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 blue 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.

CAMERA ANGLE
The camera must be positioned to capture the candidate from the waist upwards, including the candidate’s face, both hands, and the instrument. Do a test run to ensure that any movements (bow arm, artistic gesture etc) are still within the frame.
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.

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 smartphone: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTtJovKtujo
For a tablet: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_NnnY7NAB
The orientation of a device (portrait or landscape) doesn’t particularly matter – 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 new laptop and desktop computers have a reasonable, front-facing camera built in. If yours does not, a good quality webcam is your best option.
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.

SOUND QUALITY
You have a few options here. You can use the speakers and microphone already built into your device or computer. If you have access to an external microphone of better quality, this will be the preferred method.


The AMEB in Tasmania is administered by the Conservatorium of Music, University of Tasmania
School of Creative Arts
37 Hunter Street, Hobart
ABN 30 764 374 782
Post Private Bag 57, Hobart 7001
Phone 03 6226 7337
Email ameb.music@utas.edu.au

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Diploma Candidates are expected to provide a good quality audio recording of their performance.
We’ll ask you to announce the piece you’re playing, and your answers to General Knowledge questions (for Comprehensive and For Leisure) – speak slowly and clearly so that we don’t miss anything you say.

**Tip for Comprehensive and For Leisure:** Check your speakers. Don’t forget that there will be an aural component played so ensure the quality is adequate and that the volume is audible.

**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 close enough to the camera to see details, but far enough away to provide a good perspective. And don’t forget about yourself – make sure the light is adequate to read your music and see what you’re doing.

**ACCOMPANIMENT**
It is important that the sound is appropriately balanced between the solo part and the live or recorded accompaniment (if relevant).

During these extreme circumstances we are permitting the use of recorded accompaniment up to Grade 8 (inclusive) in all syllabuses where accompaniment is required. 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 (through 2020).

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. This is not an ideal situation of course but, as we are unable to have two people in a room for this purpose and latency on the internet makes ensemble playing impossible, it is our best solution for 2020. Finding an accompanist and agreeing on rates is a matter for the Candidate and their accompanist.

Normally, recording such accompaniments would violate Copyright Law. However, we are pleased to advise that we have negotiated 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 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:

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• 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 by audio only.
Essentially, this should 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.

INTERNET (COMPREHENSIVE & FOR LEISURE ONLY)
Your exam questions will be provided to you in PDF form, via email. You will need to ensure that you can open your email, view the PDF in your internet browser, and have sufficient internet speed to hear the aural recording.

How to check your internet speed: [https://www.speedtest.net/](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. 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
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.

Do a trial run of one of your pieces with your device to check how the recording turns out. Don’t forget to test both visual and audio. It’s also a fantastic learning tool to listen to yourself!

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

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

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

The exam performance should be presented as if an Examiner was in the room. Recording must

be continuous and there should be minimal gaps between each work, concluding after the last piece or exam requirement is performed. Each work should also be introduced, eg "I will now play Moonlight Sonata by Beethoven".

**Comprehensive/For Leisure:** In addition to your recording device, you will need to be able to see a screen (with internet connected) for your exam – either a computer, laptop or tablet. Please do NOT use a mobile phone for this as you will not be able to read sight-reading.

**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.

E ameb.music@utas.edu.au
P 03 6226 7337