

LCME
SINCE · 1887

Quick guide to filming your LCME Digital Recorded exam

Version 1.1
February 2025



Contents

- 2 Getting ready: Essential preparation**
- 2 Before you start recording
- 2 Video recording settings
- 3 Video recording settings for mobile devices
- 3 iPhone settings
- 4 Android settings
- 4 Top tips
- 5 Positioning your camera**
- 5 Sound quality: Getting the best audio**
- 5 Recording your exam: The one-take requirement**
- 6 Final checklist before recording your exam**
- 7 How to compress and/or converting your recording**
- 9 Need support**

Getting ready: Essential preparation

This guide will help you prepare for and record your exam successfully, ensuring you meet all requirements while achieving the best possible quality.

Like with a traditional in-person exam, recording your exam requires careful preparation to ensure everything runs smoothly. A well-planned recording session will help you perform at your best and avoid technical issues.

Before you start recording

- Choose a quiet room with good lighting where you won't be disturbed
- Fully charge your recording device
- Ensure you have enough storage space (we recommend at least 4GB free, just to be safe and to allow for a few takes if needed for any reason)
- Have all your music scores ready and organised in performance order
- If using backing tracks, test your external speakers beforehand
- Put all devices on silent mode or flight mode (including your recording device)

Video recording settings

The right settings will ensure your recording meets our requirements while keeping file sizes manageable:

- **Use 720p resolution** (not 4K or HD) and **film at 30fps** - this provides excellent quality while keeping files small
- **Maximum file size allowed is 1GB**
- Our **preferred file format is mp4**. We also accept **.mov files**
- Use a **static camera/phone on a tripod** to ensure there are no distracting camera movements during recording
- **Both portrait and landscape modes are acceptable**

Video recording settings for mobile devices

This section will help you set up your iPhone or Android device to record your LCME exam at the correct resolution and quality.

Following these settings will ensure your recording meets our requirements while keeping file sizes manageable.

iPhone settings

Checking your current settings

- Open the **Settings app**
- Scroll down and tap '**Camera**'
- Tap '**Record Video**'

Changing video settings

- Select '**720p HD at 30 fps**'
 - This is the ideal setting for LCME exams
 - Provides excellent quality while managing file size
 - Available on all recent iPhone models

Additional camera settings to check

- **Turn OFF:**
 - HDR
- **Turn ON:**
 - Grid (helps with framing)
 - Preserve Settings (useful if you are using the device to record multiple takes or exams)

Storage tips for iPhone

- **Check available storage:**
 - Settings > General > iPhone Storage
 - Ensure at least 4GB of free space
- **To free up space:**
 - Back up existing photos/videos to the cloud or an external storage device
 - Delete unnecessary apps
 - Clear 'Recently Deleted' folder

Android settings

Accessing video settings

Please note that these steps may vary by manufacturer.

- Open **Camera app**
- Tap '**Settings**' (gear icon or three dots)
- Look for '**Video size**' or '**Video resolution**'

Recommended settings

- Select '**720p**' or '**HD**'
 - May be shown as **1280 x 720**
 - Sometimes listed as '**HD ready**'
- Frame rate: **30fps**
- Video format: **mp4**
 - This is the ideal setting for LCME exams
 - Provides excellent quality while managing file size

Additional camera settings to check

- **Turn OFF:**
 - Filters
 - HDR video
 - Video effects
 - Video stabilisation
- **Turn ON:**
 - Grid (helps with framing)
 - Save settings (useful if you are using the device to record multiple takes or exams)

Storage tips for Android devices

- **Check available storage:**
 - Settings > Storage
 - Ensure at least 4GB of free space
- **To free up space:**
 - Back up existing photos/videos to the cloud or an external storage device
 - Delete unnecessary apps
 - Empty recycle bin

General tips for best results

- Clean the camera lens
- Use a stable support to avoid handheld recording (e.g. tripod mount)
- Ensure good lighting
- Close background apps
- Put the device on silent or flight mode
- Disable notifications
- Charge fully before recording
- Connect to power if possible

Positioning your camera

Proper camera positioning is crucial for assessment. Your recording must clearly show the following:

- Your whole face throughout the performance
 - For vocalists: ensure your microphone doesn't obscure your face
- Your hands and playing technique
- Your entire instrument
- Feet if using piano pedals
- For Musical Theatre exams your whole body must be in shot

Sound quality: Getting the best audio

Good audio quality is essential for a fair assessment of your performance.

- Use a single microphone setup only - multiple microphones are not permitted
- Check for clear audio without distortion
- When using backing tracks:
 - Use good quality external speakers (not laptop/phone speakers)
 - Test the balance between your performance and the track
 - Ensure accompaniment do not overpower your performance
 - No audio effects or processing allowed (no reverb, compression, etc.)

Recording your exam: The one-take requirement

As of 1 March 2025, all exam components must be recorded in one continuous take.

This format mirrors live exam and real-world performance conditions. While it may seem challenging at first, it's designed to help you develop as a performer. Your recording should include:

- All pieces/songs
- Technical work*
- Discussion questions*

**If required for your exam - please check the relevant syllabus for your exam type and level.*



Final checklist before recording your exam

Set up for success

- The camera position shows all required views
- Audio levels are clear and balanced
- External speakers positioned and tested (if using backing tracks)
- The room is quiet and has good lighting
- The recording device has sufficient storage and battery
- Camera settings are at 720p resolution and you are recording at 30fps
- Original music scores organised in performance order
- ID document ready to upload with your submission

Important reminders

- Someone can assist with technical aspects like operating backing tracks
- No prompting or cueing is allowed during the performance
- No cuts or edits are allowed between sections

Compressing your digital exam recording

We have the 1GB limit in place to ensure consistent quality for assessment, quick upload times for you and smaller download times for examiners to allow for efficient marking.

The recommended file settings for our exams ensure your submission has a good balance between video and audio quality with manageable file sizes.

If for any reason your recording is over the 1GB limit you can compress your files.

When done correctly, compression shouldn't noticeably affect the quality of your performance recording.

How to compress and/or converting your recording

Option 1: Using Handbrake (recommended)

Although not an LCME-owned system, Handbrake is a free, reliable tool for video compression.

1) Download and install Handbrake:

- Visit <https://handbrake.fr>
- Download the version for your operating system
- Install following standard installation procedures

2) Compress your video:

- Open Handbrake
- Click 'Open Source' and select your video file
- Select the preset 'General' -> 'Very Fast 720p30'
- Click 'Browse' under 'Destination' to choose where to save
- Click 'Start' to begin compression

Option 2: Online services

If you prefer not to install software, you can use Video Candy. Once again, this is not an LCME-owned system, but it is a free tool that is fast and easy to use.

To convert files:

- Visit <https://videocandy.com/video-converter.html>
- Upload your video
- Select 'MP4' as output format
- Choose '720p' resolution
- Download the converted file

For compressing files:

- Visit <https://videocandy.com/compress-video.html>
 - Upload your video
 - Select compression level
 - Download the compressed file
-

Top tips before compressing or converting your file

- Check the file size before compression
- Make a backup of the original recording
- Test compressed video before submitting - we recommend that you do not use extreme compression as it might affect video quality
- Allow time for the compression process

Need support?

Technical support:

Please contact our technical support if you have any digital exam system-related questions or need assistance with your bookings -

techsupport@gca.ac.uk

General questions:

If you have questions or queries about the content of the exams, results or certificates, please contact our Head Office -

[Contact us](#)

Useful links

- [Digital exam requirements by subject/instrument](#)
- [General recorded exams requirements](#)
- [Recorded exams FAQs](#)
- [Digital exams platform](#)