

THE NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The Associated Board graded examinations for individual instruments, singing and Theory of Music are accredited in England by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority ([QCA](#)) and the corresponding regulatory authorities in Wales ([ACCAC](#)) and Northern Ireland ([CCEA](#)). They are part of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). They have also been approved under Section 96 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

<i>Associated Board Exam Title</i>	<i>NQF Level</i>	<i>NQF Title</i>	<i>Accreditation No.</i>
Practical Grades 1–3	Foundation	Music Performance	100/0783/0
Practical Grades 4 & 5	Intermediate	Music Performance	100/0784/2

ATTAINMENT DESCRIPTIONS

The following attainment descriptions have been created to give a general indication of the levels of attainment likely to be shown by candidates with results classified as Distinction, Merit, Pass and Fail at each grade. It should be noted that each NQF level contains more than one Associated Board grade and that the descriptions must be read in relation to the examination content.

The mark awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Weakness in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performance in others. The description for the Fail category typifies a level of attainment that may be approximately 10% below the mark required for a pass.

FOUNDATION AND INTERMEDIATE LEVELS IN MUSIC PERFORMANCE: JAZZ

Distinction

Fluent and controlled playing, with a convincing choice of tempo and feel. Good tonal control, with clear contrasts and a sense of musical character and inventiveness in the notated and improvised sections, with embellishment varying the given material. At Intermediate level, the improvisation will relate to the stylistic features and harmonic context, and details of the chord sequence may be incorporated. Supporting tests show a lively response, good overall accuracy and musical awareness.

Merit

A good level of control in which any blemishes are unobtrusive. Prepared work is played at suitable and controlled tempi, and with a good sense of rhythm and feel. Simple contrasts are mostly well observed and there is evidence of tonal awareness and control in the notated and improvised sections, with embellishment providing some variety. At Intermediate level, some stylistic awareness is evident. Supporting tests are technically secure and steady.

Pass

Pitch, rhythm and tempo are generally under control, with a reasonable sense of continuity. Some slips or occasional hesitations may occur, but there will be quick recovery. Improvisation has a basic flow and is of the indicated length. Simple embellishment is present. Responses in the supporting tests may be a little cautious or uneven, but they will be broadly accurate.

Fail

Some ability to communicate the essence of the music will often be evident in places, but elsewhere errors in pitch or hesitations in rhythm compromise the accuracy of prepared work. Stumbles or breakdowns in continuity may occasionally occur and the improvisation may lack basic flow. Embellishments obscure the given material, or are not attempted. At Intermediate level, there is little evidence of experience of the style. Unprepared work may be marred by very slow or hesitant responses and technical insecurity.

KEY SKILLS

Key Skills are the general skills that can help you to improve your own learning and performance in six areas: Communication, Application of number, IT, Working with others, Improving own learning and performance, and Problem solving. They are relevant to what you do in education and training, and work and life in general, and are described in terms of units at four levels. These levels correspond to the levels used for other qualifications within the National Qualifications Framework.

In preparing for and entering Associated Board examinations, candidates are able to develop these key skills, depending on teaching and learning styles, and provide evidence that may contribute to certification at NQF levels 1–3. Candidates who wish to gain certification in the key skills will need to be provided with a structured assessment plan to assist them in identifying opportunities for development and assessment.

Further information is available from educational institutions or from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, 83 Piccadilly, London W1J 8QA (website: www.qca.org.uk).