



**Certificate of Merit® Video Recording Guidelines  
Certificate of Merit® and Panel Regional Guidelines  
Panel Finals Guidelines**

**Video Recording Instructions for Online CM Evaluations:**

- Video recordings should be good quality, but do not need to be professionally produced. Recording with a smartphone is an acceptable method of recording. **Each video submission should not exceed 5 GB.** Accepted video file types are **mov**, **mp4**, and **m4v**. To ensure that the video is uploaded successfully, all recordings should be at **720p resolution**. **Any videos submitted at higher resolutions will be automatically downgraded, which may result in potential issues with playback.** **We strongly recommend that students check their recording device to turn off the 4k recording format.**
- Video recordings must be recorded for the sole purpose of their CM Evaluation. Students must show the 2025 CM Recording Cover Sheet at the beginning of each repertoire video recording. The Cover Sheet can be printed from the Teacher/Student/Parent Portal beginning June 1.
- Students must show the original, published sheet music or sheet music with digital authorization prior to beginning to play.
- Video recordings must be made with one fixed camera angle, focused on the performer with the face and hands of the student visible. A fixed camera angle means that zooming in or out or changing position of the camera during the recording is not allowed.
- The Collaborative Pianist is not required to be in the video frame. However, if the Collaborative Pianist is visible in the video recording, they must use the same type of original, published sheet music or a digital version with digital authorization as the student uploaded to the MTAC Online System. For example, if the student is using a digital device, e.g. iPad, then the Collaborative Pianist must use an iPad.
- Students must dress as they would for a live, in-person performance:
  1. A dress or skirt, at or below knee level, with a modest blouse or top that covers the waist.
  2. Dress slacks with a collared shirt and tie or a modest blouse. Dress jacket optional.
  3. Shoes are optional for online evaluations, but if performance is impacted negatively this will affect the student's evaluation rating.

4. If shoes are opted to be worn, they must be dress shoes. No athletic shoes or backless sandals (flip flops, slides, slippers, crocs).
  5. No denim (blue jeans)
- Students must not introduce themselves in their recordings. Exception: Voice students, see Repertoire below for further details.
  - Video recordings can be completed in a studio, home, school, or any location of the student's choice, but should abide by any physical distancing recommendations. Masks may be worn during the evaluation recording if necessary to comply with local recommendations; students will not be penalized for wearing a mask.
  - Video recordings should be made exclusively for CM Evaluations and NOT from a recital or competition for another event.
  - Students will submit a separate video recording for each of the following components of the performance evaluation.
    - **(1) Technique**
      - A. **Only the official testing technique chart may be used, which is available in the Teacher Portal in the CM Resources or as a digital chart available in the Student's Testing Portal. Students may not use the technique chart from the CM Syllabi or other publishers, nor may the elements be announced to the student. No written-out notation is allowed for any student.**
      - B. **Students are required to hold the official technique chart up at the beginning of the video recording.** Students may show the Recording Cover Sheet during their technique video recording but it is not required.
        - Piano students may only have the technique chart on the piano.
        - String, Wind, and Harp students must turn the music stand toward the recording device to show that only the technique chart is on the music stand, then turn it back to play.
      - C. The elements on the technique chart must be performed in its entirety in one video recording without stopping.
        - **Exception - Strings** - Students Level 4 and above must record the elements on the technique chart in one video recording and their prepared etude in another video recording.
      - D. Voice scales and Vocalize must be performed in one unedited video recording.
      - E. Voice students must perform technique from memory (no chart for reference). Voice students must hold up the 2025 CM Recording Cover Sheet.
    - **(2) Sight Reading**

- F. The Sight Reading/Singing study period and performance **must** be included in the video recording. Failure to include the study period in the video recording will result in an Incomplete Submission rating for Sight Reading.
- G. The screen of the device used for Sight Reading must be seen in the video recording. The video recording must show both the student and the screen in the same shot. This ensures they are playing off of the screen, which is timed.
- (3) **Repertoire** - One video recording for each piece.
  - A. Students are required to hold the official 2025 CM Recording Cover Sheet up at the beginning of each video recording.
  - B. Each piece should be played in its entirety, without stopping.
  - C. All video recordings do not need to be completed on the same day, but must be completed and submitted by the student's media submission deadline
  - D. Memorization - Students must meet the minimum memory requirement for their enrolled CM level. For Non-Piano Students, memory requirements for online CM evaluations are met by having the student turn the music stand towards the recording device at the start of the video recording so they cannot see the music. For Piano Students, memory requirements for online CM evaluations are met by removing the music from the piano and bench. For all in-person CM evaluations, the student cannot have their original, published sheet music on the piano, piano bench, or music stand.
  - E. Voice Students must introduce each piece, including the title, composer, time period, work the piece is from, and a brief translation for songs sung in a foreign language.
- Video recordings must be unaltered and unedited. Editing of videos is considered cheating. Students who submit edited video recordings will receive a Remain at Level rating.
- **For Strings, Winds, and Voice Evaluations:** Repertoire that requires piano accompaniment must be performed with live piano accompaniment. Please be sure the student's instrument or voice is heard over the accompaniment.
- **For Piano:** Students will be evaluated based on their performance, not on the type of piano or keyboard used, or whether it was recently tuned. Students enrolled in Level 3 or above must perform on a keyboard with a pedal.
- It is strongly recommended that you review your video files with your teacher to ensure they meet all requirements listed in this appendix, as well as the Certificate of Merit® requirements for your instrument and level. The CM Council is unable to

review videos prior to submission and the MTAC State Office does not review videos for submission

- It is strongly recommended that you retain the video files of your performance evaluation until you have received the results from your Certificate of Merit® Evaluation.

### **Video Recording Instructions for Panel Finals**

#### **Panel Finals Video Submission Deadline is March 18, 2025**

- Video recordings should be good quality, but do not need to be professionally produced. Recording with a smartphone is an acceptable method of recording. **Each video submission should not exceed 5 GB.** Accepted video file types are **mov**, **mp4**, and **m4v**.
- Video recordings must be made with one fixed camera angle, focused on the performer with the face and hands of the student visible.
- Panel Finals video recordings must be made **March 1, 2025** or after. Students are required to hold an official Panel Finals Cover Sheet up at the beginning of the Panel Finals Audition video recording. The Cover Sheet can be printed from the Teacher/ Student/Parent Portal starting on **March 1, 2025**. Submissions that do not include the official Panel Finals Cover Sheet will be disqualified.
- Piano students may use their Advanced (Level 10) Etude as a repertoire piece for Panel Finals only.
- For Panel Instrument Guidelines, reference the Official 2024-2025 CM Panel Auditions and YAG Guidelines, Appendices for the specific repertoire requirements.
- Students should dress in formal performance attire as they would for a live, in-person audition.
  - **Performance Concert attire (Concert Black)** - Nice dress that covers the shoulders and knees or dress pants with a modest blouse or a collared shirt that covers the midriff and back, and dress shoes.
    1. Shoes must be worn for performance.
    2. No athletic shoes or backless sandals (flip flops).
    3. No denim (blue jeans).
    4. Leggings are only allowed if opaque.
- Students **must not** introduce themselves in their video recordings. Student names must remain confidential.
- Video recordings can be completed in a studio, home, school, or any location of the student's choice, but should abide by any physical distancing recommendations.

Masks may be worn during the evaluation recording if necessary, to comply with local mandates; students will not be penalized for wearing a mask.

- Students will submit a separate video for each of the following pieces indicated for the Panel Finals audition. Students applying for Panel Finals must submit 3 pieces and students applying for YAG Finals must submit the pieces for their entire 45-minute program. Reference the Appendices in the 2024-2025 CM Panel Auditions and YAG Guidelines for repertoire details.
- **Repertoire** - one video recording for each piece
  1. Each piece or movement should be played in its entirety, without stopping.
  2. All recordings do not need to be completed on the same day, but must be completed and submitted by the deadline.
  3. **Memorization** - pieces performed from memory should have all music removed from the piano or the music stand removed (for non-piano students).
- **For Strings, Winds, and Voice Evaluations:** Repertoire that requires piano accompaniment must be performed with live piano accompaniment. Please be sure the student's instrument or voice is heard over the accompaniment.
- **For Piano:** Students will be evaluated based on their performance, not on the type of piano or keyboard used, or whether it was recently tuned.
- It is strongly recommended that you review your video files with your teacher to ensure they meet all requirements listed in this document. The MTAC State Office and CM Council are unable to review videos prior to submission.
- It is strongly recommended that you retain the video files of your performance evaluation until you have received the results from your Panel Finals Audition. If you have any questions or concerns, you may email [cminfo@mtac.org](mailto:cminfo@mtac.org).

Content and resources provided by [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org).