**Examiners’ Notes**

**Tips for teachers**

**The Diploma!**

This is the first exam qualification that entitles a successful candidate to "graduate" in the hallowed halls of The University of Adelaide.

As such, it is worth treating with due respect, taking enough time to study and fully understand the requirements. The candidate should be confident that he or she knows and can meet the set standard.

Examiners genuinely look for the positive elements in a performance and hope for candidates to succeed, but the failure rate is still quite high. Unfortunately many are poorly prepared and are disappointed.

It is very important to thoroughly cover all areas of the program with equal care. One weak component can affect the overall impact and cause a negative result. Often candidates manage to play all the notes at acceptable speed and with clean fluency, but this is only the starting point. Required at this level is some evidence of musical understanding, personal communication of the expressive or descriptive elements and an awareness of differences in style. Comprehensive research is necessary in the General Knowledge area where many candidates offer a superficial collection of facts and dates, without showing any real understanding of the music in historical context.

At Associate level examiners make allowance for further development. Musical maturity can be still “in progress” and therefore still lacking to some degree.

The Licentiate, on the other hand, is almost the highest level offered by the AMEB. Here a concert standard is expected, one which demands the intellectual overview and musicianship necessary for a convincing and polished performance.

Monika Laczofy,
Federal Examiner, State Diploma Examiner and Piano Advisor

**Woodwind Sight Reading**

The ability to confidently ‘sight-read’ unfamiliar music is a valuable and practical skill for all students to develop, as it enables them to confidently start to learn a new piece of music by themselves.

They don’t need to wait until their next lesson for help with sight reading a new ensemble part. Also, for instruments where transposing is required they can play a part other than their own in an ensemble. It is my experience as a clarinet teacher, that students find being asked to sight-read very intimidating, so I try to ‘demystify’ it for them, and assist them to get better at it.

I incorporate some into every lesson, right from their very first, and ask them to sight-read unfamiliar melodies consisting of notes, note values, rests, articulations etc. with which they are already familiar, and to play to the end without stopping to correct mistakes.

It is also my experience that most students actually read and sight-read much more accurately than they think they do, and that they really lack self-confidence rather than music reading and counting and sight reading skills.

So often I have heard students say, when presented with a new piece of music or ensemble part: ‘I can’t play this, because I don’t know how it goes!’ – to which I will reply – ‘does that mean that you won’t read a new book, because you don’t know what the story is?’

Being able to sight-read provides students with the skills to be musically independent, and so to explore as they wish the extraordinary range of musical genres and styles available to them today.

Anna Lester, AMEB Clarinet and Saxophone examiner, Section III Advisor