

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT POLICY, 2008-2009
(Revised July, 2008)

The Certificate of Merit Policy is designed to help the CM Council and the Branch Chairs carry out the duties of each office and to establish uniformity throughout the State. Its purpose is to clarify and update the instructions in the syllabus for each discipline. Where the syllabi and Policy conflict, the Policy prevails.

I. TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS

- 1) Active, provisional, student and Cal Plan teacher members in good standing may register students for all programs available through CM within the teacher's MTAC-approved discipline. Path A registration is limited to teachers who are affiliated with an MTAC branch within the state of California.
- 2) An MTAC teacher may enter only within their approved discipline and only in the instrument(s) listed in the state directory. The State Membership Secretary must approve a teacher for additional instruments.
- 3) The MTAC teacher must be the primary teacher of all students they enter. The primary teacher is one who personally teaches a student on a regular basis for the majority of lessons.
- 4) Teachers may only enter students for whom they serve as the primary teachers. If a teacher enters students outside of this policy, all registered students of that teacher may be disqualified.
- 5) Any teacher who does not follow this current CM Policy, the procedures set forth in the CM Syllabus for their discipline or the MTAC Code of Ethics, is in jeopardy of losing their "good standing" status and may forfeit their privilege of participating in CM.

II. STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND REGISTRATION

- 1) A CM student may be any age and must be studying with an MTAC teacher in good standing.
- 2) A student may enter the program at any level, may skip levels, may remain at the same level or may move back to a previous level. The teacher shall make the determination of level.
- 3) Participation and eligibilities in CM will not be interrupted if a student changes teachers before registration, providing study continues with an MTAC teacher. The student will be evaluated at the branch of the new teacher. The names of both teachers will be listed if the student is selected for a Convention program. [A student who has been registered for an upcoming CM evaluation](#), but takes the evaluation while with a new teacher must have the consent of the previous teacher to participate in CM. This consent is given by filling out a Transfer of Teacher form, which is signed by both teachers. The new teacher must ensure that the student's online records are transferred.

III. REGISTRATION

- 1) All Certificate of Merit Fees are nonrefundable.
- 2) Teachers must complete their registration online by November 15 and [must submit fees along with a copy of their student list and student fees list to the Branch Chair no later than November 16](#). Branch Chairs will submit the total branch registration fee to the State by December 15.
- 3) THERE IS NO LATE REGISTRATION!

IV. GENERAL POLICIES

- 1) All communication or questions regarding a student's Certificate of Merit experience (including status of registration, evaluation, honors selection, convention application or results) must be directed through this line of communication:
 - a) Parent ... if needed, the parent will refer to the
 - b) Teacher... if needed, the teacher will refer to the
 - c) Branch Chair... if needed, the Branch Chair will refer to the
 - d) CM Council...the appropriate Chair; Evaluator, Recital, Database...if needed a referral will be made to the Conflict Resolution committee and or
 - e) State Coordinator...if needed to the State Board of Directors
- 2) It is unethical for either teacher or Chair to question an evaluator's decision by any means other than outlined in Policy IV-1. Any deviation from this procedure may be reviewed by the CM Council.
- 3) Evaluators will not discuss students' evaluations with [teachers, parents, students or door monitors](#). (See Policy IV, #1)
- 4) A *Conflict Resolution Committee* will mediate all written, dated, documented complaints about any aspect of Certificate of Merit that are submitted to the CM Council at least five days before the Spring Council meeting. This committee shall include the CM Coordinator, Assistant Coordinator, North and South Evaluator Chairs, and one Council member to be appointed at the Council meeting. Items that cannot be resolved will be referred to State Board.
- 5) Permission to reproduce limited portions of all syllabi and the "Technical Requirements for Piano" is granted to MTAC members for their own personal use. A limited number of CM tests from previous years are available for purchase at the State Office [and may be photocopied](#).
- 6) All CM teachers must use the most current syllabi available. [Each teacher should own a copy in order to be thoroughly familiar with the many requirements of the CM Program](#).
- 7) Photocopied music is appropriate only in the following situations: To facilitate page turns and for confirmed out-of-print material. Confirmed out-of-print material must be accompanied by written permission from the publisher. Outside of this policy, students and accompanists are not allowed to bring photocopies to CM evaluations. [Any student who brings a photocopy into the CM evaluation room will not be heard by an evaluator, and will "remain at level."](#) Note: some music may be legally reproduced from a CD or the Internet; this music should include a logo of the publisher and/or a letter giving permission to use it. If an Internet website is used, the source (URL) must be provided.
- 8) Students must bring to auditions an original, published score of each piece being played. If the title and composer name are not in English, the teacher must include an English translation. When music is not memorized, the student must provide a second published score for the evaluator. In the absence of this score, no convention or branch honors performance will be approved.
- 9) A graduating high school senior in any discipline, Level 7 or above, who passes all phases of Path A CM for three years during grades 9-12, including the final year of high school, is eligible for a senior award. Exceptions may be made in special circumstances, such as early graduation, upon application to the CM Council and approval by the Branch Chair.
- 10) The senior award for vocalists will be also granted to an adult student who has completed Level 10, and has successfully passed Path A CM for at least three of the past four years.
- 11) A Young Artist Guild student is considered a graduate of the CM program and is eligible for the senior

award.

V. BRANCH EVALUATIONS: General Information

- 1) Branch Student Transfers. There will no longer be student evaluation transfers between branches. This does not affect Panel or [regionalized disciplines](#) (winds, voice or strings). Groups of students may be regionalized if there are not enough students to engage one evaluator for a whole day. The Branch Chairs and Discipline Chair will coordinate cases of a religious schedule conflict, on an individual basis. The teacher should refer to CM Policy V #2 for Make-up Evaluation criteria and procedures
- 2) Make-up Evaluation applications for students grades 9 – 12 may be made by the teacher by April 15, with the evaluation completed by [May 15th](#). Students maintain their future eligibility for senior award, panel, master class and Young Artist Guild, provided all requirements of the make-up are met. [Make-ups are for emergencies only such as illness or injury. Not being prepared is not an acceptable reason for MUP.](#) Students are not eligible for Branch honors, Convention, or Panel during the year of the make-up exam. There is a fee for a make-up evaluation. [The Make-up Procedure and form is available online.](#)
- 3) Parents and/or teachers shall not be present in the same room as their child/student during branch evaluation unless accompanying and then only for that part of the evaluation. [Parents should not be listening through the doors or watching through windows.](#)
- 4) When Path A evaluations are held in a home or private studio, no student should be evaluated in his/her own teacher's studio.
- 5) Branches will purchase the ear-training materials for all disciplines and retain them at the branch. [Ear Training CD's are not available to individual teachers.](#)
- 6) Teachers must fill out the online evaluation report forms completely and correctly, paying close attention to the piece chosen from the syllabus so that compliance with level requirements may be verified. The Branch, CM Council, and State Board of Directors are not responsible for teacher errors. Eligibilities for branch honors and convention recitals must be [carefully checked by the teacher.](#)
- 7) Students must take the theory examination each year of participation in CM. At the Advanced level, a student in Grade 9 or above who passes the theory examination with a score of 90% or higher is exempt from taking it in subsequent years. There is no exemption for voice students.
- 8) If a student is evaluated at another branch or at regional evaluations for any discipline, the \$5 branch registration fee, [plus the branch surcharge](#), should follow the student to the receiving branch or regional center. [The student should pay the difference if the branch surcharge of the receiving branch is more. All fees should go through the branch treasurer.](#)
- 9) Branches may require the involvement of teachers who enter students in Path A CM, and may establish a fee for non-involvement. Should the teacher violate his/her Branches' procedures and/or policy, and refuse to pay the fine by the deadline set by the individual branch, the teacher will be disqualified from participating in CM, both Path A and Path B, until the fee is paid. This is in accordance with the MTAC State Bylaw Article III, Section 12 [and MTAC Standing Rule A, #7.](#)
- 10) All students are entitled to know their own evaluation results in a timely manner. Teachers are required

to review and give their students the results of their Evaluations soon after the results are released. The theory tests must remain with the branch chair until all CM testing is complete statewide (in early April). [If a student leaves a teacher, they may receive their results from the Branch Chair.](#)

- 11) Taped accompaniments will be allowed for strings, winds and voice branch evaluations for levels 1-7 only. Levels 8 through Advanced must use live accompaniment. Literature performed for branch honors or convention programs must be accompanied live by a pianist or other instrumentalist.

VI. BRANCH EVALUATORS

- 1) Branch evaluators shall be contracted by Evaluator Chairs using the current State-approved list.
- 2) The Evaluator Chair will assign the branch evaluation dates and will try not to assign evaluators to the same branch for two years in a row
- 3) Branch evaluators shall not be asked to complete any paperwork other than official CM forms.
- 4) Evaluators shall be paid solely through the CM contract and under the current fee schedule with no further compensation except as outlined in Policy VI-5 below. [Evaluator payment is based on per hour fee as follows: After 3 hours work, \(1\) One 15 minute paid break. After 5 hours work, \(1\) One 15 minute paid break plus 45 minute lunch period. After 6 hours work, \(2\) Two 15 minute breaks plus 45 minute lunch period.](#)
- 5) If a student misses his/her evaluations due to circumstances beyond his/her control, the branch chair may ask an evaluator to hear the student at the evaluator's convenience. This could be during a scheduled "no show" or at the end of the day. It will be the evaluator's decision to hear or not hear the student. The evaluator must not be asked to give up his/her lunch or break periods. It will be the branch's responsibility to pay the evaluator for the extra evaluation at the end of the same evaluation day. This negotiation must take place only between the evaluator and the branch chair. Neither other teachers nor parents may be involved. The evaluator need not be the one with whom the student was originally scheduled. All other CM policies continue to apply, and the branch must keep appropriate records.
- 6) Evaluators are required to complete a *Remain at Level* form for any student who does not pass the performance section of CM. If two or more segments are evaluated as Weak, including technique and sight reading, the student will receive a Remain at Level rating even if the repertoire is impeccable. [The repertoire is worth two segments. The student may now receive a Remain at Level if only the Repertoire is weak.](#)
- 7) Every branch must designate a separate chair for each discipline (piano, strings, wind, voice) in which the branch has registered students. Each piano, string, wind, and voice chair will receive information directly from the appropriate council representative.

VII. BRANCH EVALUATIONS: Theory, Sight reading, Ear training, Repertoire

- 1) Theory tests, ear training and sight reading materials are not to be distributed or seen by teachers or students before the testing date. Students are not to take the written test from the testing area without supervision. Tests are not to be released to students until all evaluations are completed in the state of California.
- 2) The sight reading portion of the Path A CM exam will be administered in the evaluation room without

the student seeing the materials in advance. The student will have 30 seconds to study the sight reading example (Voice levels 7-10, exception, please see the 2007 syllabus).

- 3) The following are NOT ACCEPTABLE for evaluation:
 - a. A piece improvised by a student instead of a published repertoire piece
 - b. Arrangements of ragtime or pop tunes. Exception: all pieces within a keyboard syllabus collection are eligible.
 - c. Original unpublished compositions
 - d. Arrangements of Classical pieces for keyboard (these *are* allowed for keyboard ensemble)
 - e. Concerti for keyboard students (certain Bach Concerti are acceptable: A Major – BWV 1055; E Major BWV 1053; f minor BWV 1056; d minor BWV 1052; g minor BWV 1058)
- 4) Repertoire requirements must be followed for each discipline as listed in each syllabus.
- 5) Students are responsible for all the technique requirements listed at their level in the syllabus.
- 6) Keyboard students may include an improvisation of from 5 to 60 seconds. It will not replace any element of technique or any other requirement. Improvisation is optional and will not be rated by the evaluator. Any Improvisation is acceptable; please refer to the MTAC Website under Improvisation. The allowed time for the evaluation will not be changed; if the time limit is exceeded, the student's rating will be affected.
- 7) Oratorio arias and sonatas need not be memorized by non-keyboard students, except that strings must memorize Baroque Sonatas. Keyboard ensemble pieces need not be memorized.
- 8) Memorization for wind instruments is optional for all CM programs.

VIII. BRANCH HONORS AND CONVENTION PROGRAMS

- 1) State convention programs are for elementary, junior high, high school and adult students. Adults may not apply for Panel (exception: voice students are eligible for all programs up to age 25.)
- 2) Students may apply for only one CM convention program per year per instrument. However, Panel applicants may apply for Convention Festival, Materials or Theme Recitals in case they are not selected for Panel. Guidelines and requirements for Convention Recitals may be found on the teacher home page of the CM Data base.
- 3) Teachers are responsible for complying with all rules printed on the online convention application and must complete the two-step online application.
- 4) All Path A requirements must be met and administered in the manner set forth by the CM Council and State Board in order for the student to be eligible for any convention program. A no-show student will not be allowed to participate in the Convention recitals for two years, and that other students of that teacher might also not be allowed to participate.
- 5) Any teacher who does not follow the current CM Policy or the guidelines as set forth in the CM Syllabi makes the student ineligible for any special CM program including: Branch Honors, Convention Festival Recitals, Materials Recitals, Theme Recitals, Ensembles Recitals, Panel Honors, Master Class, and Young Artist Guild.
- 6) Students must pass both the written theory examination and the performance portion of the CM

evaluation to be eligible for branch honors and/or convention programs; the theory score must be 80% or higher although the passing score is 70%. Students must receive “good” or “excellent” ratings for both technique and sight reading to be eligible for any convention performance. Exception: panel students are not required to sight read.

7) Branches may set their own requirements for Branch Honors. However, students must provide original music for evaluators in order to play at any Branch Honors (see Policy IV, 8).

IX. BRANCH OR REGIONAL PANEL AUDITIONS

- 1) Panel auditions are for outstanding students worthy of State recognition. Only students of exceptional quality should be enrolled for Panel consideration.
- 2) Teachers who enroll Panel students are responsible for the information found in the current *Panel Pamphlet*. It is available online at www.mtac.org. Click on “Certificate of Merit” --- “CM Policies, Panel Information ...” --- Panel Information or <http://www.mtac.org/programs/CMforms/index.shtml>
- 3) Refer to the Panel Pamphlet for all other information.

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