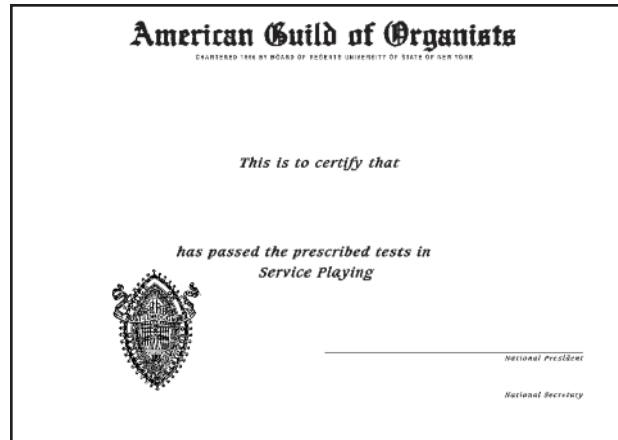




AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS  
**MANUAL OF PROCEDURE FOR  
THE SERVICE PLAYING TEST**



This manual of procedure has been developed to facilitate candidates' preparation for the examination and to aid in ensuring fair and orderly administration of the examinations by the chapter dean, the examination coordinator, the proctors, and the examiners. While some adaptation to specific circumstances can be expected and should be allowed, any significant modification of these procedures must first be approved by the Director of the Committee on Professional Certification.

The manual has been written in formal language and arranged in legal fashion in order to convey the intent that the examination be conducted in a precise and professional manner consistent with the standards of the Guild. Each person involved in the examination—dean, coordinator, proctor, and candidate—should read the entire manual carefully and thoroughly, with particular attention to the section directed to his or her specific role. In addition, if a singer will be assisting in the test, he or she should be made thoroughly familiar with those aspects of the test surrounding the psalmody question.

While maintaining an orderly testing procedure is the goal of the manual, each person involved in the test is reminded that the foundation of the Guild's entire certification program rests on people and exists for their benefit. Each person should deal, and be dealt with, fairly and sensitively, especially where the candidate's needs, aims, and interests are concerned.

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***Each candidate and coordinator/proctor should become thoroughly familiar with the entire contents of this manual by reading it carefully several times.***

## Legend:



coordinator



proctor



candidate



organ



recording



singer

## NOTES/SCHEDULE/ADDRESSES



Overview

## DEAN/COORDINATOR

The success of the Guild's certification program depends in large part on the careful organization and fair and competent supervision of the examination process. The chapter dean, and/or the local chapter's designated examination coordinator, is the person responsible for making certain that these procedures are followed scrupulously, with everything being done well, promptly, with complete integrity, and with fairness to the candidate.

Coordinator's responsibilities

### BEGINNING OCTOBER 1

1.1 The chapter dean, or the designated examination coordinator, shall be responsible for organizing and administering any tests for the Service Playing Certificate (SPC). The SPC may be given at any local AGO chapter.

First duties

1.2 The dean and/or coordinator (hereafter referred to only as "coordinator") shall read thoroughly, this manual and the test requirements published in the previous July issue of THE AMERICAN ORGANIST Magazine or available as a pdf on the certification area of the Guild's website.

1.3 The coordinator shall refer potential candidates to the Guild's website for further information concerning the SPC test and related materials.

1.4 The coordinator shall publicize the information concerning the test and shall publicize the procedure for submitting applications through chapter newsletters and announcements at chapter meetings.

### TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE TEST DAY CHOSEN BY CANDIDATE(S)

Confirm the test date

2.1 The coordinator shall confirm the test date and alternate date selected by the candidate. (The SPC test may be given at any time between October 1 and March 31, inclusive.) The coordinator shall also confirm the time and place requested by the candidate. Where two or more persons apply to take the test, the coordinator shall attempt to identify a single date, time, and place agreeable to all; however, different candidates may take the test on different dates and at different sites.

The test site



The organ

2.2 The coordinator shall make arrangements with a church or school for a place to conduct the test. Whenever possible, any preference expressed by the candidate in this regard shall be honored, *including the candidate's choice of site*. The use of a pipe organ is strongly recommended, but in cases where none is available, an electronic organ may be used, provided it is adequate to the performance of the required repertoire. The organ on which the candidate plays regularly may be used, if it meets this standard. In



Rehearsal time

The organ should be in good repair and in tune.

Quiet is imperative!

Who appoints the proctor(s)?



Characteristics of a good proctor



Setting up to record

the event that two or more candidates are scheduled to take the test on the same day and at the same location, or in cases where a singer is employed for the psalmody portion of a test, the coordinator shall arrange for the use of a "waiting room." The waiting room shall be used by the singer (who is permitted in the examination room only for item S 3) and by each candidate awaiting his or her turn to take the test. The waiting room should be completely isolated from the sound of the organ. Furthermore, the test site organ and test site should exhibit the following characteristics:

- (1) a variety of stops sufficient for proper performance of the specified organ pieces, hymns, psalm and anthem accompaniments, and sight-reading test.
- (2) the availability of practice time during the days immediately preceding the test. *(A minimum of two hours practice time is to be allotted to each candidate.)*
- (3) good tuning and mechanical condition, with the likelihood that the organ will remain in that state throughout the practice and test period. Neither the national Guild, nor the local chapter, nor the candidate, nor any other Guild member shall be liable for any expenses incurred in the tuning or repairing of the test instrument.
- (4) freedom from loud noises and other disturbances, including audible and visual distractions in or near the test area.

2.3 The coordinator shall appoint one or two proctors, as needed, who are members of the Guild in good standing. Proctors' responsibilities include: operating the recording equipment, administering the test, escorting the singer to and from the room (if a singer is employed for the psalmody question), and turning pages for the candidate, if this is requested. Individual circumstances will dictate whether one proctor is needed to accomplish these tasks, or two. In most situations, a single proctor will suffice, although the presence of a second may be desirable, especially where controls for the recording equipment are far removed from the organ console. In any case, proctors should be selected on the basis of their ability to conduct the examinations in a responsible and precise manner, while doing everything possible to set the candidate at ease. *No proctor may be appointed who has assisted in preparing any of the candidates.*

2.4 The coordinator shall arrange for the availability and set-up of recording equipment. High-quality in-house recording facilities are desirable. If these are not available, equally high-quality equipment shall be brought in and set up. Recommended equipment and instructions for recording are to be found in Appendix A.



Making arrangements

## ONE MONTH BEFORE TEST DAY CHOSEN BY CANDIDATE(S)

3.1 The coordinator shall confirm arrangements with the church or school chosen as the test site, and shall ascertain the days and times when the instrument will be available for practice, as well as the method by which the candidates may schedule their practice periods.

3.2 The coordinator shall have received from each candidate a duplicate copy of the application form sent to national headquarters. This form will include the titles of all organ pieces, hymns, psalm, and anthem accompaniments chosen by each candidate. It will also indicate whether a singer will be present for the psalmody portion of the test.

Test schedule



3.3 The coordinator shall compile a list of candidates and prepare a schedule of tests (see Appendix B for a sample schedule). The coordinator shall send a copy of this list and the test schedule both to the proctor and to the church or school where the tests are to be given. The proctor should also be sent, at this time, the titles of the organ pieces, hymns, psalm, and anthems to be played by each candidate, and should be notified as to whether a singer has been engaged and will be present for the psalmody portion of each test.

Send test information in writing to candidate(s)



3.4 The coordinator shall contact each candidate in writing, notifying each one of the location of the test, the available times for practice (emphasizing that a minimum of two hours is allowed for each candidate), the name and telephone number of the person or office to contact in order to schedule practice time, the exact time of the candidate's test, and the location of the "waiting room," where the candidate is to wait immediately prior to the test, and where the singer (if any) is to wait until he or she is summoned by the proctor. Where there are several candidates, the coordinator may allot a certain number of general combination pistons (a minimum of three) to each candidate. In any event, the coordinator shall remind candidates that registrations should be kept as simple as possible in order to reduce the time required for setting combination pistons.

Anonymity of candidate(s)

3.5 The coordinator shall not, under any circumstances, publicize the list of candidates, as some may prefer anonymity.

3.6 The coordinator shall receive from National Headquarters, the Sight-Reading test, a code for each candidate, and a reminder that the Manual of Procedure is available online.



Double check the arrangements



Assess organ and recording equipment



Blank CD or tape received  
Purchase mailing materials



Were the recordings mailed?

Write a note of thanks

Publicize the success of candidate(s)

Cancellations



The proctor sets the tone.

## ONE WEEK BEFORE TEST DAY CHOSEN BY CANDIDATE(S)

4.1 The coordinator shall reconfirm the arrangements and the schedule with the school or church where the test is to be given, and, in addition, shall confirm the schedule with the proctor(s), making any adjustments necessitated by candidate cancellations.

4.2 The coordinator shall personally assess the organ and recording equipment to be used, to ensure that they are in good working order, and will be in the appropriate place on the day of the test.

4.3 The coordinator shall receive from each candidate a blank CD or tape with forty-five minutes playing time on each side, and shall purchase (with chapter funds) a padded mailing envelope, large enough to contain all candidates' recordings, which shall be used to mail the completed tests to the Certification Program office.

4.4 The coordinator shall give the blank tapes or CDs, the application forms, the announcement format, the sight-reading test, and the mailing envelope to the proctor(s). The coordinator shall also give the proctor detailed information on the location and specifications of the recording equipment.

## AFTER THE TEST

5.1 The coordinator shall make certain that the proctor has mailed the recorded examinations and the application forms to the Certification Program office promptly.

5.2 The coordinator should acknowledge, preferably in writing, the assistance of the proctor(s) and the permission of the church or school to use its facilities.

5.3 The coordinator shall work with the dean of the local chapter to devise appropriate means of publicizing the achievement of successful candidates. Recognition in the chapter newsletter and at chapter meetings is encouraged.

5.4 When a candidate cancels a test, the coordinator shall have the final authority to determine, on the basis of the timing of the cancellation and the reasons given for it, whether rescheduling the test is warranted. The test must be completed before March 31.

## PROCTOR

*Prompt, helpful, and efficient conduct of the Service Playing test will do much to ensure that the candidate is given every advantage. Throughout the entire procedure, the proctor is expected to treat the candidate with courtesy, displaying sensitivity to any anxieties the candidate may have. During the*





*test, the proctor should refrain from making any sounds or movements which might distract the candidate in any way. Finally, the proctor should remember that the Guild's professionalism is very much at stake in the way the test is administered.* (The following paragraphs refer to the *primary* proctor where there are two; a secondary proctor may be employed to operate the recording equipment, as noted in paragraph 2.3).

**TWO MONTHS BEFORE TEST DAY  
CHOSEN BY CANDIDATE(S)**

6.1 The proctor shall be appointed by the chapter dean and shall be answerable to the dean or the designated examination coordinator.

**ONE MONTH BEFORE TEST DAY  
CHOSEN BY CANDIDATE(S)**

7.1 The proctor shall receive from the coordinator the following items:

- (a) a list of the candidates to be tested
- (b) a schedule of the day's tests
- (c) the titles of each candidate's organ pieces, hymns, psalm, and anthem accompaniments
- (d) information regarding the presence of singers (if any) for the psalmody questions

**ONE WEEK BEFORE TEST DAY  
CHOSEN BY CANDIDATE(S)**

8.1 The proctor shall receive confirmation of the schedule from the coordinator, and shall also receive the following:

- (a) a blank tape or CD for each candidate
- (b) an application form for each candidate
- (c) an announcement format (see Appendix D)
- (d) a copy of the sight-reading test
- (e) a mailing envelope
- (f) any information necessary to set up and operate the recording equipment properly.

**TEST DAY**

9.1 The proctor shall arrive one hour in advance of the first test in order to locate the recording equipment, place the microphones, set volume levels for recording, and prepare to record the first test. The proctor shall also make certain that the "waiting room" is open and that the organ is ready for the test. No practice is to be scheduled on the test organ during the hour preceding the first test.

9.2 No one shall be present at the test except the candidate, the proctor or proctors, and, at his or her own discretion, the examination coordinator. If a singer is employed for item S 3, he or

Information and test schedules

Confirmation of schedule and necessary test items



Arrive early!

Who can be present?



The candidate is escorted to the organ. Repertoire and editions confirmed  
Announcement format  
Order of performance



Transposition  
Announce by interval, not key

No marks allowed on music

Begin playing after announcement of interval of transposition

Psalm accompaniment



Stop recording only while singer enters and leaves

she may enter the room *for that portion of the test only*, remaining in the waiting room during the rest of the test. *The proctor shall serve as page turner if requested to do so by the candidate, but may not assist the candidate with registration changes.*

9.3 The proctor shall escort the candidate to the organ five minutes prior to the scheduled start of the test. Before starting the test, the proctor shall confirm with the candidate the correctness of all information on the application form concerning the titles of the compositions and the editions being used. When the candidate is ready to play, the proctor shall start the recording equipment, and following the announcement format, shall announce the candidate's code number *with no reference to name or gender*, the make and approximate size of the organ, and the first piece. The test must be played in the order specified in the test requirements, and the proctor shall continue to announce each portion of the test, following the announcement format precisely. Each organ piece and anthem is to be identified by title, composer, and edition; titles are sufficient for the hymns and psalm. See Appendix D.

9.4 For item S 2, the transposition question, the proctor shall choose two keys in which the candidate is to play the hymn he or she has selected for this purpose, and shall announce each transposition on the recording before the candidate begins to play. The proctor should not identify the key by name, *but rather by the interval of transposition*. Thus, for example, the proctor should announce, "The candidate will play the hymn one whole step up," not "The candidate will play the hymn in F-sharp major." The proctor is reminded that, according to the test requirements, there are four possible transpositions for the hymn: up a major second, up a minor second, down a major second, and down a minor second. The first transposition shall be up and the second down. The proctor shall examine the music to be used for this portion of the test to make certain that no marks of any kind have been made on the page. The candidate is not permitted to play the hymn first in the original key. The proctor shall monitor the playing of each transposition in order to verify that the candidate is indeed playing in the key requested. Since the candidate has had the opportunity to select and prepare the transposition in advance, he or she should *begin playing as soon as the interval of transposition is announced*.

9.5 After the candidate has completed item S 2 (the hymn for transposition), and before proceeding to item S 3 (the psalm accompaniment), if the psalm chosen by the candidate requires a singer for performance, the proctor should stop the recording. At this point, the proctor is to summon the singer from the waiting room, and escort the singer to the test area before restarting the recording. After the completion of item S 3, the recording should again be stopped, and the singer escorted from the room before the recording is resumed. If the psalm chosen does not require a singer, the recording need not be stopped. *At no other time is the recording to be stopped, except in the case of an emergency.*





Sight-reading

Time between test items

Test is completed.

No comments, please.

Rewind/insert CD or tape

Please mail test recordings immediately.



Overview

Where to find answers to questions

Who can take the SPC test?

9.6 After the completion of item S 7 (offertory piece), the proctor shall place the sight-reading test on the music rack. The proctor will announce that the candidate has sixty seconds in which to scan the test, at the end of which time the proctor shall signal the candidate to begin playing. *Use of pedals for the sight-reading test is optional.*

9.7 The candidate shall be permitted a reasonable period of time (between sixty and ninety seconds) in which to move from one part of the test to another. This should be sufficient for arranging scores and setting registrations.

9.8 At the conclusion of the test, the proctor shall dismiss the candidate. The proctor shall refrain from making any comment to the candidate concerning his or her playing. If the examination has been recorded on tape, the proctor shall rewind the tape. The proctor shall label the recording with the candidate's code number, and prepare a new tape or CD for recording the next test. Five minutes in advance of the second test, the proctor shall proceed to the waiting room and escort the next candidate to the organ.

9.9 At the end of all the Service Playing tests, the proctor shall pack all recordings, each of which shall be carefully labeled with the appropriate candidate's code number, and with the appropriate application form attached, and shall mail them to the Certification Program office in the padded mailing envelope provided by the local examination coordinator. The recordings should be sent by a rapid delivery agency, and should be sent promptly, so as to avoid any delays in the grading process.

## CANDIDATE

One reason for compiling in a single manual all of the instructions concerning procedure for a certification examination is to give the candidate a complete picture of the examination process. The Guild's certification program exists for the benefit of individual candidates, and it is each candidate's right to have everything done thoroughly and in order. It is the candidate's responsibility to study carefully the test requirements published in the July issue of THE AMERICAN ORGANIST Magazine or available separately from National Headquarters. Should there be any point which the candidate does not fully understand, he or she should request an explanation or clarification from the Certification Program Administrator at [exams@agohq.org](mailto:exams@agohq.org) or the local examination coordinator.

## SEPTEMBER 1

10.1 In compliance with the AGO's status as an educational, not-for-profit organization, examinations are open to members and non-members. Candidates who do not hold current Guild membership will pay an additional fee. Candidates who seek dual certification with



Time frame for the SPC test

How to set up the test

Application form

Submitting the applications

Psalmody



Securing a singer

Who cannot serve as singer

Dual AGO/NPM requirements

the National Association of Pastoral Musicians, however, must be members of that organization and must have paid their current dues.

## TWO MONTHS BEFORE TAKING THE TEST

11.1 The candidate shall contact the local dean or examination coordinator, and shall request a date (not earlier than October 1 nor later than March 31) and, if desired, a place for taking the test. When two or more persons indicate their intention to take the test, the coordinator shall attempt to arrange a single date and place agreeable to all candidates; however, different candidates may take the test on different dates and at different locations.

11.2 The candidate shall write to National Headquarters to contact the Program Administrator at National Headquarters (exams@agohq.org) to request copies of the application form.

## ONE MONTH BEFORE TAKING THE TEST— NO LATER THAN FEBRUARY 1

12.1 The candidate shall submit two copies of the completed application form: one, together with the specified examination fee, to National Headquarters, the other to the local dean or examination coordinator. Candidates seeking dual certification with NPM must indicate this on the AGO application form. The candidate must also include on the application form the requested test date, as well as all details regarding the music to be played. Title, composer, and edition should be listed for each organ work and choral anthem, and titles of the psalm and the hymns selected for congregational accompaniment and for transposition should also be included.

12.2 The candidate should note that for item S 3, Psalmody, three of the four choices given in the Examination Hymn Booklet require that the psalm be sung as well as played. If a psalm requiring a singer is chosen, it is the candidate's responsibility to secure and prepare a competent singer for the test. The singer may be one with whom the candidate works regularly. Neither the local chapter nor the national Guild shall be liable for any expense incurred in the engagement of a singer. *Neither the proctor nor the candidate may serve as the singer.* If a singer is to be present at the test, this information should appear on the completed application form. If the candidate's chosen psalm does not require a singer, the candidate shall play the organ part as though accompanying a soloist and congregation.

12.3 Candidates seeking dual AGO/NPM certification should be sure to have selected the NPM requirements from among the various test options. These are clearly spelled out in the test requirements referred to above.



Receiving confirmation



Rehearsal time



Things to note

Order of test

Simple registrations



Transposition requirements

## THREE WEEKS BEFORE TAKING THE TEST

13.1 Shortly after submitting the application, the candidate shall receive from the local dean or coordinator a letter confirming the date, location, and exact time of the test, the location of the waiting room where the candidate is to appear no later than fifteen minutes prior to the appointed time of the test, the availability of practice time on the test organ (*with a minimum of two hours allowed*), and the name and telephone number of the person or office to contact regarding practice arrangements. The candidate shall be responsible for scheduling his or her own practice time. If there are problems with the organ, or if any other difficulties arise, the candidate should contact the examination coordinator or the chapter dean.

13.2 Depending on the recording technology used by the chapter, proctor, or exam site, the candidate shall purchase either a high quality tape or CD-R (CD Recordable). When using a cassette, one 90-minute tape (45 minutes on each side) is required for recording the entire test without changing sides. No later than one week prior to the test, the candidate shall give the tape or CD-R to the examination coordinator. Recordings made on DAT tapes shall be transferred to CD before sending the exam to the Certification Program office. The Guild does not have the necessary technology to accept or duplicate DAT tapes at this time.

13.3 In preparing for the test, the candidate should bear in mind the following:

- (a) The test must be played in the order specified in the requirements.
- (b) Complex registration is not expected, due to limited practice time. The candidate should note that if there are several candidates taking the test on the same day, the coordinator may allot a certain number of general combination pistons (a minimum of three) to each candidate.
- (c) The test is recorded, and the recording will run continuously except in cases of emergency, and before and after the psalmody item (S 3) when the psalm chosen requires a singer, as outlined in paragraph 9.5.
- (d) Transpositions shall not be written out, nor may any kind of marks appear on the page of music used for transposing the hymn in item S 2. The candidate may, however, memorize the four possible transpositions of the hymn selected. The use of pedals is not required in the transpositions, but pedals may be used if the candidate desires. The hymn for transposition shall not be played first in the original key.



Hymn playing techniques

Use pedals for at least one stanza.

Psalmody



Anthems

Sight-Reading

- (e) For item S 5 and S 9, *Hymn Playing*, no introduction is required before the first stanza. No one will sing the hymn, but the candidate must show by means of registration and other techniques (manual changes, phrasing, articulation, use or non-use of pedals, etc.) that he or she is sensitive to the various musical requirements of two different stanzas of the text (or, in some cases, of verses and refrain). Other possible techniques include soloing the melody in one voice or another, artfully altering the texture by increasing or decreasing the number of voices, employing nonharmonic tones (such as passing tones or pedal points), and reharmonization. Creative additions to the hymns may be written out ahead of time, or may be drawn from published repertoire. *The use of pedals in at least one stanza is mandatory.* The candidate is urged to consult the SPC Study Guide for additional ideas on hymn playing.
- (f) For item S 3, *Psalmody*, the candidate is to play two verses of a psalm accompaniment as though it were being performed in a worship service. The *Examination Hymn Booklet* indicates clearly which psalms require a singer for performance in the test, and which do not. If the psalm chosen is one which requires no singer, no musical introduction need be played. In this case, the candidate plays the psalm as though accompanying a soloist who sings the verses and a congregation which sings the refrain. However, when a soloist is present to chant one of the psalms which requires a singer, a pitch may be given on the organ, or a brief introduction may be played before the singer begins. Where refrains are present, the candidate should treat them as congregational, registering them accordingly, but otherwise accompanying the soloist. If a singer is involved, he or she will be permitted in the room only for this portion of the test. The recording will be stopped both before and after the psalm, to allow the proctor time to escort the singer to and from the room.
- (g) For item S 4 and S 6, *Anthem Accompaniment*, the candidate is to play as though accompanying a choir, though no choir is present, and should shape the accompaniments accordingly.
- (h) The passage of music for item S 8, *Sight-Reading*, will be printed on two staves. It will be a specially composed piece approximately 8 to 12 measures in length, with some chromatic passages and exhibiting various aspects of contrapuntal voice leading, including ties, rests and contrary motion. Use of pedals is optional.



Be familiar with this entire manual.

Arrival at the test site



Setting pistons  
5 minutes allotted

Who can be present?

Confirming titles, composers and editions

Page turner

Announcement format (appendix D)

Time allowed between test items

Order of test items

Grading procedures and criteria

13.4 The candidate shall read all of the instructions in the manual which pertain to the organization and administration of the Service Playing Certificate test.

## TEST DAY

14.1 The candidate shall arrive in the waiting room no later than fifteen minutes prior to the test. At five minutes before the test begins, the proctor will escort the candidate to the organ, where he or she shall have five minutes to arrange music and set any combination pistons. The candidate is reminded once again that where a large number of candidates will be taking the test on the same day, the availability of pistons may be limited, with a minimum of three allotted to each candidate. In any case, the candidate should be prepared to reset his or her pistons in the five-minute period before the test begins.

14.2 The candidate, the proctor or proctors, and, at his or her discretion, the examination coordinator shall be the only persons in the room while the test is being recorded. If a singer is required for item S 3, he or she is permitted in the room only for that portion of the test, with the proctor stopping the recording as the singer enters and leaves the room. At all other times, the singer is to remain in the waiting room.

14.3 Before starting the test, the candidate shall confirm with the proctor the correctness of all information concerning the titles, composers, and editions being used.

14.4 The proctor shall turn pages for the candidate if requested to do so, *but may not assist the candidate with registration changes*.

14.5 When the candidate is ready to begin, the proctor shall follow the announcement format, stating aloud the candidate's code number, the make and approximate size of the organ, and the title, composer, and edition of the first piece. Thereafter, the proctor will continue to announce each new item on the test. The candidate will have a maximum of ninety seconds between items in which to rearrange scores and set registrations.

14.6 As they are announced by the proctor, the candidate shall play the various portions of the test, in the proper order, and according to details outlined in the test requirements and in Paragraph 13.3 above.

14.7 At the conclusion of the test, the candidate will be excused and the tape or CD prepared for mailing to the Certification Program office. Two members of the Board of Examiners, working independently, shall listen to the recording and evaluate the candidate's performance according to the point distribution on the examiner's mark sheet (see Appendix C). For NPM dual certification candidates, at least one of





the examiners will be a member of both AGO and NPM. The following are some of the qualities the examiners will be looking for:

- (a) clarity, rhythmic control, and musicality in all parts of the test.
- (b) awareness of appropriate styles of registration, tempo, and articulation, particularly in the repertoire pieces and anthems.
- (c) accuracy at a moderate and steady tempo (one beat = ca. 72) in the transposition.
- (d) convincing rhythm and good phrasing and breathing in the hymns, so as to contribute to effective support and leadership of a large (say, 350-member) and enthusiastic congregation in a medium-sized church space with moderate acoustical ambience.
- (e) in the psalm, sensitivity to text and music, pace and phrasing, whether with singer or without; contrast between solo passages and congregational refrains (where applicable), with clearly prepared congregational entrances (where applicable).
- (f) a vocal quality in the touch and phrase-shaping in the anthem accompaniments, together with good registrational practice and steadiness of tempo, particularly in passages with long note values.
- (g) maintenance of tempo, and accuracy of pitch and rhythm in the sight-reading test.

Passing the  
SPC test

14.8 In order to pass the Service Playing Certificate test, the candidate must secure at least 50% of the possible points on each individually numbered item on the test (see Appendix C for specific point allocation) and must earn an overall score of at least 70%.

Cancellations

14.9 If a candidate finds it necessary to cancel a test, no fees can be refunded. When the cancellation is absolutely unavoidable, the candidate shall consult with the local coordinator to ascertain the possibility of rescheduling the test. The coordinator shall have the final authority to determine whether the reason for cancellation warrants rescheduling. The test must be completed before March 31.

### THREE MONTHS AFTER TAKING THE TEST

Test results

15.1 The candidate shall be notified of the test results by letter within approximately three months of receipt of the recorded examination at the Certification Program office. The letter will be accompanied by a copy of the averaged grade scores and the examiners' comments. Because of the large number of tests graded by the examiners, written comments will necessarily be



Defective  
recording  
quality

Questions about  
grading

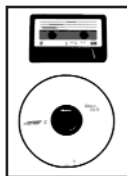
Success!

brief and limited in scope. Tapes and CDs will not be returned unless defects in the tape or problems in the recording process render them unacceptable to the examiners. In such instances, the candidate shall be reexamined at no additional cost.

15.2 All questions concerning the grading of the test should be addressed to the Director of the Committee on Professional Certification, c/o National Headquarters.

### **SIX MONTHS AFTER THE TEST**

16.1 Successful candidates shall receive their certificates within six months after taking the test. The list of those achieving certification will be published in an issue of *THE AMERICAN ORGANIST Magazine*, and local chapters are strongly urged to publicize their members' accomplishments in their chapter meetings and newsletters.



## APPENDIX A

### SUGGESTIONS FOR RECORDING THE SERVICE PLAYING TEST

1. The recording equipment should be in good working order and preferably not more than five years old.
2. If the recording equipment is battery-powered, make certain that the batteries are fresh and in good condition. If several tests are to be taped, have spare batteries on hand.
3. Two condenser microphones are preferred for stereo recording. If these are battery-powered, make certain that the batteries are fresh and in good condition. The microphones should be mounted on a stand, five to six feet above the floor (head level), and between 12 and 25 feet from the organ pipework. If the two microphones are attached by a stereo bar to a single stand, point them toward each other so as to form an inverted "V."
4. When attempting to determine the best placement for the microphones, consider the proctor's location when announcing the pieces during the test. Likewise, if a soloist is to sing the psalm in item S 3, at least one of the microphones should be positioned so as to pick up both voice and organ.
5. To test the recording level (see Paragraph 9.1), have someone play the loudest sound (e.g., a thick chord on a sforzando combination). Adjust the "record-volume" control to read slightly into the red area as the sound is sustained. Leave the control set at this level throughout the recording. If necessary, the "record-level" may be adjusted during the performance in order to pick up the very softest passages more clearly, but this must be done with great care.
6. To double check the recording level, record a one-minute piece of music and play it back (listening on headphones, if necessary), to make certain that the level is suitable, and that there is no radio interference.



## APPENDIX B

### SAMPLE SCHEDULE FOR SERVICE PLAYING TESTS

One month before the date of the test, this schedule, or one like it, is to be sent to the proctor and to the church or school where the test is to take place. See paragraph 3.4 concerning information to be sent to the candidates.

TEST DAY (Candidates are scheduled one hour apart)

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 8:00 am     | Proctor arrives and prepares recording equipment.   |
| 8:30        | Proctor prepares organ and opens waiting room.  |
| 8:45        | Candidate No.1 arrives and proceeds to waiting room.  |
| 8:55        | Proctor escorts candidate No.1 to organ. (If candidate No.1 has brought a soloist, the soloist remains in the waiting room until summoned by the proctor for item S 3.) |
| 9:00-9:45   | Candidate No.1 plays the test.  |
| 9:45        | Candidate No.2 arrives and proceeds to waiting room.  |
| 9:55        | Proctor escorts candidate No.2 to the organ.  |
| 10:00-10:45 | Candidate No.2 plays the test.  |

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Date and place of test

Location of waiting room

## APPENDIX C

AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS  
 National Headquarters  
 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1260  
 New York, NY 10115

SERVICE PLAYING TEST  
 EXAMINER'S MARK SHEET

CANDIDATE CODE \_\_\_\_\_

<p>S1, S 7 and S 10. Prepared Pieces                  (One each from Groups A, B and C)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Awareness of stylistic period . . . . .4                  Imagination and musicality . . . . .4                  Phrasing and articulation . . . . .4                  Rhythm . . . . .5                  Tempo . . . . .5                  Note accuracy . . . . .5                  Registration . . . . .3</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 40px;">Sub-Total . . . . .30</p> <p>S 2. Hymn Transposition . . . . .10</p> <p>S 3. Psalm Accompaniment . . . . .10</p> <p>S 4 and S 6. Anthems</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Accuracy . . . . .10                  Interpretation . . . . .10</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 40px;">Sub-Total . . . . .20</p> <p>S 5 and S 9. Hymn Accompaniment . . . . .20</p> <p>S 8. Sight-Reading . . . . .10</p> <p style="text-align: right; padding-right: 40px;">Total. . . . .100</p>		<p><i>(no fractional grades)</i></p> <p>.....                  .....                  .....                  .....                  .....                  .....                  .....                  .....</p> <p>-----                  -----                  -----                  -----                  -----                  -----                  -----</p>
---	--	---

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

MEMBER, BOARD OF EXAMINERS

CANDIDATES MUST SCORE AT LEAST 50% OF EACH ITEM AND 70% OF THE TOTAL MARKS OVERALL.  
 (N.B., S 1, S 7 and S 10. together, S 4 and S 6. together, as well as S 5 and S 9. together, count as ONE item each. The 50% rule applies to the SUM of the seven grades for S 1, S 7 and S 10. together, and to the SUM of the two grades for S 4 and S 6. together)

Examiners may use the accompanying sheet for critical remarks.





## APPENDIX D

### ANNOUNCEMENT FORMAT FOR THE SERVICE PLAYING TEST

There is to be total anonymity for the candidate. Name, chapter and geographic location may not be disclosed on the recording. The candidate will not even be referred to as “he” or “she.”

INTRODUCTION: (Allow 10 seconds for tape or cd to run before beginning introduction.)

---

ANNOUNCE:

“This is the Service Playing Test for Candidate [give designated code number].  
The instrument to be used is [name of organ builder and year installed],  
of [number] manuals and approximately [number] ranks.”

If further information is necessary, such as “tracker action” or “completely unenclosed,”  
please state it here.

**S1.** ANNOUNCE: “The Prelude repertoire piece is [title, composer and edition used], from  
Group \_\_\_\_\_.”

*At the conclusion of this first selection,*

**S2.** ANNOUNCE: “The hymn for transposition is  
[first line, then number in Examination Hymn Booklet].  
The candidate will play the hymn [a whole or a half] step up.”

*Following the first transposition,*

ANNOUNCE: “The candidate will now play the same hymn  
[a whole or a half] step down.”

**S3.** After the second transposition, if the candidate’s chosen psalm requires a singer, stop the recording here momentarily. Escort the singer into the room before restarting the recording. After the psalm has been sung, stop the recording again and escort the singer from the room before restarting the recording. If no singer is used, the recording need not be stopped.

ANNOUNCE: “The psalm for accompaniment is [number].”

*Following the completion of the psalm,*

**S4.** ANNOUNCE: “The first anthem accompaniment is [title, composer and edition used].”

*At the conclusion of the first anthem accompaniment,*

**S5.** ANNOUNCE: “The first hymn for congregational accompaniment is [first line, then number in the Examination Hymn Booklet].”

Two stanzas are to be played.

*At the conclusion of the first hymn for congregational accompaniment,*

**S6.** ANNOUNCE: “The second anthem accompaniment is [title, composer and edition used].”

*At the conclusion of the second anthem accompaniment,*

**S7.** ANNOUNCE: “The Offertory repertoire piece is [title, composer and edition used], from Group \_\_\_\_\_.”

*At the conclusion of this selection,*

**S8.** Place the sight-reading test on the music rack.

ANNOUNCE: “The sight-reading test has just been placed in front of the candidate. At the conclusion of 60 seconds I will instruct the candidate to begin playing.”

*At the conclusion of the sight-reading test,*

**S9.** ANNOUNCE: “The second hymn for congregational accompaniment is [first line, then number in the Examination Hymn Booklet].”

*At the conclusion of the second hymn for congregational accompaniment,*

**S10.** ANNOUNCE: “The Postlude repertoire piece is [title, composer and edition used], from Group \_\_\_\_\_.”

*At the conclusion of this selection,*

ANNOUNCE:

“This is the conclusion of the Service Playing Test for Candidate [give designated code number].”

