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Before the exam (Entry)

Entry forms There are separate diploma **entry forms** for candidates in the UK/Republic of Ireland, and for candidates in all other countries. Each diploma entry form is accompanied by a **supplementary information** leaflet, which contains clear step-by-step instructions to help you fill in your entry form.

In the **UK and Republic of Ireland**, diploma entry forms can be obtained from the Diplomas Office at ABRSM or from our website. In **all other countries**, entry forms can be obtained through local Representatives, from ABRSM's International Department or from our website. (See syllabus back cover for contact details.)

Payment and fees Payment must be made at the time of entry and your fee is dependent on the level of diploma and whether you are making a substitution.

For candidates in the **UK and Republic of Ireland**, the fees for all three levels of diploma are given on the entry form, which is issued annually with updated fee details. Candidates in **all other countries** should refer to the separate Dates and Fees leaflet for their country, which is available from the local Representative or Contact, or from ABRSM's International Department.

Submissions and supporting documentation When returning your entry form and fee, please ensure that you carefully complete the checklist (on the entry form), enclosing any of the following required documentation and submissions:

- documentation supporting your prerequisite or substitution for a prerequisite (see p. 19)
- your Arrangement (three copies) and recording (one copy) with authenticating declaration form (see p. 24)
- documentation supporting a substitution for the Arrangement (see p. 21)
- your Written Submission (FRSM only, three copies) with authenticating declaration form (see p. 24)
- ABRSM's letter approving appropriate professional experience (see p. 20)
- ABRSM's letter approving any works in your programme not listed on pp. 38–46 of this syllabus.

Where to send your entry In the **UK and Republic of Ireland**, completed entry forms, together with fees, submissions and any supporting documents, should be sent to the address indicated on the entry form. In **all other countries**, completed entry forms etc. should be returned to the local Representative or, where there is no Representative, direct to ABRSM's International Department.

Other points

- We regret that we cannot accept responsibility for the loss of any documents in the post, and we recommend you use a guaranteed postal delivery method.
- Entries for diplomas can be accepted by ABRSM only in accordance with the regulations given in this syllabus and on the understanding that in all matters our decision must be accepted as final. We reserve the right to refuse or cancel any entry, in which case the exam fee will be returned.

On the day of the exam

Places of examination Music Direction diploma exams are held at the discretion of ABRSM and subject to the availability of examiners. The exam venue must be organized by you, at no cost to ABRSM. It should be quiet and well-lit and should contain a writing table and chairs for the examiners. Someone should be provided to act as steward outside the exam room. If necessary, you must arrange transport for the examiners, to enable the exam timetable to be completed within the most suitable itinerary. An invoice for transport provided may be sent to ABRSM.

Dates of examination **UK and Republic of Ireland**
 Dates for Music Direction diplomas are fixed on an individual basis. You should contact the Diplomas Office to discuss and agree a suitable date. Please note that your entry form, payment and relevant documentation must be received at least six weeks before the agreed exam date. Examiners will not be booked until these have been received.

All other countries

You should refer to the Dates and Fees leaflet for your country for the days of the practical examination period(s). Music Direction diplomas will be held at a suitable time during this period. You should contact your local Representative or Contact who will make the necessary arrangements with ABRSM's office in London. Where there is no local Representative or Contact, please contact ABRSM's International Department.

Responsibility for your ensemble It is your responsibility to ensure that your ensemble is present at the agreed venue on the day of the exam, at no cost to ABRSM.

Examiners **Number of examiners**

Wherever possible, two examiners will be present at each diploma exam. When only one examiner can be present, the documentation and recorded evidence will be carefully monitored after their return to London in accordance with ABRSM's standard quality-assurance procedures (see Results, p. 34). At ABRSM's discretion, an additional person appointed by ABRSM may also be in attendance for monitoring purposes.

The examiners and you

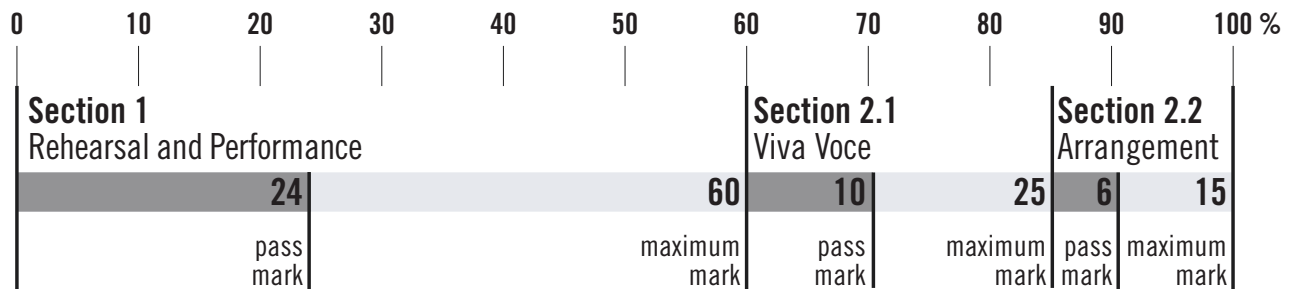
Where two examiners are present, one examiner will, wherever possible, be a specialist in your discipline, and the other will be a generalist. In these cases, you will be welcomed into the exam room by the specialist examiner who will introduce the generalist examiner. Both will have been fully trained by ABRSM. Each examiner will mark you independently. Their combined judgement ensures that you are assessed not only by someone with an intimate knowledge of your discipline, but also by another musician who is there to place your attainments within a broader musical setting.

Monitoring For monitoring and moderation purposes, the live aspects of your diploma will normally be audio-recorded by the examiners and returned to London for use by the Diploma Board (see p. 35). By submitting your entry you agree to your exam being recorded and to the recording becoming the property of ABRSM (no copy will be made available to you). The recording may be used anonymously for training purposes. These procedures are detailed in the Diploma Board Code of Practice, available upon request from the office of the Chief Examiner.

Feedback ABRSM invites feedback from all diploma candidates, for use by the Diploma Board. A feedback form is provided for this purpose, and we would be grateful if you could complete it and ensure that it is returned to ABRSM.

After the exam

Marking The marking process is designed to be fair and open. All candidates are assessed according to a two-section examination structure, amounting to a total of 100 marks. Section 1 accounts for 60 of the total marks, with the two components of Section 2 accounting for the remaining 40 marks. All components of both sections must be passed in order for a diploma to be awarded. The pass mark is 40% – this applies to each component and section as well as to the overall result. Candidates who pass with an overall mark of 70% or more are awarded the diploma with Distinction.



Viva Voce marks

Please note that your Programme Notes/Written Submission do not receive a separate mark but contribute to the overall mark of Section 2.1, whereas your Arrangement is marked separately, as Section 2.2.

The examiners review Programme Notes during the exam, whereas the Written Submission is assessed before the exam and given a guideline mark, which is then confirmed or adjusted on the basis of your responses in the Viva Voce. Similarly, the mark provisionally assigned to the Arrangement (also assessed beforehand) may be confirmed or adjusted depending on your supporting commentary during the Viva Voce.

Tables outlining the **marking criteria** for all components of the Music Direction diplomas are given in Appendix 2 on pp. 59–63.

Results On the day of your exam, the examiners will not give any indication of your result. After the examiners have returned the mark form and recorded evidence to ABRSM, they are placed before the Diploma Board (see p. 35) as part of our rigorous quality-assurance procedures. This means that results are likely to be despatched approximately eight weeks after your exam.

All results – your certificate (if successful) and the examiners' mark form – will be despatched by post. We regret that we are not able to give any results by telephone, fax or e-mail, nor can we accept responsibility for the loss of results in the post.

Retakes If you are unsuccessful in any part of your diploma, you may wish to consider a retake. Please bear in mind, however, that your diploma must be completed within three years from your first attempt.

You may choose to retake the entire exam in order to aim for higher marks. Alternatively, you are entitled to carry credit forward from any component (Rehearsal and Performance, Viva Voce or Arrangement) from your previous attempt. Please note that for the purposes of retakes, Sections 1 and 2.1 are considered an indivisible unit and must be retaken together or carried forward together. The examiners will be aware of any credit carried forward, but this will in no way affect the objectivity of the assessment process.

Details of retake options are included in the letter accompanying results. This letter also covers the options for Programme Notes/Written Submission for candidates wishing to retake their diploma.

Quality assurance and Diploma Board

For the purposes of quality assurance there is a Diploma Board which oversees all matters relating to diplomas. As well as ratifying procedures and monitoring decisions taken by its committees, the Diploma Board advises on standards and considers all matters of quality assurance, including the training and professional development of examiners and the handling of appeals.

Membership of the Diploma Board comprises a Chairman (normally a Principal of one of the UK's Royal Schools of Music), heads of studies from the Royal Schools, three independent verifiers, two diploma examiners, and the Chief Examiner and the Chief Executive of ABRSM. Further information regarding the Diploma Board, its terms of reference and modes of operation, is contained in the Diploma Board Code of Practice, available upon request from the office of the Chief Examiner.

Appeals

An appeals procedure exists for candidates who feel they have been dealt with unfairly or inefficiently by ABRSM or its examiners on a matter of procedure. Appeals on purely academic grounds (e.g. if a candidate is disappointed by his/her result) are not permitted. An appeal, if upheld, could lead to a re-examination, a review of the result, or some other course of action beneficial to the candidate. Before ABRSM embarks upon the formal appeals procedure, it would need to be convinced that there is a *prima facie* case for an appeal, on the grounds that some aspect of the examination process has been handled other than in accordance with syllabus regulations, and that this is likely to have affected the candidate's result.

Candidates wishing to appeal against the procedure of a diploma assessment should write to the Quality Assurance Manager within 14 days of the issue of the result. They should clearly state the grounds for appeal and how these are felt to have affected the result; evidence supporting the claim must be given. A copy of the mark form should be enclosed. The Chief Examiner will then review the appeal, taking advice where necessary. Should there be further dispute, the case will be referred directly to the Diploma Board, which may then appoint a panel to consider the appeal. The decision of this panel shall be final.

Other matters**Absence**

If you are unable to be present for your exam, you should notify ABRSM immediately, giving an explanation of your inability to attend. Provided your withdrawal is made necessary by an unavoidable event (such as illness or bereavement), part of the entry fee may be refunded at the discretion of ABRSM. (In the case of illness, a medical certificate is required.) Alternatively, in all countries other than the UK and Republic of Ireland, and at ABRSM's discretion, a voucher may be issued entitling the candidate to re-enter the exam within one year of the original exam date. Such a voucher cannot subsequently be exchanged for cash. A candidate re-entered on a voucher and again absent is not entitled to any further concession.

Access (for candidates with special needs)

Standard arrangements exist for candidates who have a visual or hearing impairment, or learning difficulties such as dyslexia or autistic spectrum disorders. Details of these arrangements are given in the supplementary information leaflet accompanying the entry form. In addition, ABRSM publishes guidelines for blind and partially-sighted candidates, deaf and hearing-impaired candidates, candidates with dyslexia, candidates with autistic spectrum disorders (including Asperger syndrome) and candidates with other specific needs; these separate documents are available from the Access Co-ordinator.

Candidates with other sensory impairments or learning difficulties must tick the relevant box on the entry form and also attach a statement from either a general practitioner, specialist, educational psychologist or other similarly qualified person, outlining the particular difficulties the candidate experiences and the likely impact upon his/her performance in an exam setting.

ABRSM's policy does not make any concessions in terms of marking standards; rather, we try to alter the administration of our exams or, occasionally, to provide an alternative test or mode of assessment, in line with the particular needs of the candidate.

- Language and interpreters** All examinations are conducted in English. If you are not comfortable using English, you are strongly advised to bring an independent person (who is neither your teacher nor a relative) to act as interpreter in the exam room. (Please tick the relevant box on the entry form.) Extra time will be allowed in such cases. Any costs incurred are the responsibility of the candidate. Candidates may make use of ABRSM's interpreter service, where available (for details, contact your local Representative), on payment of an additional fee. Candidates should bear in mind that exams are normally recorded (see Monitoring, p. 33) and that translations will be checked for accuracy, as necessary.
- Replacement certificates** A duplicate of a certificate can usually be provided on payment of a search fee. Applications should state the country and year the exam took place in, the name of the candidate and his/her candidate number. A further fee may be required if information is inaccurate.
- Academic recognition and dress** Each diploma entitles the successful candidate to append the appropriate letters after his/her name. Academic dress for holders of ABRSM diplomas may be obtained from William Northam & Co Ltd, P.O. Box 367, Waterbeach, Cambridge CB5 9QY (T 0870 2401852; E enquiries@wmnortham.co.uk), to whom all enquiries should be made.