

Transcript – Your Guide to AMEB Recorded Video Exams 2020

In order to keep our candidates, examiners and staff safe during this time we will temporarily be offering grade exams via video so you can keep working towards your musical goals.

In this video we'll explain the options available and give you some tips about how to record your exam video.

All AMEB State Offices are offering Repertoire video exams in most instruments.

Repertoire exams were introduced in 2019.

In this type of exam, candidates perform repertoire requirements only.

There are no technical work, general knowledge, aural test, or sight-reading requirements for a Repertoire exam.

However, a Repertoire exam generally requires one additional piece compared with a Comprehensive exam.

You can see the full Repertoire exam requirements at the end of your instrument section in the 2020 printed or digital Manual of Syllabuses.

During 2020, repertoire exams can also be taken using AMEB's For Leisure or CPM syllabuses.

The repertoire exam pages for these syllabuses are available on your State Office website.

To give you an idea of what a recorded video exam might look like we have filmed a sample grade three violin exam using the kind of technology that is easily accessible to most students and parents at home.

But first, let's talk about some recorded video exam basics.

Before recording your exam, make sure you refer to the recorded video guidelines provided by your AMEB State Office.

Each state has their own requirements that your video, enrolment, and submission must meet.

When planning your recording think about the device you'll be using.

Most recent model smartphones or tablets will be suitable but make sure you do a test recording to check both audio and visual components of the video.

For filming, you'll want a location that is quiet and well-lit.

The camera needs to be positioned so the examiner can see your face, both hands and the instrument where applicable.

For example, the whole keyboard and the pedals for a piano exam.

If you're a singer, doing a Speech and Drama exam, or know you move around a bit when you perform, you'll need to consider your full range of movement and probably expand the frame of recording so you are fully visible for the whole time.

Get inventive and use a table, a pile of books or a music stand to get the right height and angle for the camera.

Filming in landscape rather than portrait generally provides a better view.

If your instrument requires accompaniment, it is important to achieve a good balance between your solo line and the accompaniment either live or recorded.

Check this balance before you start your recording and adjust as necessary.

Speaking of accompaniment, not everybody has access to an accompanist in their own home.

As a temporary solution during physical distancing requirements pre-recorded accompaniments may be used in exams from Preliminary to Grade 8.

AMEB has Recorded Accompaniments available for most instruments from Preliminary up to Grade 3 and of course these may be used in your exam.

Other commercially available recorded accompaniments may also be used. And if none exist for the repertoire you are planning to perform, an accompanist may be engaged to record the accompaniment for you.

We have obtained the necessary license from APRA AMCOS to allow this but there are certain restrictions to be observed.

Please refer to your AMEB State Office website for full details.

So you've learnt all your repertoire, select your location, tested your recording device, and now you're ready to record your exam.

Before you press record there are a few requirements you should be aware of. The exam needs to be captured as a single continuous shot in real-time.

You must not stop or pause the camera in between pieces or use video editing software in any way.

Your face must be clearly visible in the video so we can identify the person taking the exam. Other identification requirements may apply in your state - check your State Office guidelines for these.

As for what to wear, we recommend you dress as if you are attending a face-to-face exam.

This might help you get into the right mindset for performance.

A supervisor will be required to confirm that the exam performance was recorded in one take without teaching or coaching assistance.

You must commence the video by introducing yourself using your full name, the current date, and the exam grade and the syllabus you're taking.

For example, Stephen Hodgson, May the 4th 2020, Piano for Leisure Grade 1. You should also introduce each piece before you play it.

For instance, I will be playing Song of Joy by Beethoven.

Make sure you're close to the microphone when announcing these things.

Before you submit your exam, check the video recording carefully making sure that each piece is introduced to camera, the picture and sound are of a reasonable quality, the full exam has been captured and all requirements from your State Office are met.

Some devices will automatically mirror the video image so make sure that has not occurred. Here is a sample AMEB Grade 3 violin Repertoire video exam.

This video exam was recorded in one continuous take but for the purposes of this video we have edited the candidate's performance to demonstrate some of the key requirements.

The candidate starts by introducing herself, the date of recording, then the grade and syllabus of the exam.

She then introduces her first piece.

"Hi, my name is Sadie Musto. It is 4:30pm on the 7th of May 2020 and I'll be doing my third grade violin exam."

"My first piece, my list A is Allegretto Cantabile by Dancla."

We can clearly see Sadie's face, hands and entire instrument in the video.

The audio is clear with no distortion in the upper ranges or louder sections which will help the examiner in their assessment.

This is an unaccompanied work for solo violin.

"For my list B I'll be playing Berceuse by Il'inskiy"

This is an accompanied work and Sadie is using an AMEB Recorded Accompaniment played through a tablet device and amplified with a small Bluetooth speaker.

The volume of the speaker has been set so that both the violin and accompaniment can be clearly heard in the recording.

Once Sadie has finished playing, she introduces her third piece.

"My list C will be Russian fantasy No 2 by Portnoff."

Again, Sadie is using an AMEB Recorded Accompaniment.

She made sure all recorded accompaniments were queued up on her device so she could easily navigate to the next accompaniment without it automatically playing before she had introduced the next piece.

Once more Sadie finishes this piece and introduces her final work.

"My own choice piece will be Ruhe sanft by Mozart."

Sadie happens to have a pianist in her household so is able to work with an accompanist while still observing physical distancing guidelines.

When Sadie finishes her final exam selection, she ends the recording.

We hope this video has given you some helpful hints and a little insight into the recorded video exams that we are offering in 2020.

Remember to please visit your State Office website for details on any state-specific requirements or how to enrol and submit your video exam.