



**AUSTRALIAN
GUILD OF MUSIC
& SPEECH**

Theory of Speech and Drama

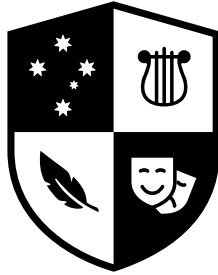
Syllabus no 3

Examination Syllabus

**Grade 6 to
Licentiate
Diploma**



2026
agms.edu.au



AUSTRALIAN GUILD OF MUSIC & SPEECH

**No. 3 – Theory of Speech and Drama
2026**

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FOREWORD

We welcome you to join the **Australian Guild of Music and Speech Ltd (AGMS)** family. Founded in 1969, the **AGMS** is a proud Australian, **education and examination body**.

“ *Empowering your success
is our passion* ”

The **AGMS** is driven to provide engaging, relevant, high-quality frameworks, to mould solid foundations for the next generations of musicians and speech & drama performers and educators.

The **AGMS** provides examinations for music and speech & drama students from introductory to advanced levels, including in speech & drama, certificate (C.S.D.AGMS), Associate (A.S.D.AGMS), Licentiate (L.S.D.AGMS) and Fellowship (F.S.D.AGMS) diplomas.

Below gives an insight into the values we share with our members:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| Music/Speech. | We champion the inherent value of all types of music/speech and its enormous contribution to the emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and physical development and self-esteem of individuals and communities. We leverage our position to spread the love of music/speech and drama. |
| Kindness. | Our approach is student-centric and, at all times, we are positive, encouraging, friendly and supportive. We assist the learner to recognise and celebrate their achievements. |
| Service. | We understand the needs of teachers and respond efficiently and flexibly. Our systems and processes are simple and make exam organisation and reporting easy. |
| Integrity. | Our examination process is academically sound, impartial, transparent and delivers assessments which are consistent with international standards. |
| Excellence. | We strive for best practice in examinations and only partner with the best examiners and educators. |

Via an **Academic Advisory Committee**, the **AGMS** has formulated this syllabus.

We look forward to growing with you on your pathway of excellence.

Yours in the arts,

The AGMS Board of Directors.

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THEORY OF SPEECH AND DRAMA



INTRODUCTION

Background to this syllabus

- The Speech and Drama syllabus is the most longstanding within the Speech syllabus package.
- It is designed for individual students who wish to undertake practical speech and drama training, accompanied by equivalent theoretical studies.
- Of all the Speech syllabi, this one takes the most academic approach.
- It offers students the opportunity to achieve high level qualifications such as the Licentiate and Fellowship Diplomas.
- This syllabus is recommended for those who wish to qualify as a Speech teacher.

Notes for Teachers

- This syllabus must be used in conjunction with the supporting document 'Speech Syllabi Background Information for Teachers' which contains essential information such as
 - Structure of the Speech Syllabi package
 - Grade set
 - Age of candidates
 - Guidelines for selecting appropriate selections at each examination level
 - Prepared versus Impromptu items
 - Memorisation requirements
 - Reading of books prior to practical examinations
 - Hard copy requirements
 - Guidelines for practical examinations
 - Guidelines for online examinations
 - Guidelines for theory examinations
 - Guidelines for Diploma examinations
 - Suggested reference books.

STRUCTURE OF THE SPEECH SYLLABUS PACKAGE

- Speech Syllabi Background Information for Teachers
- Syllabus no 1: Practical Speech and Drama
- Syllabus no 2: Speech and Drama Performance
- Syllabus no 3: Theory of Speech and Drama
- Syllabus no 4: Communication and Public Speaking

GRADE SIX THEORY EXAMINATION

Examination duration: 3 hours. Pass mark: 65

Notes for Teachers

- Grade 6 consists of theory and practical examinations, both of which must be passed to receive the Grade 6 certificate.
- An increased literary standard is required for this and later examinations.
- Candidates are asked to avoid grammatical errors, poor spelling, the use of clichés and slang.

There will be questions chosen from the following areas

- All theory of previous grades.
- Breathing
 - Correct and incorrect breathing methods.
 - Advantages of the correct and disadvantages of the incorrect breathing methods.
 - Drawings may be used but are not essential.
- Articulation and pronunciation
 - Qualities of correct pronunciation.
 - Common faults in articulation and pronunciation.
 - General points for good articulation.
 - Strong and weak form words and examples of these.
- Vowels and consonants
 - Detailed classification of vowels and consonants.
 - Drawing of a labelled mouth chart showing the position of the various monophthongs and diphthongs using phonetic symbols.
- Phonetic transcription of a brief passage—Broad or Narrow form to be stated by the candidate.
- Points for the performance of mime.
- To be able to write a short story on a given theme or opening sentence.
- Knowledge and understanding of the literature used for the various selections in the practical examination.

GRADE SEVEN THEORY EXAMINATION

Examination duration: 3 hours. Pass mark: 65

Notes for Teachers

- Grade 7 consists of theory and practical examinations, both of which must be passed to receive the Grade 7 certificate.
- It is expected that the literary standard will be higher than for previous grades, with greater use of a varied vocabulary.
- Sentence structure should be precise.
- Answers should include greater detail than for previous grades.

There will be questions chosen from the following areas

- All theory of previous grades.
- Physiology of breathing including diagrams.
- Audibility.
- Voice.
- Clarity of speech sounds and common faults.
- Relaxation.
- Phonetic transcription of a passage—Broad or Narrow form to be stated by the candidate.
- The spread of the English language worldwide.
- The book, verse and drama chosen for the Grade 7 practical examination
 - Characters
 - Themes
 - Settings
 - Climaxes
 - Purpose
 - Language
 - Style
 - Authors
 - Period of writing.

GRADE EIGHT THEORY (PROFICIENCY)

Examination duration: 3 hours. Pass mark: 65

Notes for Teachers

- Proficiency Certificate consists of theory and practical examinations, both of which must be passed to receive the Proficiency Certificate.
- In this paper a more advanced knowledge of all aspects of the theory is expected.

There will be questions chosen from the following areas

- All theory of previous grades.
- The technique of breath conservation and the importance of good breathing in performance.
- Vocal production, modulation, tone.
- Physiology: chest, lungs, larynx, head, speech organs, breathing muscles.
- Phonetic transcription of a passage—Broad or Narrow form to be stated by the candidate.
- The application of emphasis, tune and timing.
- Rhyme, poetic devices, metre, poetic style, construction of verse, verse classification.
- All relevant authors studied and the literary periods in which they were writing.
- Shakespearian theatre; staging Shakespeare.
- A deeper understanding of the content of the novel, the dramas and the poetry selected for the practical examination.
- Literary style: fiction, non-fiction, grammar and punctuation.
- Solecisms, ambiguity, redundancy, vogue words, tautology, clichés, colloquialisms, irony.

ASSOCIATE PERFORMER DIPLOMA THEORY A.Th.S.D.AGMS

Examination duration: 3 hours. Pass mark: 70

Prerequisite: Proficiency Certificate (Speech and Drama) or Professional Performance Diploma (Speech and Drama Performance)

Minimum age: 16 years

Notes for Teachers

- Associate Performer Diploma consists of theory and practical examinations, both of which must be passed to receive the Associate Performer Diploma.
- Candidates are expected to present work that illustrates a scholarly approach to all areas of Speech theory.

There will be questions chosen from the following areas

- All theory of previous grades.
- Relaxation, freedom from tension and nerves, exercises to achieve this.
- Vocal quality, vocal energy.
- The importance of timing, pause, pace, phrasing.
- Rhythm: poetical, dramatic and prose delivery.
- Interpretation, meaning, emotion, gesture, movement, characterization.
- Sincerity, intensity, conviction.
- Phonetic transcription of a passage—Broad or Narrow form to be stated by the candidate.
- Speaking lyrical poetry.
- The Greek theatre.
- Contemporary drama.
- Period drama.
- A deeper understanding of the content of the novel, the dramas and the poetry selected for the practical examination. This includes knowledge of the authors and their applicable literary periods.

LICENTIATE PERFORMER DIPLOMA THEORY L.Th.S.D.AGMS

Examination duration: 3 hours. Pass mark: 70

Prerequisite: Associate Performer Diploma (Speech and Drama)

Minimum age: 18 years

Notes for Teachers

- Licentiate Performer Diploma consists of theory and practical examinations, both of which must be passed to receive the Licentiate Performer Diploma.
- Candidates are expected to present work that illustrates a scholarly approach to all areas of Speech theory.

There will be questions chosen from the following areas

- Vocal physiology.
- All theoretical techniques pertaining to speech and drama.
- Performance technique and artistry.
- Phonetic transcription of a passage—Broad or Narrow form to be stated by the candidate.
- A broad outline of the English theatre, the Greek theatre, the Roman theatre.
- Contemporary theatre.
- Poetic licence and metrical deviations.
- The development of the novel.
- The major poets of English literature.
- The books, poems and dramas chosen for the practical examination
 - Authors
 - The period in which they were written
 - Comparison with other literature of a similar period or other period
 - The matter, style and presentation of the selections chosen.