

# **MUSIC TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA**

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## **Certificate of Merit Policies & Procedures**

**2011-2012**

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## Introduction

Certificate of Merit is an evaluation program that was created and developed by the Music Teachers' Association of California ("MTAC," "Association" or "State") in 1934, and continues to evolve over time to best meet the needs of teachers and students. The Certificate of Merit (CM) evaluation program is based on a solid foundation of systematic progression through eleven (11) Levels, from Preparatory through Advanced (Level 10). The CM program includes students performing musical repertoire and technique based on requirements set forth in an applicable instrument Syllabus (e.g. Harp, Piano, Winds, Strings, Voice).

The *Certificate of Merit Policies & Procedures* ("CM Policies & Procedures") is designed to help implement the State's CM program and to establish uniformity of its administration and implementation throughout the State of California. Its purpose is also to clarify and expand upon the policies and procedures contained in the Syllabus for each instrument. However, where the applicable Syllabus and *CM Policies & Procedures* may conflict, the *CM Policies & Procedures* prevails.

The State Bylaws ultimately govern the MTAC organization, its members, and the administration of State Programs including CM. Members participating in CM are encouraged to review the State Bylaws in addition to the *CM Policies & Procedures*. Participation in the CM program is granted through membership in the Music Teachers' Association of California.

***Where the CM Policies & Procedures conflict with any Syllabus, the CM Policies & Procedures prevails.***

Important information and documents are regularly posted at the MTAC website. Teachers must login first ([www.mtac.org/login](http://www.mtac.org/login)) to access Certificate of Merit information and materials ("CM Materials," "CM Resources," "CM Evaluators." "CM Resources" includes links to "CM Documents" and "CM Newsletters" which are updated throughout the year.

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### Section 1. Certificate of Merit Council (CM Council)

Certificate of Merit is a program developed and owned by the MTAC State Association. The CM Council is a committee appointed by the State Board of Directors to oversee the administration and operation of the Certificate of Merit program throughout California. Certificate of Merit is largely administered through the affiliate Branches of the MTAC, in accordance with Certificate of Merit policies and procedures that are regularly posted online at [www.mtac.org/login](http://www.mtac.org/login) (Teacher Home Page). All members are also subject to the rules, regulations, policies and procedures set forth in the State Bylaws. CM Council Members are listed in the State Directory and at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org). For any questions or issues regarding CM, CM Teachers should contact their CM Branch Chair first. If a question or issue cannot be resolved, the CM Branch Chair can then contact their CM Council Branch Chair Liaison. Please do not contact the State Board or the State Office with CM questions.

### Section 2. Teacher Requirements

1. **Permitted Membership Classes.** Members belonging to the following membership classes: Active, Life, Provisional, Student, and Cal Plan, who are in good standing and who have paid all other CM

finer dues, if applicable, may register students in CM through their Primary Branch, within the teacher's MTAC-approved instrument, as listed in the State Directory.

2. **Non-MTAC-Member Teachers.** Teachers who are not members of the MTAC, or who are not in the permitted classes, may not enroll students in CM, and may not use or rely upon the identity or membership of another qualified CM Teacher to do so.

For example, in a music school situation, there may be three teachers. Two teachers are qualified CM Teachers who enroll their own students into CM. The third teacher is an associate teacher, but does not have membership in MTAC. The two CM Teachers may not enroll the students of the non-MTAC-member teacher into CM, as their own students, in order to get around the hurdle of the third teacher's non-membership. If the students of the third teacher wish to participate in CM, the third teacher must separately and individually apply for the appropriate class of membership in MTAC. CM Teachers who wrongfully enroll the students of a non-MTAC-member are subject to disciplinary action by the Association.

3. **CM Teacher - Primary Teacher.** Teachers who meet the criteria in Section 2.1 above ("CM Teachers") may only register students whom they teach on a regular basis for the majority (75%) of lessons, as that student's Primary Teacher.

For example, a CM Teacher occasionally coaches a student once per month, but that student actually takes lessons regularly for the majority of the year with another teacher. The CM Teacher may not register that student in CM under the CM Teacher's name or studio.

4. **CM Teacher Regulations.** CM Teachers are required to read and review the applicable Syllabus for their instrument. CM Teachers hereby agree to be subject to, and abide by, the State Bylaws, the Syllabus, and the current CM Policies and Procedures. Any violations against the foregoing may result in the restriction of such CM Teacher's participation in the CM program, or other disciplinary actions.

5. **Change of Teacher:**

(a) **Before or On November 15.** The new CM Teacher will initiate the Change of Teacher process online when registering the student as a "new student." On the CM New Student Registration Page, a series of preliminary questions will be asked. Clicking "YES" to the first question regarding Change of Teacher will direct the teacher to the Change of Teacher Page. If the Change of Teacher is within the same Branch, the website will automatically notify the Branch Chair. The Branch Chair will then complete the change. If the Change of Teacher is between different Branches, the website will notify the CCSR. The CCSR will then complete the change. The new teacher must wait to receive an email from either the Branch Chair or the CCSR, which will inform them that the Change of Teacher process is completed. The new CM Teacher must then "Re-Enroll" the student from the "Re-enroll Students" list (from the Teacher Home Page, select "CM Students", select "Re-enroll Students"). The student shall be evaluated at the Branch of the new CM Teacher. The new CM Teacher is responsible for checking and ensuring that the student's online CM records are appropriately transferred, in order to be listed as that student's current CM Teacher for CM purposes.

**(b) After November 15.** In order to initiate the Change of Teacher process after the close of CM Registration, the new CM Teacher must complete the “Change of Teacher Form After November 15” Form, which is available from [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org), Teacher Home Page (select “Resources”, select “Documents”). Upon completion, the Form must be submitted to the CM Branch Chair. Once the Change of Teacher is completed, the new CM Teacher will be responsible for continuing the preparation for the new student’s CM Evaluation and for entering and editing all online Evaluation information as needed on the MTAC website.

**6. Former CM Students.**

(a) In the event that a previous CM student moves away or stops studying music for several years, but then returns to the same CM Teacher, the CM Teacher will need to “Recall” the student’s information and history in the CM Database by clicking “New Student Registration” located at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page), under “CM Students.” The CM Teacher will be asked a series of questions on that page. The second question asks if the student has ever been a CM student with the registering teacher before; clicking “Yes” to this question will direct the teacher to the “Recall a Student Form.”

(b) In the event that a student moves away or stops studying music with a CM Teacher, and does not return, those students will continue to appear on the Student List. The CM Database must retain all student’s CM records for various eligibility requirements, just in case a student returns to the CM system, even after many years of not participating in CM, and whether or not they return to the same teacher or a different one. Therefore, the student must remain linked to the most recent CM Teacher on record, until a “Recall a Student” or “Change of Teacher” request re-activates the process.

**7. Secondary Instrument.** CM Teachers who wish to be approved for more than one instrument must apply directly to the State Office, using the **Secondary Instrument Form**, available at [www.mtac.org/membership](http://www.mtac.org/membership).

**8. CM Teacher Training.** CM Teachers are required to read all guidelines, instructions, policies, procedures, applicable Syllabi and any Syllabi Addenda, and forms related to Certificate of Merit, which are located at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page, login required). In order to register online, CM Teachers must attend an initial mandatory CM Information Meeting at their Branch. If a Teacher cannot attend, then he or she must contact their Branch Chair for alternatives approved by the Branch Chair. On the Teacher Home Page, CM Teachers are also expected to review the CM Teacher Education power point slides (“CM Teacher PowerPoint Presentation”). Additional live education sessions regarding Certificate of Merit may also be required by the Branch. CM Council members also provide live CM information and education sessions at several Branches during the year.

### **Section 3. CM Enrollment Requirements (Path A & Path B)**

**1. Path A and Path B.** There are two types of enrollment in the Certificate of Merit program: Path A and Path B. In Path A, students take a performance evaluation and written theory examination on an assigned date or dates, at a site determined by the Branch and are evaluated by an MTAC State-appointed or contracted Evaluator. In Path B, students are evaluated by their own teacher, or by

another teacher arranged by the student's teacher, in the teacher's studio or location of the teacher's choosing. Path B Evaluations take place anytime after Path A Evaluations are completed throughout the state of California. Both Path A and Path B include all components of the CM program: performance, technique, sight-reading, written theory, and ear training tests, and optional improvisation. Both Path A and Path B students may be enrolled in Preparatory through Advanced (Level 10) Levels.

2. **Student Qualifications.** Students who are (i) age five or older as of November 15 (the CM Registration Deadline), and (ii) are studying with a CM Teacher as their Primary Teacher in good standing, may participate in CM.
3. **Enrollment Deadlines.** Enrollment for CM opens on September 15 each year. Enrollment is a multi-step procedure: (i) completing the online registration process, (ii) submitting registration materials and payments to the Branch, and (iii) submitting the Evaluation Report Form, which includes students' Repertoire, Branch Honors, Convention, and other Branch administration information.
  - (i) **Mandatory Branch Meeting (or Approved Alternative).** Teachers must attend the CM Information Meeting at their Branch, if required by the Branch. If a CM Teacher cannot attend their Branch's Mandatory Information Meeting, then he or she must contact the Branch Chair to receive alternative training options approved by the Branch Chair. CM Teachers may not be able to access the Online Registration unless they have attended the mandatory meeting, or have received alternative training.
  - (ii) **Online Registration.** CM Teachers must complete all student registrations online at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page) ("Online Registration") no later than November 15 ("CM Registration Deadline"). This information goes into a CM database (the "CM Database"), exactly as input by the CM Teacher. CM Teachers must apply for Panel Auditions and Senior Award in the Online Registration; CM Teachers are responsible for checking the eligibility requirements. The State Board of Directors, CM Council, Evaluators and the Branch are not responsible for errors or omissions made by the CM Teacher in the Online Registration.
  - (iii) **Branch Registration Materials.** Registration is not complete until CM Teachers have also submitted the following materials ("Branch Registration Materials"):
    - (a) All applicable, non-refundable Fees; and
    - (b) Student List (printed out from the Student List page); and
    - (c) Student Fees List (printed out from the Student Fee's List page); and
    - (d) If required by the Branch, signed Teacher Work Agreement along with any applicable Non-Work Fees.

CM Teachers must deliver their Branch Registration Materials to their Branch's CM Chair, or other Branch designee, no later than November 16, with no exceptions. If CM Teachers do not make delivery of the Branch Registration Materials by November 16, the **Registration is void**.

- (iv) **CM Evaluation Report Form.** After Registration is completed in November, CM Teachers must return to [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page) after January 2 in order to submit a CM Evaluation Report Form for each student registered in CM for that year. The CM Evaluation

Report Form must be submitted by the deadline set by the Branch, and its contents may not be changed by the CM Teacher after the Branch deadline. Students must perform the same pieces listed on their CM Evaluation Report Form, or shall be disqualified from Branch Honors and Convention performance.

CM Teachers must input on the Evaluation Report Form:

- accurate and complete Repertoire information;
- applications for Branch Honors or Convention programs;
- accompanists and ensemble partners; and
- any other Branch administration options, as applicable.

CM Teachers must complete the CM Evaluation Report correctly, paying close attention to the piece chosen from the applicable Syllabus so that compliance with Level requirements may be verified. However, Branch Chairs shall check the Evaluation Report Forms for Syllabus compliance (e.g., listed Syllabus page numbers and correct student Level), and contact the CM Teacher if any adjustments are required. CM Teachers are responsible for carefully checking their students' eligibility requirements for Branch Honors and Convention Recitals.

4. **CM Evaluation Results; CM Database.** The Branch is responsible for ensuring that all students' CM Performance Evaluation and Theory Examination Results are entered into the CM Database. After the CM Evaluation Results have been released, CM Teachers are responsible for checking that the Results match those entered in the CM Database online ([www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) – Teacher Home Page). Corrections must be submitted to the Branch Chair by May 31. Any corrections submitted after May 31 cannot be changed in the CM Database.
5. **Teacher Work Requirements.** Branches may require participating CM Teachers to work, in order to assist the Branch in the administration and operation of CM Evaluations. Participation requirements (e.g. number of work hours) are determined by the number of students a CM Teacher has registered as of November 16. The Branches may use and collect a Teacher Work Agreement from each participating CM Teacher, and impose a monetary fine ("Non-Work Fee") for CM Teachers who do not fulfill any mandatory CM work requirement established by CM Council and/or the Branch. CM Teachers who do not pay the Non-Work Fee by the deadline set by the Branch shall be disqualified from participating in subsequent CM Evaluation programs, both Path A and Path B, until the Non-Work Fee has been fully paid.  
  
Important: Even if a CM Teacher's students later drop from Path A and do not actually take the Path A Evaluation, such CM Teacher shall still be required to work the designated number of hours based on the November 16 registered number of students, and/or shall be required to pay the Non-Work Fee based on the November 16 registered number of students.
6. **Change to Path B.** CM Teachers may change a student originally registered for Path A, and move such student to Path B, by the deadline set by the Branch. In order to change a student from Path A to Path B, CM Teachers must go to [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page), and change the student's status from Path A to Path B and notify the Branch Chair by email.

7. **Change from Panel Auditions to Non-Panel Auditions Status.** CM Teachers may change a student who originally applied for Panel to Non-Panel (Path A) status by notifying both the Branch Chair and the Panel Chair no later than January 15.
8. **No Late Registrations.** Late Registrations are not accepted under any circumstances. The Registration deadline is November 15, with no exceptions. This policy is strictly enforced in order to preserve fairness and equal treatment for all participants.

## Section 4. CM Evaluations (Path A)

### A. CM Evaluation Components

CM Evaluations are composed of the following components: (1) a **Performance Evaluation** in which students shall perform appropriate Repertoire selections (as set forth in the applicable Syllabus), Technique requirements, and a Sight-Reading Test; and (2) a written **Theory Examination**, which includes an Ear-Training Test.

1. **Syllabus.** Guidelines and requirements for each of the components of the Certificate of Merit program are contained in the Syllabi published by the MTAC, which are available for purchase online at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org). Syllabi are provided for each instrument (e.g. Piano, Strings, Voice, etc.). Syllabi Addenda are published as necessary, and are located at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page).
2. **Performance Evaluation.** Students are assigned a specific performance schedule at an allotted time based on the students' registration level. Students perform the repertoire while an Evaluator listens and provides written comments and ratings for the benefit of the student and teacher. Venues for the Performance Evaluation are arranged by the Branch, and typically held at local colleges, studios, churches or schools. Students receive ratings of Excellent, Good, Average, Weak, and/or Incomplete in the areas of Technique and Sight-Reading; ratings of Excellent, Good, Average, Weak for Repertoire; and ratings of Pass, Ineligible for Certificate, No-Show, or Remain at Level for the overall Performance. Numerical ratings are assigned for Branch Honors and Convention Recital evaluation components, if applicable. Ratings are also provided for those students who have registered for Panel Auditions or Young Artist Guild.
3. **Repertoire Requirements.** Students must perform only Permitted Repertoire in a CM Performance Evaluation.
  - (a) **Permitted Repertoire.** "Permitted Repertoire" is defined as original compositions written specifically for the instrument being evaluated, and any repertoire listed in the applicable instrument Syllabus.
  - (b) **Not Acceptable Repertoire.** Please refer to the applicable instrument Syllabus and the Certificate of Merit Teacher Training PowerPoint slides at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page), for repertoire that is not permitted for CM Evaluations ("Not Acceptable Repertoire"). Students performing any Not Acceptable Repertoire shall receive an automatic "Ineligible for Certificate" rating by the Evaluator, and are also disqualified from Branch Honors and Convention Programs. Students must perform the Repertoire as listed on their Evaluation Report Form. If a CM Teacher wishes to change a student's Repertoire selection, the Teacher must contact the Branch

Chair in advance for consent, which consent shall be provided at the sole discretion of the Branch Chair. A student performing Repertoire that is not listed on the Evaluation Form and/or has not received the required Branch Chair consent or authorization to change a Repertoire piece, shall be disqualified from Branch Honors and Convention programs.

**(c) Foreign-Language (Non-Romanized Languages) Published Music.** Teachers must include an English translation for the Title and Composer of any piece that is brought to the Evaluation that is published or printed in a non-Romanized foreign language (e.g. Russian, Japanese), so that the Evaluator can identify the piece. The English translation of the Title and Composer can be notated by the teacher on the score, or attached on a separate sheet of paper to the score. Students may not participate in Branch Honors or Convention if a translation is not provided.

4. **Memory Requirements.** Please refer to the applicable instrument Syllabus for memory requirements for technique and repertoire.
5. **Improvisations.** Students may include an improvisation lasting from 5 to 60 seconds, during the Performance Evaluation. Improvisations are optional and will not be rated by the Evaluator. Any improvisation is acceptable; please refer to the MTAC website ([www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) – Teacher Home Page) under “Improvisation” for more information. Important: The allowed time for the entire Performance Evaluation shall not be lengthened due to the addition of an improvisation.
6. **Technique Requirements.** Students perform the technique requirements set forth in the applicable Syllabus that correspond to their registered instrument and level. Technique is performed and evaluated as part of the Performance Evaluation. Technique must be memorized and played without notation, but students may look at a Technique Chart that is included in the Sight-Reading Booklet. Each Level has a specified time limit in which to perform the technique requirements, which are comprised of various elements such as scales, arpeggios, and chords in designated keys. If the student exceeds the allowed time limit, the student’s rating shall be affected. For Piano, Advanced (Level 10) Etude must be from the Etude list provided in the Syllabus. String requirements vary; please refer to the Strings Syllabus for more information.
7. **Sight-Reading/Singing Test.** The Sight-Reading/Singing Test shall be administered in the Evaluation Room as a portion of the Performance Evaluation. Students are strictly prohibited from seeing the Sight-Reading/Singing Test materials in advance of the Evaluation. Students shall be shown the Sight-Reading/Singing Test materials for the first time at the Performance Evaluation. Students will be given a certain amount of time to study the Sight-Reading/Singing excerpt, in accordance with the times specified in the applicable Syllabus. Students may put their hands on their instrument and “shadow play” during that time. Counting aloud or saying note names aloud is acceptable both before and during the Sight-Reading/Singing Evaluation. Exception: Panel Auditions for Piano, Strings and Winds are not required to take the Sight-Reading Test.
8. **Theory Examination.** The Theory Examination is a written examination to test a student’s knowledge and skill regarding music theory. The Theory Examination shall take place in a separate Theory Test Room, which is monitored and proctored by trained teachers. CM Teachers shall be provided the opening and closing hours of the Theory Test Room. Students may spend as much time on the Theory Examination as they wish to complete the Theory Examination during testing hours but must submit the Theory Examination by the end of the examination center day (whether

complete or incomplete within the time allotted). In some instances, a student may have a Performance Evaluation scheduled in another room during the time in which the student is also taking the Theory Examination. Such students who have not completed the Theory Examination may be escorted to and from their Performance Evaluation by designated CM personnel, and return to complete the Theory Examination after they have finished their Performance Evaluation. However, all Theory Examination papers must remain in the Theory Test Room, and the student may not take them out of the Theory Test Room for any reason. All participating teachers and students must adhere to the Theory Test Room Guidelines, which includes further policies and procedures. Please refer to the applicable instrument Syllabus for a list of Theory Examination and Ear-Training Test requirements per Level. If a student is taking a CM Evaluation for more than one instrument, the student must take both the Performance Evaluation and Theory Examination for each instrument being evaluated. No personal electronic devices (cell phones, iPods, iPads, etc.) are allowed in the Theory Test Room. Parents and unauthorized teachers are not allowed in the Theory Test Room.

9. **Ear-Training Test.** The Ear-Training Test is based on the specific requirements listed in the Syllabus by instrument and level. The Ear-Training Test occurs during the Theory Examination. Students listen to a CD-recording, provided in the Theory Test Room, of various melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic examples, which are set forth on the last page of the Theory Examination. Students may rewind the ear-training CD to listen to the questions and excerpts as many times as they wish. (Path B Teachers will not be provided the Path A CD; Path B Teachers shall administer the Ear-Training Test on an instrument.) If the CD is played for a group of students, the examples may be repeated multiple times. Please refer to the applicable instrument Syllabus for a list of Theory Examination and Ear-Training Test requirements per Level.
10. **Advanced (Level 10) Theory Exemption.** At the Advanced (Level 10), a student in school grade 9 or above who passes Advanced (Level 10) Theory with a score of 90% or higher is exempt from taking only the Advanced (Level 10) Theory examination in subsequent CM years. Advanced (Level 10) students who fail Performance, but score 90% or higher on the Theory, shall retain their Advanced (Level 10) Theory Exemption. There is no exemption for Voice students. If taking evaluations for more than one instrument, students must earn a separate Advanced (Level 10) Theory Exemption for each instrument.
11. **Ensembles.** Students enrolled in Path A may choose to perform one ensemble piece (e.g. duet) during their CM Performance Evaluation. However, ensembles must be composed only of students who are individually enrolled in CM Path A. Parents, teachers, non-MTAC members, and non-CM students, may not be part of any ensemble for CM Evaluation, including serving as substitutes in the event an ensemble member is unable to perform or attend. If an ensemble member is unable to perform or attend at a CM Evaluation, the remaining ensemble members shall perform the ensemble piece, and shall be evaluated on an individual basis but will be ineligible for Convention. For more information, please refer to the applicable instrument Syllabus.
12. **Piano Ensembles.** The Piano Ensemble may include a maximum of five pianos. The CM Teacher representing any multiple piano ensemble must contact both the Branch CM Chair and Branch Board to receive approval by **November 1**. The CM Teacher is responsible for set-up of additional pianos or keyboards, including cartage and any set-up/removal expenses, before Evaluations begin

for the day, and are responsible for removal at the end of the day. The CM Teacher should not contact the facility directly; any facilities questions should be directed through the Branch CM Chair.

13. **Live Accompaniment Required; Exceptions.** Strings, Winds and Voice students in Levels 8 through Advanced (Level 10) must use live accompaniment for all pieces using accompaniment. Recorded accompaniments are permitted for Level 7 and below, but only for pieces not being considered for Branch Honors or State Convention Recitals. Any piece being considered for Branch Honors or State Convention Recitals requires live accompaniment.

## **B. Evaluation Results; Change of Teacher**

1. **Change of Teacher; Evaluation Results.** CM Teachers are required to review and provide their students with the results of their CM Evaluations as soon as possible after such Evaluations Results are released by the Branch Chair. If a student terminates lessons with his or her CM Teacher after the CM Evaluations, the former CM Teacher must still provide the student with the CM Evaluation Results, or leave the Evaluation Results with the Branch Chair and inform the former student to contact the Branch Chair to retrieve the Evaluation Results.
2. **Remain at Level Rating, Path A.** The Remain at Level rating (RAL) means that a student may not progress to a higher CM Level at his or her next CM Evaluation. A CM Student who receives an RAL rating at a Path A CM Performance Evaluation or Theory Examination, must pass Path A of the same CM Level in Performance and Theory, in order to progress to a higher CM Level on their next CM Evaluation. Students who receive an RAL rating may not repeat the Evaluation in the same CM Evaluation year.
  - (a) **Performance Remain at Level (Fail).** The Remain at Level rating is for the student who clearly is not prepared for the Performance Evaluation or receives an Automatic Remain at Level. Students will receive an RAL rating for (i) a weak, unprepared performance, or (ii) Automatic RAL situations.

Students shall receive an Automatic RAL rating for the following:

1. Repertoire: Advanced (Level 10) required Etude is not memorized.
2. Sight Reading: Student refuses to attempt to perform the sight-reading excerpt. (Legally-blind students exempt.)
3. Technique: Technique is not prepared or student cannot perform without the notation.
4. Memory: Memory requirements for the applicable Syllabus are not met.
5. Number of Pieces: The number of pieces required in the Syllabus is not correct.
6. Copyright Restrictions: A student who brings a photocopied score or brings music reproduced from a CD or downloaded from the Internet without an authorized logo or source shall not be heard by the Evaluator and shall receive an automatic RAL rating. The only exceptions are copies to facilitate page turns (an original score must be

present) and copies for confirmed out-of-print material. Confirmed out-of-print material must be accompanied by written permission from the publisher.

- (b) **Theory Remain at Level (Fail).** Students who receive a Fail grade (less than 70%) on the written Theory Examination will receive a Remain at Level rating. Students receiving an RAL rating for either the Performance Evaluation or the Theory Examination must pass Path A of the same CM Level in Performance and Theory, in order to progress to a higher CM Level on their next CM Evaluation. Any year in which a student receives an RAL rating will not be included as a participation year for the Senior Medallion or Panel Audition Eligibility.
3. **Ineligible for Certificate (IC).** The “Ineligible for Certificate” rating shall be used for students who perform a proficient CM Performance Evaluation, but who have violated rules and regulations not related to performance quality. Students who receive an IC rating will not receive a CM Certificate for the CM year in which the IC was given. However, they are permitted to move to a higher CM Level at their next Performance Evaluation. An IC rating will disqualify a student from Branch Honors, CM Convention Recitals, and Panel Convention performances. IC ratings will not affect future Senior Award or Panel eligibility. Students shall receive an IC rating for the following:
1. performing incorrect repertoire categories, Syllabus piece, or not having a required Syllabus piece;
  2. performing technique from an incorrect Syllabus or level;
  3. Advanced (Level 10) Etude is not from required Etude list as provided in the Piano Syllabus;
  4. failing to provide original music scores for the Evaluator, including a second original score if the piece is not memorized (and a third original score for a live accompanist, if applicable);
  5. performing any Not Acceptable Repertoire.
4. **Certificate Achievement, Path A.** Students must pass both the Performance Evaluation and Theory Examination for their registered CM Level in order to receive a Certificate showing that they have passed that CM Level and may progress to a higher CM Level.

## Section 5. CM Evaluation Administration

### A. Fairness Practices

1. **No Cheating Policy; Confidentiality and Security of CM Materials.** CM Teachers and students are strictly prohibited from reviewing, receiving, or distributing CM Theory Examinations, Ear-Training, and Sight-Reading Examination materials before the CM Evaluation testing dates. Students are strictly prohibited from taking any written examinations outside the testing area, without prior authorization and supervision. Students must leave any unfinished or incomplete written Theory Examinations in the Theory Room while they take the Performance Evaluation in the Evaluation Room. Any violations of this policy, as determined by CM Council or the State Board of Directors pursuant to the *MTAC State Bylaws and the MTAC Conflict Resolution and Disciplinary Guidelines*, shall result in significant restriction or disqualification from participation in CM in future years and/or other appropriate disciplinary action against the involved CM Teacher(s).
2. **CM Evaluators.** CM Evaluators are strictly prohibited from discussing students’ CM Evaluations with other parties, including teachers, parents, students, or door monitors or other Evaluators.

Therefore, CM Teachers, members, or Branch CM Chairs who have questions regarding an Evaluator's decision must follow the Communication and Conflict Resolution procedures set forth below (see Sections 11 and 12).

3. **Evaluation Venues.** Every attempt must be made by the Branches to schedule students at appropriate Evaluation Venues, other than their own CM Teachers' studios or homes, to reduce the possibility of unfairness or cheating.
4. **Security of Theory Examinations.** Theory Examinations materials must be kept and secured by the Branch CM Chair until all CM Evaluations are complete statewide (usually in early April, but Branch CM Chair must confirm dates with CM Council).
5. **Branch CM Ear-Training Materials.** Branches must purchase CM Ear-Training materials for all instruments and retain them securely with the Branch CM Chair, or other appropriate Branch Board members. CM Evaluation Ear-Training CDs are not available to individual teachers.
6. **Evaluation Area.** Only registered Path A students and Evaluators are permitted in the Evaluation Room. Except for Teachers who are working at Evaluations, Teachers and Parents are not allowed in the Evaluation room or testing area. This includes hallways, student restrooms, Evaluation rooms, Theory Test room, Theory Grading room, and the surrounding area. Teachers and Parents are not permitted to view the Evaluation through windows or door windows. The sole exception is accompanists for non-keyboard instruments who are allowed in the Evaluation Room only during the time required for accompanying a student's pieces.

In the event that an Evaluator, working Teacher, or Door Monitor notices a parent or non-working Teacher in the Evaluation Room or other prohibited areas, the Evaluator or working Teacher should **kindly** inform the parents or non-working Teacher that their presence is not allowed to ensure the integrity of the evaluations taking place, and find out the reasons the parents or non-working Teacher is present. If a problem arises, then the Evaluator or working Teacher should inform the parent or non-working Teacher that the CM Branch Chair needs to be contacted, and ask the parent or non-working Teacher to **kindly** wait in another area until the CM Branch Chair arrives, so that the student's Evaluation may continue without further disruption.

7. **Accompanists.** Any individual (e.g. parent, teacher, non-MTAC member, non-CM student) may serve as an accompanist for Strings, Winds, and Voice CM Evaluations. Accompanists may be present in the Evaluation Room only during the pieces for which accompaniment is required. Piano ensemble performers are not considered accompanists, and such ensemble performers must be individually enrolled in CM Path A.

## **B. Materials & Fees**

1. **Photocopy Permissions for MTAC-Published Materials.** MTAC has provided permission for CM Teachers to reproduce limited portions of all MTAC-published Syllabi and Technical Requirements booklets for personal use. A limited number of CM tests from previous years are also available for purchase at the State Office or MTAC Online Store, and may be photocopied for use within the CM Teacher's studio.

2. **Copyright Restrictions.** Students and accompanists are prohibited from bringing photocopied music to CM Evaluations. Individuals who bring in unauthorized photocopied music to CM Evaluations shall not be heard by an Evaluator and shall automatically receive a “Remain-at-Level” rating. The only exceptions are copies to facilitate page turns (an original score must be present) and photocopies for confirmed out-of-print material. Confirmed out-of-print material must be accompanied by written permission from the publisher.
3. **No Music Score Provided.** Students must bring to the CM Evaluation an original, published score of each piece of music to be performed. If no music score is provided to the Evaluator for any of the pieces to be performed, the student will automatically receive an “Ineligible for Certificate” rating. If the music is not memorized, the student must provide a second original score for the Evaluator. Failure to provide a second score will result in an IC rating. A photocopy may not be used as a second score.
4. **Branch Registration Fees.** If a student must be evaluated at another Branch, or at Regional Evaluations for any instrument, the \$6.00 Branch Registration Fee, plus the Branch surcharge, should follow the student to the receiving Branch or Regional Center. The student must pay the difference if the Branch surcharge of the receiving Branch is more. All fees must go through the Branch Treasurer.
5. **Non-Refundable Fees.** All CM Fees are non-refundable.

### C. Alternative Evaluations

1. **Missed or Late-Arrival Evaluations.** If a student arrives late and misses their assigned Evaluation time, the Evaluator or another Evaluator may hear the student at the end of the day, *at the Evaluator’s sole discretion*. The Branch shall be responsible for paying the Evaluator for the extra Evaluation time provided, at the end of the same Evaluation day. This negotiation must take place solely between the Evaluator and CM Branch Chair, and neither the student’s teacher nor parent may be involved. The Branch should collect the additional Evaluation Fee from the student/parents.
2. **Make-Up Evaluation (MUP).** Make-Up Evaluations are available only to students in school grades 9 through 12 for legitimate emergencies, such as serious illness, injury, or school conflicts that have been approved by the CM Branch Chair. The CM Branch Chair may require such student to provide written evidence, such as a doctor’s note. The student’s CM Teacher must submit a MUP Application and the MUP fee to the Branch Chair no later than April 15. For further information, please refer to the MUP application form and corresponding procedures available at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page).
3. **Inter-Branch Evaluations.** Non-Piano students (Harp, Strings, Voice, Winds) may need to be evaluated at another neighboring Branch (“Host Branch”) other than their registered Branch (“Home/Primary Branch”). This may occur if there are not enough students to engage an Evaluator for a full Evaluation day, as determined by the CM Council Instrument Chair. In cases where the student cannot test on a certain day for religious reasons (any instrument), and his or her Home Branch does not offer an alternative testing day, the CM Branch Chair may contact the CM Evaluator Scheduling Chair or CM Council Instrument Chair to arrange for an Inter-Branch Evaluation at a Host Branch.

## Section 6. Branch Honors

1. **Branch Honors Eligibility.** Students must pass both the Performance Evaluation and the written Theory Examination, in order to be eligible for Branch Honors. Students who receive an IC are not eligible for Branch Honors. Students who do not provide an original music score at CM Evaluations, or who do not provide a translation of the Title and Composer for music published in a foreign language in accordance with CM policies, shall not be eligible for Branch Honors.
2. **Live Accompaniment Required.** For Strings, Winds, and Voice Branch Evaluations, any pieces being considered for Branch Honors or Convention programs must be accompanied by a live accompanist for all CM Levels.

## Section 7. State CM Convention Programs

1. **CM Convention Recitals.** CM Convention Recitals are designed to honor students who have demonstrated exceptional skill in all areas of the CM program. These Recitals are for Path A students only. Students who receive top ratings and have been selected by the Evaluator at the CM Evaluation that year are invited to participate in the Convention Recitals, which take place at the MTAC's Annual Convention. The Recitals are categorized as follows:
  - (a) **Festival Recitals** feature repertoire from the Certificate of Merit Syllabus at the student's enrolled level.
  - (b) **Theme Recitals** feature the musical literature of a special theme topic chosen in advance by CM Council. The recitals may include students from various instrument disciplines.
  - (c) **New Materials Recitals** feature new Music (published within the last 10 years of the Recital), and are designed to encourage teachers and students to explore and present in this genre. New Music does not include arrangements or methods.
  - (d) **Ensemble Recitals** are designed to promote the exploration and performance of ensemble repertoire.

For more information on Convention Recital instrument/Level requirements and other rules and regulations, please refer to [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page).

The CM Panel Auditions program includes performance opportunities at Convention, which are different and additional to those listed above. Please see *CM Panel Auditions Guidelines* for more information.

2. **Eligibility for CM Convention Programs.** To be eligible to participate in State Convention Programs, students must have fulfilled all CM Path A requirements in the manner set forth by the CM Council and State Board. Students must also have achieved a Theory Examination score of 80% or higher, and have received "Good" or "Excellent" ratings for the repertoire, technique, and sight-reading components of their CM Performance Evaluation. Students who receive Ineligible for Certificate or Remain at Level ratings are not eligible for CM Convention Recitals for the year in which the IC or

RAL was received. For further information regarding eligibility requirements, please refer to the "Convention Performance Requirements" page at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page).

3. **CM Convention Master Classes.** Master Classes with invited Master Teachers/Artists are held during the annual MTAC Convention. Students are selected to work with the Master Teacher/Artist by invitation only. The minimum consideration requirement is that students must have received an Excellent rating on the Repertoire, Technique, and Sight-Reading portions of the Performance Evaluation, a 5+ rating on the designated Convention piece, and a score of 90% or more on their Theory Examination, but achieving such minimum requirements does not guarantee an invitation. CM Council also takes into consideration an equal combination of students representing both North and South Regions, a variety of repertoire from different historical musical periods, any special requests from the Master Teacher/Artist, before issuing an invitation.
4. **CM Panel Auditions; Panel Honors; Panel Master Class; Young Artist Guild.** Please refer to Sections 9 and 10 below. More detailed information is available in the *Certificate of Merit Panel Auditions Guidelines* at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page).
5. **Live Accompaniment Required.** For Strings, Winds, and Voice Branch Evaluations, any pieces being considered for Branch Honors or Convention programs must be accompanied by a live accompanist for all CM Levels.
6. **Disqualification from CM Convention Programs; No Shows.** Students who have been accepted to participate in a State Convention Program, but who do not attend or appear at the Program without adequate reason or notification of absence to the CM Council Recital Chair, shall be disqualified from participating in any subsequent Convention program for the next two (2) years. Other disciplinary measures may also be imposed for teachers or studios who demonstrate a repeated pattern of no-shows.
7. **CM Convention Participation Restrictions.** Students may apply for only one (1) CM Convention program per year, per instrument. Panel Audition applicants (see Section 9 below) who are not ultimately selected for Panel Auditions may apply to participate in Festival, Theme, or New Materials Recitals, only if the CM Teacher previously checked the appropriate box for Convention Recital on the CM Evaluation Report Form.
8. **CM Convention Program Application Process.** The application for CM Convention Programs is a two-step online process, carried out over a span of time. CM Teachers first apply for their students' participation Convention Programs on the CM Evaluation Report Form in January (see Section 3, Paragraph 3(iii)). For the second step, CM Teachers must return to [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page), and complete a Final Application for Convention Recital ("Final Application"). CM Teachers are responsible for complying with all the rules printed on the Final Application. The Final Application deadline is April 15. CM Teachers must check the Convention Student Performance Schedule after June 1 for student performance times.
9. **CM Convention Application Fee.** A Convention Application Fee shall be charged per student at the time the CM Teacher applies. This fee is non-refundable and payable by credit card or PayPal during the online Final Application process. The only students affected by this fee are those performing at the following: CM New Materials Recitals, CM Theme Recitals, CM Festival Recitals, CM Ensemble

Recitals, and CT Symposium Recitals. Aside from this one-time Application Fee, all students and their family members are admitted to the entire Convention at no additional charge, and may attend any Convention event, including all recitals, master classes, lectures, concerts, and the exhibit hall.

10. **Teacher Convention Registration Required.** CM Teachers must register for Convention and pay the requisite Convention Registration Fee, in order to attend the MTAC State Convention and their own students' performances at Convention. CM Teachers who attend their students' performances at Convention and fail to register and pay for Convention, shall be sent an invoice from MTAC. If such payment is not made by the due date provided, such Teacher's students shall be prohibited from performing at Convention in subsequent years until payment is made, regardless of the students' CM Evaluation results and qualifications for Convention performance.

## Section 8. Senior Award

1. **Senior Award Eligibility.** A graduating high school senior student in any instrument who – (i) passes all sections of Path A CM, (ii) for three consecutive or non-consecutive years during school Grades 9 through 12, (iii) including in their final year of high school, and (iv) at CM Level 7 or above – is eligible for the Senior Award. IC Ratings will not affect Senior Award eligibility. However, CM Teachers must apply for Senior Award in the Online Registration by November 15 (see Section 3). Young Artist Guild students are eligible for the Senior Award if they are accepted into the YAG program in their junior year of high school. YAG students will receive their Senior Awards at the State Convention.
2. **Senior Award Special Circumstances.** Special circumstances may exist, such as a student's early graduation from high-school, in which a student may be granted an exception from the above eligibility requirements in order to receive a Senior Award. CM Teachers may submit a written request for such exception to the Branch Chair, who shall submit the request to CM Council. CM Council shall make the sole determination as to whether to grant the exception.

## Section 9. Panel Auditions

Panel Auditions are for outstanding students who merit State-level recognition. Only students who have demonstrated exceptional performance quality should be enrolled for Panel Audition consideration, and must register for Panel Audition in the Online Registration by November 15 (See Section 3). All the policies and procedures related to Panel Auditions are set forth in the "Certificate of Merit Panel Audition Program Information" guidelines at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page).

## Section 10. Young Artist Guild (YAG)

The Young Artist Guild (YAG) is the highest achievement that a Certificate of Merit student can attain. Students must be in school grades 11 or 12 and must have passed consecutive, yearly Path A evaluations since school grade 9 to apply for YAG. YAG offers semi-professional, paid performance opportunities through Branch-sponsored concerts. A student who attains YAG membership belongs to the Guild for five (5) years, and may be invited to perform at various MTAC Branches throughout California during his or her tenure as an active member. In some cases, the Guild also provides awards, scholarships and

other financial support for its members. For more information, please see the “Certificate of Merit Panel Audition Program Information” at [www.mtac.org](http://www.mtac.org) (Teacher Home Page).

## Section 11. Communication Procedures

**Any communications, questions, or concerns received that do NOT follow the below procedures will NOT be accepted, responded to, or considered by the CM Branch Chair or CM Council, except as otherwise provided below.**

1. **Communications, Questions and Concerns.** Any communications, questions, or concerns regarding Certificate of Merit (e.g. administration, operations, evaluations, training, policies and procedures) from parents or students must first be directed to the student’s own teacher. Many questions and potential issues can often be resolved at this level.
2. **Line of Communication.** Questions or issues that cannot be resolved by the CM Teacher, and/or questions or issues from the CM Teacher, that require a response from the Branch or State, shall be directed as follows, and must be **communicated by email only:**
  - (a) CM Teacher to CM Branch Chair...if needed, the CM Branch Chair will refer to -
  - (b) CM Council member(s) (e.g. appropriate Chair, Evaluator, Recital, Database personnel)...if needed, they will refer to -
  - (c) CM Conflict Resolution Committee and/or State CM Coordinator.

In some circumstances, a situation may rise to the level of a serious conflict or complaint, as solely determined by CM Council or the State CM Coordinator, in which case the procedures in Section 12 shall govern.

3. **Exceptions to Line of Communication.** After April 15, a teacher may communicate directly with a CM Council Recital Chair regarding a student’s Convention Performance.

## Section 12. Conflict Resolution Procedures

A conflict or complaint is a serious situation in which there are open, opposing parties over a problem for which there is no obvious solution, and that requires further consideration or investigation in order to resolve. All other communications, questions, concerns, or complaints of a non-serious nature must follow the procedures set forth in Sections 11 and 12.

1. **MTAC Conflict Resolution Procedures.** In accordance with the MTAC State Bylaws, Article IV, Section 21, all MTAC members are encouraged to make every effort to resolve conflicts through direct communication among the involved parties, or at the Branch level, so long as such resolution of the conflict does not affect the State Rights of a member. For any conflicts that involve State Rights, such conflicts must be submitted directly to the State Board of Directors, first through the appropriate Branch Liaison. State Rights include State membership rights, State voting rights, eligibility to participate in State programs, and holding State office. The policies and procedures regarding conflict resolution for the organization are contained in the MTAC’s ***Conflict Resolution Procedures & Disciplinary Guidelines*** (forthcoming).

2. **CM Conflict Resolution Procedures.** Any conflicts that specifically arise from the Certificate of Merit program must follow the process set forth below. **Any conflict or complaint reports received that do not follow these procedures will not be accepted, responded to, or considered by, the CM Branch Chair, Branch Board of Directors, or CM Council:**
- (a) All conflicts or complaints should first be addressed by direct communications between all the involved parties. Only conflicts or complaints which are serious and cannot be resolved directly by the involved parties should be submitted on a prescribed Conflict Report Form (Appendix A) to the CM Branch Chair.
  - (b) If the conflict or complaint cannot be resolved by the involved parties, the person reporting a conflict or complaint (“Complaining Party”) must submit a completed CM Conflict Report Form (see Appendix A) to the CM Branch Chair. The CM Conflict Report Form must be submitted within **three (3) months** of the alleged incident, or will not be accepted or reviewed by the CM Branch Chair, Branch Board of Directors, or CM Council. Anonymous reports are not accepted.
  - (c) The CM Branch Chair shall evaluate the contents of the Conflict Report Form to ensure that it is complete and signed by the Complaining Party.
  - (d) The CM Branch Chair shall present the Conflict Report Form to the Branch Board of Directors for review, consideration, and resolution. The Branch President and CM Branch Chair must both sign the form. If the Branch Board requires further investigation in order to make a determination, the Branch Board MUST follow the procedures contained in the MTAC’s ***Conflict Resolution Guidelines & Disciplinary Procedures***. The Defending Party must be notified of the complaint before the Branch Board proceeds to make any evaluation or determination.
  - (e) If the conflict or complaint cannot be resolved at the Branch Board level within **two (2) months** of receiving the Conflict Report Form, the CM Branch Chair shall submit the Conflict Report Form and any other relevant documentation to their CM Council Branch Liaison Chair. The Complaining Party and Defending Party must be notified.
  - (f) The CM Council Branch Liaison Chair shall work with the CM Branch Chair to resolve the situation, and if it cannot be resolved among them, the matter shall be submitted to the CM Conflict Resolution Committee. The Complaining Party and Defending Party must be notified.
  - (g) The CM Conflict Resolution Committee (composed of CM Council members, including the CM Coordinator and CM Assistant Coordinator or Information Chair), shall make the final evaluation and determination for resolving the complaint or conflict. CM Council will notify the Complaining Party and Defending Party of its final determination.
  - (h) Matters that cannot be resolved by the CM Council, or which the CM Council has determined affect the State Rights of a member or members, shall be submitted to the State Board for final evaluation and determination. The State Board will notify the Complaining Party and Defending Party of its final determination.

For CM-related conflicts or complaints only – where the deadlines for submission or review may conflict in the MTAC’s ***Conflict Resolution Guidelines & Disciplinary Procedures***, the CM’s Conflict Resolution Procedures shall govern. In all other respects, the MTAC’s ***Conflict Resolution Guidelines & Disciplinary Procedures*** shall govern.

**If a member is uncertain as to whether their conflict or complaint is CM-related or is a matter that may affect State Rights, please contact the CM Branch Chair.**

# Appendix A

## CM Conflict Report Form

Date of Conflict or Complaint:

Time of Conflict or Complaint:

Name of Complaining Party:

Name of Branch:

Name of CM Branch Chair:

Name of CM Council Branch Liaison:

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Complaining Party's Contact Information:

Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

Complaining Party's Relationship to/Role in Branch:

Complaining Party's Relationship to/Role in MTAC State:

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Name of Defending Party:

Defending Party's Relationship to/Role in Branch:

Defending Party's Relationship to/Role in MTAC State:

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Incident Description *(use back side of page or staple pages to this Form)*:

Cite State or Branch Bylaws, Polices or Procedures that were allegedly violated by Defending Party:

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Signature of Complaining Party

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Date

*By signing below, the Branch Board verifies that it has accepted and reviewed the submission of this Conflict Report Form. This Form must be signed if the Conflict is submitted to CM Council.*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
Branch President (Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ )

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Date

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
CM Branch Chair (Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ )

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Date