

APPENDICES

- 102 **Appendix 1**
Specimen questions and indicative responses
- 112 **Appendix 2**
Marking criteria
- 116 **Appendix 3**
Application form for appropriate professional experience approval
- 118 **Appendix 4**
Music publishers
- 122 **Appendix 5**
The National Qualifications Framework (UK)

Specimen questions and indicative responses

The **specimen questions** on pp. 102–104 are intended to provide a clear sense of how the examiners might address the various areas of the Viva Voce. The selected **indicative responses** on pp. 105–111 provide an indication of the sorts of response that would be expected from candidates within the main marking bands (Distinction, Pass, Fail). It is important to note that these are specimen questions only, and that none of them may actually be asked in the exam. Additionally, not all areas specified below will necessarily be covered by examiners in their questioning.

SPECIMEN QUESTIONS

DipABRSM

- | | |
|---|---|
| Musical and instrumental outlook | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What attracted you to your own-choice item? ● What were your considerations in selecting the repertoire for your Recital programme? |
| Repertoire and Programme Notes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Where does this particular work stand in the creative output of the composer? What features characterize his works of this time? ● In your Programme Notes you state that Haydn was ‘a Romantic before his time’. How do you account for that opinion? ● Tell us about <i>The Well-Tempered Clavier</i> – why did Bach write it? * ● In your Programme Notes you describe Fauré as ‘one of the leading figures in the history of French music’. What important contributions did he make to the field of vocal music in particular? ● Are there any nationalistic influences in this piece or features that might indicate the nationality of the composer? |
| Musical language and form | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What form is this piece in? What features of the structure affect the way you play its various sections? * ● Can you outline the structure of the sonata’s first movement with reference to the score? How do you make this structure clear to the listener? ● Please could you map out the exposition of the fugue for us? What happens to the subject at this point? |
| Style and interpretation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Your own-choice item was a contemporary song – tell us about your interpretation of this piece. ● What are the differences in your approaches to the Beethoven and the Brahms? ● What mood are you trying to create in the Poulenc? How do you achieve it? ● How did you decide to characterize each of the variations? * ● Is playing from memory helpful to a harpist? ● What stylistic issues did you consider throughout your programme? ● As this Mozart concerto was originally written for natural horn, could you explain which notes would have sounded different when played at the first performance? ● How has the cello changed since Bach’s time? * ● Are there any specific aspects of the piano part that have influenced your performance? |
- * *indicative responses to these specimen questions are to be found on pp. 105–106.*

LRSM

- Musical and instrumental outlook**
- How did you prepare the detail needed to play Berg's *Four Pieces*, Op. 5?
 - How do you set about preparing a song in a language other than your own? How do you ensure that the meaning of the text is conveyed to your audience?
- Repertoire and Programme Notes**
- Is this piece typical of the composer's style?
 - Who were the main influences on this composer?
 - * ● For whom did Copland write his Clarinet Concerto? Do you think the dedicatee influenced the music in any way?
 - Tell us about the contribution made by Hindemith to the brass repertoire.
 - What were the main influences on Debussy's compositional style?
 - * ● In your Programme Notes you write that the D minor Sonata belongs to Beethoven's 'middle period'. Describe some of the features of his works of this time.
- Musical language and form**
- Explain the compositional techniques used in this piece, particularly in relation to its harmony.
 - How did you show in your performance the ways in which Stravinsky's *Three Pieces* link together?
 - How does Handel achieve variety in this Chaconne?
 - How does this movement's structure differ from a textbook sonata-form plan? How does this influence your performance?
- Style and interpretation**
- You write in your Programme Notes that, 'unlike Debussy, Ravel was not an Impressionist'. Is the piece you performed an Impressionist work?
 - How do you judge how much *rubato* is appropriate in this piece?
 - When playing an arrangement, to what extent do you try to simulate the sound of the original instrument? Or do you try to make the music sound appropriate to your instrument?
 - How would you research ornamentation for Baroque pieces?
 - For many years, scholars and performers have tried to define authentic performance practice. How has this impinged on your work?
 - Who were the great violinists in Elgar's time? Some wrote books of studies that are still in use today. Can you name any of them?
 - What are the main differences between the pianos of Mozart's era and Rachmaninov's? How do these differences affect the sound and colour that performers aim to produce on a modern instrument, in order for their playing to be regarded as stylish?
 - * ● Other than technical security and musical sensitivity, what factors contribute to a successful recital?
 - How has the development of material used for making strings affected the sound?
 - What were the differences in the seventeenth century between English organs and their counterparts in Germany? How did this affect the development of organ composition in England?
 - * ● Which performers do you particularly admire? Do you find that listening to their live performances or recordings helps you in matters of interpretation and style? Explain how, or why not?
- * *indicative responses to these specimen questions are to be found on pp. 107–109.*

FRSM

Musical and instrumental outlook

- How did you address the issue of stamina in preparing this piece?
- Ravel's *Gaspard de la Nuit* is widely regarded as one of the most challenging pieces in the piano repertoire. What particular difficulties did it present for you and how did you overcome them?

Repertoire and Written Submission

- How do you see the function and techniques of your instrument changing in the twenty-first century? What contemporary music do you know which presents new challenges?
- What is the origin of the word 'Partita'? Do Bach's Partitas differ from his other Suites in any way?
- It could be said that in the first half of the twentieth century the French organ composers were the only 'school' of composers for the organ. What happened in the latter half of the century?
- Describe the development of the Toccata as a genre.
- To what extent is this work 'of its time'?
- * ● In the chamber music repertoire, the voice has been used by a number of composers. Tell us about some examples and any that you consider to be important in the historical context of the voice.
- What other works are there in the French repertoire for saxophone?
- Paul Patterson's *Conversations* is a very popular work. What other British clarinet music from the late twentieth century has become accepted as standard repertoire?
- The Concerto you played today was written for Dennis Brain. Tell us about other works written for him and how they suited his particular style of playing.

Musical language and form

- How does Bach's keyboard writing differ from that of his contemporary, Scarlatti?
- How important is French influence in this composer's works?
- To what extent could this piece be regarded as 'late Romantic'?
- * ● How does the composer achieve unity within this series of varied pieces?
- Are there any particular aspects of the work's structure that have helped you in developing your interpretation?

Style and interpretation

- You ornamented the repeat of the Sarabande – is there any evidence that Bach would have done this?
- Can you describe the various styles that influenced this piece? How does this knowledge affect your interpretation?
- Is there a Russian style of playing this music? If so, does this influence you in any way?
- Are there any features of the piano part that have helped you to develop your performance?
- What part have commissions played in promoting the instrument?
- How have performing conventions changed from the nineteenth century? How have these changes influenced your performance?
- How did this composer's works affect the development of the instrument?
- Why did the virtuoso trumpet style of the Baroque period not continue into the Classical era?
- * ● What do you know of the composer's own performances? To what extent should a performer be influenced by them?
- Tell us about how the leading harp makers of the twentieth century contributed to the development of the instrument.
- Where do you think the organ is going as an instrument in the twenty-first century? Do you think it is becoming more of a secular than liturgical instrument?
- In the Maxwell Davies piece, you had to produce many varied tone colours. How did you decide to highlight these and how did you achieve the range of tone?
- * ● What criteria did you use when selecting your edition? How do the main editions of this piece differ?

* *indicative responses to these specimen questions are to be found on pp. 109–111.*

INDICATIVE RESPONSES

DipABRSM

Repertoire and Programme Notes

In your Programme Notes you describe Fauré as ‘one of the leading figures in the history of French music’. What important contributions did he make to the field of vocal music in particular?

Distinction

The candidate demonstrated an understanding of Fauré’s place in the development of the *mélodie* and an awareness of the three periods of compositional activity in Fauré’s creative output. Comparisons were made with contemporary *Lied* composers, most notably Schumann, to demonstrate nationalistic differences of style. The candidate considered Fauré’s setting of poetry to be evocative rather than using words as mere vehicles of sonority – a novel approach which also influenced the songs of Debussy, Ravel and Poulenc. The candidate acknowledged that Fauré’s intimate style was not always best suited to works on a grander scale, citing the rarely performed opera *Pénélope*, but named the *Requiem* as a lasting choral monument to rank alongside Fauré’s prolific output of songs.

Pass

The candidate clearly understood the historical context of Fauré’s works and enthused about some songs which had previously been studied. Several other composers in this genre who preceded Fauré were named, but the candidate did not elaborate on the influences (musical or poetic) to which Fauré was subjected, and references to his influence on later *mélodie* composers were sound but lacked depth. The candidate was more comfortable when referring to Fauré’s chamber music, commenting on his subtle harmonic innovations and classical elegance. It was suggested that the *Requiem* carries a resonance that reoccurs in later French compositions, such as Duruflé’s *Requiem*.

Fail

The candidate appreciated the period and style to which Fauré belonged, but had difficulty in expressing the place of the composer as a catalyst in the development of the *mélodie*. The candidate’s knowledge of Fauré’s vocal output was very limited, and suggestions of any other French composers of this genre who might have been influenced by his style were not forthcoming. A knowledge of Fauré’s instrumental composition also lacked depth, but the candidate suggested that the *Requiem* (from which the *Pie Jesu* comes) would be a lasting favourite of the concert-going public.

Musical language and form

Can you outline the structure of the sonata’s first movement with reference to the score? How do you make this structure clear to the listener?

Distinction

The candidate showed clearly and confidently where the main structural features of the movement were in the score, and pointed out how they conformed to conventional sonata form. A commanding understanding of the importance of key to the form was also shown. The candidate then demonstrated how the various stages in the formal argument could be highlighted by the performer, using subtle nuances of balance and tempo, in order to make the listener fully aware of the principal motifs and the structure overall. Particular success was achieved in showing the tension raised by the dominant preparation. An understanding of the need not to overstress these points in performance was also shown.

Pass

The candidate showed a good awareness of the importance of key to the form, with a little hesitation and misreading of the dominant preparation in the development section. However, the structural features were clearly grasped. There was some illustration of the main turning-points, with a little overemphasis at the second subject area in particular. The candidate was less successful, however, in explaining how his/her playing could highlight these elements. The structural importance of the recapitulation was understood and demonstrated with some success.

Fail

The candidate was unsure in response and showed little awareness of the main structural points, confusing the recapitulation with the coda. The significance of the development section was not clearly shown or explained and the end of the exposition was not identified, despite some prompting. The importance of key to the form was not successfully articulated or demonstrated. While showing some theoretical knowledge of the workings of sonata form, the candidate was unable to explain how a performance could clarify the shape of the structure and aid the listener's understanding – and therefore enjoyment – of the music.

Style and interpretation **Is playing from memory helpful to a harpist?**

Distinction

The candidate showed exactly why memorization is vital for a harpist. The visual aspects of playing the harp were fully explained and why having to look at, and turn the pages of, a score would greatly detract from the stage performance, technically and visually. Stage presentation from the audience's point of view was also mentioned, as the music stand could block both the sound and sightlines for the audience. The expressive freedom gained, the focus on tone quality and the overall flow of the performance were also stressed. The candidate explained the best way to manage a score in cases where playing from memory was not possible (i.e. the height of the stand and practical ways to minimize page-turning).

Pass

The candidate explained the different aspects of playing from memory from a harpist's point of view. The expressive and visual freedom that this permitted was outlined, as were the practical details of managing a score, if required. The visual needs of a harpist while performing were discussed, following a little prompting from the examiners.

Fail

The candidate had some understanding that memorization could be beneficial, but was unable to express exact ideas on how to memorize or, if not, how to manage a score.

Style and interpretation **Are there any specific aspects of the piano part that have influenced your performance?**

Distinction

The candidate showed a thorough understanding of the nature of the work and the significance of the piano part and how, in general terms, this caused both players to approach their own parts. There was also an understanding of the historical context of the piano writing. The way the musical material was divided between the instruments had been carefully analysed and the candidate was able to explain how this influenced the performance, taking into account aspects such as balance, texture, harmony, motivic development and dynamic shaping.

Pass

The candidate showed a broadly convincing understanding of the nature of the work and the significance of the piano part. There was some understanding of the historical context of the piano writing. Some care had been taken to analyse the way in which the parts related to and supported each other and the candidate was able to describe and explain some particular aspects that had influenced the performance.

Fail

There was little evidence that the candidate had considered the significance of the piano part in any detail. The candidate was unable to discuss the historical context of the piano writing and there was no comment or explanation as to how the interrelation of the parts had influenced the interpretation.

LRSM

Repertoire and Programme Notes

For whom did Copland write his Clarinet Concerto? Do you think the dedicatee influenced the music in any way?

Distinction

The candidate gave an outstanding account of the influence of Benny Goodman on Copland's Clarinet Concerto and showed an excellent grasp of the work's idiom. Goodman's background as a classically-trained jazz clarinettist who had a significant influence on the classical music field through the commissioning of many important twentieth-century works, his importance as a figure in the swing period of jazz, as well as his own jazz compositions and manner of playing, had all been thoroughly researched by the candidate. The jazz elements in the Concerto were pointed out in the score and attention was drawn to rhythmic patterns and syncopation, to the quasi-improvisatory cadenza and to the extensive use of the high register of the clarinet. The candidate also explained how performance conventions (especially rhythmic flexibility, dynamic inflection and variety of attack) affect an interpretation of the Concerto. Specific instrumental features were also highlighted. The candidate was aware of Copland's other jazz-inspired works and explained that there are also South-American influences in the Concerto, particularly in the second movement.

Pass

The candidate displayed a knowledge of Benny Goodman and was able to list a number of the works written for him by important twentieth-century composers. There was also an understanding of Goodman's significance as a central figure in the swing period of jazz and how some of the features of swing jazz (harmonic, thematic and other stylistic conventions) can be found in the Concerto. However, more attention could have been given to details in the scoring and to the extent that Goodman's own playing influenced features such as the extensive use of the higher register and the inclusion of the final glissando. The candidate's comment on how unusual it was for a performer, in an age before Previn and Kennedy, to be equally at home in jazz and classical music was well made.

Fail

The candidate knew of Benny Goodman's influence as a leading exponent of the swing style, but was unable to list many of the other important works written for him. There was some awareness of the jazzy effect of the syncopated rhythm patterns but the candidate was unable to identify or explain in sufficient detail particular aspects of Goodman's swing style in the Concerto, such as the harmonic, thematic or particular performance conventions that might affect an interpretation. The candidate was not sufficiently familiar with Copland's other music to comment in an informed way on how this Concerto differed from, or resembled, his other major scores.

Repertoire and Programme Notes

In your Programme Notes you write that the D minor Sonata belongs to Beethoven's 'middle period'. Describe some of the features of his works of this time.

Distinction

The candidate displayed a clear understanding of the features distinguishing the middle-period works, with confident reference made to a number of pieces in different genres. The importance of harmony and key choice was clearly explained and illustrated, with good examples of Neapolitan and mediant relationships. The adaptation of existing forms was well explored, with reference to sonata and variation forms for the instrument. The use of a broadening range of effects on the instrument was illustrated, and illuminatingly linked to the composer's exploration of a wider orchestral palette during the period. Some ideas were also offered on how some of these points differed from the composer's usage in his earlier works.

Pass

The candidate had a good grasp of the distinguishing features of the middle period in pieces for the instrument, with some areas, such as key relationships and the adaptation of forms, needing some prompting. Illustration was forthcoming on request, with points sometimes not quite matching the extracts played. However, some valid points were presented on the increased compression of ideas during the period, with some good examples of motifs which generated larger structures.

Fail

The candidate showed only a limited idea of the main features, and some works named did not belong to the period. Ideas of key relationships and harmonic usage were vague. While the stormy mood typical of many of the middle-period works was identified, more searching and analytical responses were lacking. Comments tended to focus to a great degree on biography, making too simplistic a link between the life and the works.

Style and interpretation **Other than technical security and musical sensitivity, what factors contribute to a successful recital?**

Distinction

The candidate described an ample range of factors, with particular attention given to programming. The importance of variety of mood, style, key and length in the pieces chosen was highlighted, with good examples of programmes involving a selection of composers as well as single-composer recitals. Communication at all levels was mentioned, including stage presence, eye contact, an easy unstressed manner, a serious focus and an appreciative smile at applause. Other attributes of the performer – including the attitude towards management and hosts, appropriate dress and a willingness to meet people – were communicated with humour and verve. The candidate went on to give striking examples of performances that entered another dimension through the personality of the interpreter or the character of the venue.

Pass

The candidate had some good ideas about the importance of being able to communicate the spirit of the music. Points concerning programming took a little while to emerge, but a fair range of possibilities was explored, some more fruitful than others. Some good suggestions for the use of more modern repertoire were made, with an awareness of a potentially wary audience reaction and how to moderate it. Some attributes of the performer were described.

Fail

The candidate mentioned the importance of a good instrument to show off the performer's skill, but had few other ideas and was inclined to think that little more was required. The audience was not taken into account and, when the idea of the importance of communication was suggested, it was greeted blankly. When prompted about programming, the candidate showed a tendency to stick to conventional combinations of pieces and communicated little sense of the wider repertoire for the instrument.

Style and interpretation **Which performers do you particularly admire? Do you find that listening to their live performances or recordings helps you in matters of interpretation and style? Explain how, or why not?**

Distinction

The candidate discussed in an authoritative way a number of performers, some contemporary and some from the past (referring to their recorded legacy). The candidate was able to express detailed opinions on particular performers' strengths and weaknesses. The knowledge and understanding was such that real insight into the music was made through comparing performances of the same work by different artists. There were considerably probing and intelligent comments on matters concerning style and interpretation and how these, in different ways, may have affected the candidate's own interpretation.

Pass

The candidate named a number of artists and expressed, in a broadly convincing way, knowledge of their performances. There was some understanding of the chosen performers' particular areas of expertise. To some degree the candidate was able to discuss the style and interpretation of one or two performances familiar to him/her and how far these had influenced his/her own interpretation.

Fail

The candidate was able to name a few performers but was not sufficiently knowledgeable about their particular style or their interpretations. There was little evidence of any thought having been given to whether any performers had influenced the candidate's own interpretation.

FRSM**Repertoire and
Written Submission**

In the chamber music repertoire, the voice has been used by a number of composers. Tell us about some examples and any that you consider to be important in the historical context of the voice.

Distinction

The candidate began by explaining that prior to the twentieth century, the use of the voice within a chamber ensemble was a rarity, and he/she cited a few examples. It was pointed out that in such works the third instrument was generally used in an obbligato capacity to the duo protagonists of piano and voice. Discussion of the twentieth-century repertoire, including works by Butterworth and Vaughan Williams, was detailed and perceptive. The way in which Copland's *As it fell upon a day* and Barber's *Dover Beach* inspired other works of this kind was clearly articulated. The candidate considered that in all these compositions the voice was the dominant participant within the ensemble, but another work – *Notturmo* by Othmar Schoeck – was significant in that it carried the description 'Five movements for string quartet and voice', thus suggesting a more balanced integration of the roles.

Pass

The candidate argued that, although we consider chamber music to be an invention of the eighteenth century, the meaning of the term was formerly interpreted as music which was not performed publicly in a church or theatre but was presented by small forces in a private setting. Consequently, there was some justification in suggesting that Bach's secular cantatas, such as the 'Peasant Cantata', were chamber music. The definition of chamber music for the voice was then established. The candidate explained that an early example was Schubert's *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*. It was claimed, however, that the genre was not seriously developed during the nineteenth century but in the early part of the twentieth, with Vaughan Williams's *On Wenlock Edge*, which inspired other composers such as Barber to emulate it. The candidate suggested that contemporary composers had experimented with using the voice in an instrumental way (i.e. without text) within a chamber grouping, but was unable to give an example.

Fail

The candidate maintained that from the time of the Elizabethan composers the voice had been used in combination with other small-scale forces, such as lute and viols, which could be considered chamber music. It was stated that over the course of time keyboard instruments had become the norm as the partner of the singer, although composers had sometimes introduced additional instruments to the ensemble – a song by Schubert was recalled which required an obbligato woodwind instrument, although more precise details were not forthcoming. The candidate surmised that other chamber-group combinations have been employed alongside the voice since then, but was unable to give more than one example from the twentieth century.

Musical language and form**How does the composer achieve unity within this series of varied pieces?***Distinction*

The candidate had an excellent grasp of the overall structure of this cycle of character pieces. The significance of the core motif, and many examples of its different uses and treatments, were cited. The sharing of thematic material and the linking of some movements were also suggested as ways in which the composer achieves a sense of unity, as was the use of closely related keys. At all times the candidate demonstrated a clear analytical understanding of the music and a readiness to draw attention to examples in the score. Also impressive was an ability to cross-refer to other pieces, showing an all-round familiarity with the composer's output and style.

Pass

The candidate displayed a grasp of the significance of the core motif and an awareness of its varied employment throughout the cycle. Detail was occasionally a little limited, but several examples of the motif's different treatments were cited with reference to the score, while some other aspects of how the composer achieves unity were touched upon, such as the sharing of thematic material. A generally good grasp of analytical detail was demonstrated.

Fail

Although the idea of the unifying motif was understood, the ways in which the composer varies its treatment throughout the cycle were not clearly explained. A much firmer analytical grasp was needed, as was an ability to draw examples from the music performed. No other suggestions as to how the composer achieves unity were put forward and there was little evidence of a real understanding of the structural aspects of the score.

Style and interpretation**What do you know of the composer's own performances? To what extent should a performer be influenced by them?***Distinction*

The candidate explained that, despite having been present at a live performance of this work given by the composer, a recently issued recording – also by the composer – had been more beneficial in the preparation of the recital. The live performance had been notable for its billing as an 'event', but it was evident that the composer lacked the temperament to perform the work with sufficient technical assurance in a live context. In particular, the tempi had often appeared hurried, which limited the range of tonal expression in the performance. By comparison, the recording was much more instructive in displaying the intentions of the composer, since it had been recorded in the less pressured environment of the studio. Here the tempi were more controlled and the ideas within the music more clearly expressed. The candidate gave the view, however, that the recording was no more than a guide to the work, and that it was necessary to develop one's own individual interpretation rather than merely create a clone of the composer's performance. Correspondence with the composer had elucidated the images and ideas that had inspired the composition, and these, together with the programme notes from the concert and the sleeve notes from the CD, had helped shape the candidate's distinctive interpretation.

Pass

The candidate stated that, although he/she had attended a live performance given by the composer, this work had not featured on the programme. A recent recording of the work by the composer had been acquired and this had provided the interpretative basis for today's performance. The candidate stated that the recording had been useful in terms of developing the overall structure of the work – both for the tempo relationships and in suggesting tonal colours – but conceded that this was not an ideal means of developing an individual interpretation, as the composer's musical mannerisms might subconsciously be assumed. The CD had, however, offered the opportunity of a secure base from which the performance might mature.

Fail

The candidate was not aware that the composer had performed and recorded this work, and its place in today's recital programme had been suggested by the candidate's teacher. The candidate felt that, where a composer had performed or recorded his/her own work, it was perfectly valid to use the performance as an example of how the work should be played, as this gave it authenticity.

Style and interpretation **What criteria did you use when selecting your edition? How do the main editions of this piece differ?**

Distinction

The candidate presented a clear overview of the published editions, from the first (available in facsimile) to the most recent. The significance of the lack of the autograph was clearly explained, as was the effect of this on all subsequent editions. The varying schools of editorial approach were outlined, with good examples from the nineteenth century in particular. Editorial practice and its effects on performance were well explained. The candidate proceeded to elaborate on criteria for choosing an edition, emphasizing the need both to check details against the earliest available sources and to guard against disguised editorial intervention.

Pass

The candidate gave a broad picture of the editions of the work, with some detail about how they differed. A little thought was required to proceed further, but eventually the significant fact of the absence of the autograph was mentioned. In choosing an edition the candidate was somewhat inclined to lean heavily on the most recent scholarship, but clearly identified and illustrated the value of earlier editions in terms of performance practice history.

Fail

The candidate showed little knowledge of editions other than the one chosen, and was dismissive of earlier editions, presenting them simply as inaccurate. The problems raised by the initial publishing history of the piece and its impact on performance were not mentioned. The candidate recognized the need to establish the composer's indications as a basis for interpretation, but was unable to view his/her own performance as itself forming part of, and being influenced by, performance practice history.

Marking criteria

The tables below outline the **marking criteria** for the Music Performance Diplomas. The demands of the criteria are carefully structured, not only between the levels of Diploma, as you move up from DipABRSM to LRSM and FRSM level, but also between the marking bands: Distinction, Pass and Fail. They are used by the examiners when coming to a decision about the way your performance measures up against the Associated Board's standards, and they also explain to you, the candidate, what qualities are required at each level and for each exam component, thus helping you to prepare for your exam with confidence. The attainment descriptions given on pp. 122–124 and the selected indicative responses to specimen Viva Voce questions on pp. 105–111 provide a further mechanism for showing the expectations at each level.

Section 1: Recital

	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
42–60 Distinction Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.	Assured, persuasive and effectively communicated performance, demonstrating both artistic awareness and a secure technique in a range of styles.	Authoritative and intuitive performance, demonstrating both artistic integrity and technical command in a range of styles.	Outstanding, completely assured and authoritative performance, demonstrating mature artistry and consummate technical ease.
36–41 A high pass Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.	Confident performance, demonstrating some sensitivity and good technique in a range of styles.	Assured, persuasive and effectively communicated performance, demonstrating both artistic awareness and a secure technique in a range of styles.	24–41 Pass Authoritative, persuasively communicated performance, demonstrating artistic integrity and technical command.
30–35 A clear pass Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.	Good performance, showing technical competence and a broad range of musical understanding.	Confident performance, demonstrating some sensitivity and good technique in a range of styles.	
24–29 Pass Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.	Solid performance in a range of styles, showing technical competence and some musical understanding at a level beyond ABRSM Grade 8.	Solid performance, showing technical competence and a broad musical understanding in a range of styles.	
0–23 Fail Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.	Despite evidence of some competence, technical and musical grasp not equal to the demands of the programme at this level.	Despite evidence of some competence, technical and musical grasp not equal to the demands of the programme at this level.	Insufficient evidence that the candidate has advanced significantly beyond LRSM level.

Programme Notes (DipABRSM and LRSM)/Written Submission (FRSM)

	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
<p>Distinction Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.</p>	Notes are pertinent and persuasively written, with thoroughly researched and well-balanced commentary.	Notes are highly perceptive and persuasively written, with a high level of research and excellent organization of material.	Submission is highly perceptive and convincing, clearly structured and expressed, with excellent organization and control of materials. Very advanced research skills, personal insight and critical evaluation of sources. A comprehensive survey of relevant source material. Excellent use of musical and literary quotations.
<p>A high pass Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.</p>	Notes provide an interesting and relevant commentary on the items performed. The material is well-organized and logically researched.	Notes are pertinent and persuasively written. The material is well-organized and logically researched.	<p>Pass</p> <p>Submission is pertinent and comprehensively argued, with good overall shape, use of language and organization.</p>
<p>A clear pass Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.</p>	Notes provide well-chosen detail on items performed, and firm evidence of helpful analysis based on sound research. Good presentation, structure, level of literacy and grammatical accuracy.	Notes provide well-chosen detail on items performed, and firm evidence of helpful analysis based on sound research. Good presentation, structure, level of literacy and grammatical accuracy.	<p>A rigorous survey of relevant source material, with a high level of research, personal insight and critical evaluation.</p> <p>Apposite use of musical and literary quotations.</p>
<p>Pass Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.</p>	Notes give background on items performed with some evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Acceptable level of presentation, literacy and accuracy, avoiding unexplained technical language.	Notes give background on items performed with some evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Acceptable level of presentation, literacy and accuracy, avoiding unexplained technical language.	
<p>Fail Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.</p>	Notes fail to give background on items performed or sufficient evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Inadequate presentation and grammatically weak.	Notes fail to give background on items performed or sufficient evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Inadequate presentation and grammatically weak.	Submission shows limited understanding, is poorly argued, lacks appropriate examples and quotations, and demonstrates little evidence of appropriately advanced research. Grammatically weak.

Section 2.1: Viva Voce

	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
19–25 Distinction Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.	Outstanding communication skills. A commanding knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised in the Programme Notes.	Outstanding communication skills. A commanding knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised in the Programme Notes.	Outstanding communication skills. An expert knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised in the Written Submission.
16–18 A high pass Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.	Impressive communication skills. A comprehensive knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. A firm grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes.	Impressive communication skills. A comprehensive knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. A firm grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes.	10–18 Pass Impressive communication skills. A commanding knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. A full understanding of the issues raised in the Written Submission.
13–15 A clear pass Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.	Good communication skills. A sound working knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. A broad grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes.	Good communication skills. A sound working knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. A broad grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes.	
10–12 Pass Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.	Competent communication skills. A broad working knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. A grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes.	Competent communication skills. A broad working knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. A grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes.	
0–9 Fail Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.	Weak communication skills. Patchy knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes.	Weak communication skills. Patchy knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised in the Programme Notes.	Insufficient communication skills. Insufficient knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised in the Written Submission.

Section 2.2: Quick Study

	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
12–15 Distinction Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.	An excellent performance, demonstrating artistry and full technical security. An instinctive approach.	An excellent performance, demonstrating artistry and full technical security. An instinctive approach.	An excellent performance, demonstrating artistry and full technical security. An instinctive approach.
10–11 A high pass Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.	Well performed and idiomatic, with attention to all or most points of detail. An assured approach.	Well performed and idiomatic, with attention to all or most points of detail. An assured approach.	6–11 Pass An idiomatic performance despite technical imperfections and some missing points of detail. An assured approach.
8–9 A clear pass Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.	A good performance despite technical imperfections and some missing points of detail. Clear evidence of a systematic approach.	A good performance despite technical imperfections and some missing points of detail. Clear evidence of a systematic approach.	
6–7 Pass Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.	Sufficiently competent to merit a pass despite some errors and missed points of detail. Few fundamental misreadings. Evidence of a systematic approach.	Sufficiently competent to merit a pass despite some errors and missed points of detail. Few fundamental misreadings. Evidence of a systematic approach.	
0–5 Fail Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.	Did not meet the basic requirements of the test. Some fundamental errors and little or no attention to matters of detail. A flawed methodology and/or insufficient technique (including continuity).	Did not meet the basic requirements of the test. Some fundamental errors and little or no attention to matters of detail. A flawed methodology and/or insufficient technique (including continuity).	Did not meet the basic requirements of the test. Some fundamental errors and little or no attention to matters of detail. A flawed methodology and/or insufficient technique (including continuity).

Application form for appropriate professional experience approval

Please photocopy this form as necessary

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone/Fax _____

E-mail _____

Level of Music Performance
Diploma you wish to enter for DipABRSM LRSM FRSM

Instrument _____

Prerequisite for which substitution is sought (see pp. 20–21)

With reference to the guidelines given on p.22, please detail the professional experience you wish to be considered by the Associated Board (continue on a separate sheet, if necessary)

I confirm that the information detailed above is accurate and true.

Candidate's signature _____ Date _____

Please complete this form (or a photocopy of it) and send it to the Syllabus Director, The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 24 Portland Place, London W1B 1LU, United Kingdom. The form must reach the Board at least six weeks before the published closing date for the session in which you wish to be examined. Please remember that you must enclose supporting documentation verifying your application, as well as a signed declaration from an independent person of appropriate standing (see p. 22) – suggested standard wording for this declaration is given on p. 117. It is important that you do not send your Entry Form to the Associated Board until *after* you have received confirmation that your application for appropriate professional experience approval has been successful.

Suggested standard wording

In my capacity as < title & organization > I confirm that < full candidate name > has gained appropriate professional experience as a performer in connection with < give details of course/qualification/performing group, etc. >.

I have read the relevant syllabus regulations and am therefore able to confirm that < candidate name > has studied/demonstrated skills and understanding equivalent to or in excess of the prerequisite for which substitution is sought.

< signature & date >

NB *Signed declarations must be written in English and submitted on official headed paper. In the case of qualifications/courses, the Associated Board may request samples of relevant course work or certification from the institution concerned.*

Music publishers

The music listed in this syllabus should be available from good music retailers worldwide, who should always be contacted in the first instance.

The Associated Board ensures that its own publications remain in print for the duration of each syllabus. In case of difficulty obtaining Associated Board titles, please use our online ordering facility (www.abrsmpublishing.com) – available in most countries – or contact ABRSM Publishing (*telephone* +44 (0)20 7636 5400; *e-mail* publishing@abrsm.ac.uk).

Every effort has been made to ascertain that the set music from other publishers was available when the repertoire lists were compiled for this syllabus (and again at the 2007 reprint of this document). In case of difficulty obtaining any such titles, please contact the publisher concerned or their UK distributor, as detailed in the list below. Candidates outside the UK should note that many publishers have local distributors around the world who may be able to supply their music more quickly. Details of these distributors may be obtained from the original publisher. Please note that the Associated Board does not supply any music from the publishers listed below.

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The National Qualifications Framework (UK)

The Associated Board's Diplomas are accredited by the regulatory authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and are part of the revised National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The number of levels in the revised NQF has been increased from five to nine (Entry Level to Level 8). The upper levels have been brought into line with the Framework for Higher Education in order to clarify the progression between NQF qualifications, such as the Associated Board's Diplomas, and university-awarded qualifications. The revised NQF is also more in line with the Scottish and Irish qualifications frameworks and is more compatible with developments in Europe.

The broad higher education comparisons given below are shown in terms of level of demand and not volume of study:

ABRSM Diploma Higher education

DipABRSM	Certificate of higher education
LRSM	Bachelor degree with honours
FRSM	Master's degree

The Associated Board's Music Performance Diplomas have been placed at the following NQF levels:

ABRSM Diploma	NQF level	NQF title	Accreditation no.
DipABRSM	4	Diploma in Music Performance	100/2799/3
LRSM	6	Licentiate in Music Performance	100/2800/6
FRSM	7	Fellowship in Music Performance	100/2801/8

Up-to-date information on the revised NQF levels is available on the openQUALS database: www.qca.org.uk/openquals.

Attainment descriptions

The attainment descriptions below have been created to give a general indication of the levels of attainment likely to be shown by candidates with results at two distinct levels within each qualification (Distinction and Pass for DipABRSM and LRSM; Pass and Fail for FRSM). These descriptions must be read in relation to the examination content as described for each level of Diploma on pp. 7–18 of this syllabus. The mark awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has demonstrated the skills, knowledge and understanding required at the level. Weakness in some aspects of the exam may be balanced by better performance in others, bearing in mind the marking scheme found on pp. 112–115.

DipABRSM (Music Performance)

- Distinction** Candidates are able to give an assured, persuasive and effectively communicated recital performance of a generalist programme that presents a wide-ranging yet coherent mixture of style, mood and tempo. Their playing/singing shows both artistic awareness and a secure technique at a level beyond ABRSM Grade 8. They can write programme notes that give a well-balanced commentary on the items performed, and that are pertinent, persuasively written and thoroughly researched. Their communication skills are outstanding and they have a commanding knowledge of their instrument/voice, its idiom and repertoire. They also have a mastery of the issues raised in their programme notes, including the idiom, form and style of the works performed, their historical position, and how these factors influence interpretation. They have a theoretical understanding of music at a minimum level of ABRSM Grade 5. They are able to perform a piece of previously unseen music of ABRSM Grade 6 repertoire level with excellence, demonstrating artistry, full technical security and an instinctive approach.

Pass Candidates are able to give a solid recital performance of a generalist programme that presents a mixture of style, mood and tempo. Their playing/singing shows technical competence and some musical understanding at a level beyond ABRSM Grade 8. They can write programme notes that give background information on the items performed, with some evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Their communication skills are competent and they have a broad working knowledge of their instrument/voice, its idiom and repertoire. They also have a grasp of the issues raised in their programme notes, including the idiom, form and style of the works performed, their historical position, and how these factors influence interpretation. They have a theoretical understanding of music at a minimum level of ABRSM Grade 5. They are able to perform a piece of previously unseen music of ABRSM Grade 6 repertoire level with competence, taking a systematic approach which, despite some errors or missed points of detail, contains few fundamental misreadings.

LRSM (Music Performance)

Distinction Candidates are able to give an authoritative and intuitive recital performance of a balanced programme that presents a contrast of repertoire from a minimum of two distinct musical eras. Their playing/singing shows both artistic integrity and technical command in a range of styles. They can write programme notes that are highly perceptive and persuasively written, with a high level of research and excellent organization of material. Their communication skills are outstanding and they have a commanding knowledge of their instrument/voice, its idiom and repertoire. They also have a mastery of the issues raised in their programme notes, including the idiom, form and style of the works performed, their historical position, and how these factors influence interpretation. They have a theoretical understanding of music at a minimum level of ABRSM Grade 5. They are able to perform a piece of previously unseen music of ABRSM Grade 7 repertoire level with excellence, demonstrating artistry, full technical security, and an instinctive approach.

Pass Candidates are able to give a solid recital performance of a balanced programme that presents a contrast of repertoire from a minimum of two distinct musical eras. Their playing/singing shows technical competence and a broad musical understanding in a range of styles. They can write programme notes that give background information on the items performed, with some evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Their communication skills are competent and they have a broad working knowledge of their instrument/voice, its idiom and repertoire. They also have a grasp of the issues raised in their programme notes, including the idiom, form and style of the works performed, their historical position, and how these factors influence interpretation. They have a theoretical understanding of music at a minimum level of ABRSM Grade 5. They are able to perform a piece of previously unseen music of ABRSM Grade 7 repertoire level with competence, taking a systematic approach which, despite some errors or missed points of detail, contains few fundamental misreadings.

FRSM (Music Performance)

Pass Candidates are able to give an authoritative, persuasively communicated recital performance of a specialist programme that is internally balanced and contains a contrast of mood and style. Their playing/singing shows both artistic integrity and technical command. They can write about the idiomatic features and performance issues of the recital programme in a written submission that is pertinently and comprehensively argued, with good overall shape, organization and use of language. They demonstrate an ability to survey relevant source materials rigorously, with high-level research skills, personal insight and critical evaluation. Their communication skills are impressive and they have a commanding knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire. They also have a full understanding of the issues raised in their written submission. They are able to give an idiomatic performance of a piece of previously unseen music of ABRSM Grade 8 repertoire level, demonstrating an assured approach.

Fail Candidates are able to give a recital performance of a specialist programme that is internally balanced and contains a contrast of mood and style, but there is insufficient evidence that they have advanced significantly beyond LRSM level. They can write about the idiomatic features and performance issues of the programme, but the argument may be disjointed or lacking in perception, or there may be an insufficient depth of research. Their communication skills are insufficient for the level and while they have knowledge of the instrument/voice, its idiom and repertoire, this is patchy. Their grasp of the issues raised by the written submission, including the idiom, form and style of the works performed, their historical position, and how these factors influence interpretation, is unconvincing. Their performance of a piece of previously unseen music of ABRSM Grade 8 repertoire level does not meet the basic requirements of the test as it contains some fundamental errors, with little or no attention being given to matters of detail, and with a flawed methodology and/or insufficient technique, including continuity.

The National Occupational Standards (UK)

The National and Scottish Vocational Qualifications entitled 'Music Practice' and 'Arts Development and Teaching', both at NQF Level 4 and offered by Edexcel, contain statements of competence that are known as 'national occupational standards'. These standards describe the functions and responsibilities within a range of job roles and can be used as benchmarks for measuring achievement in a vocational context. In preparing for the Associated Board Diplomas, candidates will be developing many of the competences described by these standards. Units 1–4 and 10 of 'Music Practice' are of particular relevance to performers.