

GRADE 1

THREE PIECES: chosen by the candidate from the List below; for further details see pages 14–16

Candidates must choose at least one piece marked ☆

	COMPOSER	PIECE / WORK / ARRANGER	PUBLICATION (PUBLISHER)
1	Kevin Hathway	☆ Tandem ⊕ low tom	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 1 (ABRSM)
2	William Edwards	Step 'n' March	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 1 (ABRSM)
3	Jan Bradley	Mind the Gap	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 1 (ABRSM)
4	David Hext	☆ Madison March ■	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 1 (ABRSM)
5	Zara Nunn	☆ Journeying Home from the Hills ■	Percussion Exam Pieces & Studies from 2020, Grade 1 (ABRSM)
6	Keith Bartlett	Three and Easy?! (No. 42 from <i>50 Short Pieces for Snare Drum</i>)	Keith Bartlett: 50 Short Pieces for Snare Drum (UMP)
7	Peter R. Birkby	☆ Fanfarette (from <i>Dozens of Duets for Drums, Book 3</i>) ⊕ unpitched percussion	Peter R. Birkby: Dozens of Duets for Drums, Book 3 (Peter R. Birkby)
8	Richard Charles	Chicken and Chips (from <i>Beat This!</i>)	Richard Charles: Beat This! (Southern Percussion)
9	Jan Faulkner	☆ Charlie's Caterpillar ■	Jan Faulkner: Simply Seven (Southern Percussion)
10	Edward Freytag	Just a Little Bit	Just Desserts (Row-Loff Productions)

STUDY: Study A *and* Study B must be prepared; for further details see pages 16–17

SIGHT-READING: a short piece of previously unseen music; for further details see pages 18 & 23

AURAL TESTS: given by the examiner from the piano; for further details see pages 74 & 75

⊕ with percussion accompaniment, as specified

■ with piano accompaniment

Symbols used in the repertoire lists

The symbols explained in this table are used in the repertoire lists on the following pages. See pages 11–15 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

3. Percussion Syllabus from 2020

Introducing the syllabus

Our new Percussion 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.

Grades 1–8: requirements and information

This syllabus is valid from 2020 until further notice.

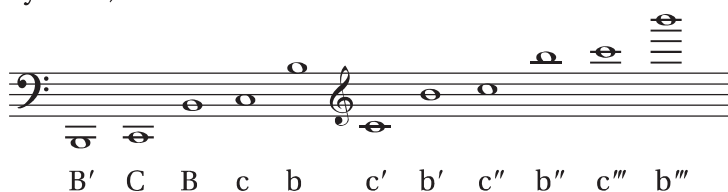
This section provides a summary of the most important points that teachers and candidates need to know when taking ABRSM graded percussion exams. Further details, as well as administrative information about the exams, are given in ABRSM's Exam Regulations (available at www.abrsm.org/examregulations) 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.:



Snare Drum

Instruments: In Snare Drum exams at Grades 1–5, it is possible for candidates to complete an exam playing a snare drum only. In Snare Drum exams at Grades 6–8, candidates must play at least one piece for multi-percussion.

In Percussion (Combined) exams at all grades, it is possible for candidates to complete the Snare Drum elements playing a snare drum only.

All pieces and studies should be played with the snares on unless marked otherwise in the music.

Multi-percussion: There are pieces for multi-percussion included in the repertoire lists for Snare Drum from Grade 3. These are marked **MULTI** in the repertoire lists, where details of the instruments required in addition to the snare drum are also shown.

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.

Tuned Percussion

Instruments: Any one or more of the following instruments may be used in exams:

- xylophone
- marimba
- vibraphone
- glockenspiel (Grades 1 and 2 only)

Pieces: At Grades 1–5, candidates may play any piece on any instrument listed above. At Grades 6–8, candidates must play the pieces on the instrument (or one of the instruments) specified in the repertoire lists - **XYL** xylophone, **MAR** marimba, **VIB** vibraphone.

Candidates must not alter a piece at any grade to suit the range of an instrument (unless indicated in the music).

Other tests: The Scales and arpeggios (when applicable) must be played on a single instrument from those listed above. The Sight-reading may be played on the same or a different instrument. In both cases, the range of the instrument used must cover the requirements set.

Percussion (Combined)

Candidates taking a Percussion (Combined) exam are required to:

- play one piece for each of Snare Drum, Timpani and Tuned Percussion
- play the technical requirements for either Snare Drum, Timpani or Tuned Percussion, at their choice
- have instruments available which meet the minimum requirements for the Sight-reading for Snare Drum, Timpani and Tuned Percussion. The subject for the test will be chosen by the examiner.

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 ⊕
	Grades 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 forms on pages 97–109 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.

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 (in- or out-of-print or downloadable). Information on sourcing exam music is given on page 16.

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.

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. 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. 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.

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"> • Studies (Snare Drum) • Studies (Timpani) • Scales and arpeggios (Tuned Percussion) The examiner will ask which the candidate has chosen.

Study (Snare Drum)

Studies are an important way to develop technical skills such as stick control, balance between hands, fluency and articulation. They also help to develop tone, pulse and dynamic control, and familiarity with rudimental patterns. 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. Each Study is based on a set of rudiments; these are listed on the sheet music.

Sheet music: The studies are published online at 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.

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 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.

Scales and arpeggios (Tuned Percussion)

Playing scales and arpeggios is important for building strong technical skills such as reliable hand movement and position, co-ordination and fluency. It also helps to develop pitch and interval awareness, and familiarity with keys and their related patterns. 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.

Memory: All requirements should be played from memory.

Ranges: Candidates are free to start at any octave, provided the required ranges are covered. All requirements should ascend and descend according to the specified range (and pattern).

Patterns: Arpeggios and dominant sevenths are required in root position only. All dominant sevenths should finish by resolving on the tonic. Scales in thirds should begin with the tonic as the lower note, while scales in sixths should begin with the tonic as the upper note. Examples of scale/arpeggio, etc. patterns found in this syllabus are given on pages 20–21.

Instruments: Requirements may be played on any of the instruments listed on page 13 as long as they can cover the full range set. Scales played on the vibraphone should be played without pedal.

Sticking: All requirements except those in thirds, in sixths and in octaves should be played hand to hand. Candidates may lead with either hand.

Speeds: The speeds on page 22 are given as a general guide.

In the exam: Examiners will usually ask for at least one of each scale/arpeggio (etc.) type. They will ask for majors followed by minors within each type. When asking for requirements, examiners will specify the key or the starting note only.

Supporting publications: Books of the requirements are published by ABRSM. Purchasing these books is not a requirement.

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 23–25 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"> the test must be played with the snares on no additional instruments will be required at any grade
Timpani	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the number of drums required at each grade is listed in the parameters on page 24
Tuned Percussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the test may be played on any of the instruments listed on page 13 the instrument chosen must meet the range requirements for the grade as listed in the parameters on page 25
Percussion (Combined)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> instruments as described in all three rows above must be available in the exam room the examiner will choose whether the test is to be played on Snare Drum, Timpani or Tuned Percussion

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.

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 74–81.

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 entry. Further information, including the syllabus for the alternative tests, is available at www.abrsm.org/specificneeds.

Sight-reading parameters

The tables on pages 23–25 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 18.

Snare Drum

All tests are written on a five-line staff.

	Length (bars)	Time	Other features that may be included
Grade 1	4	4/4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •  •  • <i>f</i> and <i>p</i>
	6	2/4	
Grade 2	<i>Lengths gradually increase</i> ↓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •  • tied notes •  • <i>mf</i> and <i>cresc.</i> hairpins • grace notes
Grade 3		3/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dotted quaver patterns • simple syncopation • rolls () • accents • <i>mp</i> and <i>dim.</i> hairpins
Grade 4		6/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anacrusis • triplets • pause signs
Grade 5			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slowing of tempo at end • <i>ff</i> and <i>pp</i>
Grade 6		9/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changes of time signature
		5/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slowing of tempo followed by <i>a tempo</i>
		5/4	
Grade 7		7/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demisemiquavers
	7/4		
Grade 8	max c. 28	12/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acceleration of tempo • playing on rim

Aural test requirements

Included in all Graded Exams in Music Performance*

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 Graded Exams in Music Performance.

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 75–81 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 89.

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 entry. Further information, including the syllabus for the alternative tests, is available at www.abrsm.org/specificneeds.

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).

4. Assessment and marking

Assessment objectives

The tables below describe the level of knowledge and skills required of candidates taking Graded Exams in Music Performance. 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 88–89.

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">• Reliable pitch and intonation• Stable rhythm at a suitable tempo• Reliable tonal control and awareness• Musical shape and detail• Communication of character and style
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">• Correct notes and secure continuity• Reliable tonal control
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">• Overall security of notes, rhythm and continuity Respond to simple piano-based musical stimuli with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall accuracy and reliable musical perception

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"> • Reliable pitch and intonation • Stable rhythm at a suitable tempo • Reliable tonal control and awareness • Musical shape and detail • Communication of character and style
<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"> • Correct notes and secure continuity • Reliable tonal control
<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"> • Overall security of notes, rhythm and continuity <p>Respond to straightforward piano-based musical stimuli with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall accuracy and reliable musical perception

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"> • Reliable pitch and intonation • Stable rhythm at a suitable tempo • Reliable tonal control and awareness • Musical shape and detail • Communication of character and style
<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"> • Correct notes and secure continuity • Reliable tonal control
<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"> • Overall security of notes, rhythm and continuity <p>Respond to moderately complex piano-based musical stimuli with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall accuracy and reliable musical perception

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"> • Reliable pitch and intonation • Stable rhythm at a suitable tempo • Reliable tonal control and awareness • Musical shape and detail • Communication of character and style
<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"> • Correct notes and secure continuity • Reliable tonal control
<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"> • Overall security of notes, rhythm and continuity <p>Respond to complex piano-based musical stimuli with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall accuracy and reliable musical perception

Mark allocation

Marks are allocated for each element of percussion exams, 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%
Total	150	100%

Result categories

The result categories for Graded Exams in Music Performance are set as follows. A Pass in each section 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

Marking criteria

The tables on pages 88–89 show the marking criteria used by examiners in percussion exams. 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 Initial-8 *	Pieces Pitch	Time	Tone	Shape	Performance
Distinction 27-30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly accurate notes and intonation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluent, with flexibility where appropriate Rhythmic character well conveyed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Well projected Sensitive use of tonal qualities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressive, idiomatic musical shaping and detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assured Fully committed Vivid communication of character and style
Merit 24-26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Largely accurate notes and intonation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained, effective tempo Good sense of rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mainly controlled and consistent Good tonal awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear musical shaping, well-realised detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive Carrying musical conviction Character and style communicated
Pass 20-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally correct notes Sufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable tempo Generally stable pulse Overall rhythmic accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally reliable Adequate tonal awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some realisation of musical shape and/or detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally secure, prompt recovery from slips Some musical involvement
Below Pass 17-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent note errors Insufficiently reliable intonation to maintain tonality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unsuitable and/or uncontrolled tempo Irregular pulse Inaccurate rhythm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uneven and/or unreliable Inadequate tonal awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Musical shape and detail insufficiently conveyed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure, inadequate recovery from slips Insufficient musical involvement
13-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Largely inaccurate notes and/or intonation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Erratic tempo and/or pulse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious lack of tonal control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Musical shape and detail largely unrealised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lacking continuity No musical involvement
10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly inaccurate notes and/or intonation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incoherent tempo and/or pulse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No tonal control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No shape or detail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unable to continue for more than a short section
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No work offered

* Initial Grade not available for percussion

Grades Initial-8 *	Scales and arpeggios/Study	Sight-reading	Grades Initial-8 *	Aural tests
Distinction 19-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Highly accurate notes/pitch ● Fluent and rhythmic ● Musically shaped ● Confident response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fluent, rhythmically accurate ● Accurate notes/pitch/key ● Musical detail realised ● Confident presentation 	Distinction 17-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accurate throughout ● Musically perceptive ● Confident response
Merit 17-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Largely accurate notes/pitch ● Mostly regular flow ● Mainly even tone ● Secure response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adequate tempo, usually steady pulse ● Mainly correct rhythm ● Largely correct notes/pitch/key ● Largely secure presentation 	Merit 15-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengths significantly outweigh weaknesses ● Musically aware ● Secure response
Pass 14-16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Generally correct notes/pitch, despite errors ● Continuity generally maintained ● Generally reliable tone ● Cautious response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continuity generally maintained ● Note values mostly realised ● Pitch outlines in place, despite errors ● Cautious presentation 	Pass 12-14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengths just outweigh weaknesses ● Cautious response
Below Pass 11-13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Frequent errors in notes and/or pitch ● Lacking continuity and/or some items incomplete ● Unreliable tone ● Uncertain response and/or some items not attempted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lacking overall continuity ● Incorrect note values ● Very approximate notes/pitch/key ● Insecure presentation 	Below Pass 9-11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weaknesses outweigh strengths ● Uncertain response
7-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Very approximate notes and/or pitch ● Sporadic and/or frequently incomplete ● Serious lack of tonal control ● Very uncertain response and/or several items not attempted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No continuity or incomplete ● Note values unrealised ● Pitch outlines absent ● Very uncertain presentation 	6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inaccuracy throughout ● Vague response
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No work offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No work offered 	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No work offered

* Initial Grade not available for percussion

5. After the exam

Results

All successful candidates receive a copy of the mark form and a certificate that shows the subject and level that they have been examined in. We aim to release results for Graded Exams in Music Performance approximately one month after the exam date; 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 during entry, mark forms and certificates are posted to the applicant named on the entry form, whose responsibility it is to pass them on to candidates.

Concerns about the exam

If the candidate has any concerns about the way the exam was conducted, the applicant has seven days from the date of the exam to let us know by phone or email, or by using the online form at www.abrsm.org/examconcerns. This will enable us to investigate the matter before the results are issued.

Appeals and feedback

Specific guidance for questions about results and appeals 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. Specific guidance, and Appeal and Feedback forms, can be found at www.abrsm.org/examconcerns.

(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