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*Republished September 2020 with edits and clarifications following the introduction of our Performance Grades suite of exams (1 July 2020) and changes to our regulated qualification titles (applicable from 1 October 2020). The updated regulated qualification titles are listed on page 6 and further information about the changes is available at [www.abrsm.org/regulation](http://www.abrsm.org/regulation). Other changes to the text are to help distinguish between the two suites of graded exam – Practical and Performance – that are now offered. **There are no changes to the exam requirements/syllabus for percussion Practical Grades in this edition.***

# 1. Introduction

## About ABRSM

At ABRSM we aim to support learners and teachers in every way we can. One way we do this is through the provision of high quality and respected music qualifications. These exams provide clear goals, reliable and consistent marking, and guidance for future learning. They are a tried and tested way to inspire musical achievement and, with backing from four Royal Schools of Music in the UK, are valued and trusted around the world.

We offer a comprehensive portfolio of qualifications and assessments for a range of instruments (including singing) and genres, as well as for Music Theory and Practical Musicianship. Our syllabuses are based on core musical skills – listening, performing, reading, writing, musical knowledge and understanding, and improvising. Together these skills give learners a good foundation for their musical development and a range of different musical activities.

Taking an exam is an exciting challenge with many benefits for learners. There's the boost to motivation which comes from working towards an exam. There's an opportunity to discover and perform some fantastic music and to build new skills. And there's the sense of achievement which comes from successfully reaching a musical goal.

We do everything we can to make the exam experience positive and rewarding. We work closely with specialists, teachers and examiners to provide syllabuses of the highest quality with a wide variety of pieces and songs to choose from. We train our friendly, expert examiners to ensure that all candidates are rewarded and recognised for their musical achievements during the assessment. Using our clear, easy-to-understand marking criteria examiners can assess all candidates reliably, objectively and consistently. Finally, candidates receive a mark form containing valuable feedback, with a celebratory certificate for everyone who passes.

Whether you're a learner or teacher, we hope our syllabuses inspire and support your music learning or teaching. We wish you every success for your musical journey!

### **Our mission**

ABRSM's mission is to inspire musical achievement. We do this in partnership with four Royal Schools of Music: Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

We are passionate about music, its value as an art form and the importance of music education. We believe that being involved with music gives people unique, positive experiences with life-long benefits.

Through our world-leading assessments, books and resources we provide people worldwide with the tools they need to teach, learn, make and enjoy music. Our scholarships, donations, sponsorship and partnerships create opportunities for people of all ages to discover music and fulfil their potential. Everything we do is designed to support learners and teachers on their musical journey.

### **Who we are**

We are the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), a company registered in England and Wales (company registration number 1926395) and a registered charity (charity registration number 292182). Our registered office is at 4 London Wall Place, London EC2Y 5AU.

Find out more at [www.abrsm.org](http://www.abrsm.org).

## About this qualification specification

### What it covers

This specification provides all the relevant requirements and information teachers, candidates, parents and organisations need in order to prepare for the following qualifications in the subjects and grades covered in Section 3 – ABRSM Entry Level Award in Practical Music (Initial Grade) (Entry 3), ABRSM Level 1 Award in Practical Music (Grades 1, 2 and 3), ABRSM Level 2 Certificate in Practical Music (Grades 4 and 5) and ABRSM Level 3 Certificate in Practical Music (Grades 6, 7 and 8). It also provides information on how the exams will be assessed, their learning outcomes, and regulated qualification details.

Further details, as well as administrative information about the exams, are given in ABRSM's Exam Regulations ([www.abrsm.org/examregulations](http://www.abrsm.org/examregulations)) which should be read before making an exam booking.

### Validity of this specification

This specification is valid from 1 October 2020 until further notice.

We may update this specification from time to time, but will not make changes to the syllabus (Section 3) other than in exceptional circumstances. In such cases, advance notice of any changes will be posted on our website, as will advance notice of any planned syllabus refreshes. The latest version of this specification will be available from [www.abrsm.org/exams](http://www.abrsm.org/exams).

## About our Practical Music qualifications

### Qualification objectives

Our Practical Music qualifications are designed for learners to demonstrate a combination of performance and other all-round musical skills and knowledge. Each grade is progressive and represents a new challenge for the learner, providing motivation and structure to develop and hone their musical skills.

Exams allow learners to receive formal recognition of the level of mastery they have achieved, and feedback to support their learning journey. Practical Music qualifications further allow learners to be rewarded and recognised for their skills in performing pieces as well as technique, notation, listening and musical perception.

### Who the qualifications are for

These qualifications are intended for learners who are interested in developing and demonstrating their all-round musical skills. Candidates may be entered at any age, but those entering for Grades 6–8 must fulfil the prerequisite detailed on page 10.

Every effort has been made to feature a broad range of repertoire to suit and appeal to candidates of different ages, backgrounds and interests. We are committed to providing all candidates with fair access to our assessments by putting in place access arrangements and reasonable adjustments where required.

### Structure

Each Practical Music qualification has been carefully designed to assess all-round musical skills – technique, notation reading, listening and musical perception – as well as knowledge, understanding and creativity. At all grades, these creative skills are demonstrated through playing of repertoire and completing of supporting tests. Collectively, these skills enable

candidates to progress to higher grades, further education, employment and other qualifications in the creative arts sector.

Candidates are required to play three pieces from set repertoire lists and a selection of technical work, and to respond to an unseen sight-reading test and a series of aural tests. Marks for each component are differently weighted (the three pieces are the same) and are awarded to each component individually

### **Progression route**

ABRSM Practical Music qualifications are available from Initial Grade to Grade 8. The syllabus in Section 3 of this specification details the grades available for individual subjects. The qualifications are progressive in their level of demand from Initial Grade through to Grade 8 (nine grades). It is not a requirement for any candidate to complete one grade before moving on to the next although there is a prerequisite for entering a Grade 6, 7 or 8 exam (see below).

Practical Music qualifications embed from Initial Grade the importance of developing a wide range of musicianship skills, including performing repertoire and technical work, and responding to previously unseen sight-reading and aural tests. The nature of the qualifications makes them an ideal platform from which to progress to ABRSM's diploma offer. The performance-only ABRSM gives candidates greater flexibility and responsibility in programme building as well as providing further opportunity to develop performance technique and interpretative skills while extending their repertoire.

Through a combination of live and written components, candidates at DipABRSM (Music Performance), and the higher LRSM and FRSM levels, demonstrate their performance, communication and research skills, as well as their musical knowledge and understanding. DipABRSM progresses to LRSM level and LRSM to FRSM. Further details of these can be found in Section 6 of this specification and at [www.abrsm.org/diplomas](http://www.abrsm.org/diplomas).

### **Prerequisite**

We believe that a thorough understanding of the elements of music is essential for a full and satisfying performance at the higher grades. Our Music Theory graded exams assess candidates on their ability to identify, use and manipulate musical symbols, to complete extracts and to answer questions about the elements of music. We also offer Practical Musicianship exams where, in developing their musicianship skills, candidates gain the understanding as well as the expressive and interpretative skills needed to master the musical language of the repertoire they are learning. A pass at ABRSM Grade 5 or above is required in either Music Theory, Practical Musicianship or any Practical Music solo Jazz instrument before learners can enter for a Grade 6, 7 or 8 Practical Music exam.

## **Regulation and UCAS points (UK)**

### **Our regulators**

ABRSM Practical Music, Music Performance and Music Theory grades, and higher-level qualifications (diplomas) are regulated in the UK by:

- Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual)
- Qualifications Wales
- Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA Regulation)

For further information, see [www.abrsm.org/regulation](http://www.abrsm.org/regulation).

## The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF)

All our regulated qualifications can be found on the RQF. There are nine qualification levels in the framework, labelled in order of difficulty from Entry Level to Level 8. For further information, visit <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk>.

### Entry to higher education

In the UK, ABRSM's Grades 6–8 in Practical Music can contribute towards entry into higher education through the allocation of UCAS points; the table below shows the UCAS Tariff value of these grades. For further information visit [www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com).

Qualification/Level	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Grade 6	8	10	12
Grade 7	12	14	16
Grade 8	18	24	30

## Regulated qualification details

### Qualification titles

The table below shows the regulated titles and qualification numbers of our Practical Music qualifications. Further information can be found at <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk>.

Qualification Number*	Qualification Title*
603/6405/1	ABRSM Entry Level Award in Practical Music (Initial Grade) (Entry 3)
603/6406/3	ABRSM Level 1 Award in Practical Music (Grade 1)
603/6407/5	ABRSM Level 1 Award in Practical Music (Grade 2)
603/6408/7	ABRSM Level 1 Award in Practical Music (Grade 3)
603/6409/9	ABRSM Level 2 Certificate in Practical Music (Grade 4)
603/6410/5	ABRSM Level 2 Certificate in Practical Music (Grade 5)
603/6411/7	ABRSM Level 3 Certificate in Practical Music (Grade 6)
603/6412/9	ABRSM Level 3 Certificate in Practical Music (Grade 7)
603/6413/0	ABRSM Level 3 Certificate in Practical Music (Grade 8)

\* For qualifications taken before 1 October 2020, please see [www.abrsm.org/regulation](http://www.abrsm.org/regulation) for the relevant regulated qualification numbers and titles.

### Qualification size

The table below describes the size of the Practical Music qualifications by showing the amount of time that a candidate would typically need to spend preparing for them:

- Under the guidance of a teacher (Guided Learning Hours);
- Under the guidance of a teacher and time spent preparing independently (Total Qualification Time);

and:

- The assigned credit value (which denotes the size of the qualification).

Level	Guided Learning Hours* (GLH)	Total Qualification Time* (TQT)	Credits
Initial Grade	8	40	4
Grade 1	12	60	6
Grade 2	18	90	9
Grade 3	18	120	12
Grade 4	24	150	15
Grade 5	24	180	18
Grade 6	36	220	22
Grade 7	48	270	27
Grade 8	54	320	32

*\* The Guided Learning Hours and Total Qualification Time are estimates of the average amount of time that it might take a candidate to prepare for these qualifications, and should be used as guidance only; it is recognised that there will be variance dependent on each individual's level of experience and ability.*

## Regulation (Europe)

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is an overarching framework that links the qualifications of different countries together and allows for comparison and translation. The EQF has eight levels across which qualifications can be mapped. The levels do not correspond directly with the UK's Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF), although they are similar.

The following table shows the level of each of ABRSM's Practical Music qualifications on the RQF and the EQF.

Qualification	RQF Level	EQF Level
Initial Grade	Entry Level (Level 3)	Level 1
Grade 1		
Grade 2	Level 1	Level 2
Grade 3		
Grade 4		
Grade 5	Level 2	Level 3
Grade 6		
Grade 7	Level 3	Level 4
Grade 8		

## Regulation (Rest of world)

Information on how ABRSM exams are recognised in individual countries can be found at [www.abrsm.org/regulation](http://www.abrsm.org/regulation).

## Qualification title referencing

The qualifications covered by this specification are 'ABRSM Entry Level Award in Practical Music (Initial Grade) (Entry 3)', 'ABRSM Level 1 Award in Practical Music' (Grades 1, 2 and 3), 'ABRSM Level 2 Certificate in Practical Music' (Grades 4 and 5) and 'ABRSM Level 3 Certificate in Practical Music' (Grades 6, 7 and 8). For ease of reading, 'Practical Grade(s)' is used in place of the full qualification titles throughout the remainder of this document. Similarly, when referring to our other, new, suite of graded performance exams, 'Performance Grade(s)' is used in place of the full qualification titles.

## 2. Practical Grades

### Syllabuses

#### Syllabus validity

The Percussion Practical Grades Syllabus is valid for exams from 1 January 2020 until further notice.

#### Syllabus amendments

Any updates to the syllabus – e.g. changes to publication details or other minor corrections or clarifications – will be posted at [www.abrsm.org/syllabuscorrections](http://www.abrsm.org/syllabuscorrections).

#### Syllabus overlap

In the first year of any revised Practical Grades syllabus, we offer an overlap period where candidates may play specific requirements from the preceding syllabus. Information on the length of the overlap period and the requirements that it applies to is given at [www.abrsm.org/overlap](http://www.abrsm.org/overlap).

Candidates will be able to take exams using the Percussion (from 1990) Syllabus until 31 December 2020. All exam requirements must be from the same syllabus – candidates may not present a mixture of requirements (i.e. pieces or supporting tests) from old and new syllabuses.

#### The next syllabus

At the time of publication of this document, the next revision of the Percussion Practical Grades Syllabus had not been scheduled. Advance notice of any planned changes to the Percussion Syllabus (including syllabus overlap information) will be posted at [www.abrsm.org/percussion](http://www.abrsm.org/percussion).

### Exam Regulations

When preparing for an exam, it is important to read ABRSM's Exam Regulations, which set out the rules for completing the exams listed in this specification. This information is available at [www.abrsm.org/examregulations](http://www.abrsm.org/examregulations).

### Malpractice and maladministration

We are committed to inspiring achievement in music. Our qualifications are used by thousands of people to support their music learning or teaching. Many people also use them when applying to study at further and higher education institutions. It is therefore vital that our qualifications remain a valuable and reliable measure of a candidate's skills and knowledge. We take any form of malpractice or maladministration very seriously.

- **Malpractice** is defined as any act that compromises or is an attempt to compromise the assessment process, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate. This also includes any act that damages our reputation or credibility as an awarding organisation.
- **Maladministration** is defined as any act that breaches the regulations through a mismanagement of administrative processes, particularly where such a breach could compromise the integrity of a qualification or assessment.

Applicants and candidates must follow the requirements set out in the relevant specification, Exam Regulations and all other ABRSM policies about the delivery of our exams. In cases where applicants or candidates have committed malpractice, a sanction or penalty may be



given. Further information about our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy can be found at [www.abrsm.org/policies](http://www.abrsm.org/policies).

## Entry requirements

There are eight grades of Practical Grades exams for each percussion subject. Candidates may be entered for any grade at any age. They do not need to have taken any earlier grade(s) in the same subject. To enter for a Grade 6, 7 or 8 exam, candidates must already have passed one of the following:

- ABRSM Grade 5 (or above) in Music Theory
- ABRSM Grade 5 (or above) in Practical Musicianship
- ABRSM Grade 5 in any Practical Grades solo Jazz instrument

For full details, including a list of accepted alternatives, see [www.abrsm.org/prerequisite](http://www.abrsm.org/prerequisite).

## Exam venues

Practical Grades Percussion exams are held as a Visit (i.e. where a venue is provided by the Applicant and visited by the examiner). They may be held independently of other exams or as part of a larger Visit that includes other subjects/grades. The percussion instruments and any seating must be set up before the exam's scheduled time. For full details about Visits, see ABRSM's Exam Regulations at [www.abrsm.org/examregulations](http://www.abrsm.org/examregulations), in particular the requirement to provide a suitable piano for the Aural tests.

## Exam booking

Details of exam dates, locations, fees and how to book an exam are available online at [www.abrsm.org/exambooking](http://www.abrsm.org/exambooking).

## Access (for candidates with specific needs)

We are committed to providing all candidates with fair access to our assessments by putting in place access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. There are a range of alternative tests and formats for Practical Grades as well as guidelines for candidates with specific needs (see [www.abrsm.org/specificneeds](http://www.abrsm.org/specificneeds)). Where a candidate's needs are not covered by the guidelines, each case is considered individually. Further information is available from the Access Co-ordinator ([accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk](mailto:accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk)) or from [www.abrsm.org/specificneeds](http://www.abrsm.org/specificneeds).

## Exam content

Practical Grades for percussion consist of six components – three Pieces, Technical requirements, Sight-reading and Aural tests. Information on how marks are allocated is given on page 87.

## In the exam

### Examiners

Generally, there will be one examiner in the exam room for Practical Grades; however a second examiner may be present for training or quality assurance purposes.

Examiners may ask to look at the candidate's or accompanist's copy of the music before or after the performance of a piece; a separate copy is not required.

Examiners may stop the performance of a piece when they have heard enough to make a judgment.

### Order of the exam

The individual Practical Grades exam components may be taken in any order, at the candidate's choice, although it is preferable for accompanied pieces (where applicable) to be performed consecutively at the beginning of the exam.

### Exam timings

The timings in the table below show the approximate length of each Practical Grades percussion exam in minutes, including the candidate's entry and exit, any tuning time and time for the examiner to finish the mark form between exams. Examiners may take more or less time than the given timings.

Grade	Initial Grade*	Grade 1	Grades 2 & 3	Grades 4 & 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<b>Time (in mins)</b>	12	12	14	17	20	25	30

\* Initial Grade not available for percussion

## 3. Percussion Practical Grades Syllabus from 2020

### Introducing the syllabus

Our new Percussion Practical Grades Syllabus is designed to offer a flexible approach to percussion assessment. There are exams at Grades 1–8 in Snare Drum, Timpani and Tuned Percussion as individual, standalone subjects. We also offer a Percussion (Combined) exam at Grades 1–8 to allow candidates to demonstrate their skills in all three subjects.

Key features:

- Newly-commissioned repertoire by leading percussion composers alongside established favourites
- A choice of at least ten pieces per subject per grade
- Accompanied (by both piano and percussion) and solo options for all subjects
- Multi-percussion options in the Snare Drum repertoire lists from Grade 3
- Completely revised Sight-reading requirements for all subjects
- Specially-commissioned studies for Snare Drum and Timpani
- Publications to support all aspects of the new syllabus

The Aural tests stay the same as the preceding syllabus. All other requirements have been revised.

### Practical Grades 1–8: requirements and information

*This syllabus is valid from 2020 until further notice.*

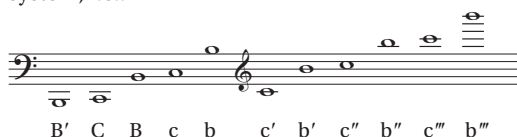
This section provides a summary of the most important points that teachers and candidates need to know when taking ABRSM Practical Grades in percussion subjects. Further details, as well as administrative information about the exams, are given in ABRSM's Exam Regulations (available at [www.abrsm.org/examregulations](http://www.abrsm.org/examregulations)) which should be read before making an exam booking.

### Instruments

Candidates are required to perform on acoustic instruments (digital instruments are not allowed). Examiners apply the marking criteria (which include the assessment of pitch, tone, and musical shaping) to assess musical outcomes without reference to the specific attributes of the instrument.

**Sticks/mallets:** Candidates are expected to use the correct sticks and mallets for the instruments they have chosen to play. Tuned Percussion pieces that require four mallets are shown by **4M** in the repertoire lists.

**Range information:** In this document, range/pitch information is presented using the Helmholtz system, i.e.:



## Timpani

**Number of drums:** The minimum number of drums required depends on whether the candidate is taking a Timpani exam or a Percussion (Combined) exam. The table below shows the minimum number of drums required for each option. All other pieces are for two drums.

	Timpani exam (Pieces, Study & Sight-reading)	Percussion (Combined) exam (Piece, Study & Sight-reading)	Percussion (Combined) exam (Piece & Sight-reading)
Grades 1-4	2	2	2
Grade 5	3	3	2
Grade 6	3	3	3
Grade 7	4	4	3
Grade 8	4	4	4

Some pieces from Grade 4 require more drums than indicated above (the maximum number is three drums at Grades 4 and 5 and four drums at Grades 6–8). Pieces that need three or four drums are shown in the repertoire lists by **3D** and **4D**, respectively.

**Types of drums:** Hand- or pedal-tuned drums may be used. However, hand-tuned drums are only appropriate if retuning does not interrupt the musical flow of a piece. Pieces that require a retune are indicated in the repertoire lists by **RETUNE** and those that require at least one pedal drum by **PED**.

**Damping:** At Grades 1 and 2, all rests of crotchet value or longer should be damped. From Grade 3, all quaver rests should also be damped. From Grade 4, rests should be damped whenever feasible, and from Grade 5, candidates should also damp with regard to the harmonic considerations of the piece.

**Sticking:** Any combination of sticking is allowed, e.g. leading with either hand, double strokes, swinging over, crossing over, etc.

**Tuning:** At Grades 1 and 2, the teacher or accompanist may tune the candidate's timpani (or advise on tuning) before the exam begins. At Grades 3–8, candidates must tune the timpani themselves. Timpanists should provide their own fixed-pitch sources, and these may only be used before the beginning of each piece or study. Examiners are unable to help with tuning.

At Grades 1 and 2, all Timpani requirements may be played on A and D (or any interval of a perfect 4th) regardless of their written pitches. Any accompaniments should be transposed appropriately. From Grade 3, all music should be played as written.

## Pieces

Musicians learn to play an instrument to explore and perform repertoire, which is why pieces are at the core of the exam – candidates are asked to present three at each grade.

The syllabus repertoire and requirements explore different traditions and styles and provide candidates with the opportunity to choose a balanced selection and demonstrate a range of skills.

All subjects offer pieces that require an accompaniment, as interacting with other musicians is an important musical skill. There are also opportunities to choose solo pieces and develop confidence with unaccompanied playing. These opportunities increase at higher grades to reflect contemporary percussion repertoire.

We hope that by offering this variety in the syllabus, candidates will find inspiring music that they enjoy learning and performing.

**Programme planning:** For Snare Drum, Timpani and Tuned Percussion exams, candidates must choose three pieces from the repertoire list for that subject, including at least one piece marked ☆ in the repertoire list at certain grades (see table below). Up to two pieces by the same composer may be played.

For Percussion (Combined) exams, candidates must choose one piece from each of the three lists (A – Snare Drum, B – Timpani and C – Tuned Percussion), including at least one piece marked ☆ in the syllabus at Grades 1-3 (see table below). Up to two pieces by the same composer may be played.



Subject	Grades	Type of pieces required (minimum of 1)	Marked in syllabus
Snare Drum	Grades 1-3	accompanied (by piano <i>or</i> percussion)	☆ <i>and</i> III or ⊕
	Grades 6-8	for multi-percussion	☆ <i>and</i> MULTI
Timpani	Grades 1-3	accompanied (by piano <i>or</i> percussion)	☆ <i>and</i> III or ⊕
	Grades 6-8	requires retuning	☆ <i>and</i> RETUNE
Tuned Percussion	Grades 1-3	accompanied (by piano <i>or</i> percussion)	☆ <i>and</i> III or ⊕
	Grade 8	requires 4 mallets	☆ <i>and</i> 4M
Percussion (Combined)	Grades 1-3	accompanied (by piano <i>or</i> percussion)	☆ <i>and</i> III or ⊕

Candidates may play two or three pieces marked ☆, if they wish.




In the exam, candidates should tell the examiner which pieces they are performing, and they are welcome to use the form on page 97 for this.

Every effort has been made to feature a broad range of repertoire to suit and appeal to candidates of different ages, backgrounds and interests. Certain pieces may not be suitable for every candidate for technical reasons or because of wider context (historical, cultural, subject matter, etc.). Pieces should be carefully considered for their appropriateness to each individual, which may need consultation between teachers and parents/guardians. Teachers and parents/guardians should also exercise caution when allowing younger candidates to research pieces online: [www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety).

The repertoire lists are the same as for ABRSM Performance Grades. Candidates may not present the same repertoire (in full or individual pieces) for the same grade of both qualifications, irrespective of when the exams are taken.

**Accompaniment:** A live piano or percussion (where the option is listed) accompaniment is required for all pieces marked with  or  in the syllabus. Recorded accompaniments are not allowed.

At Grades 1–3, candidates must perform at least one piece with accompaniment (piano or percussion). There is no accompaniment requirement at Grades 4–8. There is no upper limit to the number of accompanied pieces that can be played at any grade.

Pieces that are published as duets (or with percussion accompaniment only) are marked  in the repertoire lists; candidates must play the upper part. Pieces that are published with piano and percussion accompaniment options are marked  or  in the repertoire lists, and may be performed with either accompaniment in the exam. Details of the percussion instruments that are required to accompany each piece are also given in the repertoire lists.

Candidates must provide their own accompanist(s), who can only be in the exam room while accompanying. The candidate's teacher may accompany but examiners will not. If necessary, an accompanist may simplify any part of the accompaniment, as long as the result is musical.

Pieces accompanied by percussion must be played on a separate instrument from the candidate's.

**Exam music & editions:** Wherever the syllabus includes an arrangement or transcription (appearing as 'arr.' or 'trans.' in the repertoire lists), the edition listed in the syllabus must be used in the exam. For all other pieces, editions are listed for guidance only and candidates may use any edition of their choice. This includes editions that are downloaded. Information on sourcing exam music is given on page 17.

**Interpreting the score:** Printed editorial suggestions such as sticking, metronome marks, etc. do not need to be strictly observed. Whether the piece contains musical indications or not, candidates are encouraged to interpret the score in a musical and stylistic way. The marks awarded will be determined by how control of pitch, time, tone, shape and performance contributes to the overall musical outcome.

**Repeats:** Unless the syllabus specifies differently, all da capo and dal segno indications should be followed but other repeats (including first-time bars) should not be played unless they are very short (i.e. a few bars).

**Cadenzas & tuttis:** Cadenzas should not be played unless the syllabus specifies differently. Accompanists should cut lengthy orchestral tutti sections.

**Ossias:** Where an ossia (alternative musical line or note) occurs in the music, candidates may play either option unless the syllabus specifies differently.

**Performing from memory:** Candidates may perform any of their pieces from memory; if doing so, they must make sure that a copy of the music is available for the examiner to refer to. No extra marks are awarded for playing from memory.

**Page-turns:** Examiners will be understanding if a page-turn causes a lack of continuity during a piece, and this will not affect the marking. Candidates (and accompanists) may use an extra copy of the music or a photocopy of a section of the piece (but see ‘Photocopies’ below) to help with page-turns. Candidates and accompanists at Grades 6–8 may bring a page-turner to the exam if there is no solution to a particularly awkward page-turn (prior permission is not required; the turner may be the candidate’s teacher). Examiners are unable to help with page-turning.

**Photocopies:** Performing from unauthorised photocopies (or other kinds of copies) of copyright editions is not allowed. ABRSM may withhold the exam result where we have evidence of an illegal copy (or copies) being used. In the UK, copies may be used in certain limited circumstances – for full details, see the MPA’s *Code of Fair Practice* at [www.mpaonline.org.uk](http://www.mpaonline.org.uk). In all other cases, application should be made to the copyright holder before any copy is made, and evidence of permission should be brought to the exam.

**Sourcing exam music:** Exam music is available from music retailers and online, including at the ABRSM music shop: [www.abrsm.org/shop](http://www.abrsm.org/shop). Every effort has been made to make sure that the publications listed will be available for the duration of the syllabus. We advise candidates to get their music well before the exam in case items are not kept in stock by retailers. Non-exam related questions about the music (e.g. editorial, availability) should be addressed to the relevant publisher: contact details are listed at [www.abrsm.org/publishers](http://www.abrsm.org/publishers).

## Technical requirements

In this section of the exam, candidates prepare the following:

Subject	Technical requirements
Snare Drum	Studies
Timpani	Studies
Tuned Percussion	Scales and arpeggios
Percussion (Combined)	One of the following, at the candidate’s choice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studies (Snare Drum)</li> <li>• Studies (Timpani)</li> <li>• Scales and arpeggios (Tuned Percussion)</li> </ul> The examiner will ask which the candidate has chosen.



## Study (Timpani)

Studies are an important way to develop technical skills such as fluency, balance between hands, moving between drums, retuning/pedalling and articulation. They also help to develop tone, pulse, dynamic control and interval awareness. This leads to greater confidence and security when sight-reading, learning new pieces and performing – from a score or from memory, as a solo musician or with others.

**About the test:** Candidates prepare two studies at each grade and examiners will request which one is to be played in the exam.

**Sheet music:** The studies are published online at [www.abrsm.org/percussion](http://www.abrsm.org/percussion) as a free downloadable PDF that can be printed and used in the exam. They are also published by ABRSM in the books of *Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies* (for Grades 1–5) and *Percussion Studies* (for Grades 6–8). Purchasing these books is not a requirement.

**Memory:** There is no requirement to play the Study from memory.

**Sticking:** Candidates may use any sticking that produces a successful musical outcome.

## Sight-reading

Sight-reading is a valuable skill with many benefits. Learning to sight-read helps to develop quick recognition of keys, tonality and common rhythm patterns. Strong sight-reading skills make learning new pieces quicker and easier, and also help when making music with others, so that playing in an ensemble becomes more rewarding and enjoyable.

**About the test:** Candidates will be asked to play a short unaccompanied piece of music which they have not seen before. They will be given half a minute to look through and, if they wish, try out all or any part of the test before they are asked to play it for assessment.

**Parameters:** The tables on pages 24–26 show the elements that are introduced at each grade.

**Instruments:** In this section of the exam, the instrument requirements are as follows:

Subject	Technical requirements
Snare Drum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the test must be played with the snares on</li> <li>no additional instruments will be required at any grade</li> </ul>
Timpani	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the number of drums required at each grade is listed in the parameters on page 25</li> </ul>
Tuned Percussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the test may be played on any of the instruments listed on page 14</li> <li>the instrument chosen must meet the range requirements for the grade as listed in the parameters on page 26</li> </ul>
Percussion (Combined)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>instruments as described in all three rows above must be available in the exam room</li> <li>the examiner will choose whether the test is to be played on Snare Drum, Timpani or Tuned Percussion</li> </ul>

**Supporting publications:** For practice purposes, sample Sight-reading tests are published by ABRSM in *Percussion Sight-Reading*, Grades 1–5 and Grades 6–8. Purchasing these books is not a requirement.

**Blind or partially-sighted candidates:** Blind or partially-sighted candidates may choose an alternative test (Braille memory *or* Aural repetition) in place of the standard test, if requested at the time of entry. Further information is available at [www.abrsm.org/specificneeds](http://www.abrsm.org/specificneeds).

## Aural tests

Listening lies at the heart of music-making and the ability to hear how music works helps with all aspects of musical development. Aural skills help with gauging the sound and balance of playing, keeping in time and playing with a sense of rhythm and pulse. These skills also help to develop a sense of pitch, musical memory and the ability to spot mistakes.

**About the test:** The requirements are the same for all four subjects. Full details of the Aural tests are given on pages 75–82.

**Supporting publications:** For practice purposes, sample Aural tests are published by ABRSM. Examples of the tests are given in *Specimen Aural Tests* and *Aural Training in Practice*. Purchasing these books is not a requirement.




**Deaf or hearing-impaired candidates:** Deaf or hearing-impaired candidates may choose alternative tests in place of the standard tests, if requested at the time of booking the exam. Further information, including the syllabus for the alternative tests, is available at [www.abrsm.org/specificneeds](http://www.abrsm.org/specificneeds).

## **Sight-reading parameters**

The tables on pages 24–26 show the elements that are introduced at each grade. These parameters are presented cumulatively, i.e. once introduced they apply for all later grades (gradually progressing in difficulty). See also page 19.

# Timpani

No retuning of drums is required within a test at any grade.

	Length (bars)	Time	Drums	Other features that may be included
<b>Grade 1</b>	4	4/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 drums</li> <li>• in: A &amp; d</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• </li> <li>• </li> <li>• intervals of a perfect 4th</li> <li>• <i>f</i> and <i>p</i></li> </ul>
		3/4		
	6	2/4		
<b>Grade 2</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• </li> <li>• tied notes</li> <li>• <i>cresc.</i> hairpins</li> </ul>
<b>Grade 3</b>		3/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 drums</li> <li>• from: G, A, c, d</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dotted quaver patterns</li> <li>• <math>\gamma</math></li> <li>• intervals of a perfect 5th</li> <li>• rolls (<i>tr</i>)</li> <li>• accents</li> <li>• <i>mf</i> and <i>dim.</i> hairpins</li> </ul>
<b>Grade 4</b>		6/8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• anacrusis</li> <li>• grace notes</li> <li>• pause signs</li> <li>• <i>mp</i></li> </ul>
<b>Grade 5</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 drums</li> <li>• from: F-f</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• simple syncopation</li> <li>• slowing of tempo at end</li> <li>• <i>fp</i> rolls</li> </ul>
<b>Grade 6</b>		9/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 or 3 drums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• changes of time signature</li> <li>• triplets</li> <li>• swung style</li> <li>• intervals of a major/minor 2nd, 3rd, 6th &amp; 7th, and perfect 8ve</li> <li>• double stops</li> <li>• slowing of tempo followed by <i>a tempo</i></li> <li>• <i>ff</i> and <i>pp</i></li> </ul>
		5/8		
		5/4		
<b>Grade 7</b>		7/8 7/4 ♩	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 drums</li> </ul>	
<b>Grade 8</b>	max c. 28	12/8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• duplets</li> </ul>
		4/8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acceleration of tempo</li> </ul>

Lengths gradually increase



## Symbols used in the repertoire lists

The symbols explained in this table are used in the repertoire lists on the following pages. See pages 12–16 for further information.

All subjects	
☆	at least one of the marked pieces must be played
Ⓜ	has piano accompaniment (required)
Ⓟ	has percussion accompaniment (required)
Ⓜ or Ⓟ	has piano and percussion accompaniment (one is required)
Snare Drum	
MULTI	for multi-percussion
Timpani	
3D	three drums required
4D	four drums required
RETUNE	contains retuning
PED	requires pedal drum(s)
Tuned Percussion	
4M	four mallets required
MAR	must be played on marimba
XYL	must be played on xylophone
VIB	must be played on vibraphone

## GRADE 1

**THREE PIECES:** chosen by the candidate from the List below; for further details see pages 15–17

Candidates must choose at least one piece marked ☆

	COMPOSER	PIECE / WORK / ARRANGER	PUBLICATION (PUBLISHER)
1	Simon Archer	☆ March !!!	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 1 (ABRSM)
2	Cameron Sinclair	Ceremonial	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 1 (ABRSM)
3	Andrea Vogler	☆ Yeti Dance !!!	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 1 (ABRSM)
4	David Hext	☆ Tumbledown Mountain ⊕ tenor drum or low tom	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 1 (ABRSM)
5	Ian Wright	Baroque Notes	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 1 (ABRSM)
6	Carol Barratt	☆ Alpenstock !!!	Bravo! Percussion, Book 1 (Boosey & Hawkes)
7	Matthew Hardy	☆ Majestic March <i>playbb. 11–14 as written</i> !!! or ⊕ snare drum	Concert and Audition Pieces for the Young Percussionist (Southern Percussion)
8	Hochrainer	Etude No. 8 (from <i>Etudes for Timpani, Vol. 1</i> )	Hochrainer: Etudes for Timpani, Vol. 1 (Doblinger)
9	Knauer	Exercise No. 3 in C (from <i>85 Exercises for Timpani</i> )	P. 3 No. 3 from Knauer: 85 Exercises for Timpani (Hofmeister)
10	Andrea Vogler	☆ Gilda's Party ⊕ low tom-tom	Andrea Vogler: Gilda's Party (Southern Percussion)

**STUDY:** Study A and Study B must be prepared; for further details see page 18

**SIGHT-READING:** a short piece of previously unseen music; for further details see pages 19 & 25

**AURAL TESTS:** given by the examiner from the piano; for further details see pages 75 & 76

## GRADE 2

**THREE PIECES:** chosen by the candidate from the List below; for further details see pages 15–17

Candidates must choose at least one piece marked ☆

COMPOSER	PIECE / WORK / ARRANGER	PUBLICATION (PUBLISHER)
1 Peter R. Birkby	☆ The Haunted !!!	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 2 (ABRSM)
2 Rachel Gledhill	Tribal Dance	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 2 (ABRSM)
3 Andrew J. Smith	☆ Space Race !!!	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 2 (ABRSM)
4 Andrea Vogler	☆ What's for Tea Tonight? ⊕ low tom	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 2 (ABRSM)
5 Nick Woud	The Guard	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 2 (ABRSM)
6 Carol Barratt	☆ Flight Past !!!	Bravo! Percussion, Book 2 (Boosey & Hawkes)
7 Gert Bomhof	Fanfaria (No.1 from <i>Solo Pieces for Timpani</i> )	Gert Bomhof: Solo Pieces for Timpani (De Haske)
8 Jan Faulkner	☆ Ship Ahoy !!!	Jan Faulkner: Simply Seven (Southern Percussion)
9 Matthew Hardy	☆ Waltz for Jan !!! or ⊕ vibraphone	Concert and Audition Pieces for the Young Percussionist (Southern Percussion)
10 Hochrainer	Etude No.18 (from <i>Etudes for Timpani, Vol. 1</i> )	Hochrainer: Etudes for Timpani, Vol. 1 (Doblinger)

**STUDY:** Study A *and* Study B must be prepared; for further details see page 18

**SIGHT-READING:** a short piece of previously unseen music; for further details see pages 19 & 25

**AURAL TESTS:** given by the examiner from the piano; for further details see pages 75 & 77



## GRADE 3

**THREE PIECES:** chosen by the candidate from the List below; for further details see pages 15–17

Candidates must choose at least one piece marked ☆

COMPOSER	PIECE / WORK / ARRANGER	PUBLICATION (PUBLISHER)
1 Jan Bradley	☆ Arriving in Style ⊗ snare drum or low tom	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 3 (ABRSM)
2 Lizzie Davis	☆ Waltz of the Warlocks ■	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 3 (ABRSM)
3 Damien Harron	Tresillo	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 3 (ABRSM)
4 Ian Wright	Bouncing Beethoven	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 3 (ABRSM)
5 Andrew J. Smith	☆ Celebration ■	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 3 (ABRSM)
6 Gert Bomhof	Galop (No. 4 from <i>Solo Pieces for Timpani</i> )	Gert Bomhof: Solo Pieces for Timpani (De Haske)
7 Kirk J. Gay	Etude 6 (from <i>Pedal to the Kettle</i> )	Kirk J. Gay: Pedal to the Kettle (Tapspace)
8 Matthew Hardy	☆ Fiesta ■	Concert and Audition Pieces for the Young Percussionist (Southern Percussion)
9 Murray Houllif	Cowboy Town (No. 4 from <i>Rhythmicity</i> )	Murray Houllif: Rhythmicity (Kendor Music)
10 Murray Houllif	Hills of Home (No. 6 from <i>Rhythmicity</i> ) <i>with repeats</i>	Murray Houllif: Rhythmicity (Kendor Music)

**STUDY:** Study A and Study B must be prepared; for further details see page 18

**SIGHT-READING:** a short piece of previously unseen music; for further details see pages 19 & 25

**AURAL TESTS:** given by the examiner from the piano; for further details see pages 75 & 77–78

## GRADE 4

**THREE PIECES:** chosen by the candidate from the List below; for further details see pages 15–17

COMPOSER	PIECE / WORK / ARRANGER	PUBLICATION (PUBLISHER)
1 Adrian Bending	D 'n' A Test	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 4 (ABRSM)
2 Peter R. Birkby	Fanfare and Procession III	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 4 (ABRSM)
3 Nick Woud	Checkers 3D RETUNE	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 4 (ABRSM)
4 David Hext	Dogfight	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 4 (ABRSM)
5 Adrian Sutcliffe	Boil the Kettle	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 4 (ABRSM)
6 Gert Bomhof	Changing Meters I (No. 7 from <i>Solo Pieces for Timpani</i> )	Gert Bomhof: Solo Pieces for Timpani (De Haske)
7 Matthew Hardy	Cha Cha Challenge III 3D	Concert and Audition Pieces for the Young Percussionist (Southern Percussion)
8 Hochrainer	Etude No. 37 (from <i>Etudes for Timpani, Vol. 2</i> )	Hochrainer: Etudes for Timpani, Vol. 2 (Doblinger)
9 Murray Houllif	Rock and Roll (No. 7 from <i>Rhythmicity</i> ) <i>with repeats</i> 3D	Murray Houllif: Rhythmicity (Kendor Music)
10 Brian Slawson	Copper Rocks (from <i>Dynamic Solos for Timpani</i> ) 3D RETUNE	Brian Slawson: Dynamic Solos for Timpani (Alfred)

**STUDY:** Study A *and* Study B must be prepared; for further details see page 18

**SIGHT-READING:** a short piece of previously unseen music; for further details see pages 19 & 25

**AURAL TESTS:** given by the examiner from the piano; for further details see pages 75 & 78

## GRADE 5

**THREE PIECES:** chosen by the candidate from the List below; for further details see pages 15–17

COMPOSER	PIECE / WORK / ARRANGER	PUBLICATION (PUBLISHER)
1 Alan Bullard	Rising from the Deep III 3D RETUNE	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 5 (ABRSM)
2 William Edwards	Conflict 3D	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 5 (ABRSM)
3 Rachel Gledhill	A Storm in a Teacup 3D PED RETUNE	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 5 (ABRSM)
4 Dani Howard	R E V S 3D	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 5 (ABRSM)
5 Ian Wright	Russian Galop RETUNE	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 5 (ABRSM)
6 Berlioz, arr. Matthew Hardy	Simply Fantastique <i>with repeat</i> 3D RETUNE	Concert and Audition Pieces for the Young Percussionist (Southern Percussion)
7 Knauer	Exercise No. 20 in F (from <i>85 Exercises for Timpani</i> ) RETUNE or 3D	P.19 No. 20 from Knauer: 85 Exercises for Timpani (Hofmeister)
8 Muczynski	Allegro moderato (No. 1 from <i>Three Designs for Three Timpani</i> , Op. 11 No. 2) 3D PED RETUNE	Muczynski: Three Designs for Three Timpani, Op. 11 No. 2 (G. Schirmer) <i>or</i> Solos for the Percussion Player (G. Schirmer)
9 Garwood Whaley	Statement for Timpani 3D	Garwood Whaley: Statement for Timpani (Meredith Music)
10 Nick Woud	Study No. 5 (from <i>Symphonic Studies for Timpani</i> )	Nick Woud: Symphonic Studies for Timpani (De Haske)

**STUDY:** Study A *and* Study B must be prepared; for further details see page 18

**SIGHT-READING:** a short piece of previously unseen music; for further details see pages 19 & 25

**AURAL TESTS:** given by the examiner from the piano; for further details see pages 75 & 79

## GRADE 6

**PREREQUISITE FOR ENTRY:** ABRSM Grade 5 (or above) in Music Theory, Practical Musicianship or a Practical Grades solo Jazz instrument. For alternatives, see [www.abrsm.org/prerequisite](http://www.abrsm.org/prerequisite).

**THREE PIECES:** chosen by the candidate from the List below; for further details see pages 15–17

Candidates must choose at least one piece marked ☆

COMPOSER	PIECE / WORK / ARRANGER	PUBLICATION (PUBLISHER)
1 Gert Bomhof	Changing Meters II (No.12 from <i>Solo Pieces for Timpani</i> ) 3D	Gert Bomhof: Solo Pieces for Timpani (De Haske)
2 Bill Cahn	☆ Canzone (from <i>Six Concert Pieces for Solo Timpani</i> ) 3D PED RETUNE	Bill Cahn: Six Concert Pieces for Solo Timpani (Meredith Music)
3 S. Fink	Rockin' Timpani (No.8 from <i>Solobook for Timpani, Vol. 1</i> ) 4D	S. Fink: Solobook for Timpani, Vol. 1 (Simrock)
4 George Frock	Opening Toccata (No.1 from <i>Seven Solo Dances for the Advanced Timpanist</i> ) 4D	George Frock: Seven Solo Dances for the Advanced Timpanist (Southern Music)
5 Murray Houllif	☆ March Triumphant <i>with repeats</i> 4D PED RETUNE	Murray Houllif: March Triumphant (Kendor Music)
6 A. Ridout	Movement I (from <i>Sonatina for Timpani</i> ) 4D	A. Ridout: Sonatina for Timpani (Boosey & Hawkes)
7 Cameron Sinclair	☆ Kontretanz (from 3 <i>Tanzen</i> ) 3D PED RETUNE	Cameron Sinclair: 3 Tanzen (Scottish Music Centre)
8 Brian Slawson	☆ Paukenstein (from <i>Dynamic Solos for Timpani</i> ) 3D PED RETUNE	Brian Slawson: Dynamic Solos for Timpani (Alfred)
9 Nick Woud	☆ First Call 3D RETUNE	Principal Percussion (ABRSM)
10 Nick Woud	☆ Study No.20 (from <i>Symphonic Studies for Timpani</i> ) 4D PED RETUNE	Nick Woud: Symphonic Studies for Timpani (De Haske)

**STUDY:** Study A *and* Study B must be prepared; for further details see page 18

**SIGHT-READING:** a short piece of previously unseen music; for further details see pages 19 & 25

**AURAL TESTS:** given by the examiner from the piano; for further details see pages 75 & 80

## GRADE 7

**PREREQUISITE FOR ENTRY:** ABRSM Grade 5 (or above) in Music Theory, Practical Musicianship or a Practical Grades solo Jazz instrument. For alternatives, see [www.abrsm.org/prerequisite](http://www.abrsm.org/prerequisite).

**THREE PIECES:** chosen by the candidate from the List below; for further details see pages 15–17

Candidates must choose at least one piece marked ☆

COMPOSER	PIECE / WORK / ARRANGER	PUBLICATION (PUBLISHER)
1 Bill Cahn	Etude (from <i>Six Concert Pieces for Solo Timpani</i> ) 4D	Bill Cahn: Six Concert Pieces for Solo Timpani (Meredith Music)
2 Raynor Carroll ☆	Prelude 4D PED RETUNE	Exercises, Etudes and Solos for the Timpani (Batterie Music)
3 Peter Evans ☆	Shades of Bartók 4D PED RETUNE	Peter Evans: Shades of Bartók (Southern Percussion)
4 Kirk J. Gay ☆	Rock of the 80's (from <i>Pedal to the Kettle</i> ) 4D PED RETUNE	Kirk J. Gay: Pedal to the Kettle (TapSPACE)
5 Stravinsky, arr. Matthew Hardy ☆	Rite of Passage <i>with repeats</i> 3D PED RETUNE	Concert and Audition Pieces for the Young Percussionist (Southern Percussion)
6 David Mancini ☆	Flower City Funk 4D PED RETUNE	David Mancini: Flower City Funk (Kendor Music)
7 A. Ridout	Movement III (from <i>Sonatina for Timpani</i> ) 4D	A. Ridout: Sonatina for Timpani (Boosey & Hawkes)
8 Cameron Sinclair ☆	Feuertanz (from <i>3 Tanzen</i> ) 4D PED RETUNE	Cameron Sinclair: 3 Tanzen (Scottish Music Centre)
9 Nick Woud ☆	Study No.9 (from <i>The Timpani Challenge</i> ) 4D PED RETUNE	Nick Woud: The Timpani Challenge (Pustjens Percussion)
10 Ian Wright ☆	Spring Fever 4D RETUNE	Principal Percussion (ABRSM)

**STUDY:** Study A and Study B must be prepared; for further details see page 18

**SIGHT-READING:** a short piece of previously unseen music; for further details see pages 19 & 25

**AURAL TESTS:** given by the examiner from the piano; for further details see pages 75 & 81

## GRADE 8

**PREREQUISITE FOR ENTRY:** ABRSM Grade 5 (or above) in Music Theory, Practical Musicianship or a Practical Grades solo Jazz instrument. For alternatives, see [www.abrsm.org/prerequisite](http://www.abrsm.org/prerequisite).

**THREE PIECES:** chosen by the candidate from the List below; for further details see pages 15–17

Candidates must choose at least one piece marked ☆

COMPOSER	PIECE / WORK / ARRANGER	PUBLICATION (PUBLISHER)
1 John Beck	Movement II (from <i>Sonata for Timpani</i> ) 4D	John Beck: Sonata for Timpani (Boston Music Company)
2 E. Carter	Saëta (No.1 from <i>Eight Pieces for Four Timpani</i> ) 4D	E. Carter: Eight Pieces for Four Timpani (AMP) or P.28 from Solos for the Percussion Player (G. Schirmer)
3 Julian Fairbank	☆ Proclamation 4D PED RETUNE	Julian Fairbank: Proclamation (Southern Percussion)
4 S. Fink	Episode <i>and</i> Cadenza (Nos 4 <i>and</i> 6 from <i>Solobook for Timpani, Vol. 2</i> ) 4D <i>retune required between pieces</i>	S. Fink: Solobook for Timpani, Vol. 2 (Simrock)
5 George Frock	☆ Beguine and Samba (No. 3 from <i>Seven Solo Dances for the Advanced Timpanist</i> ) 4D PED RETUNE	George Frock: Seven Solo Dances for the Advanced Timpanist (Southern Music)
6 Kirk J. Gay	☆ Bolt! (from <i>Pedal to the Kettle</i> ) 4D PED RETUNE	Kirk J. Gay: Pedal to the Kettle (Tapspace)
7 Michael J. Rhodes	Scenes from an Ancient Battle 4D	Michael J. Rhodes: Scenes from an Ancient Battle (Studio 4 Music)
8 Cameron Sinclair	☆ Neuertanz (from 3 <i>Tanzen</i> ) 4D PED RETUNE	Cameron Sinclair: 3 Tanzen (Scottish Music Centre)
9 Nick Woud	☆ Study No.22 (from <i>Symphonic Studies for Timpani</i> ) 4D PED RETUNE	Nick Woud: Symphonic Studies for Timpani (De Haske)
10 Nick Woud	☆ Variations 4D PED RETUNE	Principal Percussion (ABRSM)

**STUDY:** Study A *and* Study B must be prepared; for further details see page 18

**SIGHT-READING:** a short piece of previously unseen music; for further details see pages 19 & 25

**AURAL TESTS:** given by the examiner from the piano; for further details see pages 75 & 82

## Aural test requirements

Included in all Practical Music graded exams\*

Listening lies at the heart of all good music-making. Developing aural awareness is fundamental to musical training because having a ‘musical ear’ impacts on all aspects of musicianship. Singing, both silently in the head and out loud, is one of the best ways to develop the ‘musical ear’. It connects the internal imagining of sound, the ‘inner ear’, with the external creation of it, without the necessity of mechanically having to ‘find the note’ on an instrument (important though that connection is). By integrating aural activities in imaginative ways in the lesson, preparation for the aural tests within an exam will be a natural extension of what is already an essential part of the learning experience.

### In the exam

Aural tests are an integral part of all Practical Music graded exams.

The tests are given by the examiner from the piano. For any test that requires a sung response, pitch rather than vocal quality is being assessed. The examiner will be happy to adapt to the vocal range of the candidate, whose responses may be sung to any vowel (or consonant followed by a vowel), hummed or whistled (and at a different octave, if appropriate).

The information on pages 76–82 sets out the tasks that candidates will be asked to complete in the exam.

### Assessment

Some tests allow for a second attempt or for an additional playing by the examiner, if necessary. The examiner will also be ready to prompt, where helpful, although this may affect the assessment.

Marks are not awarded for each individual test or deducted for mistakes; instead they reflect the candidate’s overall response in this section. The marking criteria for the Aural tests are given on page 90.

### Supporting publications

For practice purposes, sample Aural tests are published by ABRSM. Examples of the tests for Grades Initial–8 are given in *Specimen Aural Tests*. More examples for Grades 1–8 are given in *Aural Training in Practice*. Purchasing these books is not a requirement.

### Deaf or hearing-impaired candidates

Deaf or hearing-impaired candidates may choose alternative tests in place of the standard tests, if requested at the time of booking the exam. Further information, including the syllabus for the alternative tests, is available at [www.abrsm.org/specificneeds](http://www.abrsm.org/specificneeds).

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\* A different set of tests apply to Jazz and Singing for Musical Theatre exams

## INITIAL GRADE \*

- A To clap the pulse of a piece played by the examiner.** The examiner will start playing the passage, and the candidate should join in as soon as possible, clapping in time.
- B To clap as ‘echoes’ the rhythm of two phrases played by the examiner.** The phrases will be two bars long, in three or four time, and consist of a melody line only. The examiner will count in two bars. After the examiner has played each phrase, the candidate should clap back the rhythm as an ‘echo’ without a pause, keeping in time.
- C To sing as ‘echoes’ two phrases played by the examiner.** The phrases will be one bar long in 4/4 time. They will be in a major key, and within the range of tonic–mediant. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note (the tonic) and then count in two bars. After the examiner has played each phrase, the candidate should sing back the echo without a pause, keeping in time.
- D To answer a question about one feature of a piece played by the examiner.** Before playing, the examiner will tell the candidate which feature the question will be about. It will be about dynamics (loud/quiet) or articulation (smooth/detached).

## GRADE 1

- A To clap the pulse of a piece played by the examiner, and to identify whether it is in two time or three time.** The examiner will start playing the passage, and the candidate should join in as soon as possible, clapping in time and giving a louder clap on the strong beats. The examiner will then ask whether the music is in two time or three time. The candidate is *not* required to state the time signature.
- B To sing as ‘echoes’ three phrases played by the examiner.** The phrases will be two bars long, in a major key, and within the range of tonic–mediant. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note (the tonic) and then count in two bars. After the examiner has played each phrase, the candidate should sing back the echo without a pause, keeping in time.
- C To identify where a change in pitch occurs during a phrase played by the examiner.** The phrase will be two bars long, in a major key, and the change will affect only one of the notes. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the tonic and then count in two bars. The examiner will play the phrase twice, making the change in the second playing, after which the candidate should state whether the change was near the beginning or near the end. If necessary, the examiner will play both versions of the phrase again (although this may affect the assessment).
- D To answer questions about two features of a piece played by the examiner.** Before playing, the examiner will tell the candidate which two features the questions will be about. The first will be: dynamics (loud/quiet, or sudden/gradual changes); the second will be articulation (smooth/detached).



## GRADE 2

- A To clap the pulse of a piece played by the examiner, and to identify whether it is in two time or three time.** The examiner will start playing the passage, and the candidate should join in as soon as possible, clapping in time and giving a louder clap on the strong beats. The examiner will then ask whether the music is in two time or three time. The candidate is *not* required to state the time signature.
- B To sing as ‘echoes’ three phrases played by the examiner.** The phrases will be two bars long, in a major key, and within the range of tonic–dominant. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note (the tonic) and then count in two bars. After the examiner has played each phrase, the candidate should sing back the echo without a pause, keeping in time.
- C To identify a change in either pitch or rhythm during a phrase played by the examiner.** The phrase will be two bars long, in a major key. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the tonic and then count in two bars. The examiner will play the phrase twice, making the change in the second playing, after which the candidate should identify the change by describing it, or singing/clapping. If necessary, the examiner will play both versions of the phrase again (although this may affect the assessment).
- D To answer questions about two features of a piece played by the examiner.** Before playing, the examiner will tell the candidate which two features the questions will be about. The first will be *one* of the following: dynamics (loud/quiet, or sudden/gradual changes), articulation (smooth/detached); the second will be tempo (becoming slower/faster, or staying the same).

## GRADE 3

- A To clap the pulse of a piece played by the examiner, and to identify whether it is in two time, three time or four time.** The examiner will start playing the passage, and the candidate should join in as soon as possible, clapping in time and giving a louder clap on the strong beats. The examiner will then ask whether the music is in two time, three time or four time. The candidate is *not* required to state the time signature.
- B To sing as ‘echoes’ three phrases played by the examiner.** The phrases will be two bars long, in a major or minor key, and within the range of an octave. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note and then count in two bars. After the examiner has played each phrase, the candidate should sing back the echo without a pause, keeping in time.
- C To identify a change in either pitch or rhythm during a phrase played by the examiner.** The phrase will be up to four bars long, in a major or minor key. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the tonic and then count in two bars. The examiner will play the phrase twice, making the change in the second playing, after which the candidate should identify the change by describing it, or singing/clapping. If necessary, the examiner will play both versions of the phrase again (although this may affect the assessment).

*Grade 3 cont.*

**D To answer questions about two features of a piece played by the examiner.** Before playing, the examiner will tell the candidate which two features the questions will be about. The first will be *one* of the following: dynamics (loud/quiet, or sudden/gradual changes), articulation (smooth/detached), tempo (becoming slower/faster, or staying the same); the second will be tonality (major/minor key).

**GRADE 4**

**A To sing or play from memory a melody played twice by the examiner.** The melody will be within the range of an octave, in a major or minor key with up to three sharps or flats. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note and then count in two bars. (If the candidate chooses to play, the examiner will also name the key-chord and the starting note, as appropriate for the instrument.) If necessary, the examiner will play the melody again and allow a second attempt (although this may affect the assessment).

**B To sing five notes from score in free time.** The candidate may choose to sing from treble or bass clef. The notes will be within the range of a third above and below the tonic in the key of C, F or G major. The test will begin and end on the tonic and will not contain intervals greater than a third. First the examiner will name and play the key-chord and the starting note. If necessary, the examiner will help the candidate by playing and identifying the correct note if any note is sung at the wrong pitch.

**C (i) To answer questions about two features of a piece played by the examiner.** Before playing, the examiner will tell the candidate which two features the questions will be about. The first will be *one* of the following: dynamics, articulation, tempo, tonality; the second will be character.

**(ii) To clap the rhythm of the notes in an extract from the same piece, and to identify whether it is in two time, three time or four time.** The examiner will play the extract twice (unharmonised), after which the candidate should clap back the rhythm. The examiner will then ask whether the music is in two time, three time or four time. The candidate is *not* required to state the time signature.

## GRADE 5

- A To sing or play from memory a melody played twice by the examiner.** The melody will be within the range of an octave, in a major or minor key with up to three sharps or flats. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note and then count in two bars. (If the candidate chooses to play, the examiner will also name the key-chord and the starting note, as appropriate for the instrument.) If necessary, the examiner will play the melody again and allow a second attempt (although this may affect the assessment).
- B To sing six notes from score in free time.** The candidate may choose to sing from treble or bass clef. The notes will be within the range of a fifth above and a fourth below the tonic, in a major key with up to two sharps or flats. The test will begin and end on the tonic and will not contain intervals greater than a third, except for the rising fourth from dominant to tonic. First the examiner will name and play the key-chord and the starting note. If necessary, the examiner will help the candidate by playing and identifying the correct note if any note is sung at the wrong pitch.
- C (i) To answer questions about two features of a piece played by the examiner.** Before playing, the examiner will tell the candidate which two features the questions will be about. The first will be *one* of the following: dynamics, articulation, tempo, tonality, character; the second will be style and period.
- (ii) To clap the rhythm of the notes in an extract from the same piece, and to identify whether it is in two time, three time or four time.** The examiner will play the extract twice (unharmonised), after which the candidate should clap back the rhythm. The examiner will then ask whether the music is in two time, three time or four time. The candidate is *not* required to state the time signature.

## GRADE 6

- A To sing or play from memory the *upper* part of a two-part phrase played twice by the examiner.** The upper part will be within the range of an octave, in a major or minor key with up to three sharps or flats. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note and then count in two bars. (If the candidate chooses to play, the examiner will also name the key-chord and the starting note, as appropriate for the instrument.) If necessary, the examiner will play the phrase again and allow a second attempt (although this may affect the assessment).
- B To sing a melody from score, with an accompaniment played by the examiner.** The candidate may choose to sing from treble or bass clef. The melody will be within the range of an octave, in a major or minor key with up to three sharps or flats. First the examiner will name and play the key-chord and the starting note and then give the pulse. A brief period of preparation will follow during which the candidate may sing out loud. The examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note again and then count in two bars. If necessary, the examiner will allow a second attempt (although this may affect the assessment).
- C To identify the cadence at the end of a phrase as perfect or imperfect.** The phrase will be in a major or minor key and will be played twice by the examiner. The chords forming the cadence will be in root position. Before the first playing, the examiner will play the key-chord.
- D (i) To answer questions about two features of a piece played by the examiner.** Before playing, the examiner will tell the candidate which two features the questions will be about. The first will be: texture or structure; the second will be *one* of the following: dynamics, articulation, tempo, tonality, character, style and period, texture/structure.
- (ii) To clap the rhythm of the notes in an extract from the same piece, and to identify whether it is in two time, three time or four time.** The examiner will play the extract twice (unharmonised), after which the candidate should clap back the rhythm. The examiner will then ask whether the music is in two time, three time or four time. The candidate is *not* required to state the time signature.

## GRADE 7

- A To sing or play from memory the *lower* part of a two-part phrase played twice by the examiner.** The lower part will be within the range of an octave, in a major or minor key with up to three sharps or flats. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note and then count in two bars. (If the candidate chooses to play, the examiner will also name the key-chord and the starting note, as appropriate for the instrument.) If necessary, the examiner will play the phrase again and allow a second attempt (although this may affect the assessment).
- B To sing the *upper* part of a two-part phrase from score, with the lower part played by the examiner.** The candidate may choose to sing from treble or bass clef. The upper part will be within the range of an octave, in a major or minor key with up to four sharps or flats. First the examiner will name and play the key-chord and the starting note and then give the pulse. A brief period of preparation will follow during which the candidate may sing out loud. The examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note again and then count in two bars. If necessary, the examiner will allow a second attempt (although this may affect the assessment).
- C (i) To identify the cadence at the end of a phrase as perfect, imperfect or interrupted.** The phrase will be in a major or minor key and will be played twice by the examiner. The chords forming the cadence will be in root position. Before the first playing, the examiner will play the key-chord.
- (ii) To identify the two chords forming the above cadence.** The chords will be limited to the tonic, subdominant, dominant, dominant seventh or submediant (all in root position). First the examiner will name and play the key-chord, then play the two chords as a pair. The candidate may answer using technical names (tonic, dominant, etc.), chord numbers (I, V, etc.) or letter names (C major, G major, etc.).
- (iii) To identify whether the modulation at the end of a different passage is to the dominant, subdominant or relative minor.** The passage, played once by the examiner, will begin in a major key. First the examiner will name and play the starting key-chord. The candidate may answer using technical names (dominant, subdominant, relative minor) or the letter name of the new key.
- D (i) To answer questions about two features of a piece played by the examiner.** Before playing, the examiner will tell the candidate which two of the following features the questions will be about: dynamics, articulation, tempo, tonality, character, style and period, texture, structure.
- (ii) To clap the rhythm of the notes in an extract from the same piece, and to identify whether it is in two time, three time, four time or 6/8 time.** The examiner will play the extract twice (unharmonised), after which the candidate should clap back the rhythm. The examiner will then ask whether the music is in two time, three time, four time or 6/8 time.

## GRADE 8

- A (i) To sing or play from memory the *lowest* part of a three-part phrase played twice by the examiner.** The lowest part will be within the range of an octave, in a major or minor key with up to three sharps or flats. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note and then count in two bars. (If the candidate chooses to play, the examiner will also name the key-chord and the starting note, as appropriate for the instrument.) If necessary, the examiner will play the phrase again and allow a second attempt (although this may affect the assessment).
- (ii) To identify the cadence at the end of a continuing phrase as perfect, imperfect, interrupted or plagal.** The phrase will be in a major or minor key and will be played twice by the examiner. The chords forming the cadence will be limited to the tonic (root position, first or second inversions), supertonic (root position or first inversion), subdominant (root position), dominant (root position, first or second inversions), dominant seventh (root position) or submediant (root position). Before the first playing, the examiner will play the key-chord.
- (iii) To identify the three chords (including their positions) forming the above cadential progression.** The chords will be limited to the tonic (root position, first or second inversions), supertonic (root position or first inversion), subdominant (root position), dominant (root position, first or second inversions), dominant seventh (root position) or submediant (root position). First the examiner will name and play the key-chord, then play the three chords in sequence, finally playing each chord individually, pausing for the candidate to identify it. The candidate may answer using technical names (tonic, first inversion, etc.), chord numbers (Ib, etc.) or letter names (C major in first inversion, etc.).
- B To sing the *lower* part of a two-part phrase from score, with the upper part played by the examiner.** The candidate may choose to sing from treble or bass clef. The lower part will be within the range of an octave, in a major or minor key with up to four sharps or flats. First the examiner will name and play the key-chord and the starting note and then give the pulse. A brief period of preparation will follow during which the candidate may sing out loud. The examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note again and then count in two bars. If necessary, the examiner will allow a second attempt (although this may affect the assessment).
- C To identify whether the modulations at the end of two different passages are to the dominant, subdominant or relative minor/major.** The first passage will begin in a major key and the second will begin in a minor key; each passage will be played once by the examiner. Before playing each passage, the examiner will name and play the starting key-chord. The candidate may answer using technical names (dominant\*, subdominant, relative minor/major) or the letter name of the new key. (\* Minor-key passages may modulate to the dominant major or minor but the candidate is only required to specify 'dominant' in such cases.)
- D To describe the characteristic features of a piece played by the examiner.** After hearing the piece, the candidate should describe any notable features (such as texture, structure, character, style and period, etc.). The examiner will prompt the candidate with questions only if this becomes necessary.

## 4. Assessment and marking

### Assessment objectives

The following tables describe the level of knowledge and skills required of candidates taking Practical Grades. They also show the assessment objectives and corresponding marking criteria that examiners use to assess the performances at each level. The full marking criteria used by examiners are available on pages 89–90.

### Initial Grade (RQF Entry Level 3)

Assessment objectives	Marking criteria
Learners will:	Learners can:
Demonstrate musical skill, knowledge and understanding through performing repertoire of basic musical and technical demands, demonstrating control across the range of musical ingredients appropriate to simple repertoire and awareness of basic characteristic features and performance conventions.	Perform basic repertoire with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reliable pitch and intonation</li><li>• Stable rhythm at a suitable tempo</li><li>• Reliable tonal control and awareness</li><li>• Musical shape and detail</li><li>• Communication of character and style</li></ul>
Demonstrate instrumental control and familiarity with prescribed note patterns relevant to the instrument, through playing prescribed technical requirements at basic demand levels.	Perform specified basic technical requirements with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Correct notes and secure continuity</li><li>• Reliable tonal control</li></ul>
Demonstrate notational and listening skills and understanding at basic demand levels through responding to previously unseen music and prescribed aural tests.	Respond to simple musical notation with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall security of notes, rhythm and continuity</li></ul> Respond to simple piano-based musical stimuli with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall accuracy and reliable musical perception</li></ul>

## Grades 1-3 (RQF Level 1)

Assessment objectives	Marking criteria
<p>Learners will:</p> <p>Demonstrate musical skill, knowledge and understanding through performing repertoire of elementary musical and technical demands, demonstrating control across the range of musical ingredients appropriate to straightforward repertoire and awareness of elementary characteristic features and performance conventions.</p>	<p>Learners can:</p> <p>Perform elementary repertoire with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable pitch and intonation</li> <li>• Stable rhythm at a suitable tempo</li> <li>• Reliable tonal control and awareness</li> <li>• Musical shape and detail</li> <li>• Communication of character and style</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate instrumental control and familiarity with prescribed note patterns relevant to the instrument, through playing prescribed technical requirements at elementary demand levels.</p>	<p>Perform specified elementary technical requirements with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct notes and secure continuity</li> <li>• Reliable tonal control</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate notational and listening skills and understanding at elementary demand levels through responding to previously unseen music and prescribed aural tests.</p>	<p>Respond to straightforward musical notation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall security of notes, rhythm and continuity</li> </ul> <p>Respond to straightforward piano-based musical stimuli with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall accuracy and reliable musical perception</li> </ul>



## Grades 4–5 (RQF Level 2)

Assessment objectives	Marking criteria
<p>Learners will:</p> <p>Demonstrate musical skill, knowledge and understanding through performing repertoire of intermediate musical and technical demands, demonstrating control across the range of musical ingredients appropriate to moderately complex repertoire and awareness of comprehensive characteristic features and performance conventions.</p>	<p>Learners can:</p> <p>Perform intermediate repertoire with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable pitch and intonation</li> <li>• Stable rhythm at a suitable tempo</li> <li>• Reliable tonal control and awareness</li> <li>• Musical shape and detail</li> <li>• Communication of character and style</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate instrumental control and familiarity with prescribed note patterns relevant to the instrument, through playing prescribed technical requirements at intermediate demand levels.</p>	<p>Perform specified intermediate technical requirements with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct notes and secure continuity</li> <li>• Reliable tonal control</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate notational and listening skills and understanding at intermediate demand levels through responding to previously unseen music and prescribed aural tests.</p>	<p>Respond to moderately complex musical notation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall security of notes, rhythm and continuity</li> </ul> <p>Respond to moderately complex piano-based musical stimuli with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall accuracy and reliable musical perception</li> </ul>

## Grades 6–8 (RQF Level 3)

Assessment objectives	Marking criteria
<p>Learners will:</p> <p>Demonstrate musical skill, knowledge and understanding through performing repertoire of advanced musical and technical demands, demonstrating control across the range of musical ingredients appropriate to complex repertoire and awareness of sophisticated characteristic features and performance conventions.</p>	<p>Learners can:</p> <p>Perform advanced repertoire with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliable pitch and intonation</li> <li>• Stable rhythm at a suitable tempo</li> <li>• Reliable tonal control and awareness</li> <li>• Musical shape and detail</li> <li>• Communication of character and style</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate instrumental control and familiarity with prescribed note patterns relevant to the instrument, through playing prescribed technical requirements at advanced demand levels.</p>	<p>Perform specified advanced technical requirements with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct notes and secure continuity</li> <li>• Reliable tonal control</li> </ul>
<p>Demonstrate notational and listening skills and understanding at advanced demand levels through responding to previously unseen music and prescribed aural tests.</p>	<p>Respond to complex musical notation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall security of notes, rhythm and continuity</li> </ul> <p>Respond to complex piano-based musical stimuli with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall accuracy and reliable musical perception</li> </ul>

## Mark allocation

Marks are allocated for each component of Practical Grades for percussion subjects, as shown in the table below:

Exam section	Maximum marks	% of total mark
Piece 1	30	20%
Piece 2	30	20%
Piece 3	30	20%
Technical requirements	21	14%
Sight-reading	21	14%
Aural tests	18	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Result categories

The result categories for Practical Grades are set as follows. A Pass in each component of the exam is not required to pass overall.

Result category	Mark band
Distinction	130–150
Merit	120–129
Pass	100–119
Below Pass	50–99

## Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment is a form of assessment that requires candidates to demonstrate that they can identify and effectively use a selection of skills, techniques, concepts and knowledge to carry out a key task. Practical Grades allow candidates to demonstrate their ability to draw together different skills, knowledge and understanding – theory, notation, instrument control, listening skills, creative interpretation – and apply these across the individual components of the exam.

## Awarding

An examiner's assessment of a piece or any other component will be based on the performance given at that time towards the qualification for which the candidate has been entered. Prior performances of the same pieces or other components will not be taken into account for the qualification, nor will marking appeals be accepted on that basis. The transfer of marks, at any grade, between Practical Grades and Performance Grades is not permitted.

Candidates may not perform the same repertoire (in full or individual pieces) for both a Practical Grades and a Performance Grades qualification. If choosing to enter at the same grade for both qualifications, irrespective of when the exams are taken, the pieces presented must be different.

## Marking criteria

The tables on pages 89–90 show the marking criteria used by examiners for Practical Grades in percussion subjects. Examiners mark up or down from the pass mark for each element by balancing the extent to which the qualities and skills listed in the criteria (broadly categorised by pitch, time, tone, shape and performance) are demonstrated and contribute towards the overall musical outcome.

## Marking criteria

Grades	Pieces	Time	Tone	Shape	Performance
<b>Initial-8*</b>	<i>Pitch</i>				
<b>Distinction</b> <b>27-30</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly accurate notes and intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent, with flexibility where appropriate</li> <li>Rhythmic character well conveyed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well projected</li> <li>Sensitive use of tonal qualities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expressive, idiomatic musical shaping and detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assured</li> <li>Fully committed</li> <li>Vivid communication of character and style</li> </ul>
<b>Merit</b> <b>24-26</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely accurate notes and intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustained, effective tempo</li> <li>Good sense of rhythm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainly controlled and consistent</li> <li>Good tonal awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clear musical shaping, well-realised detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Positive</li> <li>Carrying musical conviction</li> <li>Character and style communicated</li> </ul>
<b>Pass</b> <b>20-23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally correct notes</li> <li>Sufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suitable tempo</li> <li>Generally stable pulse</li> <li>Overall rhythmic accuracy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally reliable</li> <li>Adequate tonal awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some realisation of musical shape and/or detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally secure, prompt recovery from slips</li> <li>Some musical involvement</li> </ul>
<b>Below Pass</b> <b>17-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent note errors</li> <li>Insufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsuitable and/or uncontrolled tempo</li> <li>Irregular pulse</li> <li>Inaccurate rhythm</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uneven and/or unreliable</li> <li>Inadequate tonal awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Musical shape and detail insufficiently conveyed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insecure, inadequate recovery from slips</li> <li>Insufficient musical involvement</li> </ul>
<b>13-16</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely inaccurate notes and/or intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erratic tempo and/or pulse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Serious lack of tonal control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Musical shape and detail largely unrealised</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacking continuity</li> <li>No musical involvement</li> </ul>
<b>10-12</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly inaccurate notes and/or intonation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incoherent tempo and/or pulse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No tonal control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No shape or detail</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unable to continue for more than a short section</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>

\* Initial Grade not available for percussion

Grades Initial-8 *	Scales and arpeggios/Study	Sight-reading	Aural tests
<b>Distinction 19-21</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly accurate notes/pitch</li> <li>Fluent and rhythmic</li> <li>Musically shaped</li> <li>Confident response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fluent, rhythmically accurate</li> <li>Accurate notes/pitch/key</li> <li>Musical detail realised</li> <li>Confident presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accurate throughout</li> <li>Musically perceptive</li> <li>Confident response</li> </ul>
<b>Merit 17-18</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largely accurate notes/pitch</li> <li>Mostly regular flow</li> <li>Mainly even tone</li> <li>Secure response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequate tempo, usually steady pulse</li> <li>Mainly correct rhythm</li> <li>Largely correct notes/pitch/key</li> <li>Largely secure presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengths significantly outweigh weaknesses</li> <li>Musically aware</li> <li>Secure response</li> </ul>
<b>Pass 14-16</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally correct notes/pitch, despite errors</li> <li>Continuity generally maintained</li> <li>Generally reliable tone</li> <li>Cautious response</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuity generally maintained</li> <li>Note values mostly realised</li> <li>Pitch outlines in place, despite errors</li> <li>Cautious presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengths just outweigh weaknesses</li> <li>Cautious response</li> </ul>
<b>Below Pass 11-13</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frequent errors in notes and/or pitch</li> <li>Lacking continuity and/or some items incomplete</li> <li>Unreliable tone</li> <li>Uncertain response and/or some items not attempted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacking overall continuity</li> <li>Incorrect note values</li> <li>Very approximate notes/pitch/key</li> <li>Insecure presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weaknesses outweigh strengths</li> <li>Uncertain response</li> </ul>
<b>7-10</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very approximate notes and/or pitch</li> <li>Sporadic and/or frequently incomplete</li> <li>Serious lack of tonal control</li> <li>Very uncertain response and/or several items not attempted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No continuity or incomplete</li> <li>Note values unrealised</li> <li>Pitch outlines absent</li> <li>Very uncertain presentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inaccuracy throughout</li> <li>Vague response</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No work offered</li> </ul>

\* Initial Grade not available for percussion

## 5. After the exam

### Results

All candidates receive a copy of their mark form; successful candidates also receive a certificate that shows the qualification title as well as the subject and level that they have been examined in. We aim to release results for Practical Grades in line with the schedules on our website at [www.abrsm.org/results](http://www.abrsm.org/results); however, some results may take longer. Examiners will not issue or discuss a candidate's result; the mark form (and certificate for successful candidates) will be issued by ABRSM after the exam. Unless otherwise requested at the time of booking, mark forms and certificates are issued to the applicant, whose responsibility it is to pass them on to candidates.

### Exam feedback

Specific guidance for questions about the administration of the exam or the results awarded is available on our website. We also welcome feedback about other matters. All feedback is logged and plays a valuable part in our quality assurance procedures. For further information on our processes and deadlines for submitting feedback, please visit [www.abrsm.org/send-exam-feedback](http://www.abrsm.org/send-exam-feedback).

## 6. Other assessments

ABRSM's other assessments for percussionists are Performance Grades, Performance Assessment, Ensembles and diplomas. Full information is available at [www.abrsm.org/exams](http://www.abrsm.org/exams).

### Performance Grades

ABRSM Performance Grades are our new progressive qualifications that allow learners to focus on and showcase their performance skills. They are available from Grade 1 to Grade 8. Candidates may be entered for any grade at any age and do not need to have taken any earlier grade(s) in the same subject. Full information, including the qualification specification, is available at [www.abrsm.org/performancegrades](http://www.abrsm.org/performancegrades).

### About Performance Grades

Each Performance Grade has been carefully designed to assess synoptically the underpinning knowledge and understanding required for music performance. These creative skills are presented through the technical control of an instrument, interpretation of repertoire, and the delivery and successful communication of a selected programme of repertoire. Collectively, these skills enable candidates to progress to higher grades and other qualifications in the creative arts sector.

The exams are made up of five components:

- four Pieces/Songs – three selected by candidates from set lists and one that is their own choice
- an assessment of the performance as a whole

Marks for each component are weighted evenly and are awarded to each component individually.

The exams are currently offered as remote assessments only. Candidates' performances are video recorded in one continuous take and submitted to ABRSM for assessment. The candidate/Applicant is responsible for organising a suitable venue and any equipment needed to run the exam.

Those entering for a Grade 6, 7 or 8 Performance Grades exam must first have passed ABRSM Grade 5 (or above) in Music Theory, Practical Musicianship or a Practical Grades solo Jazz instrument; for full details, including a list of accepted alternatives, see [www.abrsm.org/prerequisite](http://www.abrsm.org/prerequisite).



## Music Theory

ABRSM Music Theory exams are available for Grades 1–8. Candidates may be entered for any grade at any age and do not need to have taken any earlier grade(s). Further information is available at [www.abrsm.org/theory](http://www.abrsm.org/theory) and the qualification specification (including the full syllabus) is available at [www.abrsm.org/specifications](http://www.abrsm.org/specifications).

### About Music Theory

Developing musical literacy forms a key part of a rounded education for performers, composers and listeners of all kinds. Understanding how written symbols relate to the elements of music, and having the skills to interpret and translate them into sounds, empowers us to communicate and experience music in a meaningful way.

ABRSM's Music Theory grades give learners:

- a knowledge of the notation of western music, including commonly used signs and terminology
- an understanding of fundamental musical elements such as intervals, keys, scales and chords
- an ability to apply theoretical knowledge and understanding to score analysis
- skills in harmonic completion of extracts and melody writing (at Grades 6–8).

Candidates are assessed on their ability to identify, use and manipulate musical symbols, to complete extracts and to answer questions relating to the elements of music according to the parameters detailed in the full syllabus at [www.abrsm.org/theory](http://www.abrsm.org/theory).

### Grade 5 as a prerequisite

We believe that a thorough understanding of the elements of music is essential for a full and satisfying performance at the higher grades.

It is therefore an ABRSM requirement that candidates must provide evidence of a pass at ABRSM Grade 5 or above in Music Theory, Practical Musicianship or a Practical Grades solo Jazz instrument before they can enter for a Grade 6, 7 or 8 Practical Grades or Performance Grades exam.

## Practical Musicianship

ABRSM Practical Musicianship exams are available for Grades 1–8 and are open to singers and instrumentalists. Candidates may be entered for any grade at any age and do not need to have taken any earlier grade(s). The full syllabus is available at [www.abrsm.org/practicalmusicianship](http://www.abrsm.org/practicalmusicianship).

### About Practical Musicianship

Musicianship is a broad concept that covers a complex range of musical abilities. For the purposes of this syllabus, it is loosely defined as the ability to ‘think in sound’. This occurs when a musician is able to produce music which they perceive internally and in the imagination, whether through playing by ear, singing, reading from notation, or through improvisation.

ABRSM’s Practical Musicianship grades encourage learners to develop their ability to ‘think in sound’ and perform spontaneously. While Practical Grades and Performance Grades focus on aspects of performance and/or supporting tests that are prepared in detail in advance, here the playing (or singing) is in response to immediate challenges and stimuli, presented both aurally and via notation.

The exams also cover the following key skills:

- the ability to internalise music and to reproduce it
- interpreting written music with a minimum of preparation
- exploring the possibilities inherent in a short motif
- the ability to detect differences between what is heard and what is written.

In developing their musicianship skills, learners will be gaining the understanding as well as the expressive and interpretative skills needed to master the musical language of the repertoire they are learning.

### Grade 5 as a prerequisite

We believe that a thorough understanding of the elements of music is essential for a full and satisfying performance at the higher grades.

It is therefore an ABRSM requirement that candidates must provide evidence of a pass at ABRSM Grade 5 or above in Practical Musicianship, Music Theory or a Practical Grades solo Jazz instrument before they can enter for a Grade 6, 7 or 8 Practical Grades or Performance Grades exam.

## ARSM

The ARSM diploma is available to instrumentalists and singers of any age. It is the first of our diploma qualifications and provides musicians with an opportunity to develop their performance technique and interpretative skills, while focusing on programme building and extending their repertoire.

### Key features

- Candidates present a balanced and varied programme, as follows:
  - the programme lasts 30 minutes
  - at least 20 minutes of the music is chosen from the repertoire list
  - the remaining programme time may be made up of own-choice repertoire, of Grade 8 standard or above
- There are no additional supporting tests or other requirements
- There are two assessment methods available:
  - in person – held at the same venues and during the same time periods as ABRSM's Practical Grades
  - remote – a video recorded performance submitted to ABRSM for assessment
- ARSM is a letter-bearing qualification. Candidates awarded the diploma can use the letters ARSM (Associate of the Royal Schools of Music) after their name.

Those entering for an ARSM diploma must first have passed ABRSM Grade 8 (or a listed alternative). Full details of the exam and entry requirements are available in the qualification specification at [www.abrsm.org/arsmdiploma](http://www.abrsm.org/arsmdiploma).

We update our syllabuses from time to time. Advance notice of any changes will be given at [www.abrsm.org/exams](http://www.abrsm.org/exams). Please refer to the website for the most recent version of the ARSM syllabus.

## DipABRSM, LRSM, FRSM (Music Performance)

These diplomas are available to instrumentalists and singers of any age. Through a combination of live and written components, candidates demonstrate their performance, communication and research skills, as well as their musical knowledge and understanding. Each diploma serves as a stepping stone to the next level.

### Key features

- Candidates:
  - present a recital programme
  - submit programme notes (DipABRSM & LRSM) or a written submission (FRSM)
  - undertake a viva voce, with questions covering the recital, programme notes/written submission as well as other aspects of performance
  - perform a short piece of unaccompanied and previously unseen music after five minutes' preparation time (quick study)
- These diploma exams take place at specific venues and times of the year
- Each diploma is a letter-bearing qualification. Candidates awarded a diploma can use the letters DipABRSM (Diploma of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music), LRSM (Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music) or FRSM (Fellowship of the Royal Schools of Music) after their name as appropriate.

Those entering for one of these diplomas must fulfil a specific ABRSM prerequisite (or a listed alternative). Full details of the exam and entry requirements are available at [www.abrsm.org/diplomas](http://www.abrsm.org/diplomas) and the qualification specification is available at [www.abrsm.org/specifications](http://www.abrsm.org/specifications).

We update our syllabuses from time to time. Advance notice of any changes will be given at [www.abrsm.org/exams](http://www.abrsm.org/exams). Please refer to the website for the most recent versions of the diploma syllabuses.

### Further diploma exams

DipABRSM, LRSM and FRSM diplomas are also available for Instrumental/Vocal Teaching and Music Direction. Full details are available at [www.abrsm.org/diplomas](http://www.abrsm.org/diplomas).

(may be photocopied or detached for exams)



# Exam programme & running order

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

**Please write details of the items you are performing in your exam in the order you are presenting them and hand this slip to the examiner. Best wishes for an enjoyable and successful exam!**

**Year of syllabus** \_\_\_\_\_

List *	Number	Composer	Title

**Singers only:** unaccompanied traditional song: \_\_\_\_\_

**Percussion (Combined) only:** technical requirements on: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Leave blank for Snare Drum, Timpani and Tuned Percussion