

ABRSM

Qualification Specification

Music Performance diplomas

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Introduction

About ABRSM

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.

Our mission

ABRSM's mission is to inspire achievement in music. 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 candidates and teachers on their musical journey. Find out more at www.abrsm.org.

How we are regulated

ABRSM diploma exams in Music Performance are regulated in the UK by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), Qualifications Wales and Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA Regulation). They are part of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) in England and Northern Ireland. For further information, see www.abrsm.org/regulation.

This qualification specification

What this specification covers

This specification includes all the information required to deliver a qualification, including regulated qualification details, and assessment and learning outcomes. It is designed to help teachers, candidates, parents and organisations when preparing for diploma exams in Music Performance in the exam subjects listed below. It should be read in conjunction with the Music Performance diploma syllabus, which contains details of the exam requirements.

Baritone, Bassoon, Bass Trombone, Cello, Clarinet, Cornet, Double Bass, E♭ Horn, Euphonium, Flugelhorn, Flute, Guitar, Harp, Harpsichord, Horn, Oboe, Organ, Percussion, Piano, Recorder, Saxophone, Singing, Trombone, Trumpet, Tuba, Viola and Violin.

Validity of this specification

This specification is valid from September 2021, and will be reviewed again in September 2022. We may change or add to this specification from time to time. The latest version will be available from www.abrsm.org.

About these qualifications

Overview

Qualification objectives

Encouraging diverse approaches to the performing of music, the diplomas stimulate enjoyment and achievement through the progressive acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. They are compatible with systems of assessment widely applied in higher education and encourage lifelong learning without restrictions on length of study or the requirement that the learner is taught in an institution. The diplomas are designed to reflect the learner's day-to-day experience as a performer, whether amateur or professional.

Who the qualifications are for

Diploma exams in Music Performance provide an authoritative assessment framework for a wide range of musicians. Whether learners are intending to pursue a career in music, are currently working as a professional and wish to broaden their qualifications, or are purely after the satisfaction of achieving a personal goal, they will find that one of our diplomas is right for them. In order to establish basic levels of competence, a specific prerequisite is required before entry can be made to any level. However, in line with our aim to provide open access and to recognise learners' achievements, we offer a range of substitutions for these prerequisites, including previous learning and experience.

Progression route

Candidates who successfully complete Grade 8 can progress on to one of ABRSM's higher-level qualifications, initially the ARSM and DipABRSM diplomas. The performance-only ARSM (www.abrsm.org/arism) diploma bridges the gap between Grade 8 and DipABRSM, providing candidates with an opportunity to develop their performance technique and interpretative skills, while focusing on programme building and extending their repertoire. Through a combination of live and written components, candidates at DipABRSM, and the later LRSM and FRSM levels, demonstrate their performance, communication and research skills, as well as their musical knowledge and understanding. DipABRSM and LRSM each progress to the next level. Further details of these can be found at www.abrsm.org/diplomas.

As candidates move up through the diploma levels they will find that the repertoire becomes more demanding, the exam time lengthens, and the challenge of the requirements, and the scope and length of the written work, increase.

Regulated qualification details

Qualification titles

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

Qualification number	Qualification title	ABRSM title*
600/1179/8	ABRSM Level 4 Diploma in Music Performance	DipABRSM
600/1181/6	ABRSM Level 6 Diploma in Music Performance	LRSM
600/1182/8	ABRSM Level 7 Diploma in Music Performance	FRSM

*Throughout the rest of this document, the ABRSM title is used to refer to each diploma.

Qualification size

The table below describes the size of the Music Performance diploma 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).

Diploma	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Total Qualification Time (TQT)	Credits
DipABRSM	54	900	90
LRSM	108	1800	180
FRSM	134	2250	225

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.

Music Performance diplomas

This section provides a summary of the information that candidates, teachers, parents and organisations need to know when preparing for Music Performance diploma exams.

Syllabus

Availability

When preparing for an exam, it is important to read the relevant syllabus. The syllabus sets out the rules for completing the exams listed in this specification. We update and refresh our syllabuses from time to time. For the most up to date version, please visit www.abrsm.org/exams. Advance notice of any significant changes will be given at www.abrsm.org/diplomas.

Amendments

Any updates to a syllabus – e.g. changes to publication details or other minor corrections or clarifications – will be posted at www.abrsm.org/syllabuscorrections.

Entry requirements

Candidates for Music Performance diploma exams must satisfy the following prerequisites for entry. Further information, including a list of permitted substitutions, is available in the Music Performance diploma syllabus and at www.abrsm.org/diplomas.

Diploma	Prerequisite
DipABRSM	ABRSM Grade 8 (Practical or Performance) in the instrument presented or a permitted substitution (see www.abrsm.org/diplomas)
LRSM	DipABRSM Performance in the instrument presented or a permitted substitution (see www.abrsm.org/diplomas)
FRSM	LRSM Performance in the instrument presented or a permitted substitution (see www.abrsm.org/diplomas)

Supporting documentation

If fulfilling the prerequisite through one of the substitutions listed in the Music Performance diploma syllabus, candidates will need to enclose supporting documentation with the entry form. In the case of qualifications, a copy of the relevant certificate should be enclosed. For courses (or parts of courses), a signed declaration from the institution concerned is acceptable (standard wording for this declaration is given in the Music Performance diploma syllabus).

For candidates offering the standard ABRSM prerequisite, a photocopy of the certificate (or mark form) must be enclosed in all cases.

Appropriate professional experience

At all three levels, candidates may apply to offer appropriate professional experience as a substitution for the standard ABRSM prerequisite. This is done by filling in the application form in the Music Performance diploma syllabus and sending it to syllabus@abrsm.ac.uk for consideration. The form must reach ABRSM at least six weeks before the published closing date for the session in which the candidate wishes to be examined. It is important to note that applying for this substitution is a *separate* procedure from sending in your entry form, and that approval of professional experience must already have been given *before* the candidate can enter for the diploma. Further guidance is available in the Music Performance diploma syllabus.

Making an entry

Details of exam dates, locations, fees and how to book an exam are available at www.abrsm.org/exambooking

Music Performance diploma candidates must carefully complete the checklist (on the entry form), enclosing any of the following required documentation and submitted work:

- documentation supporting the prerequisite or substitution for a prerequisite
- (*FRSM only*) the Written Submission with authenticating declaration form
- ABRSM's letter approving appropriate professional experience.

Access (for candidates with specific needs)

ABRSM aims to make its exams accessible to all candidates by providing access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. While changes may be made to the administration of the exam, ABRSM is not able to make any changes to the assessment standards; each candidate's performance is marked in line with the usual criteria.

ABRSM publishes guidelines for candidates with specific needs at www.abrsm.org/specificneeds. Where a candidate has specific needs that are not covered by the guidelines, ABRSM considers each case individually. Further information is available from the Access Co-ordinator (accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk) or from www.abrsm.org/specificneeds. We advise applicants to contact the Access Coordinator with any questions before making an entry.

Candidates who require access arrangements or reasonable adjustments (such as extra time for the Quick Study test) must tick the relevant box on the entry form and include supporting evidence where required. Details of what supporting evidence is needed can be found at www.abrsm.org/specificneeds. If supporting evidence is not provided by the time of the exam, ABRSM may withhold results or impose a penalty. Candidates are also welcome to provide information relating to their specific needs in order that the examiner can be as sensitive and supportive as possible on the day.

ABRSM recognises that candidates who require access arrangements or reasonable adjustments may be giving personal and sensitive information as part of the entry process. We are committed to handling this information tactfully and securely. You can find our Privacy Policy at www.abrsm.org/privacypolicy. Applicants are responsible for getting appropriate consent to share information about a candidate's specific needs with ABRSM.

In the exam

Examiners

One or two examiners will be present in Music Performance diploma exams. At ABRSM's discretion, an additional person appointed by ABRSM may also be present for monitoring purposes. Where two examiners are present, one examiner will, wherever possible, be a specialist in the discipline, and the other will be a generalist. Both will have been fully trained by ABRSM. Each examiner will mark independently.

On the day of the exam candidates will need to provide the examiner(s) with copies of all the music being performed, ideally in the same editions (for pieces which are accompanied by piano, a copy of the piano score should be supplied). (If photocopies are to be used for this purpose, it is the candidates responsibility to obtain written permission from the publisher/copyright holder. In the UK, certain publishers allow photocopies to be made for the examiners' use - for full details, see the MPA's *Code of Fair Practice* at www.mpaonline.org.uk).

Monitoring

For monitoring and moderation purposes, the live aspects of each diploma will normally be audio-recorded by the examiners and returned to ABRSM's London office after the exam. By submitting an entry, candidates agree to their exam being recorded and to the recording becoming the property of ABRSM (no copy will be made available to the candidate and, for the avoidance of doubt, the audio-recording has the status of an examination script and is therefore exempt from subject access requests under the Data Protection Act 2018). The recording may be used anonymously for training purposes.

Order of the exam

Candidates may perform their Quick Study before or after the Recital, at their choice. They should tell the examiners their preferred order at the start of the exam.

Instruments

ABRSM Public Venues provide an upright or grand piano. All other candidates must provide their own instruments (and any other equipment e.g. footstools). Details of the types of instruments required/allowed are given in the Music Performance diploma syllabus.

Tuning

Candidates must tune their instrument themselves. Examiners are unable to help with tuning.

Equipment

All ABRSM Public Venues provide a music stand, but candidates are welcome to bring their own if they prefer. Candidates are recommended to bring their own stool, if required. Chamber ensemble members must bring their own music stand/stool, if required. Candidates may not bring into the exam room any material or equipment unconnected with their exam; any infringement of this rule may lead to disqualification.

Elements of the exam**Structure**

Music Performance diploma exams each consist of three sections, as follows:

Diploma	Section 1	Section 2.1	Section 2.2
DipABRSM	Recital	Viva Voce and Programme Notes	Quick Study
LRSM	Recital	Viva Voce and Programme Notes	Quick Study
FRSM	Recital	Viva Voce and Written Submission	Quick Study

Exam timings

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

Diploma	Section 1	Section 2.1	Section 2.2	Total
DipABRSM	35	12	10	60
LRSM	40	15	10	75
FRSM	50	20	10	90

General information about submitted work

Candidates should be aware of the following:

- For quality assurance purposes, candidates should not identify their name on or inside any submitted work. Instead, candidates should include their candidate number on each submission.
- Permission to use copyright extracts from musical scores is not usually required for exam submitted work. Candidates must make sure, however, that the appropriate publisher credit is given. If in any doubt, candidates should contact the publisher concerned.
- Submitted work may not be drawn upon for future use at a higher level of ABRSM diploma, although reference to it may be cited.
- Below pass submitted work may form the basis of a resubmission at the same level.
- Submitted work must neither have been previously published nor submitted to any institution or agency for

another academic award.

- ABRSM reserves the right to refuse examination of any submitted work if, in its view, it contains material of an suitable, unseemly or libellous nature.
- ABRSM regrets that it cannot return any submitted work, so candidates are advised to keep a copy for their records.

Declaration of genuine work

All submitted work must genuinely be the candidate's own, and the candidate is required to complete a candidate declaration form substantiating each piece of work. This form can be found on our website at www.abrsm.org/entryforms.

In the case of the Written Submission, the declaration form must be submitted with the candidate's entry. For Programme Notes, the candidate must give the steward the declaration form on the day of the exam, along with the Programme Notes themselves. The steward will pass them to the examiners.

If the examiners perceive a significant discrepancy between the level of authority of submitted work and the performance in the Viva Voce (allowing for the fact that candidates may be nervous), it may be necessary to probe deeper to establish that the work is genuinely the candidate's own.

Plagiarism

ABRSM defines plagiarism as an attempt to pass off the work of others as one's own. This means that copying from a published or unpublished source without acknowledging it, constructing a précis of someone else's writing or ideas without citing that writer, or colluding with another candidate to submit the same or similar work, constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism applies to all sources including - but not limited to - printed and electronic books and articles, and website content.

Programme Notes must be written in candidates' own words. Where material has been cited in Written Submissions, candidates may use footnotes, endnotes or bibliography/discography, where appropriate, to acknowledge all sources. Any academic referencing system (e.g. Havard, Chicago, APA) may be used, but candidates should apply one style consistently.

The Quality and Compliance Officer, in accordance with the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy (www.abrsm.org/policies), will consider all suspected cases and candidates will be penalised or disqualified if a charge of plagiarism is upheld. Candidates will have a right of appeal and representation if such a charge is made.

Assessment objectives

About assessment objectives

The Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) level describes the difficulty level of the qualification. 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>. The information below describes the level of knowledge and skill required of candidates taking Music Performance diploma exams. The marking criteria used by examiners is available on pages 19 to 22 of this specification and in the Music Performance diploma syllabus.

DipABRSM (RQF Level 4)

Assessment objectives	Marking criteria
Learners will:	Learners can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform a generalist programme of music of prescribed length, wholly or mainly chosen from specified lists covering a wide-range of period, style, mood and tempo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate musical, technical and interpretative skills appropriate to the demands of the chosen repertoire across the programme as a whole, and at a level beyond Grade 8.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce programme notes of a prescribed length for a general concert audience. Respond to questioning of brief length and limited scope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research, identify and analyse appropriate information about the chosen repertoire and instrument/voice. Competently communicate a broad working knowledge and informed contextual and stylistic awareness verbally and in writing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform unaccompanied a prescribed piece of previously unseen music of a standard broadly equivalent to ABRSM Grade 6 repertoire, following study time of a set length. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate musical literacy and musicianship skills appropriate to the technical and musical challenges of the unseen piece. Produce a competent performance using a systematic approach, showing awareness of the musical content and style.

LRSM (RQF Level 6)

Assessment objectives	Marking criteria
Learners will:	Learners can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform a balanced programme of music of prescribed length, wholly or mainly chosen from specified lists including repertoire from at least two distinct musical eras, and a variety of mood and tempo. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate musical, technical and interpretative skills appropriate to the demands of the chosen repertoire across the programme as a whole, and at a level consistent with the final-year recital of an undergraduate degree.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce programme notes of a prescribed length for a musically informed audience. Respond to searching questioning of moderate length and scope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research, identify and evaluate appropriate information about the chosen repertoire, instrument/voice and related issues. Competently communicate a broad working knowledge and understanding of contextual and stylistic issues verbally and in writing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform unaccompanied a prescribed piece of previously unseen music of a standard broadly equivalent to ABRSM Grade 7 repertoire, following study time of set length. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate musical literacy and musicianship skills appropriate to the technical and musical challenges of the unseen piece. Produce a competent performance using a systematic approach, interpreting and realising the musical content and style.

FRSM (RQF Level 7)

Assessment objectives	Marking criteria
Learners will:	Learners can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perform a specialist programme of music of prescribed length, wholly or partly chosen from specified lists which may concentrate on one composer or period, but is balanced and includes contrasting moods and styles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate musical and interpretative skills, artistic integrity and technical command appropriate to the demands of the chosen repertoire across the programme as a whole, at a level consistent with study of performance at post-graduate level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce a written submission of a prescribed length, exploring complex issues relating to some of the repertoire performed. ▪ Respond to in depth questioning of substantial length and scope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate high-level research skills, personal insight and critical evaluations of sources. ▪ Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theoretical and methodological perspectives. ▪ Synthesise and clearly communicate conclusions verbally and in writing, and respond with points of clarification, expansion and evaluation, as required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Perform unaccompanied a prescribed piece of previously unseen music of a standard broadly equivalent to ABRSM Grade 8 repertoire, following study time of set length. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate musical literacy and musicianship skills appropriate to the technical and musical challenges of the unseen piece. ▪ Produce an idiomatic performance with an assured approach, interpreting and conveying the musical content and style.

Exam requirements: Section 1

Overview

For this section of the exam, candidates prepare and present a programme of repertoire chosen from the relevant list in the syllabus. Our syllabuses include a wide range of repertoire for candidates to choose from, and we hope that by offering this variety, candidates will find music that inspires them and that they enjoy learning and performing.

Scope of the assessment

Duration

Candidates should plan their Recital to match the timings given in the table below. Recitals may be up to 10% longer or 10% shorter than the given timings. The total durations include any breaks between items, as well as one longer pause of up to 5 minutes for woodwind, brass and singing candidates. Examiners may stop the Recital if it is too long.

Diploma	Recital duration
DipABRSM	c. 35 minutes
LRSM	c. 40 minutes
FRSM	c. 50 minutes

Programming

DipABRSM candidates should aim to present a generalist programme that offers a wide-ranging yet coherent mixture of periods, styles, mood and tempi, with no more than one work by any one composer (except for vocal items or where a combination of movements or pieces from a composer's collection is indicated in the syllabus lists). LRSM candidates should aim to present a balanced programme that includes a contrast of repertoire from at least two distinct musical eras. Variety of mood and tempo should also be a guiding factor in the construction of the programme. FRSM candidates should aim to present a specialist programme which may concentrate on one composer or period but should be internally balanced, containing sufficient contrast of mood and style.

Own choice repertoire

Recital programme should be largely drawn from the prescribed lists of instrumental and vocal works or movements given in the syllabus repertoire lists. Candidates may, however, also include in their programmes a work, or works of their own choice (prior approval is not required). Performing own choice repertoire gives no advantage over candidates presenting items from syllabus lists only. The permitted proportion of own choice repertoire is shown in the table below. Own choice repertoire is not pre-approved by ABRSM.

Diploma	Own choice repertoire allowance
DipABRSM	<i>max. 7 minutes</i>
LRSM	<i>max. one-third of total platform time</i>
FRSM	<i>max. two-thirds of total platform time</i>

Related instrument option

Candidates performing on some instruments (listed below) have the option to play up to two works on a related instrument (listed in brackets alongside the main instrument, below), while making sure that the *majority* of their programme is performed on their main instrument.

Baritone (Euphonium), Bassoon (Contrabassoon), Cello (Viola da Gamba), Clarinet (E♭ Clarinet, Bass Clarinet), Cornet (Trumpet, Flugelhorn), Euphonium (Baritone), Flugelhorn (Cornet, Trumpet), Flute (Piccolo, Alto Flute), Harp (Non-pedal Harp), Harpsichord (Spinnet, Virginal), Oboe (Cor Anglais), Trumpet (Cornet, Flugelhorn), Tuba (Sousaphone, Euphonium), Viola (Violin), and Violin (Viola).

Candidates wishing to perform part of their Recital on an instrument not listed among the accepted related instruments above should apply in writing to syllabus@abrs.ac.uk.

Specialist option

LRSM and FRSM candidates may choose to present a proportion of their Recital within one of the specialist areas detailed below. The proportions are as follows:

Diploma	Proportion of Recital
LRSM	max. one-third
FRSM	half to max. two-thirds

Orchestral musician: Candidates present orchestral excerpts, either unaccompanied or accompanied by their pianist. Examiners may ask for an excerpt (or excerpts) to be repeated, and for a different tempo or approach to the one presented. Therefore the total playing time of the excerpts need not be the full one-third of the programme. FRSM candidates (only) must play relevant pieces from the 'Orchestral excerpts for FRSM' listed in the syllabus.

Chamber ensemble member: Candidates are required to supply the ensemble for the purposes of the exam at their own expense. Ensembles should have between three and nine players (including the candidate), with one player to each part.

Keyboard accompanist: Candidates are required to supply the duo partner for the purposes of the exam at their own expense.

The choice of repertoire is at the candidate's own discretion, but must be comparable in standard to appropriate syllabus repertoire lists. Presenting a specialist option gives no advantage over other candidates.

Accompaniment

Candidates must provide their own accompanist (where applicable), who may stay in the exam room only while accompanying. Examiners will not accompany under any circumstances.

Interpreting the score

All movements must be performed complete, although candidates should use their discretion in omitting tutti sections or including cadenzas in concerto movements or other works. Repeats and interpretative decisions, such as phrasing and the realisation of ornaments, are also at the discretion of the candidate, who is expected to achieve a musical and stylistically appropriate performance.

Performing from memory

Although there is no specific requirement to perform from memory, candidates are encouraged to do so if they consider it will enhance their Recital. In particular, singers are advised to perform their programme from memory, with the exception of oratorio/sacred items and complex contemporary scores.

Infringements

Candidates not meeting the syllabus requirements in any way, such as offering an inappropriate standard of piece, failing to adhere to the minimum/maximum platform times, or not being prepared to perform the minimum number of movements/pieces or the whole of a work if specified in the syllabus, will be liable to penalty.

Candidates who present a performance which is more than 10% shorter than the specified programme duration may be subject to a penalty. This could range from a 1 mark deduction to disqualification from the exam, depending on the length of the performance.

Exam music

Editions

The editions quoted in the repertoire lists are recommendations only, and candidates are free to choose any other editions. Candidates are required to bring a copy of all the music they are performing to the exam, ideally in the same editions. (If photocopies are being used for this purpose, it is the candidate's responsibility to get written permission from the publisher/copyright holder.) LRSM and FRSM candidates should be prepared to discuss their choice of editions in the Viva Voce.

Page-turns

Both the candidate and their accompanist may bring a page-turner, if required. In the case of Organ candidates, the page-turner may also act as registrant.

Availability

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.

Photocopies

Performing from unauthorised photocopies (or other kinds of copies) of copyright editions is not allowed. We may withhold the exam result where there is evidence of an illegal copy (or copies) being used. In the UK, copies may be used in some limited circumstances – for full details, see the MPA's *Code of Fair Practice* at 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.

Exam requirements: Section 2.1

Overview

This section of the exam is an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, approach and understanding to the examiners through written work and a viva voce.

Scope of the assessment

Duration and word count

The timings of the Viva Voce and the required length of the written work are shown in the table below. Written work may be up to 10% longer or 10% shorter than the given lengths; any work falling outside of these limits will be penalised.

Diploma	Viva Voce length	Programme Notes/ Written Submission length
DipABRSM	up to 12 minutes	1,100 words
LRSM	up to 15 minutes	1,800 words
FRSM	up to 20 minutes	4,500 words

Programme Notes (DipABRSM and LRSM) and Written Submissions (FRSM) are pieces of prepared work that candidates will discuss with the examiners as part of the Viva Voce and which contribute to the Viva Voce (Section 2.1) mark.

Viva Voce

The Viva Voce is an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, approach and understanding to the examiners. Questions will cover the Recital and Programme Notes (DipABRSM and LRSM)/Written Submission (FRSM), as well as other aspects of performing. Typical areas of discussion include: Musical and instrumental outlook; repertoire and Programme Notes/Written Submission; musical language and form; and style and interpretation. Candidates will have the opportunity to add any further points that they wish to draw the examiners' attention to before conclusion. Sample questions and indicative responses are given for each level in Appendix 1 of the Music Performance diploma syllabus.

Programme Notes format (DipABRSM and LRSM)

Candidates must present two identical copies of their Programme Notes to the examiners at the start of the exam. (If the Programme Notes are in a language other than English, one copy of the original should be submitted together with two copies of an independently verified translation into English.) The Notes should discuss and illuminate in the candidate's own words the works they have chosen to perform in their Recital. Candidates should be prepared to discuss their Programme Notes in the Viva Voce.

Programme Notes must be typed or printed in black on paper of international A4 (297 x 210mm) size or smaller. Candidates should not bind or laminate their work. The title page must contain the following information:

- the full title of the diploma and the instrument
- the date of the exam
- the word count (excluding title page)
- the works in the programme in the order that they are performed (excepting orchestral excerpts, if offered as a specialist option at LRSM level).

In addition, all pages must be consecutively numbered and printed single-sided. Candidates must not identify their name anywhere on or inside their Programme Notes. See also page 8 for general information about submitted work.

Written Submission format (FRSM)

Candidates must send their Written Submission with their entry. (If the Written Submission is in a language other than English, the original should be submitted together with an independently verified translation into English.) The Written Submission should address idiomatic features and performance issues connected with their Recital. Candidates should be prepared to discuss their Written Submission in the Viva Voce.

The Written Submission (FRSM) must be in the following format:

- typed or printed in black
- all pages must be consecutively numbered
- the title page must contain the following information: the full title of the diploma and the candidate's instrument; the Submission's title; the date of submission; the word count (excluding title page, endnotes/footnotes, bibliography/discography)
- the title page must be followed by an outline or précis of the Submission of about 150–250 words and a contents page
- references to either endnotes or footnotes, if used, must be clearly inserted in the text
- the Submission must be consistent in its presentation and approach to the citation of sources
- a bibliography and, where appropriate a discography, must be included, citing all works used in the preparation of the Submission.

Candidates must not identify their name anywhere on or inside their Written Submission. See also page 8 for general information about submitted work.

Supporting publications

Further guidance on writing programme notes is contained in *Writing Programme Notes: A guide for diploma candidates* by Nigel Scaife, published on our website at www.abrsm.org/diploma-preparation and can be accessed for free. FRSM candidates preparing their Written Submission may wish to refer to Trevor Herbert's *Music in Words* (London: ABRSM, 2001) which defines presentational conventions for written work, while also providing a basis for researching and writing at higher educational levels. Purchasing this book is not a requirement.

Exam requirements: Section 2.2

Overview

In this section of the exam, candidates are required to perform a short piece of unaccompanied and previously unseen music.

Scope of the assessment

Preparation time

Before performing the Quick Study, candidates at all levels will be given five minutes preparation time in which to look through the music and to try out any parts of it. During this time the examiners will not be assessing the candidate. In total, the Quick Study lasts up to 10 minutes.

Standard of unseen piece

The unseen piece will be of a standard similar to ABRSM repertoire at a level shown in the table below:

Diploma	Approx. standard of unseen music
DipABRSM	equivalent to ABRSM Grade 6 standard repertoire
LRSM	equivalent to ABRSM Grade 7 standard repertoire
FRSM	equivalent to ABRSM Grade 8 standard repertoire

Notes for percussionists

The Quick Study will be either for tuned percussion or timpani: the examiner will choose the test according to the instruments brought to the exam.

Notes for singers

The Quick Study tests for singers are printed with a simple piano accompaniment, which candidates may use if they wish, to any degree of fullness, during their preparation time. During this time, candidates may also play any part of the vocal line at the piano. The actual performance of the test is unaccompanied, although candidates who need to relocate their pitch may play a guide note (from the vocal line), as appropriate. Candidates may also use the piano to play the key-chord and their starting note before performing the test. Examiners will not assist candidates as accompanist, nor will any other party be permitted to. Candidates must sing the text and will be offered a choice of English or Italian words.

Supporting publications

A sample specimen Quick Study test for each diploma and instrument is available at www.abrsm.org/diplomasupport to help candidates understand the technical level required and what to expect in the exam; this resource can be accessed for free. For further practice, candidates can explore the Grade 6, 7 or 8 repertoire lists for their instrument. ABRSM also publishes a book of *Piano Specimen Quick Studies* Which contains practice material for DipABRSM, LRSM and FRSM exams in Piano. Purchasing this book is not a requirement.

Assessment

Mark allocation

Marks are allocated for each section of Music Performance diploma exams, as shown in the table below. A pass in each section (Section 1, Section 2.1 and Section 2.2) is required to pass overall.

Diploma section	Pass mark	Maximum mark	% Total mark
Section 1	24	60	60%
Section 2.1	10	25	25%
Section 2.2	6	15	15%
Total	40	100	100%

Result categories

The result categories for Music Performance diploma exams are set as follows.

Result category	Mark band
Distinction	70-100
Pass	40-69
Below Pass	0-39

Marking criteria

The tables on pages 19 to 22 of this specification show the marking criteria used by examiners. 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 marking criteria are demonstrated and contribute towards the overall musical outcome.

Marking criteria: DipABRSM and LRSM

Section 1 Recital	DipABRSM & LRSM
<p>42-60 Distinction Consistently well-projected and involved, showing strong performance commitment and musical conviction, with the interpretative demands of the chosen repertoire consistently well met. Assured delivery throughout the programme, with a highly effective match between instrumental/vocal resources and technical challenges of the chosen works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Highly accurate notes and intonation ▪ Fluent, with persuasive rhythmic flexibility where appropriate ▪ Well-projected tone; sensitive and varied use of tonal qualities ▪ Expressive and idiomatic musical shaping and detail ▪ Vivid communication of musical character and style across the chosen works ▪ Excellent awareness and control of textures and ensemble, with effective blending and balancing ▪ Effective sequence and pacing of chosen programme
<p>33-41 High Pass Positive outward projection, showing good performance commitment and awareness, with the interpretative demands of the chosen repertoire largely well met. Effectively controlled delivery across the programme as a whole, with a good match between instrumental/vocal resources and technical challenges of the chosen works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Largely accurate notes and intonation ▪ Sustained, effective tempi; good sense of rhythm ▪ Well controlled tone; good tonal awareness ▪ Clear musical shaping; well-realised detail ▪ Effective communication of musical character and style across the chosen works ▪ Good awareness and control of textures and ensemble, with appropriate blending and balancing ▪ Largely effective sequence and pacing of chosen programme
<p>24-32 Pass Outward projection and involvement sufficient to convey an overall sense of performance, with stylistic realisation adequate to meet the main interpretative demands of the chosen repertoire. Secure delivery overall, with instrumental/vocal resources sufficient to meet most technical challenges of the chosen works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Generally accurate notes and intonation ▪ Suitable tempi; controlled pulse; overall rhythmic accuracy ▪ Generally reliable tone; adequate tonal awareness ▪ Overall realisation of musical shape and detail ▪ Musical character and style across the chosen works generally conveyed ▪ Adequate awareness and control of textures and ensemble, with sufficient blending and balancing ▪ Generally effective sequence and pacing of chosen programme
<p>18-23 Below Pass Insufficient outward projection and/or sense of involvement to convey an overall sense of performance; lacking sufficient stylistic realisation to meet the main interpretative demands of the chosen repertoire. Insecure delivery, with instrumental/vocal resources insufficient to meet the technical challenges of the chosen works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inaccurate notes and/or intonation ▪ Unsuitable or uncontrolled tempi; irregular pulse ▪ Unreliable tonal control; inadequate tonal awareness ▪ Musical shape or detail insufficiently conveyed ▪ Musical character and style across the chosen works insufficiently conveyed ▪ Inadequate awareness or control of textures and ensemble ▪ Ineffective sequence or pacing of chosen programme
<p>12-17 Below Pass Lacking outward projection and/or sense of involvement. Absence of stylistic realisation. Very insecure delivery; instrumental/vocal resources considerably below the level needed to meet the technical challenges of the chosen works.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very inaccurate notes and/or intonation ▪ Erratic tempi and/or pulse ▪ Lacking tonal control or awareness ▪ Musical shape or detail largely unrealised ▪ Lacking awareness or control of textures and ensemble ▪ Frequent breakdowns, continuity severely compromised
<p>Marks below 12 are awarded only for incomplete performances</p>	

Section 2.1	DipABRSM & LRSM Programme Notes		DipABRSM & LRSM Viva Voce
Distinction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Illuminating and insightful musical commentary on the works performed and their background context ▪ Written material is effectively structured and well-balanced, showing evidence of thorough research 	20-25 Distinction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insightful approach to programme planning and recital preparation ▪ Highly-informed about repertoire and background context ▪ Excellent knowledge of musical language and form ▪ Thorough understanding of style and interpretation ▪ Persuasive grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes
High Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helpful and relevant musical commentary on the works performed and their background context ▪ Written material is logically structured and balanced, showing evidence of appropriate research 	15-19 High Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well-considered approach to programme planning and recital preparation ▪ Well-informed about repertoire and background context ▪ Good knowledge of musical language and form ▪ Clear understanding of style and interpretation ▪ Firm grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes
Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sufficient appropriate information about the works performed and their background context ▪ Written material is structured, showing evidence of some research 	10-14 Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Considered approach to programme planning and recital preparation ▪ Generally informed about repertoire and background context ▪ Basic knowledge of musical language and form ▪ Adequate understanding of style and interpretation ▪ Overall grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes
Below Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient or irrelevant information about the works performed and their context ▪ Written material has inadequate structure or coherence, and/or show insufficient evidence of research 	5-9 Below Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unconsidered approach to programme planning and/or recital preparation ▪ Insufficiently informed about repertoire and/or background context ▪ Unreliable knowledge of musical language and/or form ▪ Inadequate understanding of style and/or interpretation ▪ Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes
Below Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lacking appropriate information about the works performed and their context ▪ Written material lacks structure or coherence, and/or shows no evidence of research 	1-4 Below Pass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No attention to programme planning and/or recital preparation ▪ Uninformed about repertoire and/or background context ▪ No knowledge of musical language and/or form ▪ No understanding of style and/or interpretation ▪ Lacking a grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes
0	No work offered		

The Programme Notes do not receive a separate mark but contribute to the overall mark of Section 2.1.

Section 2.2 Quick Study	DipABRSM & LRSM
<p>12-15 Distinction Highly effective match between musical understanding and the demands of the music, demonstrated through authoritative stylistic realisation and interpretation. Assured technical delivery, with positive performance commitment and musical conviction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accurate note/pitch/key ▪ Rhythmically fluent and accurate ▪ Effective tempo realisation ▪ Expressive, idiomatic musical shaping and detail ▪ Sensitive use of tonal qualities ▪ Vivid communication or character and style
<p>9-11 High Pass Good match between musical understanding and the demands of the music, demonstrated through effective stylistic realisation and interpretation. Well controlled technical delivery, with a sense of performance commitment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Largely accurate note/pitch/key ▪ Mainly correct rhythm, stable pulse ▪ Appropriate tempo control ▪ Clear musical shaping, well-realised detail ▪ Good tonal awareness ▪ Character and style communicated
<p>6-8 Pass Sufficient musical understanding and realisation to meet the main demands of the music. Generally reliable technical delivery, with prompt recovery from slips.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pitch outlines in place, despite errors ▪ Note values mostly realised, generally reliable pulse ▪ Adequate tempo, generally controlled ▪ Some musical shape and detail conveyed ▪ Adequate tonal awareness ▪ Some sense of character and style
<p>3-5 Below Pass Lacking sufficient musical understanding and/or realisation to meet the overall demands of the music. Insecure technical delivery, inadequate recovery from slips.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approximate notes/pitch/key ▪ Incorrect note values and/or uncontrolled pulse ▪ Unsuitable and/or uncontrolled tempo ▪ Musical shape and detail insufficiently conveyed ▪ Inadequate tonal awareness ▪ Character and style largely unrealised
<p>1-2 Below Pass Level of musical understanding and/or realisation considerably below the demands of the music. Unable to continue for more than a short section without error.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very inaccurate notes/pitch/key ▪ Note values unrealised and/or erratic pulse ▪ Incoherent tempo ▪ Musical shape and detail absent ▪ Lack of tonal awareness ▪ Lacking sense of character or style
<p>0</p>	<p>No work offered</p>

Marking criteria: FRSM

Section 1 Recital	FRSM
42-60 Distinction	Outstanding, completely assured and authoritative performance, demonstrating mature artistry and consummate technical ease.
24-41 Pass	Authoritative, persuasively communicated performance, demonstrating artistic integrity and technical command.
0-23 Below Pass	Insufficient evidence that the candidate has advanced significantly beyond LRSM level.

Section 2.1	FRSM Written Submission		FRSM Viva Voce
Distinction	Submission is highly perceptive and convincing, clearly structured and expressed, with excellent organisation and control of materials. Very advanced research skills, personal insight and critical evaluation of sources. A comprehensive survey of relevant source material. Excellent use of musical and literary quotations.	19-25 Distinction	Outstanding communication skills. An expert knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised in the Written Submission.
Pass	Submission is pertinent and comprehensively argued, with good overall shape, use of language and organisation. A rigorous survey of relevant source material, with a high level of research, personal insight and critical evaluation. Apposite use of musical and literary quotations.	10-18 Pass	Impressive communication skills. A commanding knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. A full understanding of the issues raised in the Written Submission.
Below Pass	Submission shows limited understanding, is poorly argued, lacks appropriate examples and quotations, and demonstrates little evidence of appropriately advanced research. Grammatically weak.	0-9 Below Pass	Insufficient communication skills. Insufficient knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised in the Written Submission.

The Written Submission does not receive a separate mark but contributes to the overall mark of Section 2.1.

Section 2.2 Quick Study	FRSM
12-15 Distinction	An excellent performance, demonstrating artistry and full technical security. An instinctive approach.
6-11 Pass	An idiomatic performance despite technical imperfections and some missing points of detail. An assured approach.
0-5 Below Pass	Did not meet the basic requirements of the test. Some fundamental errors and little or no attention to matters of detail. A flawed methodology and/or insufficient technique (including continuity).

Results

Results, mark forms and certificates

Issuing results

On the day of the exam, the examiners will not give any indication of the result. After the examiners have returned the mark form and recorded evidence to ABRSM, a sample of these will be reviewed as part of our rigorous quality assurance procedures. ABRSM aims to release results 12 weeks after the exam. The examiners' mark form will be despatched by email and the certificate (if successful) will follow by post. We regret that we are not able to give any results by telephone, nor can we accept any responsibility for the loss of certificates in the post.

Retakes

If candidates are unsuccessful in any part of their diploma, they may wish to consider a retake. The diploma must be completed within three years from the first attempt. Candidates may choose to retake the entire exam in order to aim for higher marks. Alternatively, they are entitled to carry credit forward from any component (Recital, Viva Voce or Quick Study) from their previous attempt. The examiners will be aware of any credit carried forward, but this will in no way affect the objectivity of the assessment process. Details of retake options are included in the letter accompanying results. This letter also covers options for the Written Submission for candidates wishing to retake their diploma.

Appeals

Specific guidance for questions about results and marking appeals can be found at www.abrsm.org/send-exam-feedback.

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 therefore take any form of malpractice or maladministration very seriously.

- **Malpractice** is defined as any act which 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 which damages our reputation or credibility as an awarding organisation.
- **Maladministration** is defined as any act which 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 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.