

Choral Singing Syllabus

(a) This syllabus is offered to provide choirs with a professional assessment by examiners with extensive choral experience. It aims to encourage young singers and to help improve choral standards.

(b) There is a special entry form for Choral Singing, containing further information about submitting entries and making arrangements for these examinations. The form is available from Representatives, most music sellers and direct from the Board's office in London.

(c) Choral Singing examinations are available in the UK and Republic of Ireland (ROI) and in a limited number of other countries. They are held at premises provided by the Applicant and visited by the examiner in accordance with the regulations and requirements for Visits (see Reg. 7 in the *Examination Information & Regulations*). They may either be held independently of other examinations or as part of a larger examination entry that includes other subjects/grades. An examiner attendance fee is payable in addition to the entry fee if the examiner is attending purely for Choral Singing examinations and the total examining time is less than 3 hours. For examiner attendance and entry fees, see the current UK and ROI entry form or, for other countries, the relevant Dates and Fees leaflet.

(d) *UK and ROI:* Examinations can take place on any day except Sundays and Bank Holidays. Information about closing dates for entries is given in the Choral Singing entry form. The Applicant is asked to specify three preferred examination dates/times and the Board then books an examiner, taking these preferences into account wherever possible. *Other countries:* Examinations may be scheduled to take place on any day during the Practical examination period(s). Information about examination periods and closing dates for entries is given on the Dates and Fees leaflet for the country in question. The Applicant may make a request on the entry form concerning the days and times of the examination(s), but the Board cannot guarantee that any such preferences can be met.

(e) There are three levels of examination:

Initial: for choirs who have reached the standard approximately equivalent to that required for solo singing in Grades 1–3

Intermediate: for choirs who have reached the standard approximately equivalent to that required for solo singing in Grades 4–5

Advanced: for choirs who have reached the standard approximately equivalent to that required for solo singing in Grades 6–8.

All choirs must comprise more than one voice to a part. The minimum number of parts, as well as requirements on performing from memory and unaccompanied items, are specified on pages 3–5.

(f) The examination should last up to 20 minutes for Initial level, 22 minutes for Intermediate level and 25 minutes for Advanced level. These timings include 5 minutes' platform time which is allowed for each choir for setting up, and approximately 5 minutes which is allowed for the performance of the initial vocal exercises.

(g) The preliminary vocal exercises at each level should be presented as an informal working session to help put the choir at their ease and as a preparation for the performance to follow. They should consist of typical examples of the warm-up exercises used by the choir, similar to the suggested examples given on pages 6 and 7.

(h) All choirs are expected to sing a programme of at least three items, contrasting in style and tempo and following the specifications set for each level, chosen either from the suggested list of works (given as a guideline to expected standards) or from any other works, published or unpublished, of the choir's own choice, provided they are similar in standard and have serious musical aims. Wherever possible, vocal scores of all works performed should be made available for the use of the examiner. All works may be sung in any language; a short translation should be provided for the examiner when words other than English are used.

(i) The making or use of photocopies (or other kinds of copies) of copyright works is not permitted. For further details, see para *k* of 'Examination Music and Performance Requirements' in the *Examination Information & Regulations*.

(j) The examiner will award an overall grading, rather than a mark, for the vocal exercises and programme performed, taking into account the following elements of the performance:

- 1 *Vocal exercises*: breathing, posture, intonation, vocal range and flexibility, tone and vowel sounds
- 2 *Prepared performance*: (i) technical competence (including unanimity, security of technique, consistency of intonation, diction, vocal quality and balance)
(ii) artistic merit (including communication, interpretation, presentation and dress, choice and balance of programme).

(k) The gradings are as follows:

A: an outstanding performance, with little reservation

B: a very good performance, but with some reservation

C: a competent performance, but with significant reservation

F: failure to reach the standard required to pass.

(l) The examiner's notes and grading are sent to the applicant named on the entry form. For choirs obtaining a C grading or above, a special certificate is issued to the applicant, together with a certificate for each member of the choir present at the examination.