

CHANGES IN THE AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR 2008

One of the most far-reaching changes in the AGO certification requirements for 2008 is the new *2007 Revised Examination Hymn Booklet*, which incorporates developments in hymnody since the 1992 edition and the 1997 Service Playing Test Supplement. Please be aware that the 2007 edition *supersedes the 1997 Hymn Booklet, which is no longer valid, including any references that may appear in study guides, manuals of procedures, etc.* The Hymn Booklet is free, and may be ordered from AGO Headquarters after July 1, 2007. It is hoped that AGO exam candidates will find a delightful variety of hymns and psalms from which to choose. Many thanks to Certification Committee member Ken Grinnell, FAGO, ChM, his distinguished hymn consultants, including Carl Daw from the Hymn Society, Morgan Simmons, Austin Lovelace, AAGO, Walter Hilse, FAGO, and others, and the NPM representatives Paul Skevington and Claudette Schiratti, AAGO, for compiling this resource!

The new 2007 Hymn Booklet impacts the Service Playing Certificate Test at S 2. Transposition, S 3. Hymn Playing, and S 4. Psalm Accompaniment. Also note that under S3, the required hymn for NPM candidates has been changed to "Lead me, guide me," No. 21 in the 2007 edition. AGO candidates now have four and NPM candidates have two choices in various styles of psalm singing for the required psalm at S 4. NPM candidates may choose Psalm 22 (Guimont) or Psalm 33/34 (Gelineau). The Hymn Booklet indicates which psalms require a singer.

Under CAGO, the new hymn resource affects C 4. Hymn Playing, for which the AGO candidates will play TWO hymns chosen from the *2007 Revised Examination Hymn*

Booklet. NPM candidates are required to play ONE hymn from the *2007 Revised Examination Hymn Booklet* and substitute James J. Chepponis's "Melodic Gloria" (order from G.I.A., No. G-2955) as the second hymn choice. This liturgical selection for NPM candidates has been moved to C4 from C3, the accompaniment of a vocal solo. All AGO and NPM candidates will now play the required C3 solo. At C 8. No. c., the improvisation hymn bridge selections will be taken from the 2007 Hymn Booklet.

In the AAGO requirements at A6, *The candidate will prepare a hymn of choice (from a U. S. hymnal, with English text, readily available in print) as though leading a large enthusiastic congregation. He or she will introduce the hymn followed by two stanzas bridged by an interlude. The introduction and interlude may be original, selected from published repertoire or improvised. Contrast between the two stanzas and sensitivity to the character of the text and tune will be expected. [As a creative option,] the candidate may choose to include an interlude in the form of a modulatory bridge with a change of key for the second stanza.* Please note that the AAGO candidate is required to furnish either two hymnals or legal copies of the chosen hymn at the exam site for the examiners.

The AAGO hymn playing requirement is a return to earlier times when playing a hymn was required of AAGO candidates. Leading congregational singing is the top priority for church organists at every level.

The addition of the AAGO hymn requirement produces a scoring change: all keyboard skills items on the AAGO Section I from A2 through A7 are now worth 10 points, with no 15-point items.

On the FAGO exam, *The Art of Fugue* is no longer the source for F3. Open Score Reading. The level of difficulty for the example remains the same; it is still a good idea to practice score-reading with C clefs in *The Art of Fugue*.

Because of increased production and mailing costs, the Examination Fees have been raised slightly; the increase is applicable to all exam applications submitted after July 1, 2007.

Candidates should be informed of the deadlines for submitting applications, for requesting cancellations, for receiving refunds, minus non-refundable processing fees, and for requesting a single postponement (CAGO only). Please study carefully the sections on Application Procedures and Examination Fees for the selected exam.

As always, candidates are urged to make full use of the AGO study materials and the previous five years of tests available from AGO Headquarters (see page 6 of every TAO and order from www.agohq.org/store or 800-AGO-5115). Tried and true tactics, such as studying with a good teacher, working with a study buddy, frequently recording exam repertoire and hymns, and playing for study partners and friends, build confidence and self-awareness, increasing the chances for success. Do start work early on skills such as transposition, harmonization, and improvisation. Also practice working out the tests within the time limits!

For questions, contact info@agohq.org. Best wishes, AGO exam candidates!

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