

CT ABRSM Plus

United Kingdom



CT ABRSM Plus

Instrumental and vocal music teaching can be a rewarding career, offering a wealth of opportunities to be creative and to bring out the best in others. It can, however, feel isolating, and many believe that there is little support available to help music teachers grow and refresh their skills.

ABRSM is the world's leading authority on musical assessment, actively supporting and encouraging music learning for all. We recognise that all musicians need effective teachers to nurture and develop their talents. We also know that good teachers continually want to enhance their professional skills. Our CT ABRSM Plus course has been designed to do just that. We have helped over 2,000 teachers worldwide to enhance their teaching, expand their student base and join a network of professionals who share our passion for music education.



What is the CT ABRSM Plus course?

The CT ABRSM Plus course combines two of our highly respected letter-bearing qualifications: the world-class Certificate of Teaching (CT ABRSM) and the Principles of Teaching diploma (DipABRSM level).

This course is designed to develop your teaching skills and help you to discover the right approach for you and your students. Upon completion of the course you'll be able to review your own teaching, make judgements about how effective it is and introduce new teaching techniques to your lessons.

Who is the course for?

The course is suitable for experienced instrumental and vocal teachers who are interested in expanding their knowledge and understanding of teaching and music education. In order to benefit from this course you must have a minimum of one year's teaching experience to draw on.

The course is open to anyone aged 21 years or over and who is teaching a minimum of five students on a regular basis.

What qualifications do I need?

All applicants to this course who wish to take the DipABRSM (Principles of Teaching) must have ABRSM Grade 8 Practical in the instrument taught or a permitted substitution, and also ABRSM Grade 6 Theory (1992 syllabus) or a permitted substitution before the diploma examination is taken.

There are no pre-requisite formal qualifications for students who wish to enrol for the CT ABRSM qualification only, and who do not wish to take the diploma.

What if I already have my Certificate of Teaching (CT ABRSM)?

Our unique diploma study sessions offer essential preparation for those CT ABRSM holders who would like to develop and expand their professional portfolio by obtaining the Principles of Teaching diploma.

A separate CT ABRSM Plus application form for those that already hold the Certificate of Teaching is available to download at www.abrsm.org/teachers or upon request from the ABRSM Professional Development team.

How is the course structured?

The CT ABRSM Plus course is available in both part-time and fast-track formats.

The part-time course consists of 12 study days spread over a period of nine months at regional centres around the UK. The fast-track format consists of ten study days over a period of six months and is a residential course with full-board accommodation, allowing students to focus exclusively on their studies.

How is the course assessed?

The Certificate of Teaching element of this course is continually assessed and each assignment will be sent to your mentor and graded as Excellent, Pass 1, Pass 2 or Working Towards. You'll be given the opportunity to discuss how your work has been marked and the grade awarded with your mentor. You'll also be asked to evaluate your own work throughout. The course director, your course leader and subject mentor will moderate your portfolio of work. Successful students will then be awarded their CT ABRSM qualification.

The Principles of Teaching diploma will be marked by an examiner and graded at Pass or Fail only. The mark awarded will depend upon the extent to which you have demonstrated the skills, knowledge and understanding required at DipABRSM level.

How much study time will be required?

It is possible to tailor your assignments to reflect the teaching issues you currently face, making the course relevant to each student. You will need to set aside enough time to complete your assignments and read around the subject. This is likely to vary from week to week, but you could reasonably expect to spend an average of 5-7 hours per week studying for your CT ABRSM qualification.

Next steps

Full details of application procedures, course dates, venues and fees can be found on the entry information and application form, or online at www.abrsm.org/ctplus.

To discuss any aspect of the CT ABRSM plus course further, please contact Louisa Thomas, Professional Development Manager on 020 7467 8257 or email profdev@abrsm.ac.uk.



What are the benefits for me?

- **Gain two highly respected letter-bearing qualifications**
Our qualifications are widely recognised by music services and schools and will appeal to parents and pupils who recognise ABRSM as the authority on music education.
- **Refresh your approach to teaching**
You'll explore all aspects of your current teaching and evaluate its effectiveness. You'll have the chance to try out new ideas with your students between study sessions and then discuss the results with your course colleagues during the study days and online.
- **Diploma study sessions**
Focused study sessions in preparation for ABRSM's Principles of Teaching diploma.
- **Gain insights from a subject specific mentor**
Your mentor will observe your teaching throughout the course, offering constructive feedback and highlighting strengths and opportunities for improvement. Your mentor will also suggest new approaches that will help to improve your lessons.
- **Learn new skills**
Each year we provide a variety of presentations from expert teachers on a number of different teaching approaches and techniques.
- **Find imaginative ways to help your students improve**
Mentor sessions provide an opportunity to discuss specific teaching issues with your mentor and colleagues, who will help you to find new solutions to common problems. These discussions can cover any aspect of music teaching.
- **Network with like-minded teachers**
The CT ABRSM Plus course provides you with a network of music teachers who are keen to explore new ideas and improve their skills. In addition to meeting with colleagues at your study centre you'll also have access to our unique online course resources and forums between study sessions.
- **Join our professional alumni**
All successful students will be invited to join our CT ABRSM Alumni Association. Members receive regular newsletters, access to alumni forum discussions, and discounts on ABRSM publications and professional development events.
- **Accreditation**
The CT ABRSM element of the course is recognised by the Open University. Students are given 35 points of credit at degree level 2 upon successful completion of the course.

A closer look at the course

At the beginning of the course, you will be allocated an individual mentor who shares your subject group specialism. You and your mentor will agree an individual programme of work and set personal objectives. Your mentor is there to offer professional guidance throughout your course of study and will observe your teaching.

Throughout the course you will receive guidance and advice on preparing for the DipABRSM, alongside your CT ABRSM study.



Study days

Study days at regional centres include whole group and subject-specific mentor group sessions.

During your whole group sessions you will explore a range of topics, including:

- my teaching now
- understanding emotions in education
- teaching music through an instrument
- improvisation
- composition
- aural teaching
- learning styles
- teaching strategies
- kindermusik
- kodály
- establishing technique
- constructing a curriculum
- teaching the pupil and teaching the instrument
- music in schools
- the National Curriculum
- tension in performance
- using notation and sight-reading
- special educational needs
- music technology
- preparing for performance
- relationships: teacher, parent, pupil
- teaching adults
- teaching young children

During your subject-specific sessions you will explore topics more specific to your instrument group, such as:

- repertoire
- technique
- curriculum
- lesson planning
- sight-reading, scales and aural training
- motivation and aptitude for learning
- musicianship
- performance
- exam preparation

These topics are broken down and discussed in greater detail by subject mentors. Here is a summary of the range of topics you may cover for each instrument family:



Piano

Technique: laying the foundations

- good posture at the keyboard
- building on natural co-ordination
- relaxation
- good hand and finger position

Technique: tone production

- developing tone quality and colour
- developing cantabile
- achieving variety of touch
- controlling dynamic levels
- appropriate tone quality and colour for different styles
- finer subtleties of pedalling and pedalling for special effect



Strings

Instrumental basics

- knowledge of basic muscle use and control
- formation and control of the bow hold
- formation and control of the instrument hold
- common faults and their correction

Studies and bowing techniques

- repertoire when dealing with specific areas of techniques
- when to teach different bowing techniques
- slurred and legato bowing
- string crossing and legato bowing
- string crossing and double stops
- *Détaché, portato, spiccato, martelé, sautillé* bowings



Guitar

Technique: laying the foundations

- what is a good technique?
- good posture and the beginner
- points of tension and how to eliminate them
- establishing basic technique
- the right hand
- the left hand

Tone production

- establishing a working definition of good tone
- tone and the beginner
- variety of tone
- interpretation and the beginner



Singing

The voice as an instrument

- placing and resonance
- formation of vowels and their modification
- projection
- legato and staccato
- scales, arpeggios and glissandi
- extending range, strength and flexibility

Voice classification

- different classes of voice
- repertoire and roles
- when and what to transpose
- pupil preconceptions and social pressures



Brass

Embouchure

- knowledge and understanding of appropriate musculature
- correct formation and control of the embouchure
- position and function of the jaw
- position of the mouthpiece on the lips

Ensemble playing

- teacher as conductor, director, enabler
- repertoire: duets, trios, quartets, ensembles
- performance opportunities



Percussion

Generic percussive skills

- teaching pulse/learning pulse
- teaching rhythm/learning rhythm
- teaching without instruments
- voice phonetics, body movement, counting and singing

Composition

- composing and arranging for percussion
- in search of repertoire
- teacher as composer
- pupil as composer



Woodwind

Breathing

- location and use of the intercostals, diaphragmatic and abdominal musculature
- controlled inhalation and exhalation
- exercises to develop the breathing muscles
- support – what does it mean?

Finger technique

- finger position and movement
- major aspects of fluent finger technique
- exercises to develop finger independence and agility
- improving control of the little fingers
- alternative fingerings and their effect on tone and intonation

Coursework

Your portfolio of work, which you will complete over the course of your studies, includes three written assignments, two action-research projects, lesson observations, a diary of teaching and a personal profile.



Written assignments

During the course, you will complete three written assignments of between 1,000 and 2,000 words each.

Assignment one is an exploration of your personal experience of teaching and learning in music. The topics for assignments two and three are decided in consultation with your mentor. There is a range of subjects to choose from including:

- case study focusing on a specific aspect of teaching or learning
- comparison of teaching strategies
- constructing a curriculum
- developing aural and listening skills
- developing practice strategies
- the first lesson
- group teaching
- instrumental/vocal tuition within the National Curriculum
- motivating pupils
- parental roles
- preparation for performance
- teaching adult learners
- teaching young learners
- teaching composition
- teaching sight-reading
- teaching improvisation
- teaching pupils with special educational needs



Projects

The two projects that you will work on are based on personal and practical teaching experience. For your first project you video yourself teaching a lesson and then develop a critique of your teaching based on your own observations, peer assessment and your mentor's comments. Your second project is a piece of action research, on a topic of your own choice, in consultation with your mentor and course leader. Alternatively, you can choose from a range of suggestions including:

- a case study of a pupil or group of pupils focussing on a specific aspect of teaching or learning
- teaching pupils with special educational needs
- developing aural and listening skills
- motivating pupils
- group teaching
- preparation for performance
- teaching sight-reading
- teaching improvisation
- teaching composition

Lesson observations

Observation of your teaching is a fundamental part of the CT ABRSM Plus course. Following each observation, you and your mentor will discuss what took place and complete a joint evaluation of the lesson, making written statements under two broad headings: preparation and reflection. Within these broad headings, the evaluation looks at a range of issues, including:

- your skills and subject command
- lesson planning
- challenges and demands set for pupils
- expectations of pupils
- matching teaching style and materials to pupils' needs
- rapport and relationship with pupils
- pacing of the lesson
- assessment to support the pupil's learning
- pupil self-evaluation
- homework



Diary of teaching

During the course you will keep a diary of teaching and will be invited to share thoughts from your diary during discussion sessions if you wish. The diary provides an opportunity for reflection on teaching practice and on your personal and professional development. It also contributes towards your evaluation of the course as it forms the basis of your personal profile to be included in your final portfolio.

Personal profile

Written towards the end of the course, this is a crucial part of your professional development, reflecting on the learning that has taken place and helping to develop new goals for the future.

Preparing for your DipABRSM

A number of study sessions will be dedicated to preparation for the Principles of Teaching diploma. Students who successfully complete the CT ABRSM qualification may then continue to take their diploma exam.

The diploma consists of two sections. First, a Viva Voce: a discussion with the examiners including demonstrations of teaching approaches, and performance of extracts from ABRSM Grade 6 repertoire. Second, a Written Submission and a performance of a short piece of previously unseen music, similar in standard to ABRSM Grade 6 repertoire. You qualify for an exemption from the Written Submission part of the DipABRSM and can substitute your CT ABRSM for a Pass at this section of the diploma.



A note from Richard Crozier, Course Director

Whether you are new to teaching, or have many years' experience, you'll no doubt want to include professional development as part of your strategy for self-improvement. Enrolling on an ABRSM music teaching course has been the first step for over 2,000 teachers on a journey that has resulted in them developing a new enthusiasm for their work.

ABRSM's 130-strong Professional Development Mentor Panel is trained to help you fulfil your ambitions as a teacher. You may want to add something new to your lessons or simply re-visit the myriad of issues surrounding the processes of teaching and learning.

The CT ABRSM Plus course helps to keep music at the heart of every lesson and give you greater enjoyment from your work.

Teaching Resources

We encourage students on our courses to read widely on the subject of music education, both in preparation for, and during, study. The following ABRSM resources form part of our recommended CT ABRSM Plus reading list.



The Music Teacher's Companion

Paul Harris, Richard Crozier

The essential handbook for all music teachers, packed with advice and ideas relating to all aspects of music teaching.

Includes:

- expert advice and teaching strategies
- solutions to teaching problems
- tips for lesson planning



All Together!

An indispensable resource that celebrates the value of group teaching in today's music curriculum.

Explores:

- issues central to group teaching
- group dynamics and motivation
- practical and creative teaching methods



Music in Words

Trevor Herbert

An invaluable reference tool giving much needed advice on how to research and write about music.

Provides:

- support for writing tasks
- a framework of independent research
- 'how-to' guide and quick-reference inventory

Available from music shops worldwide and from www.abrsm.org/publications.

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