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## INTRODUCTION

ABRSM's diplomas provide an authoritative assessment framework for a wide range of musicians – directors, performers and teachers. Whether you are intending to pursue a career in music, are currently working as a professional and wish to broaden your qualifications, or are purely after the satisfaction of achieving a personal goal, you will find that one of our diplomas is right for you.

There are three diploma **subject-lines** – Music Direction, Music Performance, and Instrumental/Vocal Teaching. Each subject-line has three **levels** of award:

<b>DipABRSM</b>	Diploma of The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
<b>LRSM</b>	Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music
<b>FRSM</b>	Fellowship of the Royal Schools of Music

The requirements within each subject-line at each level are generally comparable, and the syllabus for each subject-line is published separately. From 2010 this Music Direction syllabus is available online only (at [www.abrsm.org/diplomas](http://www.abrsm.org/diplomas)).

Encouraging diverse approaches to the directing, performing and teaching of music, the diplomas stimulate enjoyment and achievement through the progressive acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. As a result, their usefulness has been acknowledged by music services and agencies around the world. They are compatible with systems of assessment widely applied in higher education and encourage lifelong learning, without restrictions on length of study or the requirement that you, the candidate, are taught in an institution. In the UK they are accredited by the regulatory authorities (see p. 66).

The **Music Direction diplomas** are designed to reflect your day-to-day experience as a director, whether amateur or professional, and to accommodate a variety of different kinds of ensemble – symphony, chamber and string orchestras, wind, military and brass bands, and choirs (accompanied or unaccompanied). The following tasks are included:

- organizing a venue and rehearsal
- compiling a programme and writing and talking with confidence about the music
- rehearsing the repertoire
- putting on the best possible performance on the day
- arranging a piece which may not be available in a suitable version for an ensemble.

The diplomas balance the demands of the repertoire against the musical, technical and interpersonal skills needed by successful directors. You are accordingly required to demonstrate a command of directing technique in rehearsal and performance alongside an appropriate knowledge of the instruments or voices within your ensemble. As you move up through the diploma levels you will find that the repertoire becomes more demanding, the rehearsal and performance time lengthens, and the challenge of the required Arrangement, and the scope and length of your written work, increase. At each level you will be assessed according to the overall quality of your direction, as well as your understanding of and sensitivity to the demands of different types of repertoire.

In order to establish basic levels of competence, a specific prerequisite is required before entry can be made to any level. However, in line with our aim to provide open access and to recognize your achievements, we offer a range of substitutions for these prerequisites, including your previous learning and experience. You are also allowed to substitute one of the diploma requirements. The prerequisites and all possible substitutions are listed in the tables on pp. 18–19 and 21. Any substitutions appearing after the issue of this syllabus will be listed on our website ([www.abrsm.org/diplomas](http://www.abrsm.org/diplomas)). Administrative arrangements regarding diplomas are negotiated individually between ABRSM and you. We hope that you find the experience of taking one of our diplomas stimulating, challenging and worthwhile, both during the period of preparation and in the exam itself.

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## OVERVIEW

### Overview

The Music Direction diplomas are available to directors of instrumental groups or choirs. Through live and written components, you, the candidate, will be examined in your command of directing technique in rehearsal and performance, your understanding of the repertoire and your knowledge of the instruments or voices within your ensemble. The diplomas are conducted in English (see p. 36) and are assessed wherever possible by two examiners.

Before you can enter for a Music Direction diploma, you will need to show that you fulfil a specific ABRSM **prerequisite** as evidence that you have reached a required minimum level of competence. The table on pp. 18–19 lists the prerequisites and their possible substitutions.

Each level of diploma comprises a number of **requirements** that you must satisfy in full. The requirements are divided into two sections, as outlined below. You must pass all the requirements of both sections in order for your diploma to be awarded. The requirements must be met in full within three years. The table on p. 21 lists the possible substitutions for requirements.

**SECTION 1** ● a **Rehearsal and Performance** using an instrumental or choral ensemble provided and directed by you.

#### **SECTION 2** Section 2.1

- a **Viva Voce**, entailing a discussion with the examiners. The Viva Voce follows the Rehearsal and Performance and does not involve your ensemble.
- a written assignment (relating to your Rehearsal and Performance programme) which you should be prepared to discuss as part of your Viva Voce, and which contributes to the Viva Voce mark. At DipABRSM and LRSM levels, this assignment takes the form of **Programme Notes**, which must be presented to the examiners on the day of the exam. At FRSM level, you are required to prepare a **Written Submission**, which you must send to ABRSM with your entry.

#### **Section 2.2**

- an **Arrangement** for your ensemble, which you must submit with your entry. You should be prepared to discuss your Arrangement during the Viva Voce.

Full descriptions of each level of diploma, including preparation guidance, are given on the following pages. All practical information about taking a diploma is described in Practicalities (pp. 32–36).