I. INTRODUCTION

While the Academy for Jewish Religion recognizes multiple approaches to Jewish ritual and הלכת, it believes that effective spiritual leaders must be exposed to and gain competence in the full range of traditional rules and behaviors. Ritual Skills testing is meant to examine the student’s assimilation of a range of those rules and behaviors, regardless of the student’s own personal and professional religious preferences. These Ritual Skills include the ability to competently perform certain ritual recitations and actions, to be familiar with guiding others in certain life-cycle and religious activities and prayers, and to adequately discharge certain functions commonly held to be the responsibility of clergy. Perfection is certainly not expected; adequacy and competence are.

II. TESTING PROCEDURES

Ritual Skills testing will occur for two weeks each semester. In addition, students may test over the summer as scheduling with appropriate faculty members allows. This testing is open to all AJR students regardless of which year of study one is in at the moment.

III. TEXTS AND MATERIALS

A note on texts and materials from which the tests will be administered:

A. Prayers, procedures, ceremonies and prayer services

Any traditional סידור (ArtScroll, Koren, etc., Silverman, Sim Shalom, Lev Shalem, etc.) and/or traditional bencher (רבך) (NCSY, B’Kol Echad, UJA-Fed., etc.). Traditional Rabbis’ manuals include Goldin’s Hamadrikh (Orthodox) and the RA’s (Conservative) Moreh Derekh. At AJR, students are required to learn the traditional versions of prayers and rituals with the assumption that students will then consider whether and how they might adapt or change these.

B. Nusah

Regarding the musical aspects of davenning, any version of traditional nusah is acceptable for most prayers, and it is acceptable to demonstrate some texts in melody (ex. Mi Khamokha).

C. Cantillation

Students testing for regular (not High Holiday) Torah reading will be tested on the “scroll side” of the תורה (the side without vocalization or trope) for the brief passages designated. They will
also be tested by the instructors at random passages for sight-reading with trope on the vocalized side of the הפותח, תנקוב, and שיר השירים/קהילותרות, סופר. Students need to bring a תנקוב תנקוב to the test.

D. Cantorial Requirements

Since cantorial students study and are tested on many Ritual Skills that involve chanting as a matter of course in their classes, they are only required to be tested on Ritual Skills listed in this handbook that are marked Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement. This applies also to ordained cantors who are students in the AJR Rabbinical Program.

IV. RITUAL SKILLS TIME LINE

The Ritual Skills program is divided into five units. All skills will be tested; there will not be “multiple choice” questions. The units must be completed as follows:

⇒ Unit Alef should be completed by the end of 14 credits.
⇒ Unit Bet should be completed by the end of 28 credits.
⇒ Unit Gimmel should be completed by the end of 42 credits.
⇒ Unit Dalet should be completed by the end of 56 credits.
⇒ Unit Heh should be completed by the end of the fall semester of the senior year.

V. TEST PARAMETERS AND EXPECTATIONS

The following short descriptions describe the parameters and expectations for each Ritual Skill on the list:

Unit Alef

ברכת ממוקם

and additions for בירת מולא ימי טוב, שיר הפותח, ברכות כהן, tested in Unit Bet); Singing/chanting the entire ברכות הממקה. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

라도

Chant from הנה אל-יוסף thru the end; Gestures related to
blessing on lights; Holding the cup; When is the wine drunk? Why? Differences between synagogue and home. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

**Shabbat & Festival**: Chant the evening and morning Kiddush; holding the cup; When is the wine drunk? Who drinks first? (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

**Torah Cantillation**: Chant all sign groups in any combination; Chant these specific selections: Numbers 28:1-4 and 28:11-15 (רashi תרש). These will be chanted from the Torah scroll side of the ציוק; Chant randomly selected passages from vocalized side of ציוק; When is scroll opened and when is it closed? When is it covered? Students need to bring a קבלת שבת to the test. (Rabbinic Requirement)

**Naso Shel Hakolat Shabbat**: Four consecutive pages anywhere in the section that begins with כל רונין; When does one stand, sit, turn around? (Rabbinic Requirement)

**משיער של שבת**: Two consecutive pages anywhere in the section that begins with עמידה (excluding the three biblical paragraphs of קראתÓ). Additionally, after the ברכות מועד שבת and the three passages that follow it, the ציוק. (Rabbinic Requirement)

**Шairroit Shel Shabat**: Any 5 consecutive pages in בראשית ורופין. Any 3 pages from the end of צור ישראל ותרכז את אדום; and any 3 pages in the Shaharit Amidah after the מועדל. (Rabbinic Requirement)

**“Choreography” of שבת and Weekday Services** – Where to stand, sit, and bow during traditional services, including during the Umudah for שבת and weekday services. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

**Donning of**

**תפילין ve Tfiláh**: The order of the donning and the blessings; ציטוף. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

**בוטלím ve Kotelíím**: Proper procedure and blessing. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

**Unit Bet**

**Haftarah Cantillation**: Testing on randomly selected passages; Blessings before and after the המ cdr. Students need to bring a ברך ת랙 to the test. (Rabbinic Requirement)

**necessary Shel Mosirím Uholáh**: Any 4 consecutive pages beginning with ברך וברך (Rabbinic Requirement)
Proper procedure and blessing; Found in Sim Shalom, original 1985 edition, on page 712. (Rabbinic Requirement)

Where to Find: Knowledge of “where to find” the following ברכות תפילה and ברכות הרשימא, and הנשלה שחרית, תפילה ודרק. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

Unit Gimmel

Cantillation of מないように: Testing of randomly selected passages from the vocalized side of the יורה. (Rabbinic Requirement)

Where to Find: הושגרו לשלושrogen, and note differences when פסח על השחרית מתוכן. Testing of randomly selected passages beginning with (end of the קדשה) thru (Rabbinic Requirement)

Unit Dalet

Ararim 모ים: Demonstrations of the proper way to hold the 4 species using simple props (a roll of paper for a לולא, a ball of paper for א終わった, etc.); recite the קדשה (the gestures and when they are done) by the prayer leader and by the congregation during קדשה. Students should bring these materials to the test. Students will be asked to describe the procedure of assembling the three species (not including the ארור) if they all had come separately. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)
Cantillation of דקילת איכה: Students will be tested by the instructors at random passages for sight-reading with trope on the vocalized side of the תקן or תקון to the test. Note that the cantillation of chapters 1, 2, 4, and 5 uses the same melodies for each of the tropes, but that the melody is different for chapter 3. Students must be able to demonstrate knowledge of both melodies. (Rabbinic Requirement)

Cantillation of the remaining דקילת זילבה: Ability to chant randomly selected passages from מעריב ילקטרותノウィツ using a text that contains vocalization and trope. Students need to bring a וויט to the test. (Rabbinic Requirement)

מצורים לימים שונים: Any 5 consecutive pages beginning with ברכו. Basic nusah only, not melodies for פיטוסים. (Rabbinic Requirement)

קריאת שם: Naming of a child at a בינת בת או בינתメールה תנד תקון to the test. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

שעון דרבוט: For a Wedding Ceremony and for a meal at the wedding and first week of marriage. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

אול-מלא תומיס: Chant or read this prayer fluently and a Psalm for a Funeral / יזך When is it not recited at a funeral, and what is chanted in its place? Chant or read this alternate prayer. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

珲יזה ביבת חמסה: Ability to understand the instructions for conducting a service on one of the following days – שבת בראחות (evening and daytime), any day during והכתחו (morning service), evening service for the First Night of והשלי; ברכות והfillna. Rabbinic students will use any Hebrew version of the והל and cantorial students will use any English version. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

◲כמנה: Ability to fill out a traditional Aramaic כמנה with the help of a traditional Rabbi’s Manual (Moreh Derekh, the Rabbinical Assembly manual, is recommended. It can be found on the reserve shelf of the AJR Library); ability to read כמנה aloud. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

“Basic Gabboi:" Proper procedures for: calling people to the Torah on ויוויכת / ינשה, reciting מניחת הכנ受到影响 and שיבת הכנ受到影响, reciting שיבת הכנ受到影响, reciting ויוויכת / ינשה, and reciting and שיבת הכנ受到影响. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

Unit Heh
Cantillation for יאש: Students will be tested by the instructors at random passages from the Torah readings for יאש and תור for sight-reading with trope on the vocalized side of the אוש. Students need to bring a אוש or מכתב to the test. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

Ability to tie וסטר: Any strings can be used for demonstration. Diagrams from שער by R. R. Feldman, are available in as an appendix to the online version of this document found on the AJR website. Students may also consult The Jewish Catalog (called The First Jewish Catalog when it was reissued), pp. 52-53. Available in the Reserve Section of the AJR library, #BM 700.548. A number of videos are also available on YouTube. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

Ability to tie and adjust יסִלּוּי, knots: The square or dalet knot of the Head יסִלּוּי; the Yud knot of the Hand יסִלּוּי; the student should bring a pair of יסִלּוּי, whose straps can be used for demonstration; Knots to be made will be additional to the knots already present on the יסִלּוּי – no knots should be untied from the existing set. Students should demonstrate the ability to adjust knots for different size heads and arms. Diagrams from שער by R. R. Feldman are available in an Appendix to this document. A number of videos are also available on YouTube. Students may use charts while being tested. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

Conversion at דָּבָנ: Knowledge of the procedure for conversion at a דָּבָנ for both male and female, adult and child; (Cf. מורה זר, the Rabbinical Assembly manual. It can be found on the reserve shelf of the AJR Library). (Rabbinic Requirement)

שר מַכְּרֵת שְׁפִּיר: Ability to identify the three different notes of שְׁפִיר and their proper order in the שְׁפִיר which follows the שְׁפִיר שְׁפִיר שְׁפִיר. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)

שר מַכְּרֵת שְׁפִיר: Knowledge of where to find it and the ability to fill it out. (Rabbinic Requirement)

משה: Ability to read a משה, including משנה. For examples cf. Hamadrikh (An Orthodox rabbis’ manual that is found on the reserve shelf of the AJR Library), pp. 246-252. (Rabbinic/Cantorial Requirement)