use Weeks due to a piece of gear, mic, or engineer
 - Before booking a solo instrument, engineers/students should consider other recording options. Remember that while recording a solo instrument in the Weeks Studio may provide a cool experience, a large ensemble may not appreciate that you are using only 1 channel.
- **2 weeks: Mixing/Mastering**
 - Because mixing and mastering generally requires the least number of people, as well as no need for recording, these sessions can happen early in the morning or late at night, which at this far out will be most of the session times available.
 - If a mixing session is needed during the daytime, an engineer may use a priority booking slot.
 - Mixing/mastering is important especially when there is an important piece of gear an engineer is trying to use. Keep in mind that studio time is valuable, and it would behoove all of Frost to do any basic mixing or timing editing on a project on a computer in the lab so that an engineer is using Weeks Studio for purposes only available in Weeks (i.e. outboard analog gear, critical listening sections).
- **3 days: Open**
 - If there is studio time available 3 days before the proposed time, it is up for grabs for licensed engineers. A formal email request must still be made.
 - This time can be used for anything as long as it follows studio policy: listening sessions, getting comfortable with gear, etc. For example, however, if a last minute recording session pops up during a time an engineer scheduled a listening session, it would be courteous to give that time to the recording session as they don't have options to record elsewhere whereas an engineer has options to listen to music elsewhere.

Processing of requests

Licensed engineers Priority requests will be processed first. These sessions are a privilege rewarded for being part of the Music Engineering program and completing the licensing procedures. Non-priority requests will be processed according to the time frame they were sent it along with the number of sessions an engineer has booked. Conflicts of requested time will be sorted out at the Licensed Engineer Meetings.

Licensed Engineer Meetings

Once there are 6 licensed engineers, there will be bi-weekly meetings of all licensed engineers to confirm studio bookings and to , and to talk about any updates or concerns over the facilities.

Frost Students Booking in Weeks Studio (Non-Music Engineering/Audio Engineering)

- Students (Non-MuE/AE) should check with their department first to see if they have recording facilities that will meet their needs.
- Students should consider the expense of the studio's applications and if their project warrants the use of the space
- If a student would like to book studio time, they should go onto the MuE website and contact a licensed engineer they would like to work with (<http://mue.music.miami.edu/weeks-studio/engineers/>) . That engineer, if they agree to the session, should book time using the booking form as normal.
- Students should consider that recordings that come out of Weeks Studio will be used to show prospective students, faculty, the community, and the world what is happening at the Frost School of Music. Projects should be for professional and high quality work.

RULES, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

Though most rules below may appear to be common sense, please read them carefully, as failure to abide by the rules (and seeing that musicians and observers are doing the same) will result in penalties addressed to the session engineer. Severity of the punishment is decided by the student staff and the MuE faculty. Since it would be impossible to make a list of every stipulation that pertains to our facilities, please always remember to use common sense. If you have concerns, please consult a staff member or MuE faculty.

STUDIO LOGS AND ACCESS

- Upon entering the studio, the engineer should check the online studio log form for any updates to equipment in the studio (fixes, new malfunctions, etc.).
- Before leaving the studio after a session, the engineer must fill out the online studio log. The link to this page will be bookmarked in all web browsers. This will include details such as if anything was broken, missing, or messy upon arrival, if there were any malfunctions during the session, etc.
- For Fall 2016, access to the studio will be given with Cane Card access to the Weeks facility and a pin for the back entrance through the conference room.
- **TROUBLESHOOTING:** Doing ones best to find out the source of the problem. Example: if signal is not being transmitted from a mic line, the items to swap out could include the microphone, XLR cable, TT patch cable, trying a different preamp, and trying a different input into Pro Tools. Logging trouble shooting is important as it allows the production engineer to quickly determine the source of the problem or fix it. Trouble shooting does not call for opening any equipment's casing or housing.

GENERAL RULES

- The session engineer is ultimately responsible for the actions of everyone attending a studio session.
- The session engineer may refuse access to anyone, except staff, during his/her session.
- If you want to use a part of the facility that the engineer is not using, you must ask their permission to do so; if they agree, they will become accountable for your actions.
- Anyone who is not a licensed engineer or in training to become a licensed engineer is NOT permitted to use the equipment or assist the engineer. (ex. USE THE CONSOLE, SET UP MICS, ETC.)
- There is ABSOLUTELY NO FOOD OR DRINK in the studio or control room. Each instance of food or drink found in the studio will result in loss of the engineers next booked session. All food and drink should be left in the studio lobby.
- Leave the space better than how you found it. The purpose of cleaning up/resetting is to make sure an engineer can come in and start every session the same way without having to undo any settings or find a lost mic
- If any area of the studio is messy at the beginning of your session, make note of it in the log and staff will hunt down and discipline the guilty party. If you don't log it and the mess is still there at the end of your session, the guilt falls onto the engineer who didn't log it.
- The engineer completing the session is the one responsible for any mess that is made.
- Do not write directly on the console or any other equipment. Use console tape if you would like to label channels.
- Be on time for your session and be ready to leave on time. Do not impose upon someone else's studio time. If you know in advance you may need some extra set-up or tear-down time, try to make arrangements with the appropriate engineer. If the engineer after you doesn't show up for his time, you can use it, free of deductions on your studio hours.
- Always close projects, clean up files on the computer, and reset the board to its default setup.
- There should be no need to restart/shut down the computer or any gear in the studio. If an engineer feels there is a reason to turn off anything or the need to reset something, they should call the Production Engineer for guidance.

SECURITY

- The double doors should never be left open. If you expect visitors, make sure they have a way to contact you.
- The emergency exit door in the far corner of the studio should be used for emergency exit ONLY.
- All doors should be locked when you leave your session
- If doors are found unlocked and the students present do not have keys for them, then Campus Security should be called to have them locked.

- If you see someone around any of the MuE facilities that you don't recognize, don't hesitate to ask why they are there.
- There should NEVER be an air connection between the outside and the control room or live room. I.E. do not leave the double doors, door to the sound lock, and doors to the live room or control room all open at the same time. The humidity can damage the piano and electrical equipment.

SAFETY

- There is no smoking allowed in any auditorium or studio.
- Exit doors should never be blocked by any item at any time. If lights have burned out in passageways or exit signs, the condition should be reported in the log.
- If there is any damage done to the building i.e. windows cracked, walls broken, fabric torn, etc., mark it in the logbook.
- The engineer should familiarize him/herself with the locations of the fire alarms as well as the fire extinguishers and they should know the types of fire each extinguisher can control.
- In case of a fire, sound the nearest alarm immediately, and evacuate the building while shutting doors behind you and call Public Safety when out of the building.
- If someone is seriously injured or in need of emergency assistance, call 911. The engineer should also be able to locate the first aid kit.
- Caution should be taken if handling large or heavy cases and equipment. Do not attempt to lift heavy objects alone. The best method is to squat directly in front of the object to be lifted, then rise, letting your legs do all the work. Keep the object you are lifting close to your body, and don't twist.

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE

- Report any missing or malfunctioning equipment in the log as well as problems occurring during a session. A good log describes the symptoms you observed, as specific as possible, how you determined the particular piece of gear to be faulty, and any troubleshooting methods you used. Try to isolate the malfunction to the nearest knob, switch, patch point, or other user accessible point. Once a problem is logged, find alternate means to continue your session.
- If the broken item is a stand or a cable, it should be placed in the box labeled 'Broken Equipment' in the machine room and the Production Engineer will take care of it
- If you, your assistants, or a musician damages a piece of equipment unintentionally, report it in the proper fashion. If you do not report the accident and are found out to be responsible for some damage, penalties will be severe.
- Only the Production Engineer and MuE Faculty are allowed to conduct repairs on equipment. Licensed engineers SHOULD NOT try to repair broken equipment as there is a chance for further damage.

COMPUTER MAINTENANCE

- Under no circumstances are you to install external peripherals on the computer.
- You may not add any software to the machines, especially software downloaded from the internet. Be aware that what you download could contain a virus. If you feel that something should be added to a machine, please request it through the Production Engineer.
- Please do not make copies of the software for use on other machines or for distribution outside Music Engineering. The copyrights of the software must be protected in order to allow their authors to earn a livelihood and continue writing more programs.
- The computer in the Weeks studio should be used only for recording, mixing, and other audio applications. It should NOT be used for games or word processing.
- Every licensed engineer will have a folder on the studio computer where they should save their work. Any work not saved in their folder WILL BE DELETED.
- Every month there will be a cleaning of the licensed engineer's folders. There will be a one week notice to allow time to remove files as well as reserved time for doing so. Requests can be made to keep certain projects on the computer.
- It is highly recommended that engineers save all of their work on an external hard drive. A good rule of thumb is to always have work saved in two places.

BOOKING

- Any engineer found booking time for another engineer will lose their priority sessions for the rest of the semester.
- Anyone found using the facilities without going through the official booking procedure will face severe penalties up to and including losing their license. The penalty is influenced by the engineer's previous studio record and ability to follow rules.
- Engineers are allowed to record anyone they wish to work with.
- It should be stressed that engineers may not be paid for studio time, and recordings made in the Weeks Studio may not be sold or used for commercial releases.
- In the event that a licensed engineer wishes to cancel a session:
 - They lose one priority session per cancellation
 - After 3 cancellations they lose their priority sessions for the rest of the semester
 - After 5 cancellations they lose their booking privileges for the semester.
 - NOTE: if the session is for a FSOM student and the engineer wishing to cancel finds a qualified licensed engineer with enough experience to complete the session professionally, then there will be no penalty.
 - NOTE: because of the current low number of licensed engineers and requested bookings, engineers may ask the Production Engineer for remission of the penalties. The Production engineer will take into account the time of the session and how desirable the time was, as well as past performances of the engineer.

WHO TO CONTACT IF THERE IS A PROBLEM

- BEFORE contacting anyone, especially late at night, try to find out a work around to whatever issue is occurring, i.e. using a difference microphone, different preamp, etc.

- For any malfunction that is stopping you from completing a session, contact the **Production Engineer**. Their contact information will be available inside the studio. This would be things such as the computer is not turning on, a console is not turning on, there is a fire, etc. This DOES NOT include things such as a broken microphone, one channel not working on a console, **or forgetting how to do something**. There are manuals if you forget how to do something
- For any malfunction, make sure to write it in your logs.
- For Fall 2016, the ONLY PERSON you should contact if you are having malfunctions that are stopping you from completing a session is the Production Engineer.