



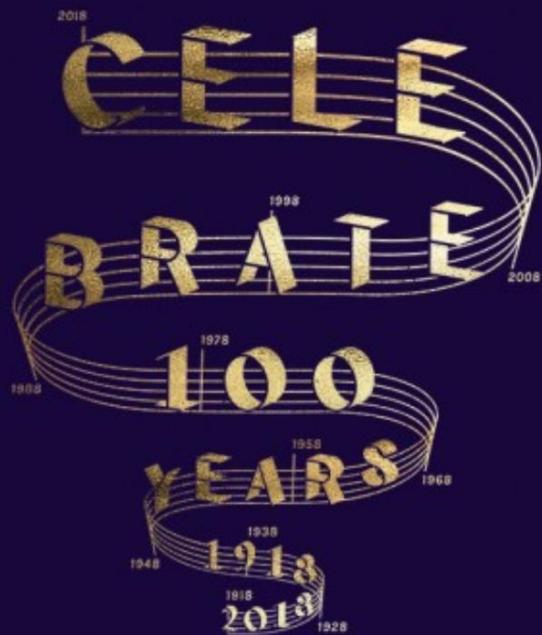
Getting that "Plus" grading  
(A+, B+, C+)

AMEB Information Day 2018  
Jane Burgess

*Music does not excite until it is performed – Benjamin Britten, composer*



# 2018 Manual of Syllabuses



Music Syllabuses

# PRACTICAL EXAMINATIONS

## Levels 1, 2 and 3 Assessment

The **syllabus objectives** introduce each of the three levels of the syllabus. They **specify the required areas of achievement** within each syllabus and are the basis upon which candidates and teachers work and upon which candidates can expect to be assessed. **The detailed Grading Descriptors report the candidate's achievement against the objectives** for the level and the specific syllabus requirements for the grade.

(Found on page xx of the 2018 syllabus)

## The Objectives consist of three sections:

Section I. Technical Work.

Section II. Studies and pieces and Extra Lists.

Section III.

1. Aural Tests
2. Sight reading
3. General Knowledge



## Piano Third Grade



The Universities of Melbourne, Adelaide, Western Australia and Tasmania, the Minister for Education and Training,  
New South Wales, and the Minister for Education and the Minister for the Arts, Queensland

Subject Code 1564 Candidate No. Teacher's Code Examiner Code

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Technical Work    | <b>Section I. Technical Work</b>                      |
| List A            | <b>Section II. Studies and pieces and Extra lists</b> |
| List B            |   |
| List C            |   |
| List              |   |
| Extra List        |   |
| Aural Tests       | <b>Section III. Aural Tests</b>                       |
| Sight Reading     | <b>Sight Reading and</b>                              |
| General Knowledge | <b>General Knowledge</b>                              |
| General Remarks   |   |

|                     |                |                    |                    |        |
|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|
| A+ High distinction | B+ High Credit | C+ Pass with Merit | D Not Satisfactory | Result |
| A Honours           | B Credit       | C Pass             |                    |        |

EXAMINER SIGNATURE:

Date.....

[Note: After perusal of this report, the teacher is required to hand it to the candidate]



### GRADING DESCRIPTORS

#### HIGH DISTINCTION

A+: In addition to satisfying the requirements for an A grading (below), the candidate demonstrates outstanding achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives in all Sections, including performance flair, consistent technical fluency and penetrating stylistic insight.

#### HONOURS

A: The candidate demonstrates an overall superior level of achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives in all Sections, in terms of musicianship, security of technique (including intonation, tone, phrasing, articulation, rhythm), and stylistic awareness

#### CREDIT

B+: In addition to satisfying the requirements for a B grading (below), the candidate demonstrates meritorious achievement against most of the syllabus objectives.

B: The candidate demonstrates an overall creditable level of achievement with appropriate development of musicianship, technique and stylistic awareness in accordance with the syllabus objectives. Some unevenness of achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives or between different Sections of the examination may be apparent.

#### PASS

C+: In addition to satisfying the requirements for a C grading (below), the candidate demonstrates more than adequate achievement against some of the syllabus objectives in each Section.

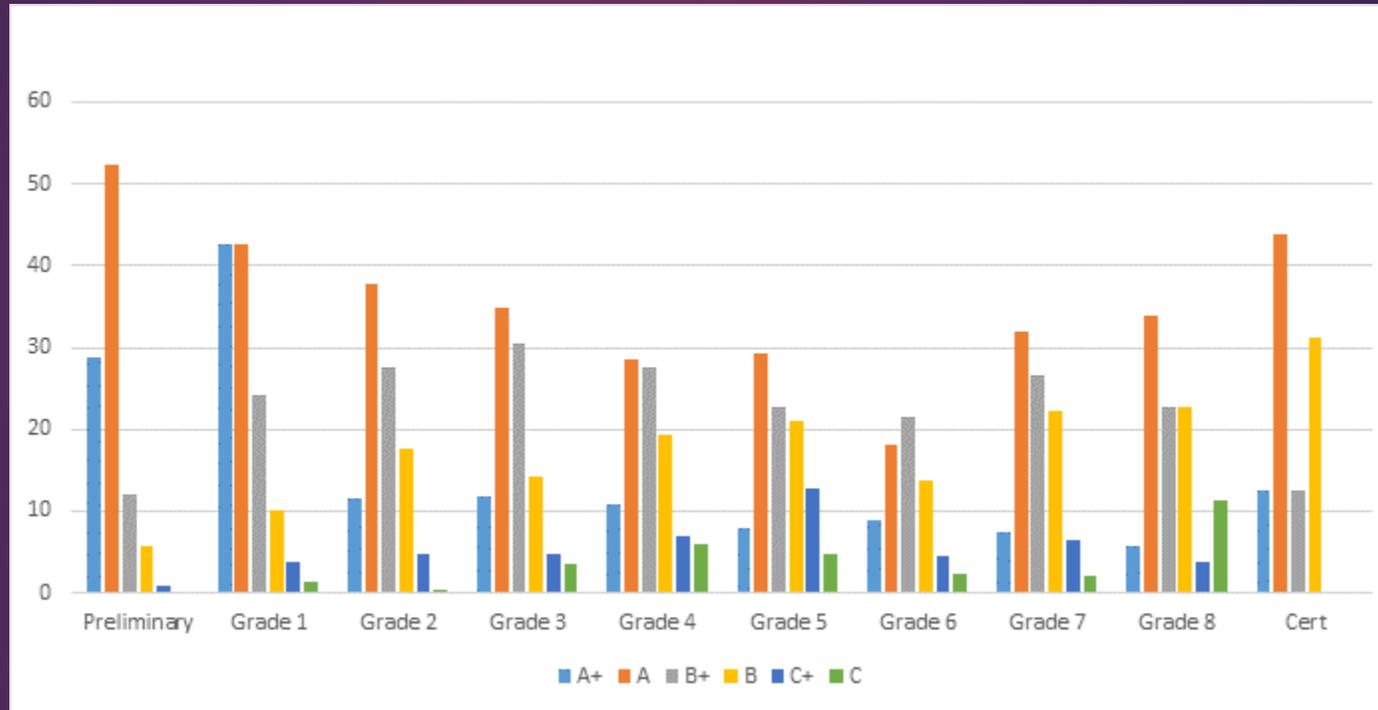
C: The candidate demonstrates an overall adequate level of achievement in musicianship, technique and style in accordance with the syllabus objectives. Considerable unevenness of achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives, or between different Sections of the examination, may be apparent.

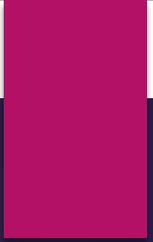
#### NOT SATISFACTORY

D: The candidate demonstrates an overall inadequate level of musicianship, technique and style and does not satisfy the syllabus objectives. Often this has resulted from inadequate preparation. Presentation is often hesitant, evidencing technical errors and/or an inappropriate sense of style.

| Grade     | <b>Grading Descriptors</b><br>Found on page xx of the 2018 AMEB syllabus and on the back of the report sheets.   | <b>Summary of Descriptors</b>                                       |
|-----------|--|---|
| <b>A+</b> | <b>HIGH DISTINCTION A+:</b><br><b>In addition</b> to satisfying the requirements for an A grading (below), the candidate demonstrates <b>outstanding achievement</b> in meeting the syllabus objectives <b>in all sections, including performance flair, consistent technical fluency and penetrating stylistic insight.</b>   | <b>Outstanding</b><br>in all sections                               |
| <b>A</b>  | <b>HONOURS A:</b><br>The candidate demonstrates an <b>overall superior level</b> of achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives <b>in all sections, in terms of musicianship, security of technique</b> (including intonation, tone, phrasing, articulation, rhythm), <b>and stylistic awareness</b>  | <b>Superior</b><br>in all sections                                  |
| <b>B+</b> | <b>HIGH CREDIT B+:</b><br><b>In addition</b> to satisfying the requirements for a B grading (below), the candidate demonstrates <b>meritorious achievement against most of the syllabus objectives.</b>  | <b>Mostly meritorious</b> some unevenness                           |
| <b>B</b>  | <b>CREDIT B:</b><br>The candidate demonstrates an <b>overall creditable</b> level of achievement <b>with appropriate development of musicianship, technique and stylistic awareness</b> in accordance with the syllabus objectives. <b>Some unevenness of achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives or between different Sections</b> of the examination may be apparent. | <b>Overall creditable</b><br>some unevenness                        |
| <b>C+</b> | <b>PASS WITH MERIT C+:</b><br><b>In addition</b> to satisfying the requirements for a C grading (below), the candidate demonstrates <b>more than adequate achievement against some of the syllabus objectives in each Section.</b>   | <b>Sometimes more than adequate</b><br>considerable/some unevenness |
| <b>C</b>  | <b>PASS C:</b><br>The candidate demonstrates an <b>overall adequate</b> level of achievement <b>in musicianship, technique and style</b> in accordance with the syllabus objectives. <b>Considerable unevenness of achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives, or between different Sections</b> of the examination, may be apparent.                                      | <b>Overall adequate</b><br>with considerable unevenness             |

## Grading Distribution for AMEB exam candidates in 2016





# Syllabus objectives outline the “what” the “aim” or the “target”.

Level 1 Piano objectives for grades Preliminary to grade 4 are found on page 55-56 of the 2018 syllabus

Level 2 Piano objectives for grades 5-8 and Certificate of Performance are found on pages 67 of the 2018 syllabus

## Objectives Section I: Technical Work common to both Level 1 and Level 2

The candidate is required to demonstrate:

- Comfortable and well-balanced seating position
- Appropriate hand and finger shape
- Accurate and prompt performance from memory of all Technical Work requested by the examiner
- Performance of the Technical Work at the indicated minimum tempo or faster
- Independent action of finger
- Smooth passing of the thumb under the hand in scales and arpeggios
- Controlled co-ordination of the hands (in scales and arpeggios in Level 2 and in thirds and sixths found in grade 8)
- Systematic fingering in scales and arpeggios
- Controlled even tone in all Technical work
- An increasing range of dynamic levels
- A clear, even, *legato* touch
- A crisp, even *staccato* touch (grades 3 to 8)

## Objectives Section I: Technical Work continued...

### Objective specific to Level 1 only

The candidate is required to demonstrate:

- Appropriate phrasing and shaping of each part in the Canon (grade 1)

### Objectives specific to Level 2 only

The candidate is required to demonstrate:

- Controlled graduations and contrasts of tone as required for each grade
- Clear, even, articulation of the notes
- A clean double octave technique with relaxed wrist action (with allowance being made according to the size of the hand)

## Broad Summary of Section I: Technical Work Objectives

The candidate is required to demonstrate:

1. Accurate, prompt performance at the indicated tempi
2. Fluency - clear even articulation of the notes
3. Controlled co-ordination of the hands
4. Control of dynamic and tonal contrast

Candidates who perform technical work to a high standard are more likely to achieve those “Plus” grades.

## Section II: Studies, pieces

### Objectives common to both Level 1 and Level 2

Through a program of three works (preliminary to grade 4) or four works (grade 5 to grade 8) drawn from the lists, the candidate is required to demonstrate:

- Accuracy and fluency
- Rhythmic and metric stability
- Articulation of *legato*, *non-legato* and *staccato* textures as required
- Musical phrasing and punctuation
- Expressive realization of dynamics
- Execution of ornaments appropriate to each style/period.

## Objectives Section II: Studies and pieces continued...

### Differences between Level 1 and Level 2

The candidate is required to demonstrate:

Development of increasing awareness of the dynamic range of the piano (Level 1)

A wide dynamic range (Level 2)

Control of variations in tempo and touch (Level 1)

Refinement and subtlety of style, texture, and tone quality and colour (Level 2)

Control of variations in the tonal balance between the hands (Level 1)

Control of variations in balance between the hands and clarity of part playing (Level 2)

Understanding of the style and character appropriate to each work (Level 1)

Projection of style and character appropriate to the period and to the performance practices (Level 2)

Although the use of sustaining pedal is encouraged, the development of a legato pedalling technique is not demanded in Level I examinations.

Reliable pedalling technique (Level 2)

Effective use of the sustaining pedal to create specific colours and textures (Level 2)

Use of *una corda* pedal where appropriate (Level 2)

## Section II. Studies and pieces objectives – A Broad Summary

1. Accuracy and fluency of notes, rhythms and metre
2. Musical phrasing and punctuation
3. Balance between the hands
4. Understanding the style and character appropriate to each work

Candidates who perform their pieces to a high standard are more likely to achieve those “Plus” grades.

## Objectives Section I: Extra Lists Grades 2 - 7 only

The candidate is required to demonstrate:

Familiarity with Extra list pieces by performing the whole or part of them at the discretion of the examiner.

Candidates who perform extra list pieces to a high standard are more likely to achieve those “Plus” grades.

## Section III. Aural Tests

A full description of all the aural tests are found on pages xiii - xiv of the 2018 syllabus

General Summary:

Perform promptly and accurately aural tests involving:

- Beats (preliminary)
- Rhythm patterns and pitching melodic phrases (preliminary to grade 2)
- Metre and intervals (grades 3 – 6)
- Triads (grades 4- 7)
- Cadences (grades 6-8)
- Memory of a melodic phrase (grades 7- 8)
- The lower part of a two-part phrase (grade 8)

There are a range of useful resources that give graded examples.

Begin working on aural tests early!

Candidates who perform aural tests to a high standard are more likely to achieve those “Plus” grades.

## Section III. Sight Reading

### Objectives

- Accuracy of notes, time and rhythm Level 1 and 2
- Fluency (Level 1) at the indicated tempo (Level 2)
- Dynamics articulation and style as indicated (Level 2)
- Use of sustaining pedal where appropriate (Level 2)

Many students are not natural sight readers.

Sight reading skills can be developed with regular practise.

There are a range of useful resources that give graded examples.

Challenge: Encourage students to become excellent sight readers!

Candidates who perform sight reading to a high standard are more likely to achieve those “Plus” grades.

## Section III. General Knowledge

The Full list of guidelines are found on pages xiv – xv of the 2018 syllabus

Guideline summary:

- Name and/or explain any notes, rests sign, terms, its title and its key/tonality (Preliminary to Certificate of Performance (CP))
- Identify key changes (grade 2- CP)
- Explain Form (grades 5 - CP) with grades 7- CP requiring detailed structural analysis and knowledge of other movements
- Knowledge of the period, style, composer and influences and of the genres typical of that period (Grade 7 – CP)

There are a range of useful resources available.

General Knowledge taught from the outset of learning a piece is more likely to be internalized and synthesized.

Candidates who have a thorough knowledge of the General Knowledge relating to their pieces are more likely to achieve those "Plus" grades.

| Grade     | <b>Grading Descriptors</b><br>Found on page xix of the 2018 AMEB syllabus and on the back of the report sheets.  | <b>Summary of Descriptors</b>                                  |
|-----------|--|--|
| <b>A+</b> | <b>HIGH DISTINCTION A+:</b><br><b>In addition</b> to satisfying the requirements for an A grading (below), the candidate demonstrates <b>outstanding achievement</b> in meeting the syllabus objectives <b>in all sections, including performance flair, consistent technical fluency and penetrating stylistic insight.</b>   | <b>Outstanding</b><br>in all sections                          |
| <b>A</b>  | <b>HONOURS A:</b><br>The candidate demonstrates an <b>overall superior level</b> of achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives <b>in all sections, in terms of musicianship, security of technique</b> (including intonation, tone, phrasing, articulation, rhythm), <b>and stylistic awareness</b>  | <b>Superior</b><br>in all sections                             |
| <b>B+</b> | <b>HIGH CREDIT B+:</b><br><b>In addition</b> to satisfying the requirements for a B grading (below), the candidate demonstrates <b>meritorious achievement against most of the syllabus objectives.</b>  | <b>Mostly meritorious</b> some unevenness                      |
| <b>B</b>  | <b>CREDIT B:</b><br>The candidate demonstrates an <b>overall creditable</b> level of achievement <b>with appropriate development of musicianship, technique and stylistic awareness</b> in accordance with the syllabus objectives. <b>Some unevenness of achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives or between different Sections</b> of the examination may be apparent. | <b>Overall creditable</b><br>some unevenness                   |
| <b>C+</b> | <b>PASS WITH MERIT C+:</b><br><b>In addition</b> to satisfying the requirements for a C grading (below), the candidate demonstrates <b>more than adequate achievement against some of the syllabus objectives in each Section.</b>   | <b>Sometimes more than adequate</b><br>considerable unevenness |
| <b>C</b>  | <b>PASS C:</b><br>The candidate demonstrates an <b>overall adequate</b> level of achievement <b>in musicianship, technique and style</b> in accordance with the syllabus objectives. <b>Considerable unevenness of achievement in meeting the syllabus objectives, or between different Sections</b> of the examination, may be apparent.                                      | <b>Overall adequate</b><br>with considerable unevenness        |

# How would you grade these performances?

Two performances of Kabalevsky's Toccata No 12 Opus 27 appear in the links below. This piece features in the Piano syllabus grade 3 list C manual list and in the Piano for Leisure syllabus.

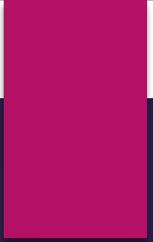
Download the Grading Activity Sheet and AMEB Grading Descriptors from the links below. Use the Grading Descriptors to measure each candidate's achievement against the syllabus objectives and grade each performance.

[Grading Activity Sheet](#)

[Grading Descriptors](#)

[Kabalevsky Toccata video 1](#)

[Kabalevsky Toccata video 2](#)



*Magical music never quite leaves the memory*  
*Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor*

Thank you for attending