

2017 AP Digital Audio Recording and Online Submission:

Best Practices and Planning Checklist

Beginning with the May 2017 AP[®] Exam administration, all recorded student responses for AP French, German, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture Exams and AP Music Theory Exams must be recorded using digital audio recording technology and submitted online using the Digital Audio Submission (DAS) portal. Student-response tapes and student-response CDs cannot be used for these exams and will not be accepted.

Planning is the key to a successful exam administration. AP coordinators should establish a process to ensure that students' responses are properly recorded, saved, and submitted on time to the AP Program.

In this document, you will find key information and best practices for:

- Planning Before Exam Day
- File Management using a Computer
- File Management using a Handheld Digital Recorder
- Final Preparations and Post-Exam Activities

These checklists are intended to help the AP coordinator identify key details for planning audio recording and submission for the 2017 exam administration. All policies and procedures set forth in the [2016-17 AP Coordinator's Manual](#) must be followed to ensure exam security. Exams must be administered on the scheduled date and time, and following the instructions in the [2016-17 AP Exam Instructions](#).

Planning Before Exam Day

Recording and File Management Strategy

- Which recording method will your school use? Approved technology for 2017 are **digital language labs; computers (laptop or computer lab) with MP3 recording software; handheld digital recorders; digital audio capture (DAC) app** (only available for Music Theory). Review the information available on collegeboard.org/ap-audio-2017 and in the *2016-17 AP Coordinator's Manual* to determine the best recording method for your school.

- For AP French, German, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture Exams: based upon the number of available recording devices and test room locations, will students record in a single group or will you need multiple groups? Will you utilize a standard, staggered, or shift administration option? Review pages 97–99 in the *2016-17 AP Coordinator's Manual*.

You may be able to have all students record at the same time if:

- You have sufficient testing rooms that meet AP seating requirements for the number of students testing, and
- You have enough recording equipment for all students to test at the same time

You may need multiple recording groups if:

- The number of students testing for a given exam exceeds the capacity of the room(s) available, or
- The number of students testing for a given exam exceeds the number of recording devices available

- For AP Music Theory Exams: How many students need to record and how many recording rooms do you have available? Remember that students must record the sight-singing part of the exam individually. Review the exam administration options on page 102 of the *2016-17 AP Coordinator's Manual*.

- Determine how you will properly export, name, and save students' recorded response files. Refer to the instructions in the *2016-17 AP Coordinator's Manual* and *2016-17 AP Exam Instructions*. **Remember:** Each student's responses must be recorded and saved as a **single MP3 file**; there should be one file per student named with the student's AP number, an underscore, the exam form, and the file extension .mp3 (for example, 87654321_O.mp3).

- Key Factors to Consider:

- What is the ratio of the number of students to the number of available recording devices for each exam?
- How many recording locations are available that meet AP testing requirements? Consider off-site locations if needed. (See p. 32 of the *2016-17 AP Coordinator's Manual* for policies regarding off-site testing.)
- How many proctors are needed for each test room? (See p. 29 of the *2016-17 AP Coordinator's Manual* for proctor/student ratios.) Consider extra staff needed to monitor students waiting to record, if applicable.
- What is the expertise and availability of school support staff?
- What is the level of complexity your school is willing to take on?

- How long will students have to wait/how long can they wait? If recording in groups for a morning exam, determine which students also have an afternoon exam the same day. These student should be placed in the first recording group and dismissed as early as possible, to provide the maximum amount of “break time” between the morning and afternoon exam.

Remember: Students may record in groups for AP French, German, Italian, and Spanish Language and Culture Exams. Students must record **one at a time** for AP Music Theory Exams.

Uploading and Submitting Files to the AP Program

Beginning in 2017, all recorded responses must be uploaded and submitted to the AP Program via the Digital Audio Submission (DAS) portal.

- In April 2017, the AP coordinator will receive an email with instructions to create a DAS portal account.
- After creating the account, the coordinator receives a confirmation email with a school-specific code for creating additional accounts.
- The coordinator should share this code with any other staff at the school who will be responsible for uploading and submitting students’ response files. **NOTE:** The AP teachers for AP Music Theory and AP French, German, Italian, and Spanish Language and Cultures cannot be involved with uploading or submitting student files. Please see the proctor eligibility policies and AP Exam Security policies in the *2016-17 AP Coordinator’s Manual*.

Facility Planning

- Reserve room(s) for exam day
 - Recording room(s)
 - Waiting room (if necessary)
- Confirm physical setup of the recording room(s) and ensure that all recording rooms adhere to AP Program seating policies; see page 54 in the *2016-17 AP Coordinator’s Manual*.

- Plan any required cabling or power for laptop computers.
- Obtain all required room keys and alarm codes, if applicable.
- Remember: you will need to order master CDs for each testing room (See page 19 in the *2016-17 AP Coordinator’s Manual*)

Staff Planning

- Recruit proctor(s) for each recording room, and for any waiting rooms.
- Train all proctors on using the equipment and the exam instructions and policies. (See pp. 35-45 of the *2016-17 AP Coordinator’s Manual* for Proctor Training information; refer to the specific proctor scripts for the necessary exams in the *2016-17 AP Exam Instructions*.)
- Identify and schedule IT staff support for pre-exam recording equipment setup and post-exam processing.
- Ensure that any school staff involved in saving, naming, uploading, and submitting students’ files understand the process.

Practice with the Recording Equipment

- Book sessions for AP students, teachers, and proctors to practice with the actual recording equipment and recording software (if using MP3 recording software on a laptop or computer) that will be used on exam day. If using a microphone and/or headset, be sure to include these in the practice sessions. **Note:** Master CDs should never be opened prior to the exam’s scheduled date and time. Although AP teachers should be involved in students’ practice before the exam, the teachers **cannot** have access to students’ exam recordings or assist in the exam administration or upload and submission of sight-singing and speaking responses.
- It is critical for students and proctors to understand how to start, stop, pause, and playback the recording using the equipment/software that will be used on exam day.

File Management using a Computer

When recording using a computer, follow the “Computer with MP3 Software” proctor scripts for the appropriate subject in the *2016-17 AP Exam Instructions book*. The following are suggestions for exporting, saving, and naming files when using a computer (laptop or desktop) to record students’ responses. You must adhere to all of the policies and instructions for exam administration in the *2016-17 AP Coordinator’s Manual* and the *2016-17 AP Exam Instructions*.

It is critical that steps are taken to ensure that the file is re-named correctly (student’s AP number and exam form; for example, 87654321_O.mp3).

If using Audacity to record on a computer, refer to the document [Recording Student Responses on a Computer Using Audacity MP3 Recording Software](#) for additional information, available for download on collegeboard.org/ap-audio-record.

File Management: Network server (suggested for AP programs with tech support available)

Prior to exam day:

- Setup a secure (password protected) folder on a school network server for each exam you administer with a recording section.
- Ensure that the drive and folder are accessible on the testing computers.
- Ensure that proctors and any other necessary school staff know how to access the secure folder.

On exam day:

- Students complete the recording process. Students are dismissed.
- Each student’s file is named with the student’s AP number and the exam form (for example, 87654321_O.mp3) and saved to the secure folder.
- Proctors should ensure that each student has recorded their responses as a single file in MP3 format.

After the exam:

- The AP coordinator, proctor, or other authorized staff person accesses the secure folder with the students’ response files from a computer with an internet connection, uploads the files to the DAS portal, and submits the files to the AP Program for scoring.
- After successful submission in the DAS portal, the AP coordinator will receive a confirmation email. Once the files have been submitted and the confirmation email received, students’ audio files should be deleted from computers and/or network drives. (Retain the confirmation email for your records.)

File Management: Folder on Local (Testing) Computer + Flash/USB Drive *(suggested for AP programs with minimal tech support and/or schools that previously burned CDs at each testing computer)*

Prior to exam day:

- Create a folder with the exam name on all testing computers.
- Obtain Flash/USB drives with sufficient storage space to hold students' recorded responses. (A 1GB flash drive should be able to store approximately 200 response files.)
- Create a folder on the Flash/USB drive with the name of the exam.

On exam day:

- Students complete the recording process. Students are dismissed.
- Each student's file is named with the student's AP number and the exam form (for example, 87654321_O.mp3) and saved to the exam folder on the testing computer/laptop.
- Proctors should ensure that each student has recorded their responses as a single file in MP3 format.

After the exam:

- The proctor or other authorized staff person copies the files from the testing computer(s) to a Flash/USB drive, and gives the drive to the AP coordinator or other authorized staff person.
- Using a computer with a connection to the internet, the AP coordinator or other authorized staff person uploads files to the DAS portal from the USB/Flash drive, and submits the files to AP Program for scoring.
- If you will be using the same USB/Flash drives for multiple exams, be sure to transfer files off the USB/Flash drive and clear the USB/Flash drive **before** using it for the next exam.
- After successful submission in the DAS portal, the AP coordinator will receive a confirmation email. Once the files have been submitted and the confirmation email received, students' audio files should be deleted from all computers and any remaining USB/Flash drives. (Retain the confirmation email for your records.)

File Management using a Handheld Digital Recorder

When recording using a handheld digital recorder, follow the “Handheld Digital Recorder” proctor scripts for the appropriate subject in the *2016-17 AP Exam Instructions* book. You must adhere to all of the policies and instructions for exam administration in the *2016-17 AP Coordinator’s Manual* and the *2016-17 AP Exam Instructions*.

It is critical that steps are taken to ensure that the file is re-named correctly (student’s AP number and exam form; for example, **87654321_O.mp3**).

The method below explains the best practice for recording with handheld digital recorders that appears in the *2016-17 AP Exam Instructions*.

This method may work for your school if:

- For world language and culture exams: You have 2 or more groups that need to record and only one set of handheld recorders.
For Music Theory exams: you have one recorder that multiple students have to use.
- You have two rooms available (testing room and waiting room)
- There are enough proctors to monitor each room

Process:

- Have a handheld recorder in a small sealable plastic bag available for each student in Group 1 for world language and culture exams or Student 1 for Music Theory exams. (Remember: students must record individually for AP Music Theory.)
- When Group 1/Student 1 enters the recording room, have the student(s) place an AP number label on the area of the plastic bag identified for Group 1.

- Group 1/Student 1 records. When complete, students place the handheld recorder back into the bag and leave it in the testing room.
- After Group 1/Student 1 is dismissed, Group 2/Student 2 enters the testing room. Each student places an AP number label on the area of their plastic bag identified for Group 2.
- The process repeats until all groups/students complete recording.

After recording is complete and all students are dismissed:

- The handheld digital recorders in the bags labeled with students’ AP numbers are taken to a room with a computer and internet access.
- Transfer the files from all the handheld recorders to a folder on the computer named for the exam. Ensure that all files are named correctly (with the student’s AP number and exam form) and that each student has recorded a single file in MP3 format.
- Once all files have been saved to the computer, the AP coordinator or other school staff:
 - Using a computer with an internet connection, access the folder where the files were saved
 - Log in to the DAS portal
 - Upload all files and submit
 - After successful submission in the DAS portal, the AP coordinator will receive a confirmation email. Once the files have been submitted and the confirmation email received, students’ audio files should be deleted from computers and/or network drives. (Retain the confirmation email for your records.)

Final Preparations and Post-Exam Activities

Before Exam Day:

- Read the *2016-17 AP Coordinator's Manual* and the instructions in the *2016-17 AP Exam Instructions* for the exam(s) you're administering
- Ensure all recording equipment and software works
- Make sure you have equipment in each testing room to play master CDs
- Make sure you have ordered enough master CDs for each testing room
- Perform a sound check in all testing rooms (Do **not** use the master CDs to perform the sound check. They cannot be opened prior to the exam administration.)
- Ensure students and proctors have had time to practice with the recording equipment
- Consult with IT support staff
- If recording in groups, do a run through with proctors to ensure everyone involved understands the process
- Purchase extra batteries for handheld digital recorders and stereos
- Clean all headsets and microphones with a sanitized wipe and check cables and connections for wear and tear
- If recording in groups, determine which students will be in each group
- Create a DAS portal account and share your school-code with any other authorized staff who will need to access the portal in order to upload and submit students' files

After the Exam:

- Check that students have saved their responses as a single MP3 file. If you discover after students have been dismissed that any of them recorded multiple files, call AP Services for Educators.
- Save and name each student's MP3 file with the AP number, an underscore, and the exam form (for example, 87654321_O.mp3).
- Login to the DAS portal to upload and submit students' response files. **All files should be uploaded and submitted as soon as possible, preferably directly following the exam, but no later than the close of the next business day after your school's last scheduled exam of a particular AP Exam administration period (regular or late).**
- After all files have been successfully submitted in the DAS portal, the AP coordinator will receive a confirmation email. Once the files have been submitted and the confirmation email received, students' audio files should be deleted from computers and/or network drives. (Retain the confirmation email for your records.)