

Preparing for exam success in 2020

Teachers, candidates and their families should consult this helpful list to ensure your student has the most successful exam experience in the year ahead.

Explore

Start preparing early! It's a great idea for students to build their repertoire up in the first months of preparation. This will help them decide which pieces they are engaging with and why.

Start with quantity and work towards quality

If a student has multiple pieces from all of the required lists "under construction", this allows the student and teacher to refine the options to the best of these for their final exam program, or swap out a List piece if one is not working out.

In high grades and Diplomas, timing is everything

Certificate, Associate and Licentiate candidates should definitely have a depth of material they are working on. This will ensure they have enough pieces to fall safely within the program timing requirements. Remember that if a program is shorter than the minimum timing requirement in these exams, the result is "Unable to Assess". A very important detail!

Work from original music from the early stages

Many candidates get caught out because they start learning a piece from a photocopy of their teacher's music. Once you have decided this will be an exam piece, all students have to obtain their own legally-obtained music to comply with Australian copyright laws for performance. If a work is available in the public domain in Australia, this is an allowable exception.

Plan

Make a timeline

Teachers can plot a timeline with their student so the student and their family know what they should be accomplishing at each stage of the year to expect the best exam result.

Don't just work on pieces

Even from the early stages, students should be working on all sections of the syllabus (technical work, List pieces, extra list, aural tests, sight reading and general knowledge) to see the best improvement in their musicality. Even for students planning to do a Repertoire exam, this extension work will benefit your exam performance.

Be ready early

Ideally, aim to be 'exam-ready' at least a month before the exam period. This provides a buffer if an injury, a personal issue or another important commitment halts progress at some point leading up to the exam.

Now, enrol!

After this initial planning, you can enrol with a realistic expectation that the student will be ready by exam day.

Avoid unnecessary stress and frustration by paying careful attention when you enrol online.

Consider these important questions before pressing "Pay Now"!!!

- Has the candidate done an AMEB exam before? If so, enrol using their **existing candidate number** so they are not issued a new number for this most recent enrolment.
- Is the **candidate name** exactly as it should appear on the certificate?
- Have you chosen the **correct type of exam**? Is it 'Old'? 'New'? 'Comprehensive'? 'Repertoire'? Check with the most recent edition of the AMEB Manual of Syllabuses before enrolling. Getting this wrong can create confusion and sometimes disappointment on exam day if the student hasn't prepared for the exam type on their enrolment.
- **Communicate with the student's family** before you enrol to check for **dates that need to be avoided**. This is vital so AMEB (NSW) can schedule a date that the student is able to attend.
- Exams take place on six days of the week during exam periods. We understand that Saturdays are extremely popular but due to the challenge of supply versus demand, there are occasions where these requests cannot be met. Be clear in the wording of your request. Start with "**Please avoid** (provide date/s)" or "**Please schedule** only on (provide weekdays)" so this is read correctly. It is helpful to **mention any day other than a Saturday** when the student may be available to sit for their exam. Requests such as "Sat preferred, but can do Monday also" or "Sat preferred, but can do Wednesday afternoons" help to find a suitable time when the Saturdays are in high demand.

Deep Dive!

Encourage students to fall down the rabbit hole with each of their chosen works.

Seek out recordings

Listen to a variety of recordings of each work. This will help students see the possibilities for their own interpretation. YouTube footage of performances of all standards can provide a student with the ability to explore pieces more critically, which will in turn improve their own performance.

Record work in progress

Record their own attempts every few lessons so they can step back and objectively assess where they are improving and where there is still work to do.

Learn more about the repertoire

Encourage students to write short essays about the composer, the musical period a work came from, the theme of the work, even interesting trivia about the piece that helps the student gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of their exam pieces.

Road Test

Students should be encouraged to seek out performance opportunities leading into their exam day. Performing in eisteddfods, at school assemblies, in front of family members or even busking can help students to work through their nerves and learn valuable performance skills that will help them perform at their best on the day of their exam. [AMEB studios](#) are also available for hire throughout the year on weekdays if student wish to prepare for exam conditions.

Finally, the day arrives!**Call your accompanist**

Either the day before your exam, or the morning of the exam, contact your accompanist (where applicable) to confirm they have the correct time and venue for your exam.

Arrive ready to play

Keep in mind that warmups are rarely possible at the exam venue.

Early is better than late

Aim to arrive about half an hour early to the venue in case there are public transport delays or you have problems finding the address. Remember that candidates who arrive late for their exam cannot expect to be examined.

Keep your Notice of Examination on hand

Teachers should always provide the Notice to each of their students **before** exam day. These can be emailed to each student from AMEB Connect. AMEB exams take place at a number of locations, so check your notice carefully. It may not be at the same venue as your last exam!