



Motivating musical achievement

Welcome to ABRSM

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Welcome to ABRSM

Music is at the heart of our work. We are here to support and encourage music learning throughout the world so that everyone can share in its power.

We motivate musical achievement through our authoritative assessment of students, the professional development of their teachers, and a wide range of published resources. We also actively support music education through funding and advocacy.

ABRSM is the leading authority on musical assessment. By delivering our exams rigorously and consistently we set the worldwide gold standard, with over 600,000 people, in over 90 countries, choosing to take them every year.

As part of our commitment to excellence in music education, we provide a rich resource of materials, from albums of repertoire for the earliest stages of learning to scholarly editions of the great composers. Our online presence includes SoundJunction, our award-winning site for music learners.

We know that good teachers endeavour to enhance their professional skills. We support their continuing professional development through our innovative courses and online learning resources.

To build on our 120 years inspiring generations of musicians, we provide charitable donations, scholarships and sponsorships, as well as acting as an advocate for music education. We do all we can to give music a voice in public life because we believe it has the power to change people's lives.

This booklet aims to give you an overview of all our activities. You can explore in more detail at www.abrsm.org.

ABRSM has the authority of four of the UK's leading conservatoires:

- Royal Academy of Music, London
- Royal College of Music, London
- Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester
- Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama, Glasgow



Exams and assessments

- Prep Test
- Grades 1–8
- Diplomas
- Music Medals
- Performance Assessment
- Ensembles



Since 1889, we have provided music teachers and their students with exams and assessments that nurture and evaluate an individual's performance and progress. As the world's largest and leading specialist in music assessment, our consistent and rigorous approach carries recognised international authority.

Motivation and encouragement

We have designed our exams and assessments to motivate students of all levels and ages, giving them a series of realistic goals and tangible rewards for their achievements.

Exam syllabuses are not intended to provide a complete curriculum. Students are encouraged to play and experience as much music as possible, embracing a wide range of genres.

Beginners and upwards

We want to bring the power of music to all age groups and every level of ability.

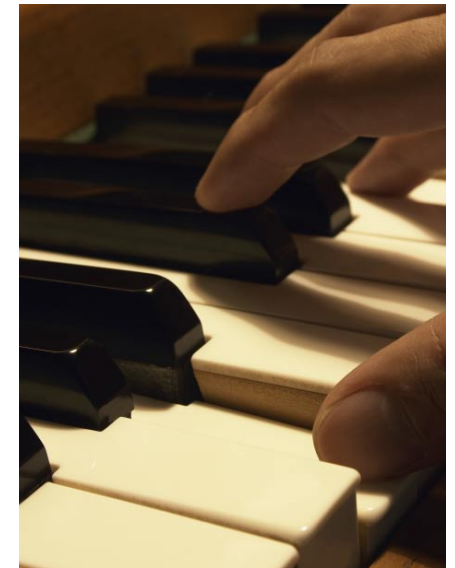
Many students will start with the Prep Test and then work through all the grades from 1 to 8, but we do not impose a set pattern. A student may begin with the grade that best suits their ability – and it does not matter if a grade is 'missed out'.

For people to get the richest experience from performing music, we believe that a thorough knowledge and understanding of the elements of music is essential. So, before moving on to a practical exam at Grade 6, 7 or 8, a student must first pass Grade 5 (or above) in Theory of Music, Practical Musicianship or a solo Jazz subject. These have in common a level of musical understanding which acts as a solid foundation for further development as a musician.

Certificates and mark forms

All successful exam candidates receive a certificate to mark their achievement. Practical graded exam candidates also receive a mark form, written by the examiner during the exam. Theory candidates receive a form listing the marks awarded to each question.

We provide the mark form to give teachers, candidates and parents a clear, consistent and fair indication of the strengths and weaknesses in each part of the exam.



Our exams and assessments

Let's take a closer look at the exams and assessments we offer.

Prep Test

The Prep Test is designed for students who have been learning an instrument for about six to nine months. Working towards this early goal encourages the development of good technique and sound musicianship. It is also an ideal introduction to the experience of taking an exam.

We have developed the Prep Test to be as relaxed and enjoyable as possible. No marks are awarded and there is no pass or fail. At the end of the assessment every candidate is rewarded with a certificate which includes positive and helpful comments from the examiner.

Grades 1–8

Each of the eight graded exams represents a logical step in the musical development of a student.

Graded exams are available for:

- Piano, Jazz Piano*
- Harpsichord
- Organ
- Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Double Bass
- Guitar
- Harp
- Recorder
- Flute, Jazz Flute*
- Oboe
- Clarinet, Jazz Clarinet*
- Bassoon
- Saxophone, Jazz Sax*
- Horn
- Trumpet, Jazz Trumpet*
- Cornet, Jazz Cornet*
- Flugelhorn, Jazz Flugelhorn*
- E♭ Horn
- Trombone, Jazz Trombone*
- Bass Trombone
- Baritone
- Euphonium
- Tuba
- Percussion
- Singing
- Theory of Music
- Practical Musicianship



Grades 1–8: Instrumental and singing exams

Practical syllabuses are available in over 35 subjects, from Piano to Percussion, and from Harpsichord to Horn. There is a separate Jazz syllabus for Flute, Clarinet, Sax, Trumpet, Trombone, Piano and Ensembles.

Pieces for each syllabus have been carefully selected to provide maximum choice whilst covering the key skills necessary at a particular level. Our aim is to inspire teachers and students by giving them the widest possible variety of repertoire.

Practical exams have four sections, giving candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their skills through prepared work and musicianship tests:

- Set pieces/songs
- Scales and arpeggios/ broken chords, or, for singers, an unaccompanied folk song
- Sight-reading or quick study
- Aural tests

Grades 1–8: Theory of Music and Practical Musicianship exams

We aim to encourage an education in music that is as broad as possible, covering both the theoretical and the practical. We provide a Theory of Music syllabus, examined through written exams, and a Practical Musicianship syllabus that uses practical methods to assess musical understanding.

In a Practical Musicianship exam candidates demonstrate their understanding of melody, harmony, rhythm and form by responding to questions about music and by singing or playing an instrument of their choice in a series of tests.



* Not available in all countries: check the **Examination Information & Regulations** booklet for availability

Diplomas

ABRSM diplomas provide an authoritative assessment framework for a wide range of musicians.

There are three subjects for diplomas:

- Music Performance
- Music Direction
- Instrumental/Vocal Teaching

and each subject has three levels of award:

- Diploma of The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (DipABRSM)
- Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music (LRSM)
- Fellowship of the Royal Schools of Music (FRSM)

The diplomas are designed to encourage a diversity of approaches to performing, directing and teaching music and to stimulate achievement through acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding.

These highly respected and letter-bearing qualifications provide valuable opportunities for professional musicians (and those aspiring to be so) to gain recognition for their abilities and achievements.



Music Medals

Music Medals are our assessments and teaching resources, devised to introduce essential musical skills and encourage playing together.

Progressively structured across five levels, Music Medals provide goals and celebrate achievement. Copper and Bronze are for beginners, whilst Silver, Gold and Platinum reward further musical progress.

Fully supported by award winning publications, Music Medals are flexible and inclusive, providing a suggested teaching format and resources. Assessments take place in normal lesson time and each Music Medal covers three activities: playing together, playing solo and musicianship skills. Performances are video recorded, marked by the teacher and moderated by ABRSM. Successful candidates are awarded a certificate, and, of course, a Music Medal. Find out more at www.abrsm.org/musicmedals.

Music Medals assessments are available in the UK, and the ensemble publications are available worldwide.





Performance Assessment

For many adults who return to playing or singing after a long break, who begin to learn a new instrument from scratch, or for musicians with specific needs, an exam is not always the most appropriate kind of assessment. The Performance Assessment is an alternative that provides a valuable performing experience.

Participants can play their own choice of repertoire and come away with a written report containing constructive comments and advice from a member of our examining panel.

Ensembles

We offer syllabuses for a wide range of ensembles from duos and trios to jazz ensembles and choirs.

Entering for exams: UK and Ireland



Practical exams

There are three exam periods per year, in the spring, summer and autumn.

Theory exams

There are three exam days per year, in the spring, summer and autumn.

ABRSM Centres

We have exam centres throughout the UK and Ireland, many of which are run with the assistance of our Honorary Local Representatives.

When allocating appointments for practical exams our administration team makes every effort to be as flexible as possible. We will always try to take into consideration any preferences indicated on the exam entry form.

Standard Visits and Special Visits

Teachers or schools with a large number of candidates and a suitable venue can opt for one of our visit schemes, where our examiner hears candidates at the school or teacher's home, rather than at an ABRSM Centre.

Standard Visits take place within one of the three main exam periods (in the spring, summer and autumn). Special Visits take place outside these sessions on a date chosen by the teacher.

Further information about entry arrangements, including exam dates and entry fees, can be found on entry forms (which we revise annually) and in the *Examination Information & Regulations* booklet for the UK and Ireland.

Online services

Our online exam services offer teachers direct access to all their exam entry details at any time. Each teacher's online account provides a hub of essential and helpful information at every step: making an exam entry, briefing students about attending for their exam, and viewing their results. www.abrsm.org

Entering for exams: All other countries

Dates of exams vary from country to country. In most cases your local ABRSM Representative will be able to provide information about entry procedures, dates and fees. Leaflets detailing this information are also published for each country. They are available from your Representative or from our office in London. Details of your nearest Representative can be found in the *Examination Information & Regulations* booklet (international edition) or at www.abrsm.org.

Online services: Malaysia and Singapore

Our online exam services offer teachers in Malaysia and Singapore direct access to all their exam entry details at any time. Each teacher's online account provides a hub of essential and helpful information at every step: making an exam entry, briefing students about attending for their exam, and viewing their results. www.abrsm.org

Access for our candidates with specific needs

We are aware of the importance of providing opportunities for all candidates irrespective of sensory impairment, learning difficulties, physical challenges, or other specific needs.

One option is the Performance Assessment (see page 11). We also make provision for those who wish to take graded exams. We aim to ensure that all candidates can take part as fully as possible in every section of an exam.



We publish guidelines covering provisions for candidates who are blind or partially-sighted; deaf or hearing-impaired; with dyslexia and other learning difficulties; with autistic spectrum disorders and those with other specific needs. In some cases the guidelines include details of the availability of alternative tests. For candidates with requirements outside of these guidelines, arrangements will be considered on an individual basis.

Our guidelines are published at www.abrsm.org/exams.

Accreditation

In the UK

Our diplomas, graded exams (for individual instruments, Singing and Theory of Music) and Music Medals are accredited in England by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and the corresponding regulatory authorities in Wales (ACCAC) and Northern Ireland (CCEA). They are part of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and have also been approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

In other countries

Our exams are recognised formally in a number of other countries. In Australia, Canada and South Africa our exams can be used for credit towards the relevant qualifications taken by students completing compulsory secondary education. Contact us for full details of accreditation worldwide.

For UK higher education institutions

Our exams at Grades 6, 7 and 8 attract points under the tariff of the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) for applications from students worldwide for places at higher education institutions in the UK.

Examiners

Our examining panels consist of over 700 musicians, all highly qualified and skilled in their own field. Individual experience is combined with comprehensive and rigorous training, both prior to acceptance on to the panel and whilst they remain a member of it.

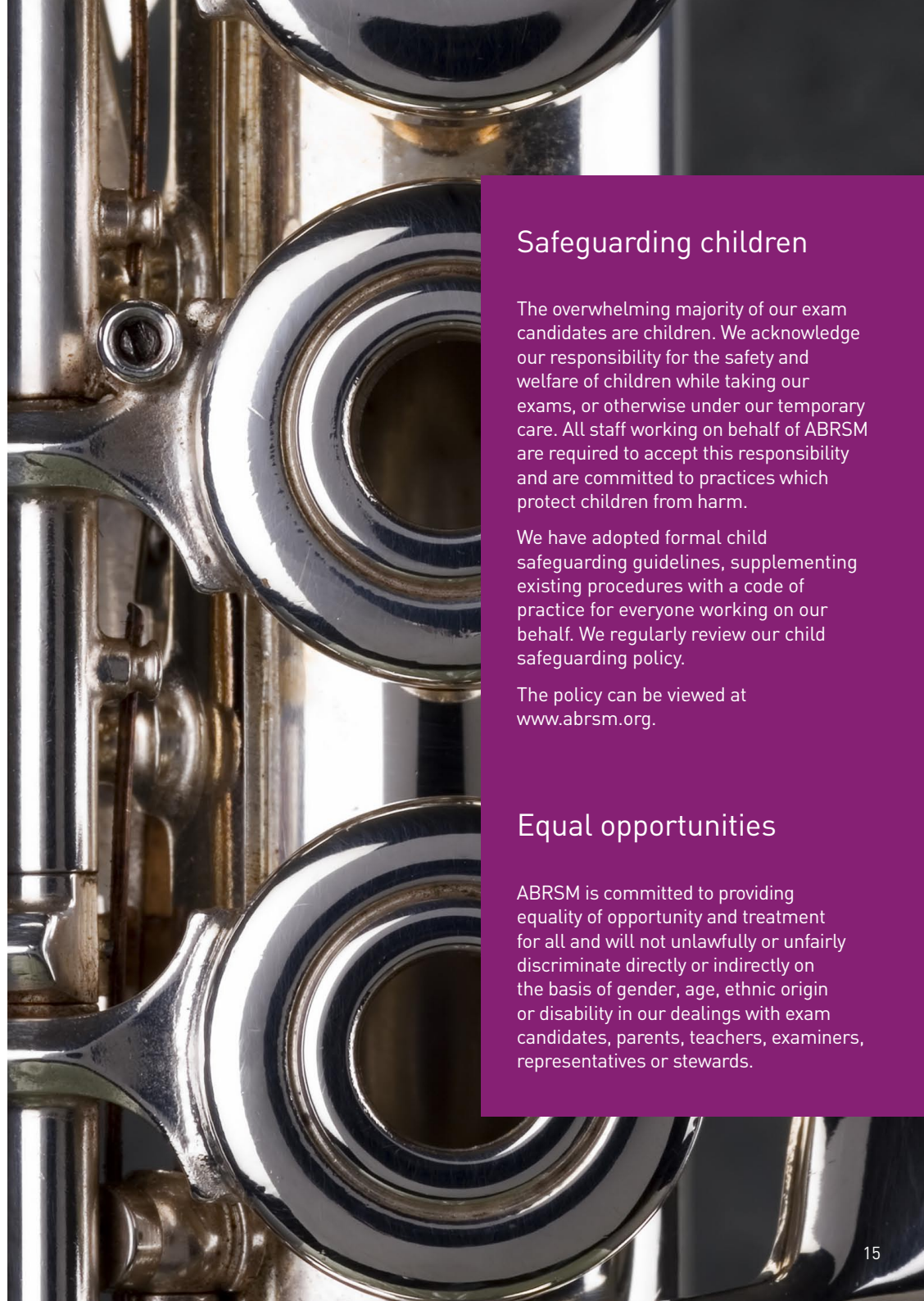
We provide all our examiners with continuing professional development, moderation and monitoring. The result is a team of examiners that we trust and know to be impartial, objective and consistent.

ABRSM graded exams are *music* exams rather than instrumental or singing exams. Examiners are assessing the quality of the music-making, not how it is achieved. For this reason we do not restrict examiners to assessing only their own instrument but require them to examine all instruments.

This places the emphasis firmly on the music, rather than technique, and gives consistency across the syllabuses.

Examiners conducting Jazz exams are selected for their expertise, experience and background in jazz, either as instrumentalists or teachers. Jazz examiners assess any instrument in the Jazz syllabus.

Where possible, two examiners are present at every level of diploma exam. Whenever possible, one examiner will be a specialist in the discipline concerned, the other a generalist.



Safeguarding children

The overwhelming majority of our exam candidates are children. We acknowledge our responsibility for the safety and welfare of children while taking our exams, or otherwise under our temporary care. All staff working on behalf of ABRSM are required to accept this responsibility and are committed to practices which protect children from harm.

We have adopted formal child safeguarding guidelines, supplementing existing procedures with a code of practice for everyone working on our behalf. We regularly review our child safeguarding policy.

The policy can be viewed at www.abrsm.org.

Equal opportunities

ABRSM is committed to providing equality of opportunity and treatment for all and will not unlawfully or unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly on the basis of gender, age, ethnic origin or disability in our dealings with exam candidates, parents, teachers, examiners, representatives or stewards.

Publications

As part of our commitment to excellence in music education, we provide a rich range of materials to support our exams and to help everyone get the most out of music-making.



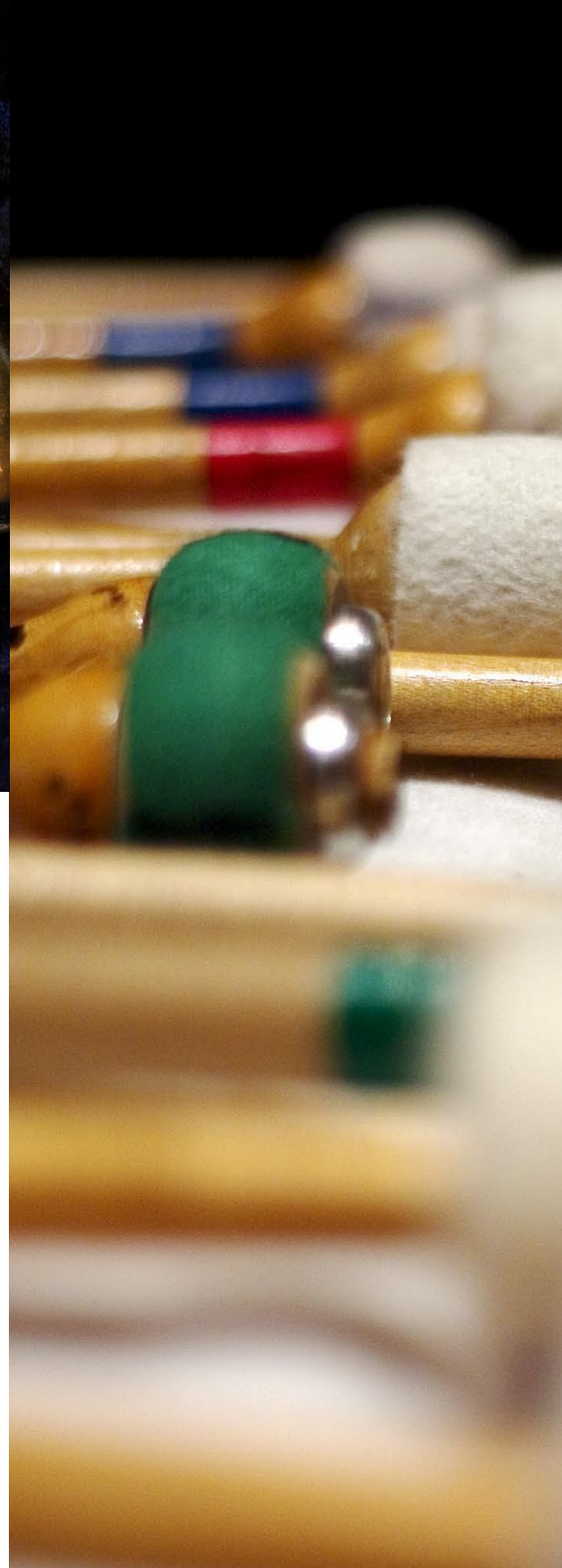
The scope of our publications covers wide-ranging and extensive instrumental catalogues, scholarly editions of the great composers and jazz publications for a variety of instruments.

There are also albums of specially-commissioned pieces by contemporary composers in the *Spectrum* series.

Publications to support our exams include:

- Albums that complement our instrumental and vocal syllabuses, both classical and jazz
- CDs and audio downloads of exam repertoire
- Practice aural tests and sight-reading/quick studies
- Scales, arpeggios and broken chords
- Theory and musicianship textbooks
- Scholarly, practical editions of the major Baroque, Classical and Romantic composers' keyboard music
- Biographies, guides and companions

Our publications are available at music shops worldwide and online from www.abrsm.org/publications.



SoundJunction

SoundJunction is our free, multi-award-winning website where you can:

- Explore music by taking it apart and listening to individual instruments to find out how it all works
- Create your own music and discover the nuts and bolts of music theory by playing and exploring
- Listen to music specially written and recorded by top musicians and composers
- Discover music and instruments from different traditions and countries

SoundJunction has over 100 hours of audio and video and more than 1,000 pages covering over 300 pieces of music from traditions around the world.
www.abrsm.org/soundjunction

Libretto

The latest news, features and developments at ABRSM are available in our magazine *Libretto*, published three times a year and free to teachers all over the world.

You can browse through current and back issues of *Libretto* at www.abrsm.org.

Professional development

All musicians need good teachers to nurture and develop their talents – and good teachers endeavour to enhance their professional skills. We support their continuing professional development through our innovative courses and online learning.



Further information

- All syllabuses and other relevant information can be found at www.abrsm.org.
- Syllabuses, information booklets and entry forms are available free of charge from our Representatives, Honorary Local Representatives, or our office in London.
- *These Music Exams* is a comprehensive guide for candidates, teachers and parents which answers the questions they ask most frequently. It sets out the criteria used by our examiners and covers all aspects of preparing for and taking exams. It is available from our Representatives, Honorary Local Representatives, our office in London or at www.abrsm.org.

In the UK teachers can choose from three core courses:

- **Certificate of Teaching (CT ABRSM)**
Available as a one year, part-time course, or as a fast-track residential course over six months
- **Teaching Music Effectively**
A short course including four study days
- **An Introduction to Instrumental and Vocal Teaching**
One-day course

Outside the UK the following courses are regularly available:

- **Certificate of Teaching (CT ABRSM)**
Available in the one year, part-time format in Hong Kong and Indonesia
- **Professional Development Programme**
Regular seminars and workshops for teachers in South East Asia
- **Centenary Travel Grant Fund**
Supports a variety of courses and conferences all over the world

As well as our core courses, we provide syllabus seminars - whenever particular syllabuses are updated - and other courses to support teachers' development throughout their careers. We also offer a range of short courses, workshops and seminars around the world that provide for the needs of teachers at all stages in their careers and reflect the latest developments in music education.

You can find further details about our teaching courses at www.abrsm.org/teachers.

Getting in touch

Our Representatives, Honorary Local Representatives and other contacts are listed on our website: www.abrsm.org

Contact us:

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