

HARPSICHORD (*Subject Code: 41*): **Syllabus requirements**

Syllabus validity and grades

This syllabus is valid from 2009 until further notice. It is offered at Grades 4–8 only.

Venues

Harpichord exams are held at Visits, i.e. premises provided by the Applicant and visited by the examiner. They may be held independently of other exams or as part of a larger Visit that includes other subjects/grades. For full details about Visits, see Reg. 7 in the *Examination Information & Regulations*, in particular the requirements to:

- arrange for a steward to be present
- provide a suitable piano for the Aural tests
- provide transport for the examiner, if requested (without cost to ABRSM)

Instruments

The instrument should be in a state of tuning and regulation appropriate for the exam. The majority of the pieces listed in this syllabus require an instrument with a range extending up to *d*^{'''}. The few pieces with a range above this note are indicated in the syllabus lists by an asterisk (*). Any notes lower than *C* (i.e. two octaves below middle *C*) may be transposed up an octave or omitted, as appropriate, should they be unavailable on the instrument used for the exam.

Programme planning

Candidates should use their discretion in their choice of pieces to present a contrasted and balanced programme. Candidates must choose three pieces to perform in the exam: one from List B and one from List C, with the third piece chosen from *either* List A *or* List D.

Editions

Some editions of the pieces may include editorial suggestions for dynamics, fingerings or other points of interpretation that are only appropriate to the piano; these may be disregarded. Candidates may, at their discretion, play from published facsimiles of printed editions of works included in the syllabus.

Registration

Candidates may exercise reasonable discretion in the choice of registration and manual allocation in the pieces selected for the exam, according to the specific nature of the instrument they are using and the extent of its ability to equate to any prescribed registration indications.

Scales and arpeggios

Examiners will usually ask for at least one of each type of scale/arpeggio required at each grade.

All scales and arpeggios should:

- be played from memory
- ascend and descend according to the specified range
- be played with evenness of touch and articulation and at a pace that is consistent with accuracy and distinctness

Any practical and systematic fingering that produces a good result will be accepted.

Candidates are free to start at any octave, provided the required ranges are covered. Where the keyboard compass of an instrument happens to be restricted, the range of any affected scale and arpeggio requirements may be reduced accordingly by an octave. Scales in thirds or a third apart should begin with the tonic in the lower voice, while scales a sixth apart should begin with the tonic in the upper voice.

Sight-reading and figured bass realization

Candidates will be given a short interval of up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out any part of the sight-reading test before they are required to perform it for assessment. The same procedure applies to the figured bass realization test.

The main parameters for the sight-reading and figured bass realization tests are outlined on pp. 11–19. A book of specimen sight-reading tests for harpsichord is published by ABRSM (figured bass tests not included).

Performance and assessment

When marking, examiners will be assessing not only the accuracy of notes and rhythm, but also other elements inherent in a good performance, including control of touch and articulation, suitable choice of tempo, and details of expression, including the addition of judicious ornamentation and rhythmic inflections conforming to the prevailing stylistic orientation of the pieces performed. Any practical and systematic fingering that produces a good result will be accepted. Further details of assessment criteria are given in *These Music Exams*, available free of charge from music retailers and from www.abrsm.org/exams.

Marking scheme

Schedule of maximum marks for all grades:

Scales and arpeggios	21	
Pieces: 1	30	
2	30	
3	30	
Sight-reading	12	} <i>one combined mark will be recorded</i>
Figured bass realization	9	
Aural tests	18	
Total	<hr/> 150	