

# APPENDICES

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## Specimen questions and indicative responses

The **specimen questions** on pp. 48–51 are intended to provide a clear sense of how the examiners might address the various areas of the Viva Voce. The selected **indicative responses** on pp. 52–58 provide an indication of the sorts of response that would be expected from candidates within the main marking bands (Distinction, Pass, Fail). It is important to note that these are specimen questions only, and that none of them may actually be asked in the exam. Additionally, not all areas specified below will necessarily be covered by examiners in their questioning.

### SPECIMEN QUESTIONS

#### DipABRSM

\* *indicative responses to these specimen questions are to be found on pp. 52–53.*

- Musical outlook**
- What were your considerations in selecting the repertoire to be rehearsed and performed?
  - Why did you choose this piece for the Arrangement section of the diploma?

- Technique**
- Show us how you would negotiate this particular pause and *tempo primo*.
  - The trumpet section has had many bars' rest. How do you ensure that they enter in the correct place?
  - What is the value of vocal warm-up exercises? Which would you use in addition to those heard today?
  - Tuning woodwind and brass instruments together can be problematic. Is there a universally satisfactory tuning note, or should different sections tune to different notes?
  - \* ● How do you structure a rehearsal session?
  - Show me some of the ways in which you can obtain dynamic variety without the use of verbal instructions.
  - How can you help a choir not to sing sharp or flat?

- Rehearsal and Performance**
- The sopranos were having trouble staying in tune at this point. Why do you think that was?
  - Did you find the rapid 'one in a bar' units of the 3/8 a problem when shaping the phrases or striving for an overall vision of the piece? How did you overcome this?
  - \* ● The trumpets and horns were having difficulty with transposition, it seemed. How can you help them with this?
  - Were there any places where you became aware that you were spending too much time on an individual section of your ensemble, thus interrupting the impetus for the other players?
  - Your percussion section was a little too enthusiastic. How did you manage to bring them back to your tempo?
  - How do you deal with an individual or soloist who is making a persistent mistake in rehearsal?
  - In what ways did your rehearsal differ from how you had planned it?
  - Some sections of the band seemed to lack confidence. What are the merits of sectional rehearsals, and how might they be best organized?

- Repertoire and Programme Notes**
- What other pieces by this composer are you aware of? Has your knowledge of them influenced the way in which you tackled this piece?
  - You have been asked to provide music for a short concert with your ensemble. What would you choose and why would it appeal to the audience?
  - In your Programme Notes you write that Fauré's 'Pelléas et Mélisande' Suite 'displays a richer instrumental technique' than the Sibelius suite of the same name. Can you justify this claim?
  - Tell me which music you would next like to attempt with your group. How would it help the group to develop?

- Musical language and form**
- Can you tell me about the harmonic style of this piece? From where do you think the composer gets his inspiration?
  - \* ● Could you talk me through the structure of this piece? What are the main formal elements that affect the way you direct it?
  - These settings are an interesting blend of simple words and complicated rhythmic patterns. How can you retain the simplicity of expression in your interpretation?
- Style and interpretation**
- What considerations influenced your choice of tempi in the performance?
  - How much did you tell your musicians about the sound-picture the composer is trying to portray and how did you try to communicate this sound-scape in performance?
  - Is it essential to adhere to the composer's metronome markings to achieve an authentic performance? What factors would permit a modification or change to be made in this regard?
- Arrangement**
- Your folk song arrangement was very colourful, but where is the melody at this point?
  - \* ● What is the effective range of this instrument? Show me in your score how you have utilized this particular instrument in your Arrangement.
  - Tell me about the inclusion of this instrument to double the melody line here.
- Professional values and practice**
- What steps do you take to ensure that the rehearsal space you use is free from hazards?
  - How do you ensure that the physical well-being of your ensemble members is not harmed by their having to play or sing in extended rehearsals?

### LRSM

- \* *indicative responses to these specimen questions are to be found on pp. 54–55.*

- Musical outlook**
- Which piece did you feel improved the most during the rehearsal, and why?
  - \* ● How did you set about preparing the score for the first piece we heard today?
- Technique**
- How important is it that your players/singers are all of approximately similar technical ability?
  - How do you introduce a new piece to the orchestra/band/choir?
  - In your brass band, do you encourage the trombones to give a bright, characteristic sound, or do you ask them to blend with the saxhorns?
  - How do you ensure good discipline within your ensemble, at the same time as maintaining the players'/singers' goodwill and co-operation?
  - This piece involves some deft changes of time signature at a brisk pace. Could you tell us how you decided to beat these?
  - How do you indicate the change of metre at this point?
  - How can your gestures influence the dynamic shifts in this particular section?
  - Ends of phrases are a difficult area, especially with younger players. Can you demonstrate how you could effect some clean endings within a variety of speeds and dynamic levels?
- Rehearsal and Performance**
- Which sections of this work did you feel, at the end of the rehearsal, most needed more attention? To which particular aspects of it would you give additional rehearsal time?
  - Your seating plan for the choir today is (un)conventional. Have you tried other ways of grouping the singers, and if so, what were the results?
  - Were there any balance or intonation problems which you did not have time to address?
  - I noticed that one or two of your musicians were unwilling to establish eye contact with you. Were you aware of this and how could you have dealt with it?
  - The brass were much more rhythmic in performance than they had been in rehearsal. How did you achieve this?
  - There was an ensemble slip at this point when you changed the beating pattern. What could you do about this before the next performance?

- Repertoire and Programme Notes**
- Which more challenging works are you keeping in mind for your ensemble? What needs to change before they can be tackled with confidence?
  - What are your principles in programme building?
  - The composer has provided a detailed programme for this piece. You have reproduced this in your Notes, so does that mean the work cannot stand without written explanation?
  - While it is good to enthuse about the works contained in a programme, can you justify your statement that 'Rossini was the principal composer of his day'? Who were his rivals in this regard?
- Musical language and form**
- Do the members of your chamber orchestra need to know the formal structure of the works they play to give a credible performance? If so, how can you provide this information in a way that might illuminate their contribution? Illustrate your answer with reference to the first movement of the symphony you played today.
  - Show me some features of this piece that make it so unmistakably by its composer.
  - Could you explain the harmonic progression at this point? Which instruments need to be brought to the fore in balance in order for this to make the most impact?
- Style and interpretation**
- Is it important for the director to make a personal mark on works performed?
  - To what extent did the acoustic environment of today's performance influence your interpretation?
  - \* ● What is the case for accompanying the motet by Bach you performed today? What instrumentation would be stylish?
  - In preparing this Air and Variations with your brass band, to what extent did you consult the solo cornet player and to what extent do you expect to make your own mark on the work as a whole?
- Arrangement**
- What is the effect of leaving the double-basses out until this point?
  - You chose to arrange the two Consolations by Liszt for your ensemble. How did you vary the textures so that each had its own special timbre?
  - \* ● In writing your Arrangement, to what extent did you feel constrained by the technical abilities of your singers?
- Professional values and practice**
- How do you nourish your own personal musical skills to keep your directing a stimulating experience for your ensemble?
  - \* ● Have you done any research into noise-level problems within orchestras or bands? Do you know how any professional ensembles have conquered these challenges? Do you feel that such issues exist in your ensemble's workspace?
  - What support agencies are you aware of that can help you professionally, and what are their specific areas of expertise?

## FRSM

- \* *indicative responses to these specimen questions are to be found on pp. 56–58.*

- Musical outlook**
- Your choice of programme was very varied. Tell me how you arrived at this and what features particularly appealed to you.
- Technique**
- There might be a number of ways in which to approach this moment in the piece. Could you demonstrate one or two of them? What would help decide your preference?
  - Could you tell us how you achieved the subtle effect needed at this point?
  - Describe how you approach issues of attack with mixed instrumental and vocal forces?
  - What are your views about where the players should perceive the beat to actually fall and how do you influence that perception?

- Rehearsal and Performance**
- What do you feel are the strengths and weaknesses of the ensemble that you are directing? How are you going to tackle this particular area of weakness?
  - What aspects of the texture in this section do you think need most care in order to give a stylish performance?
  - Might your concept of this work need some differences of approach in another acoustic? How might you cope in taking your group on a short tour visiting several different halls with varying acoustics?
  - \* ● If you could turn the clock back, which parts of your performance would you like to have a second opportunity to work through? What do you think caused the difficulties that you encountered in the first place?
  - Your Arrangement calls for sections of the choir to sing in conflicting metres. How can that be rehearsed successfully?
- Repertoire and Written Submission**
- In your Written Submission on Elgar's Third Symphony, as reconstructed by Anthony Payne, you argue that a valid reconstruction of such a work can only be attempted if original thematic material is extant for each movement. Does this then invalidate Payne's incorporation of music from other Elgar works?
  - How far have you been influenced by the several recordings of this piece made over a period of 30 years and directed by the composer himself?
  - What contemporary repertoire would suit your ensemble?
  - You have been asked to provide the music for a short educational concert for children in order to introduce them to your particular ensemble. Which pieces or movements would best demonstrate the versatility and range of the ensemble?
- Musical language and form**
- The contrapuntal nature of this music is quite complex. Could you show me which parts of this particular section you would have brought out if you had rehearsed it today, and why?
  - \* ● In preparing your choir to sing this piece, how did you go about helping them to project the composer's specified vocal representation of instruments?
  - This avant-garde piece might be tough going for some of the players. Which aspects of it might you be able to highlight to them in order to gain their enthusiasm for the style, and thus a better performance?
- Style and interpretation**
- What consideration did you give to historical practice when directing this work?
  - When a composer annotates his score in such a detailed fashion, as in the piece you performed today, what room is left to the conductor to express a personal view of the music, and is such a view valid?
  - How do you maximize the tension created by the instrumental spacing/voicing at this point?
  - \* ● Explain your understanding of an ideal balance between a faithful rendition of a score and some element that is added or subtracted by the director. Give examples of recordings of this work that you feel demonstrate where this challenge has been successfully resolved, and others where it is less than successful.
- Arrangement**
- What effect were you trying to achieve here? What would be the effect of rescoring it in this particular way?
  - To what extent were you influenced by Debussy's own use of orchestral colour when making your Arrangement of his two Préludes?
  - \* ● Discuss the challenges involved in translating the sonorities and textures of the chosen piano piece into your full score for wind band. What examples of the composer's orchestral writing influenced you when executing your reworking?
- Professional values and practice**
- In what ways do you envisage developing your own professional expertise over the coming years?
  - What steps do you take to keep up-to-date with current activities and practices in the brass band world?

## INDICATIVE RESPONSES

## DipABRSM

**Technique** How do you structure a rehearsal session?*Distinction*

The candidate had an excellent grasp of what was needed, and in the first part of the exam started with a properly structured tuning-up (woodwind first, then brass, with timpani checked last) followed by some good warm-up exercises for the whole band. In the Viva Voce the candidate demonstrated that it was essential for a director to know which passages needed rehearsal, and how to break these down to their constituent parts, and he/she talked well about the ratio between playing through and real rehearsing. The candidate pointed out that sectional practice was occasionally used to maximize use of time in pieces posing notational difficulty, and sound opinions were offered on the importance of maintaining morale and enthusiasm in rehearsals, without compromising standards. On today's showing, the examiners felt entirely satisfied that these ideals would be exemplified in reality.

*Pass*

A rehearsal schedule had been devised for today's examination, and was shown to the examiners in the Viva Voce. However, it seemed a little too detailed, not sufficiently allowing for actual developments or local context. The candidate knew that tuning-up was important but pointed out that in some circumstances the lack of available time prevented this. He/she used warm-up exercises and aimed to rehearse passages thoroughly, spending the right amount of time on getting passages correct and only then playing the whole piece through. The candidate thought that it was more important to spend time on rhythm than intonation (or vice versa) but admitted that this aspect of rehearsal technique could be rethought.

*Fail*

Today's 'practical' had revealed rather poor time management of the rehearsal session, and questions on this topic showed that this had not apparently been detected by the candidate. Furthermore, no strategies for proper planning emerged in the Viva Voce either, the conclusion being that spontaneity would suffice. The candidate thought that tuning-up was not necessary at every rehearsal and that it was more important to get stuck into the difficult parts straight away. He/she was a little vague as to how to break the score down in rehearsal, saying that this aspect would need to be rethought quite considerably. The candidate's policy of playing through a whole piece towards the end of a rehearsal under speed was not convincingly made.

**Rehearsal and Performance** The trumpets and horns were having difficulty with transposition, it seemed. How can you help them with this?*Distinction*

The question had been partly answered by efficient reaction in the rehearsal session, and further helpful clarification was forthcoming in the Viva Voce. The candidate admitted to having no personal familiarity with the instruments that experienced difficulty, but had prepared in advance by discussing the issues with a brass-playing colleague. Thus it was possible to talk to the players in helpful language, to the extent of telling them which note in their usual reading key they should be playing. Further questioning continued to demonstrate a broader knowledge than that actually needed in today's session, and the candidate's response went on to outline useful schemes to help brass players in less common circumstances when transposing in more complicated keys. Thus, the answers given would materially assist the players concerned, at the same time as raising the level of respect for this director for his/her specific input in a technical area.

*Pass*

The candidate explained the transposition intervals involved with trumpets and horns with reasonable assurance. There was also awareness of the actual pitch implications in the brass family. Some difficulty had been experienced in relaying

this knowledge in a helpful form to the players, however, despite the candidate's accurate singing to them of the passage in question. Eventually, progress would probably have been made by persisting in this direction, though it might have been more helpful also to tell the players how to calculate the intervals for themselves.

*Fail*

By his/her own admission in the Viva Voce, the candidate had not detected that the brass players were having any difficulty with transposition. Having been shown the relevant point in the score, the candidate recalled that 'something had gone adrift', but had actually thought the bassoons had come in early. Questioning revealed a sketchy understanding of transposing instruments, while incorrect answers were given to more detailed questions. In the candidate's view, evidently no help could be given to inexperienced horn players who had parts requiring transposition. The issues were really not at all well grasped, leaving the examiners to conclude that the candidate would be able to offer little or no help to players having trouble with transposition.

**Musical language and form** **Could you talk me through the structure of this piece? What are the main formal elements that affect the way you direct it?**

*Distinction*

An enthusiastic and detailed analysis of the piece was quickly outlined, together with persuasive ideas of how to bring these points to life in performance. It was evident that a thorough understanding of the design of the piece and its historical context, combined with excellent communication skills, would enable a powerful and imaginative performance to come to fruition.

*Pass*

A clear outline grasp of the design of the selected piece was shown, though some points of detail had been overlooked. Sensible explanation was offered as to the need to observe the composer's performance directions also, though the issue of relating the tempi to each other was less well communicated.

*Fail*

The notion of formal structure in music seemed insufficiently grasped in this set of replies. Even the most straightforward points, such as the verse and chorus design of the piece sung by the choir today, seemed to go unnoticed. The composer's dynamic indications, which would have helped illuminate the structure, were also not achieved in the rehearsal and performance session.

**Arrangement** **What is the effective range of this instrument? Show me in your score how you have utilized this particular instrument in your Arrangement.**

*Distinction*

A number of instances of unorthodox demands were made of this instrument in the Arrangement, but the recording and later explanation in the Viva Voce gave ample justification for these apparent idiosyncrasies. Illustrations were quoted from modern composers who had pioneered the effects reproduced, and one or two were the candidate's own experimentation. Full and interesting explanation was given of how the ideas had been piloted with musical friends before being incorporated into the final version of the Arrangement.

*Pass*

The pitch range of the instrument in question was given correctly, though less knowledge was shown about the most effective range in performance. Shortcomings in this regard were apparent in the recording, and the candidate readily conceded that to have written the phrase in question one octave higher would have been preferable.

*Fail*

The candidate was unable to state the instrument's range. Although the passage in question was written correctly for the instrument, its balance within the score had been shown not to work in the recorded performance. This shortcoming was attributed by the candidate to the performer, not to the quality of the instrumentation.

## LRSM

**Musical outlook** How did you set about preparing the score for the first piece we heard today?*Distinction*

The candidate displayed a highly organized approach to score-learning, based on an initial broad reading of the music's sense and span. This was later broken down in a detailed way into both vertical and horizontal readings of the score to glean to the full the harmonic language (including transpositions) and individual sectional demands. Aspects of part-balance, dynamics, unanimity of phrasing and potential ensemble hazards had clearly been given considerable thought. The score had been lightly marked with only essential points. There was also evidence of comparison with similar works from the composer's output and furthermore a clear indication of factual research into the work's history and stylistic features. Recordings of renowned interpretations of the work had been consulted, without detracting from a strong personal approach to the work, realized through an evident ability to envisage the end-product during study.

*Pass*

The candidate was able to describe the ways in which he/she had committed the work to memory and also displayed some knowledge of how leading interpreters of the past and present had performed the piece. The score had been carefully annotated, although some of the markings might eventually have proved distracting as they obscured printed indications. Some thought had been given to the difficulties that each section of the ensemble would encounter and the candidate displayed a basic understanding of the harmonic language, if not always fully probing the colouristic possibilities of the voicing of chords and balancing of melody lines. A suitably fluent level of actual score-reading was shown, although evidence was not wholly present of an ability to bring the work effectively and vividly to life in the candidate's mind purely through study of the score.

*Fail*

The candidate had clearly spent many hours poring over the score, but not in a very systematic way. The notes, on a basic level, were known, but more thought was needed as to how to blend them into a whole, both in terms of balance and unanimity of delivery. Insufficient thought had been given to what would prove problematic in rehearsal and performance and the candidate was not fully versed in the historical facts that lay behind the music's expression. Some of the composer's instructions seemed to have been scantily considered, or missed altogether.

**Style and interpretation** What is the case for accompanying the motet by Bach you performed today? What instrumentation would be stylish?*Distinction*

A thorough grasp of the issues was shown in a lively and well-informed set of replies. The opinion was given that at least three options would prove stylish, namely: organ support for the vocal lines throughout; continuo accompaniment by cello and double-bass with either organ or harpsichord (a preference for the organ was expressed in recognition of authenticity); or string orchestra, with or without organ (or harpsichord) continuo. When asked to explain how the five parts would be distributed in a string orchestra version, the view was expressed that an additional violin or viola part would be needed, and that to cover the tenor line with the cellos would be distinctly unidiomatic, a view which the examiners found entirely convincing.

*Pass*

The candidate had evidently considered the question from a practical point of view. He/she had realized that dropping pitch in a long unaccompanied work was a potential hazard, so had suggested that organ accompaniment would be suitable. The candidate was not wholly clear about the nature of continuo practice in baroque repertoire, being of the opinion that the most helpful approach would be for the organ to double the voice parts throughout. He/she thought that some movements could still be left unaccompanied, but conceded that pitch might again become an issue in this event.

*Fail*

The candidate showed the examiners that no instruments were indicated in his/her score, but when it was pointed out that this was not an Urtext edition he/she lost a measure of confidence. While saying that he/she knew that some of Bach's music was often played on different instruments than those originally intended, the candidate could not substantiate this answer with examples.

**Arrangement** **In writing your Arrangement, to what extent did you feel constrained by the technical abilities of your singers?**

*Distinction*

Some aspects of the Arrangement had already struck the examiners as having been skilfully tailored to the choir appearing today, but in the Viva Voce further good points were made. Notably the text had been chosen by the choir in a vote, and those who had shown a willingness to sing solo parts had been able to have them custom-written. The candidate amusingly admitted that it was possible that the Arrangement was so expressly planned for his/her own choir that it might not suit another ensemble at all, without considerable rewriting.

*Pass*

A good sense of familiarity with the choir was shown by the candidate, in particular an awareness of the problem of balance between the sections. Not only were there too few tenors, but some singing the part were evidently finding it too high, so the tactic of doubling crucial moments with the altos was a useful precaution. The candidate went on to explain that although he/she had first been drawn to a Russian text, experience of the group had taught that better results and higher morale would probably result from learning a piece in English.

*Fail*

The Arrangement included some unvocal leaps and false relations, for which no really persuasive explanation was given in the Viva Voce. The view was expressed by the candidate that the Arrangement should be what he/she really wanted to write, whether or not the performers would be able to manage the demands easily.

**Professional values and practice** **Have you done any research into noise-level problems within orchestras or bands? Do you know how any professional ensembles have conquered these challenges? Do you feel that such issues exist in your ensemble's workspace?**

*Distinction*

The candidate was keenly aware that the weekly rehearsal venue was only just large enough and that noise levels were a potential problem. However, there was no alternative hall locally and the players' enthusiasm demonstrated that it was better to meet there than not at all. The candidate had questioned several leading professional bodies with a range of operating spaces (rehearsal halls, concert platforms, theatre pits) and attended rehearsals and performances, thus gaining considerable knowledge about where to seat the various sections. As a result, there was prudent seating of brass and percussion sections and an advantageous use of acoustic screens.

*Pass*

The candidate appreciated the issue of ideal seating and had experimented with a variety of seating arrangements, also seeking feedback from players. Furthermore, the candidate had communicated with two other local conductors concerning the problem, as well as making a phone call to one professional orchestra to obtain guidance. Some noticeable improvement had thus been made in playing conditions, although the candidate admitted that improvements could yet be made.

*Fail*

The candidate was aware that the noise levels in the hall were extreme, but felt that the players were happy to put up with it. Although the candidate realized that some brass bells were positioned far too close to other musicians, and horns were seated right in front of trombones, he/she seemed not to have given sufficient thought to providing at least a partial remedy to this. The candidate felt that this was the only way that the ensemble could physically fit into the available space.

## FRSM

**Rehearsal and Performance** **If you could turn the clock back, which parts of your performance would you like to have a second opportunity to work through? What do you think caused the difficulties that you encountered in the first place?**

*Distinction*

The candidate cited five moments in the piece that would possibly improve with a second attempt. The first was caused by the percussionist missing an entry, which the candidate felt to be his/her own fault as a result of forgetting to give the promised cue. The next two moments would have been markedly improved by just giving the players more time in rehearsal. The following example was probably owing to the complexity in the rhythmic patterns; the candidate suggested that it was because the players were insufficiently familiar with this particular challenge, due to limited rehearsal time. The last moment was 'just one of those things', the candidate suggested; it had never gone wrong in rehearsal but the players concerned had tensed up at that moment and the intonation had suffered as a result. Another performance would probably yield a better account of that part of the piece.

*Pass*

With a little help and encouragement, the candidate was able to home in on the passages which the examiners felt could have gone better in performance. The candidate accepted responsibility for the couple of rhythmically uncertain moments, and admitted that nerves had just got the better of him/her. There were two moments when the intonation was really rather poor and the candidate hoped that a little rebalancing would help to sort that out. The problem of the final chord was discussed in some detail and the candidate seemed to know what the problem was, and would know how to work on it in further rehearsal.

*Fail*

The candidate identified only a couple of the shaky moments in the performance, and, although it was evident that these were the fault of the players, the candidate was unable to pinpoint the precise causes. He/she was in fact quite pleased with the performance and did not notice the wrong entry in the lower brass, nor the non-entry of the percussion, both of these in the lively *Allegro* section. The examiners felt between themselves that the candidate was a little too obsessed with appearances when directing, or that his/her head was buried too deeply in the score. Real and attentive listening is one of the responsibilities of a good director and, if this area could be improved, the examiners felt that the candidate would start to be more aware of the shakier moments in performance, and know what to do to avoid them.

**Musical language and form** **In preparing your choir to sing this piece, how did you go about helping them to project the composer's specified vocal representation of instruments?**

*Distinction*

The candidate had drawn some excellent responses from the soloists in the preceding performance, and was able to explain convincingly how these had been elicited. The candidate had played each phrase on a synthesizer – a sophisticated machine well able to simulate instruments effectively – and together with the soloists had noted the specific articulation of each instrument, followed by attempts to copy the actual sound quality. The candidate experimented with dynamics too, and eventually found that the choir would need to compromise a little in that regard, as the singers found that the characteristic tonal variations lost their impact when sung too quietly. The examiners were impressed by the thoroughness and perception shown in this small detail of preparation, which was found in the rest of the Viva Voce to underpin all the candidate's responses.

*Pass*

The relevant passages were quickly identified in the Viva Voce and clear explanation given of how instrumental colour had been required of voices. The candidate had asked the soloists to bear in mind the instrument each was trying to represent, although some of the soloists had found this new technique quite difficult. The candidate sang a phrase of each example with acceptable definition, and in the rehearsal had also relied on this method to make the point.

*Fail*

The preceding rehearsal and performance had become ensnared in earlier passages of the piece, so the specific details referred to in the above question had not actually been sung. When asked to identify the relevant passages, some unfamiliarity with the score was evident, but the first example was eventually found. It seemed that the imitative writing had not been a particular feature of rehearsals, with the candidate repeatedly expressing concern that the difficulty of the actual notes had proved a distraction from any attempts to convey this effect. Indeed, the candidate had been encouraging the choir to practise without the words in a bid to make matters easier, although he/she realized that this course of action may eventually have made it harder for the singers to grasp the fuller picture.

**Style and interpretation** Explain your understanding of an ideal balance between a faithful rendition of a score and some element that is added or subtracted by the director. Give examples of recordings of this work that you feel demonstrate where this challenge has been successfully resolved, and others where it is less than successful.

*Distinction*

The candidate likened the director to a pianist or organist, comparing each player in an ensemble to a pipe in the organ or part of a pianist's hand, as cogs in a complicated yet potentially expressive machine. The candidate was quick to add that the difference between the ensemble made up of real people and a machine was that each cog was an additional mind and intelligence, whose input could be harnessed. Further explanation showed the candidate's perceptive insight into the role of the director as enabler and unifier, adding his/her own fusing influence to the sum of the parts, thus bringing the printed page into a fuller existence than any prosaic reading concerned only with accuracy could hope to achieve. And further, since the mix of personalities would also vary, so would the outcome inevitably be fresh time after time, when music is made in this organic fashion. The candidate illustrated his/her experience of impressive, and also less exciting, recorded performances by describing the effect one or two had made on him/her.

*Pass*

Some creative individual input had been demonstrated in the practical session, but of a patchy nature. For example, the candidate had been successful in bringing out the links between movements, while other areas passed without sign of a very positive steering hand. Perhaps some good intentions had not been properly realized, since in the Viva Voce several interesting interpretative views were put forward, although they had not really been conveyed in practice earlier. Recordings had been consulted, and the candidate was quick to point out features of each in which he/she had detected the conductor's personal input. Perhaps a certain lack of confidence had prevented the candidate from adopting some of these ideas.

*Fail*

The impression of somewhat impersonal performances given earlier in the exam seemed to be confirmed by the candidate's responses in the Viva Voce. He/she seemed happy to assume that the printed text would be reliably accurate, suggesting that a good composer would ensure that everything necessary for a complete performance would be found on the page. There was certainly a measure of detail achieved in performance, but only to the extent of rather slavish observation of printed instructions. The candidate had preferred not to consult recordings of the works performed.

**Arrangement** Discuss the challenges involved in translating the sonorities and textures of the chosen piano piece into your full score for wind band. What examples of the composer's orchestral writing influenced you when executing your reworking?

*Distinction*

The candidate spoke in detail and at length about the many challenges of scoring the piece. The chordal work had on the whole been a delight to orchestrate, once the authentic woodwind and horn voicing had been found, but the left-hand quaver work had been a problem, notably in the central section, as had the later busy triplet figures in an ensemble devoid of a harp. The candidate had spent considerable library time – very successfully, it seemed – researching the composer's symphonies, concertos and overtures, searching for alternative figurations that would suit this context. The inter-hand syncopations had, however, been deliberately retained as being reminiscent of the composer's third symphony.

*Pass*

The candidate was detailed in outlining all the aspects of the piano original that had caused the most difficulty. A book on orchestration had been of great help, suggesting ways to circumvent the problems of scoring the roulades, and a study of the composer's set of variations for orchestra that happened to be on the shelf had also brought forth some ideas. However, the candidate did admit that he/she knew that there was a wealth of other orchestral material by the same composer that might have kindled further solutions had time allowed. Nonetheless, the candidate showed fluency in outlining all the points in the finished score where he/she felt some success had been achieved.

*Fail*

The candidate admitted that, of all the diploma components, the Arrangement had represented the sternest challenge. Much time had been spent working out which of the instruments or players would be able to tackle such tortuous figurations. In the end, solutions had been found, but the candidate (a pianist) admitted to not knowing very much of the composer's output for orchestra. The candidate did point out all the trouble spots, but added that he/she felt that the best had been made of what was, in essence, a fairly insoluble problem.

## Marking criteria

The tables below outline the **marking criteria** for the Music Direction diplomas. The demands of the criteria are carefully structured, not only between the levels of diploma, as you move up from DipABRSM to LRSM and FRSM level, but also between the marking bands: Distinction, Pass and Fail. They are used by the examiners when coming to a decision about the way your performance measures up against ABRSM's standards, and they also explain to you, the candidate, what qualities are required at each level and for each exam component, thus helping you to prepare for your exam with confidence. The attainment descriptions given on pp. 66–68 and the selected indicative responses to specimen Viva Voce questions on pp. 52–58 provide a further mechanism for showing the expectations at each level.

### Section 1: Rehearsal and Performance

	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
<b>42–60</b> <b>Distinction</b> Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.	Assured and effective directing, demonstrating both artistic awareness and a secure technique.	Authoritative directing, demonstrating technical command and exceptional interpretative insight and imagination.	Charismatic directing, demonstrating outstanding interpretative insight.
<b>36–41</b> <b>A high pass</b> Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.	Confident directing, demonstrating some sensitivity and good technique.	Assured and effective directing, demonstrating both artistic awareness and a secure technique.	<b>24–41</b> <b>Pass</b> Authoritative directing, demonstrating artistic integrity and technical command.
<b>30–35</b> <b>A clear pass</b> Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.	Solid, showing good technical competence and a broad musical understanding.	Confident directing, demonstrating some sensitivity and good technique.	
<b>24–29</b> <b>Pass</b> Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.	Showing adequate technical competence and a musical understanding at a level beyond ABRSM Grade 8.	Solid, showing adequate technical competence and a broad musical understanding.	
<b>0–23</b> <b>Fail</b> Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.	Despite evidence of some competence, technical and musical grasp not equal to the demands of the programme at this level.	Insufficient evidence that the candidate has advanced significantly beyond DipABRSM level.	Insufficient evidence that the candidate has advanced significantly beyond LRSM level.

## Programme Notes (DipABRSM and LRSM)/Written Submission (FRSM)

	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
<p><b>Distinction</b> Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.</p>	Notes are pertinent and persuasively written, with thoroughly researched and well-balanced commentary.	Notes are highly perceptive and persuasively written, with a high level of research and excellent organization of material	Submission is highly perceptive and convincing, clearly structured and expressed, with excellent organization 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.
<p><b>A high pass</b> Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.</p>	Notes provide an interesting and relevant commentary on the items rehearsed/performed. The material is well-organized and logically researched.	Notes are pertinent and persuasively written. The material is well-organized and logically researched.	<p><b>Pass</b></p> <p>Submission is pertinent and comprehensively argued, with good overall shape, use of language and organization. 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.</p>
<p><b>A clear pass</b> Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.</p>	Notes provide well-chosen detail on items rehearsed/performed, and firm evidence of helpful analysis based on sound research. Good presentation, structure, level of literacy and grammatical accuracy.	Notes provide well-chosen detail on items rehearsed/performed, and firm evidence of helpful analysis based on sound research. Good presentation, structure, level of literacy and grammatical accuracy.	
<p><b>Pass</b> Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.</p>	Notes give background on items rehearsed/performed, with some evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Acceptable level of presentation, literacy and accuracy, avoiding unexplained technical language.	Notes give background on items rehearsed/performed, with some evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Acceptable level of presentation, literacy and accuracy, avoiding unexplained technical language.	
<p><b>Fail</b> Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.</p>	Notes fail to give background on items rehearsed/performed or sufficient evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Inadequate presentation and grammatically weak.	Notes fail to give background on items rehearsed/performed or sufficient evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Inadequate presentation and grammatically weak.	Submission shows limited understanding, is poorly argued, lacks appropriate examples and quotations, and demonstrates little evidence of appropriately advanced research. Grammatically weak.

## Section 2.1: Viva Voce

	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
<p><b>19–25</b> <b>Distinction</b> Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.</p>	<p>Outstanding communication skills. A commanding knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. An excellent knowledge of professional values and practices.</p>	<p>Outstanding communication skills. A commanding knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. An excellent knowledge of professional values and practices.</p>	<p>Outstanding communication skills. An expert knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Written Submission. An excellent knowledge of professional values and practices.</p>
<p><b>16–18</b> <b>A high pass</b> Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.</p>	<p>Impressive communication skills. A comprehensive knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A firm grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A very good knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>	<p>Impressive communication skills. A comprehensive knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A firm grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A very good knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>	<p><b>10–18</b> <b>Pass</b> Impressive communication skills. A commanding knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A full understanding of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Written Submission. A very good knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>
<p><b>13–15</b> <b>A clear pass</b> Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.</p>	<p>Good communication skills. A sound working knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A broad grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A good knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>	<p>Good communication skills. A sound working knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A broad grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A good knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>	
<p><b>10–12</b> <b>Pass</b> Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.</p>	<p>Competent communication skills. A broad working knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Adequate understanding of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A satisfactory knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>	<p>Competent communication skills. A broad working knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A satisfactory knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>	
<p><b>0–9</b> <b>Fail</b> Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.</p>	<p>Weak communication skills. Patchy knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. Insufficient knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>	<p>Weak communication skills. Patchy knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. Insufficient knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>	<p>Insufficient communication skills. Insufficient knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Written Submission. Insufficient knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>

## Section 2.2: Instrumental Arrangement

	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
<p><b>12–15</b> <b>Distinction</b> Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.</p>	<p>Technically secure, with well developed sense of colour. Very good feel for style and idiom, and keen awareness of balance. Very good presentation of score, with clear editorial control.</p>	<p>Assured technique, with vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Excellent sense of style and idiom. Score professionally presented.</p>	<p>Authoritative technique, with full exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Complete identification with style and idiom. Score professionally presented.</p>
<p><b>10–11</b> <b>A high pass</b> Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.</p>	<p>Consistent technique, with some imaginative use of colour. An appreciation of style and good grasp of idiom. Appropriate doubling and score expansion. Well presented with good editorial control.</p>	<p>Technically secure, with well developed sense of colour. Very good feel for style and idiom, and keen awareness of balance. Very good presentation of score, with clear editorial control.</p>	<p><b>6–11</b> <b>Pass</b> Assured technique, with vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Excellent sense of style and idiom. Excellent editorial control and presentation of score.</p>
<p><b>8–9</b> <b>A clear pass</b> Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.</p>	<p>Developing technical security, a good sense of style and idiom, with balanced textures. Legible presentation and adequate editorial control.</p>	<p>Consistent technique, with some imaginative use of colour. An appreciation of style and good grasp of idiom. Appropriate doubling and score expansion. Well presented with some evidence of editorial control.</p>	
<p><b>6–7</b> <b>Pass</b> Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.</p>	<p>Some imagination shown. A sense of style and idiom. Attention to balancing of musical lines and chords, despite technical lapses. Legible presentation, perhaps with small errors. Limited editorial control.</p>	<p>Some imagination shown. A sense of style and idiom, and of balancing of musical lines and chords, despite some technical weakness. Legible presentation. Limited editorial control.</p>	
<p><b>0–5</b> <b>Fail</b> Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.</p>	<p>Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown in use of colour and textural contrast. Awkward doublings and lack of balance. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness.</p>	<p>Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown in use of colour and textural contrast. Awkward doublings and lack of balance. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness.</p>	<p>Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown despite some sense of style and idiom. Technical weakness apparent. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness.</p>

## Section 2.2: Choral Arrangement

	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
<p><b>12–15</b> <b>Distinction</b> Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.</p>	<p>Technically secure, with well developed sense of colour. Very good feel for style and idiom, and evidence of considerable originality in the development of material. Keen awareness of balance. Very good presentation of score, with clear editorial control.</p>	<p>Assured technique, with vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Excellent sense of style and idiom combined with considerable originality and insight in the development of material. Score professionally presented.</p>	<p>Authoritative technique, with full exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Style and idiom are fully characterized, showing personal creativity and perceptive insight in the development of material. Score professionally presented.</p>
<p><b>10–11</b> <b>A high pass</b> Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.</p>	<p>Consistent technique, with some imaginative use of colour. An appreciation of style and good grasp of idiom and evidence of genuine originality. Appropriate development of material. Well presented with good editorial control.</p>	<p>Technically secure, with well developed sense of colour. Very good feel for style and idiom, and evidence of considerable originality in the development of material. Keen awareness of balance. Very good presentation of score, with clear editorial control.</p>	<p><b>6–11</b> <b>Pass</b> Assured technique, with vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Excellent sense of style and idiom combined with considerable originality and insight in the development of material. Excellent editorial control and presentation of score.</p>
<p><b>8–9</b> <b>A clear pass</b> Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.</p>	<p>Developing technical security, a good sense of style and idiom, and evidence of some originality. Balanced textures and convincing development of material. Legible presentation and adequate editorial control.</p>	<p>Consistent technique, with some imaginative use of colour. An appreciation of style and good grasp of idiom and evidence of genuine originality. Appropriate development of material. Well presented with some evidence of editorial control.</p>	
<p><b>6–7</b> <b>Pass</b> Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.</p>	<p>Some imagination shown. A sense of style, idiom and structure. Attention to balancing of voice parts, despite technical lapses. Legible presentation, perhaps with small errors. Limited editorial control.</p>	<p>Some imagination shown. A sense of style, idiom and structure. Attention to balancing of voice parts, despite some technical weakness. Legible presentation. Limited editorial control.</p>	
<p><b>0–5</b> <b>Fail</b> Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.</p>	<p>Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown in use of colour and textural contrast. Awkward doublings and lack of balance. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness. Below minimum or above maximum performance time.</p>	<p>Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown in use of colour and textural contrast. Awkward doublings and lack of balance. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness. Below minimum or above maximum performance time.</p>	<p>Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown despite some sense of style and idiom. Technical weakness apparent. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness. Below minimum or above maximum performance time.</p>

## Application form for appropriate professional experience approval

*Please photocopy this form as necessary*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone/Fax \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Level of Music Direction  
diploma you wish to enter for

DipABRSM

LRSM

FRSM

Ensemble \_\_\_\_\_

**The ABRSM prerequisite that you wish to substitute** (see pp. 18–19)

\_\_\_\_\_

**With reference to the guidelines given on p.20, please detail the professional experience you wish to be considered by ABRSM** (continue on a separate sheet, if necessary)

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\_\_\_\_\_

**I confirm that the information detailed above is accurate and true.**

Candidate's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete this form (or a photocopy of it) and send it to the Syllabus Director, ABRSM, 24 Portland Place, London W1B 1LU, United Kingdom. The form must reach ABRSM at least six weeks before you intend to enter for your diploma. Please remember that you must enclose supporting documentation verifying your application, as well as a signed declaration from an independent person of appropriate standing (see p. 20) – suggested standard wording for this declaration is given on p. 65. It is important that you do not send your entry form to ABRSM until *after* you have received confirmation that your application for appropriate professional experience approval has been successful.

### Suggested standard wording

In my capacity as < title & organization > I confirm that < full candidate name > has gained appropriate professional experience as a director in connection with < give details of course/qualification/ensemble, etc. >.

I have read the relevant syllabus regulations and am therefore able to confirm that < candidate name > has studied/demonstrated skills and understanding equivalent to or in excess of the < ABRSM prerequisite – see pp. 18–19 >.

< signature & date >

**NB** *Signed declarations must be written in English and submitted on official headed paper. In the case of qualifications/courses, ABRSM may request samples of relevant course work or certification from the institution concerned.*

## Accreditation (UK)

ABRSM's diplomas are accredited by the regulatory authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and they have been part of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) for many years. From 2011, our diplomas will be accredited within the new framework for UK qualifications: the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). There are nine levels within the QCF (Entry level to Level 8) which directly align to the Framework for Higher Education so that progression between QCF qualifications and university-awarded qualifications is clear. The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulator (Ofqual) is working with partners in Wales (DCELLS) and Northern Ireland (CCEA) to regulate all qualifications within the QCF.

The QCF levels and credit values for ABRSM's diplomas in Music Direction will be confirmed in 2011. Information on ABRSM qualifications within the QCF can be viewed at: <http://register.ofqual.gov.uk>

The broad higher education comparisons given below are shown in terms of level of demand and not volume of study:

<b>ABRSM diploma</b>	<b>Higher education</b>
DipABRSM	Certificate of higher education
LRSM	Bachelor degree with honours
FRSM	Master's degree

ABRSM's Music Direction diplomas were formerly placed at the following NQF levels:

<b>ABRSM diploma</b>	<b>NQF level</b>	<b>NQF title</b>	<b>Accreditation no.</b>
DipABRSM	4	Diploma in Music Direction	500/2157/6
LRSM	6	Licentiate in Music Direction	100/2803/1
FRSM	7	Fellowship in Music Direction	100/2804/3

## Attainment descriptions

The attainment descriptions below have been created to give a general indication of the levels of attainment likely to be shown by candidates with results at two distinct levels within each qualification (Distinction and Pass for DipABRSM and LRSM; Pass and Fail for FRSM). These descriptions must be read in relation to the examination content as described for each level of diploma on pp. 7–16 of this syllabus. The mark awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has demonstrated the skills, knowledge and understanding required at the level. Weakness in some aspects of the exam may be balanced by better performance in others, bearing in mind the marking scheme found on pp. 59–63.

### DipABRSM (Music Direction)

**Distinction** Candidates are able to direct an ensemble in the rehearsal and performance of contrasting items in an assured and effective manner, demonstrating both artistic awareness and a secure technique. They can write programme notes that give a well-balanced commentary on the items rehearsed and performed, and that are pertinent, persuasively written and thoroughly researched. Their communication skills are outstanding and they have a commanding knowledge of the ensemble directed, its idiom and repertoire. They are able to arrange a piece of music for their ensemble with technical security, a well developed sense of colour, very good feel for style and idiom, and a keen awareness of balance. They also have a mastery of the issues raised by their arrangement and by their programme notes, including the idiom, form and style of the works rehearsed and performed, their historical position, and how these factors influence interpretation. They

have an excellent grasp of professional values and practice and the legal framework relating to instrumental/choral directing at this level. They have performance skills at a minimum level of ABRSM Grade 8 Practical as a prerequisite for entry to the qualification.

**Pass** Candidates are able to direct an ensemble in the rehearsal and performance of contrasting items with adequate technical competence, and musical understanding at a level beyond ABRSM Grade 8. They can write programme notes that give background information on the items rehearsed and performed, with some evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Their communication skills are competent and they have a broad working knowledge of the ensemble directed, its idiom and repertoire. They are able to arrange a piece of music for their ensemble with some imagination and a sense of style and idiom, despite some technical lapses. They also have adequate understanding of the issues raised by their arrangement and by their programme notes, including the idiom, form and style of the works rehearsed and performed, their historical position, and how these factors influence interpretation. Their knowledge of professional values and practice and the legal framework relating to directing is appropriate for instrumental/choral directors at this level. They have performance skills at a minimum level of ABRSM Grade 8 Practical as a prerequisite for entry to the qualification.

#### **LRSM (Music Direction)**

**Distinction** Candidates are able to direct an ensemble in the rehearsal and performance of contrasting items in an authoritative manner, demonstrating technical command and exceptional interpretative insight and imagination. They can write programme notes that are highly perceptive and persuasively written, with a high level of research and excellent organization of material. Their communication skills are outstanding and they have a commanding knowledge of the ensemble directed, its idiom and repertoire. They are able to arrange a piece of music for their ensemble with an assured technique, vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities, and an excellent sense of style and idiom. They also have a mastery of the issues raised by their arrangement and by their programme notes, including the idiom, form and style of the works rehearsed and performed, their historical position, and how these factors influence interpretation. They have an excellent grasp of professional values and practice and the legal framework relating to instrumental/choral directing at this level. They have performance skills at a minimum level of ABRSM Grade 8 Practical as a prerequisite for entry to the qualification.

**Pass** Candidates are able to direct an ensemble in the rehearsal and performance of contrasting items in a proficient manner, with adequate technical competence and a broad musical understanding. They can write programme notes that give background information on the items rehearsed and performed, with some evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Their communication skills are competent and they have a broad working knowledge of the ensemble directed, its idiom and repertoire. They are able to arrange a piece of music for their ensemble with some imagination and a sense of style and idiom, despite some technical lapses. They also have a grasp of the issues raised by their arrangement and by their programme notes, including the idiom, form and style of the works rehearsed and performed, their historical position, and how these factors influence interpretation. Their knowledge of professional values and practice and the legal framework relating to directing is appropriate for instrumental/choral directors at this level. They have performance skills at a minimum level of ABRSM Grade 8 Practical as a prerequisite for entry to the qualification.

**FRSM (Music Direction)**

- Pass** Candidates are able to direct an ensemble in the rehearsal and performance of contrasting items in an authoritative manner, demonstrating artistic integrity and technical command. They can write about the idiomatic features and performance issues of the programme in a written submission that is pertinently and comprehensively argued, with good overall shape and use of language and excellent organization. They demonstrate an ability to survey relevant source materials rigorously, with high-level research skills, personal insight and critical evaluation. Their communication skills are impressive and they have a commanding knowledge of the ensemble directed, its idiom and repertoire. They are able to arrange a piece of music for their ensemble with an assured technique, vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities, and an excellent sense of style and idiom. The score of their arrangement shows excellent editorial control and presentation. They also have a full understanding of the issues raised by their arrangement and by their written submission. They have a very good knowledge of professional values and practice, including their own professional opportunities and the wider employment context relating to directing at this level. They have performance skills at a minimum level of ABRSM Grade 8 Practical as a prerequisite for entry to the qualification.
- Fail** Candidates are able to direct an ensemble in the rehearsal and performance of contrasting items, but there is insufficient evidence that they have advanced significantly beyond LRSM level. They can write about the idiomatic features and performance issues of the programme, but the argument may be disjointed or lacking in perception, or there may be an insufficient depth of research. Their communication skills are insufficient for this level and although they have knowledge of the ensemble directed, its idiom and repertoire, this is patchy. They are able to arrange a piece of music for their ensemble, but this arrangement lacks sufficient imagination or sense of style and idiom, and occasionally may contain technical weakness such as awkward doublings or a lack of balance. The arrangement may be poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness. Their grasp of the issues raised by their arrangement and by their written submission is unconvincing. Their knowledge of professional values and practice and the legal framework relating to directing is insufficient for this level. They have performance skills at a minimum level of ABRSM Grade 8 Practical as a prerequisite for entry to the qualification.