

INSTRUCTIONS TO EXAMINERS

Portrait Layout: Letter Grading

Evaluation Guidelines

ASTACAP is designed to engage all levels of students and is *not* a competition. The purpose of the evaluations is to recognize the students' achievements and to encourage them to keep playing and improving.

- Please verify student name, repertoire and level to avoid writing on the wrong form.
- Be friendly and put the student at ease so that the experience is as supportive as possible.
- Students are instructed to bring both the original (or legal download) and a photocopy (for use by the examiner) of their etude and, if they don't play by memory, their solo piece(s), but do not disqualify a student who doesn't have these. Report lapses to the Exam Coordinator.
- The Exam Coordinator will be able to answer any questions that might arise during the examinations. Please send the monitor for help or consult with the Exam Coordinator at your next break.
- Position the student so you can get a good view of left and right hands.
- Ask for scales and arpeggios first, then the etude and solos. Leave sight-reading for last.
- Students may choose the order in which to perform their solos if playing more than one selection.
- Students are not expected to play extended cadenzas unless they choose to play them for Honors designation.
- Do not ask students to skip to different sections of a solo if they are playing by memory.
- Examiners find it helpful to sign all the evaluation forms before the examination.
- The written comments are invaluable in helping the student and teacher learn from the ASTACAP experience.
 - When writing comments, mention some of the positive characteristics of the student's playing.
 - Make constructive suggestions directed at specific skills, when appropriate.
 - Write short, elucidating comments in the boxes on the first page of the form. Use the General Comments and Suggestions section for longer comments. Please write ample comments in both sections.
- If necessary, you may stop players before they have completed their solo(s) in order to stay on schedule or perhaps hear an abbreviation of the etude if that seems more appropriate. This is up to the discretion of the examiner in all cases.

Grading System

- Each category of the performance—scales, etude, and solo(s)—is awarded a General Impression Grade.
- The grades are V (very good), S (satisfactory), or N (not satisfactory).
- Feel free to use plus and minus signs to fine-tune the grading.
- With the exception of the etude, each category is also awarded a Memorization Grade from N to V+, depending upon the fluency of memorization.
- The Memory Requirements
 - *Memory is not required and is not graded* for etudes.
 - *Memory is required and graded* for scales and arpeggios.
 - *Memory is not required but is graded* for solos with these exceptions: for Levels 7 – 10, Classical period and later sonatas written for string instrument and piano. Accompaniment is required if these sonatas are presented.
 - If an Overall Memorization Grade of V or higher is achieved, the student will be awarded “Distinction for Memorization” on their Certificate of Achievement.
- Write N/A if the second and or third solo is not played and is not required. However, if a student plays an optional second and or third solo, these shall be graded, as well.
- If the student earns a General Impression grade of “N” in one or more categories (scales, etude, or solo(s)) make a notation of “No Pass” in the Overall Impression category on the first page. “No Pass” is also written as the Final Score at the bottom of the second page, and no Certificate of Achievement will be awarded. Explain your reasons for the “No Pass” and suggest in writing that the student repeat the level with new repertoire after further study, before progressing to the next level.
- Once the General Impression and Overall Impression scores are awarded, scan them, and combine those results with the observations made in the comments, to formulate a reasonable Final Score. Enter the Final Score on the blank in the final line of the Evaluation Form. The Final Score is awarded by and solely at the considered discretion of the Examiner. Final Scores may not be disputed, though the Site Coordinator may wish to consult with the Examiner for an explanation.
- A grade of “S-” is the lowest passing Final Score.

- Requirements for Honors Designation
 - The student achieves a score of “V” or higher overall AND
 - The entire program (with the exception of the etude) is played by *fluent* memory PLUS at least one of the following
 - A solo is performed from a higher level than the level sought and/or
 - A substantial cadenza is played along with a concert movement
- The teacher requests consideration for Honors on the application. If Honors is awarded, it is checked on the final line of the Evaluation Form and will be noted on the Certificate of Achievement.
- Level A designation denotes students who are taking the exam a second time at a given level. The usual standards of performance for passing apply.
- Comments Only designation denotes students who prefer not to be graded, for some reason, including presenting only a portion of the requirements (for example, two solos instead of three or fewer than the required number of scales and arpeggios). In the case of Comments Only, make helpful comments, but do not assign any grades. There will be no Certificate awarded.

Exam Timings

EXAM LEVEL	Duration (mins.)
Levels F and 1	8
Levels 2 and 3	10
Levels 4 and 5	15.
Level 6	17
Levels 7 and 8	20
Level 9	25
Level 10	30

Wrapping Up

- The Exam Coordinator will collect the completed Evaluation Forms. These are reviewed, copied and mailed to the teachers who will present them to their students.

Thank you for agreeing to serve as an ASTACAP examiner!