

Certified Tuning Examiner Training

Wednesday, August 3, 2022, 5th Period
ETSC Tuning Exam Team

Why do you want to become a CTE?:

- An excellent tuner doesn't necessarily make an excellent examiner, and vice versa.
- Advertising as a CTE is prohibited. RPT is the only status allowed to advertise.
- Volunteer work. Serving people and communities.
- Excellent learning opportunities from fellow examiners and examinees.

Qualifications for becoming a CTE Trainee:

- RPT member in good standing.
- Have signed Certified Tuning Examiner Consent to Serve (CTS) form before taking Qualifying Tuning Exam.
- Have passed Qualifying Tuning Exam at 90% or above in all sections aurally, with no repeat for the Pitch section nor any partial retake.
- Non-RPT member can sign CTS form after passing RPT Tuning Exam at 90% or above in all sections aurally, with no repeat for the pitch section nor Part 1 retake, as mentioned above, and start CTE training as soon as reclassification to an RPT is completed.

Qualifying Exam:

- No fee for up to three attempts within 5 year period.
- Must sign CTE form before taking the exam.
- You'll receive a numbered Tuning Examination Manual after approval. (This may be an electronic version.)

Required skills:

- Handling exam equipment.
- ETD use. You don't have to own, but must have regular access to an approved device.
- Scoring. Hand scoring and computer scoring. Understanding PCN (Pitch Correction Number).
- Managing the exam.
- Exam Preparation.
- Humanistics. Treating examinee with respect. Teamwork.

Training Procedures:

- Assist as many Tuning Exams as possible. Get involved in all aspects of the exam.
- Get your CTE Trainee Proficiency Record signed off by the CTE you work with.
- After all items in Section A are signed off, run a full exam as an Acting CTE in Charge under observation by a CTE Skills Reviewer.
- Upon receipt of completed Proficiency Record, ETSC Board will submit a recommendation for certification to the PTG Executive Board. The Board will vote for approval.
- There is a 6-year time limit to complete the training.

Recertification:

- CTEs must be re-certified every 5 years (with one year grace period).
- Open-book questionnaire.
- Less active CTE may be required to run an observed exam under a CTE Skill Reviewer.

Master Tuning:

- Confirm the piano meets the criteria as an exam piano.
- Prep tunings. Aural or with an ETD. Repeat several times for stability. The better the prep tuning, the easier and smoother Master Tuning session goes.

- Aural tuning only in Master Tuning session. An ETD can be used to alter a pitch in very small increment (0.1 or 0.2 cent, etc.), but must be verified aurally.
- Aim for moderate tuning style. Avoid getting too picky. The purpose of Master Tuning is to establish the basis for evaluating an examinee's tuning whether it's within acceptable range.
- Handle entire midrange (C3-B4) as a whole, regardless your temperament octave. An examinee may use different temperament octave than yours.
- Maintain smooth flow of the process.
- Avoid remark or attitude which may make observer(s), if any, less confident to the quality of the exam piano, Master Tuning, or Tuning Exam, or RPT Exam as a whole.

Some important points in administering a Tuning Exam:

- Check eligibility of the examinee and all paperwork, fee, etc. The examinee must carry his/her current membership card.
- Confirm Master Tuning and the exam piano match.
- Confirm Master Tuning Record and ETD stored Master Tuning match.
- Back-up ETD. Machine can break.
- Always double, or even triple, check readings and form entries. Write clearly and firmly.
- Double, or triple, check your math.
- Using PCN, do quick scan for any obvious error.
- For aural verification, do not verify all points. Do not attempt to reduce points in order to pass the examinee.
- Avoid spending too much time for aural verification. Maintain smooth flow of exam process.
- Do not turn aural verification into a classroom. It is a great learning opportunity, but too much information during an exam can distract the examinee's attention.
- Avoid remark or attitude which may make the examinee nervous, or less confident to the exam.
- Stick to the rule. Be fair to everybody.
- Process paperwork without delay.

Aural Verification:

Aural Verification is the core of a Tuning Exam. Every exam tuning must be aurally verified. Why? Because the purpose of piano tuning is to make a piano sounds good to human ear, and only human ear can appreciate the resultant sound of music. A piano technician must know how to tell whether a note is in tune or out of tune aurally, and if it's out of tune, in which way and how much off. As a Tuning Examiner, whether CTE or an assistant RPT, you need to be able not only to tell a note is in tune or out of tune, but to explain the examinee why, and how to fix an out of tune note. In an actual Tuning Exam, the examinee will be invited to sit at the piano (this is not a mandatory, though), then the scorer will call which note to be checked without telling that the score shows which way the note is off. The examinee will check the note with aural checks and tells it is sharp or flat or OK. Then two (sometimes more) non-scorer examiners take the seat in turn. An error point is verified when all three examiners' calls (the number on the score and two aural judgements) agree (sharp or flat). If there is a disagreement, the point is crossed out. Such disagreement can occur when there are other errors that interfere clear judgement, but sometimes the examiner who is checking the note is unsure about various aural tests and how to interpret them to tell if the note in question is off and in which way, then makes a call by guess. This destroys fair evaluation of the examinee's tuning. When you notice this is the case, you must intervene and show the person who cannot tell correctly what checks can be used and how to interpret them. One caution here: do not turn the exam room into a classroom, and start lecturing unnecessarily long.

Here are some tips:

- Start from the most obvious. If you are the scorer, call a note with largest error point first.
- Assume all other note in the range (temperament, midrange, etc.) are correct, and determine if you can improve overall tuning by moving the note in question up (the note is flat) or down (the note is sharp).
- Too many large errors can void aural checks, or make them very difficult. In such case, you may need to skip verifying note by note. Just playing some parallel intervals or chords can reveal that the tuning is not the level of passing the exam.

- Combine test intervals which tell you upper and lower limits you can move the note to correct the error. For example, when combining 4th and 5th above a note, the upper limit is when the 4th becomes pure, and the lower limit is when the 5th becomes pure. With three parallel 3rds with the note in question at the higher note of the middle 3rd, the upper limit is when the middle 3rd beats at the same rate with the top 3rd, and the lower limit is when the middle 3rd beats at the same rate with the bottom 3rd.
- When you can improve one (or more) interval(s) by moving a note upwards or downwards, but doing so makes other interval(s) significantly worse, you cannot move the note either direction to improve overall tuning. In this case, you must call the note is neither sharp or flat (leave as is). You should not jump on a conclusion by just one kind of check.