

# RECORDED EXAM SET UP GUIDELINES

**Please note** that certain things, such as camera angles, sound quality, and adequate lighting and balance, are compulsory guidelines for Recorded Exams – these items are denoted by the **red text**.

This document also includes practicalities of setting up your recording equipment, tips, and FAQs. If your question is not answered here, we may be able to help you in the AMEB Tasmania Office so please be in touch.

If you're undertaking a Rockschool Video Exam, you'll find lots of great tips [here](#).

## SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS

Candidates should work with their teacher, adhering to the AMEB Syllabus requirements, to best prepare for their exam. To record your exam, organise a suitable recording venue, accompanist (if relevant), and recording equipment, and practice before you undertake your exam.

In general, the order in which the various components of exam are recorded is up to the Candidate. All items performed must be introduced individually (except for Speech and Drama exams where the flow is incorporated into the performance).

## CAMERA ANGLE

Do a test run to ensure that any movements (bow arm, artistic gesture etc) fit within the frame. **The camera must be positioned to capture the candidate from the waist upwards, including the candidate's face, both hands, and the instrument (unless specified below).**

**For keyboard instruments, angle the camera a little away from one side of the keyboard so that the candidate and their hands on the keys are visible, as well as the feet on the pedals.**

**For vocal and speech candidates, film from further away to allow you to move freely while staying within the frame.**

**For group exams, the frame must include all performers.**

**Tip:** Get someone to help you move the camera while you're in your performing position.

You'll need to check the height and angle of your phone, tablet, or camera. A tripod or tablet mount will provide you with more control over the angles the camera reaches. If you don't have a tripod, don't worry. Here are a couple of MacGyver-esque solutions for keeping your device steady. And you can pop a couple of books underneath if you need more height:

For a smart phone: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTtJovKtujo>

For a tablet: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNnnfy7NA8>

The orientation of a device is usually better as landscape but we'd rather whichever provides the best perspective of you and the performance.

## VIDEO RECORDING QUALITY

**All recordings must include both audio and visual.**

A high-quality recording device should be used, such as a recent model smart phone or tablet. **Video resolution of 720p is recommended (minimum 480p).** Most recent laptop and desktop computers have a reasonable, front-facing camera built in. If yours does not, a good quality webcam is your best option.

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If the function is available, check that the camera is set to display the actual date and time the recording was created.

If the Examiner is unable to assess the exam due to poor recording quality, it will be necessary for the candidate to submit a new recording. A reschedule fee may be charged to cover the Examiner's time and associated administration.

### **SOUND QUALITY**

You have a few options here. You can use the speakers and microphone already built into your recording device. If you have access to an external microphone of better quality, this is preferable.

Diploma Candidates are expected to provide a good quality audio recording of their performance.

You're required to announce each item prior to performing it – speak slowly and clearly so that we don't miss anything you say.

### **LIGHTING / POSITIONING**

Position yourself in a well-lit spot, without too many shadows. It's always better to have your light source in front of you, rather than behind so you don't appear as a silhouette. Make sure you're far enough away from the camera to adequately frame your performance, but also close enough to show details. And don't forget about yourself – make sure the light is adequate to read your music and/or see what you're doing.

### **ACCOMPANIMENT (IF RELEVANT)**

It is important that the sound is appropriately balanced between the solo part and the accompaniment (whether live or recorded).

For Classical: Where physical distancing prohibits working with a live accompanist, the use of recorded accompaniment is permitted up to Grade 8 (inclusive). This may be done in one of the following ways:

1. Where an official AMEB accompaniment recording is available, only this version may be used.
2. If no official AMEB accompaniment recording is available, Candidates may use commercially recorded accompaniments (where available).
3. If no official AMEB accompaniment recording is available, Candidates may obtain a recording for use in their Recorded Exam only (licence extended through 2021).

Candidates may use accompaniment via an app (eg MyTempo) that adjusts tempo without affecting pitch. In this case the candidate should choose a tempo appropriate to the musical and artistic objectives for the level, and appropriate to their ability and interpretation.

AMEB is unable to approve individual accompaniment tracks – this is the responsibility of the Candidate/teacher.

In the third instance, our recommendation is that Candidates engage an accompanist to produce a recorded accompaniment for them that may then be used as part of their Recorded Exam. Normally, recording such accompaniments would violate Copyright Law. However, we are pleased to advise that we have extended a special arrangement under a Casual Blanket Licence provided by APRA AMCOS. Please note that this has a number of restrictions for works that are

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under copyright that must be adhered to as part of this process. These are listed in full on the APRA AMCOS website but the key ones are:

- the recording can not be used to perform in public (such as posted on the internet, or as a public YouTube video);
- the accompaniment must be an audio recording only;
- the recording may not be sold commercially (eg published for purchase on a website);
- the recording must be audio only.

Essentially, this should be considered a private arrangement, the recording can not be used in any public format and should only be used for practice and then for your AMEB exam.

The accompanist does not need to be visible in the recording.  
The accompanist may also be the Supervisor.

### **INTERNET (FOR ONLINE DISCUSSION COMPONENTS)**

For Candidates required to complete an online component, this will be conducted via Zoom. You will need to ensure that you have sufficient internet speed to participate in this section.

How to check your internet speed: <https://www.speedtest.net/>. Most online teaching platforms suggest you have at least 1Mbps upload and download speed. You will get a stronger and more stable signal for your connection if there is no-one else uploading or downloading at the same time so negotiate that with your family.

If your exam location is away from your internet source, you can try tethering or a dongle.  
Pro tip: Close all other programs on your device and/or computer and turn off notifications so you're not disturbed during the exam, and your internet speed is optimised.

### **MINIMISING INTERRUPTIONS**

Try to find a location with minimal ambient noise.

Make sure your family members know not to disturb you and ask them not to use the microwave or noisy items during your recording.

Remember to silence all nearby devices. If you're recording on a phone or tablet, turn on flight mode or do not disturb to ensure calls and other alerts don't disturb the recording.

### **GENERAL TIPS**

The exam performance should be presented as if an Examiner was in the room. Recording must be continuous, concluding after the last piece or exam requirement is performed. There should be minimal gaps between each performed item and **the complete recording time must fit within syllabus guidelines**. Each work should also be introduced, eg "I will now play Moonlight Sonata by Beethoven".

Consider the items in the room around you. While we will keep these exams secure, it is good practice to remove any personal items and to generally be conscious of what you are presenting. A very busy background may make it difficult to focus on your performance.

Dress as you would for any other exam – it will help you get in the performance mindset.

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Have all of your supplies on hand – a bottle of water, music, props, etc. Your exam will be void if you leave the room or stop the recording at any point.

Do a trial run of a part of your exam with your device to check how the recording turns out. Don't forget to test both visual and audio. Pro tip: Listening back to yourself is a fantastic learning tool!

Plug your recording device into a charger to ensure it doesn't run out of battery power during the exam.

### **HELP IS AVAILABLE**

We have provided a lot of resources in the hope that they answer your questions and assist you in setting yourself up for a great exam. But there's always more that can be done.

The AMEB Tasmania office team is here to help. While these times are challenging, we are very excited to be able to develop these alternatives to the traditional exam format. We will be maintaining regular hours (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm), despite any working from home arrangements that may be required.

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