



Royal Academy of Music
Royal College of Music
Royal Northern College of Music
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Amanuenses in ABRSM Theory exams

About this pack

This pack contains information for candidates, their teachers and amanuenses who are taking or assisting in an ABRSM Theory exam. If the applicant is providing an amanuensis, it is their responsibility to ensure that a pack is passed on to the amanuensis, as a signed agreement is required in order that the exam be validated.

We advise everyone concerned to read all the documents in this pack, even those that are not directed at them.

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- Guidance for Candidates
- Guidance for Amanuenses
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- Amanuensis Agreement
- Working with your Amanuensis
- Further Information

The guidance contained within this pack was produced in consultation with the British Dyslexia Association and the RNIB.

Guidance for candidates using an amanuensis

What is an amanuensis?

- ABRSM use the term 'amanuensis' to describe someone who will either read questions for you (a reader), take down your answers (a scribe), or do both for you during your exam, where you are unable to do so yourself because of a physical disability, learning difficulty or a visual impairment.
- You may choose to have the questions read out and to write down your own answers (using a reader), or to read the questions yourself and for the amanuensis to write down your answers (using a scribe). Alternatively, you may want the amanuensis to do both of these things.
- The code 'A' on the entry form covers a reader, a scribe or both.
- Because using an amanuensis is not a silent process you will need to take your exam in a separate room to avoid disturbing other candidates.

Who will the amanuensis be?

- Wherever possible, ABRSM will provide a fully trained amanuensis for you if you are a UK candidate. The amanuensis will normally be an ABRSM examiner for both Theory and Practical exams, who has been checked by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and has been fully trained in how to support you to access the exam.
- It may not always be possible for ABRSM to provide an amanuensis, and in these cases you must be prepared to find somebody yourself. He or she should be musically literate, educated to at least the equivalent level of the exam being taken and should have worked as your amanuensis at least once, either in music lessons or in another exam. We ask that your amanuensis is not your music teacher or someone related to you unless absolutely necessary.
- We are aware that some candidates with learning difficulties may not be able to work with an unfamiliar person. In these cases you may arrange your own amanuensis, as above.

How will I use the amanuensis?

- Using an amanuensis in a music theory exam can be quite complex. To help you prepare for it, please refer to the sound recording and document *Working with your amanuensis*.

Where will the exam take place?

- We ask that you arrange to take your exam at a venue in your local area, for example your local school or another venue you are familiar with, which you know to be available on the exam date at the relevant time.
- If you are unable to arrange your own venue for your exam, it may be possible for us to arrange for your exam to be held in another room at the main centre in your area. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and when it is not possible we may have to look further afield. In this case we will refund any travel expenses incurred.

When will the exam take place?

- The exam will take place on the same date and at the same time as all other Theory exams.

Will there be extra time?

- The following extra time allowance will be given to candidates using an amanuensis, provided we are informed on entry:

Grades 1–3: 30 minutes

Grades 4–5: 40 minutes

Grades 6–8: 60 minutes

Who will invigilate the exam?

- We will provide the invigilator, but if your exam is taking place at your local school we would appreciate your assistance in asking a teacher to act as invigilator for you. If this is not possible, we will send somebody to invigilate.

Will I be able to have the same amanuensis for each exam?

- If you would like to have the same amanuensis for your next exam, you will need to ask for this next time you enter. ABRSM can't guarantee that the same amanuensis will be free for your next exam, but we will make every effort to cater for any specific requests. The sooner you can let us know, the better.
- Equally, if you would like to have a different amanuensis for your next exam, you will need to let us know at the time of entry and we will do our best to meet your request.

What if I am not happy with my amanuensis?

- If ABRSM were not responsible for providing the amanuensis, we cannot take responsibility for the actions of your chosen amanuensis, nor can we arbitrate in any dispute or process a complaint which has arisen from their behaviour.

The paper

- The paper will normally be sent to the amanuensis, who will bring it to the exam.

Results

- If you would like to receive your results in an alternative format, for example Braille, large/modified print, on disk or on audiotape, please inform the Associated Board at the time of entry.

Your responsibilities

- to inform ABRSM that you require an amanuensis at the time of entry
- to inform ABRSM if you plan to use your own amanuensis, and to provide their name and address as soon as possible
- to abide by the exam regulations.

ABRSM's responsibilities

- to provide a fully trained amanuensis for your exam wherever possible
- to try to provide a venue and invigilator if you are not able or do not want to do so
- to pay for any travel costs incurred, should you need to travel out of your local area to a venue which we have provided
- to provide you with results in a format that you are able to access, on request.

Guidance and Regulations for amanuenses in ABRSM Theory exams

Your qualifications

- You must be a trained ABRSM amanuensis
or
someone who has worked as an amanuensis for the candidate in preparation for this, or another, exam.
- You must be musically literate and educated to at least the equivalent level of the exam being taken.

Your manner

- The candidate will be aware that you are literate in music theory, and may be embarrassed about dictating answers to you. It is therefore important that you are calm, quiet, reassuring (if appropriate), and patient.
- If a candidate needs you to cross out answers you may have spent some time recording, you must appear not to mind.
- Don't feel uneasy if there is a lot of silence during the exam – the candidate needs space to think through questions and to consider their answers.

Venue, staff and moderators

- Any ABRSM theory exam involving an amanuensis will take place separately from the main exam in that area, either in a different room at the main venue, or at a private venue.
- Present in the exam room with you will be the candidate and an invigilator.
- From time to time ABRSM may send a moderator to act as invigilator, as part of ABRSM's monitoring and quality assurance processes.

Preparing for the exam

- You need to ensure that you have read and understood the syllabus for the exam in question.
- If you are not a fully trained ABRSM amanuensis, you should have worked with the candidate as their amanuensis at least once, either in music lessons or in another exam.

Before the exam

- You should have established the following points with the candidate:
 1. What does he/she require of you – a reader, a scribe or both?
 2. Would he/she like to be reminded of the time at any point? At what interval(s)?
- You will be required to read and sign the *Amanuensis Agreement* and hand this to the invigilator before the exam begins.

During the exam

You will:

- proceed according to the *Working with your Amanuensis* material
- read or re-read all or any part of the question or given answer as requested by the candidate, at any point during the exam.
- write down any answers, exactly as they are dictated, as directed by the candidate
- make any corrections if requested by the candidate, as directed
- give the spelling of any word which occurs in the theory paper if requested, but will ask the candidate for spellings of any technical terms used in his or her answers.
- give the candidate a choice at the beginning of the exam as to whether they would like to be reminded of the time and at what intervals, and advise accordingly.

You will not:

- lead the conversation or speak unless directed by the candidate
- give any undue assistance in answering any of the questions
- give any indication of whether the candidate's answers are right or wrong
- read or re-read any questions or answers unless directed by the candidate
- give the spelling of any word which does not appear in the theory paper
- advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be done.

After the exam

- Hand in the exam paper to the invigilator and ensure that the signed *Amanuensis agreement* has been submitted.



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Working with your amanuensis

Using an amanuensis requires both the candidate and amanuensis to give careful consideration to communication. The guidance below, together with the sound recording, highlights the types of questions and issues that you should consider in preparation for your exam. Whilst the examples used are taken from Grade 1 and 5 Theory papers, the methods demonstrated can be applied across all grades. This recording demonstrates the most difficult example of using an amanuensis, where the candidate requires both a reader and a scribe. Please note that answers given are not always correct – it is the process of using an amanuensis in a theory exam that is being demonstrated.

Musical Examples

Track 1 Add the Missing Bar-Lines

1 Add the missing bar-lines to these two tunes. The first bar-line is given in each.

10

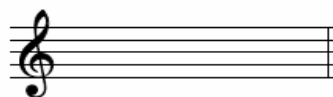


Leoncavallo

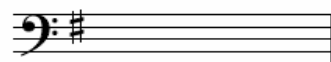
- For this question, well-prepared candidates would be aware that they do not need to know the pitch of the notes to work out the answer. In this case the candidate should ask the amanuensis to read out only the rhythm. The amanuensis will, as always, follow the candidate's instructions, so unless instructed to single out a specific aspect of the example, they will read out all of it.

Track 2 Writing Tonic Triads

(b) Write each of the tonic triads named below.



C major



G major

Track 3 Adding Missing Notes or Rests

4 In each of the numbered spaces add the note or rest named below, as shown in the answer to [1]. 10

Track 4 Context Question: Identifying the Loudest Note

8 Look at this folk-song melody and then answer the questions below.

(i) Draw a circle round the note that you think will sound the *loudest*.

Track 5 Context Question: Identifying Middle C (see extract above)

(iii) How many times does the note middle C occur?

Track 6 Rewriting in Different Time Signature

(i) Rewrite the following bar on the blank staff below using the $\frac{4}{4}$ time signature that is provided, but without changing the rhythmic effect.

Track 7 Transposition up a Perfect 5th

- 3 These are the actual sounds made by a horn in F. Rewrite the passage as it would appear for the player to read, that is, transpose it *up* a perfect 5th. Do *not* use a key signature but remember to put in all necessary sharp, flat or natural signs.

10

Bruckner, Symphony No. 8



Track 8 Context Question: Describing Chords

- 4 Look at this extract from an opera, *La finta giardiniera*, by Mozart, with the orchestral accompaniment arranged for piano, and then answer the questions on page 5.

Allegro



- (b) (i) Describe the chords in the piano part marked **A** and **B** as I, II, IV or V. Also indicate whether the lowest note of the chord is the root (a), 3rd (b) or 5th (c). Remember that the key is F major.


Chord A (bar 6)

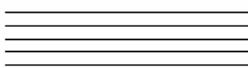
Chord B (bar 7)

- Where an amanuensis needs to communicate a longer extract of music to a candidate, the candidate must be ready to direct the amanuensis to give them the information they need. For example, they may wish to hear the whole extract through once, and then have specific bars or sections read to them again.

 **Track 9 Context Question: Identifying a Ic-V Progression (see extract above)**

- (ii) Below the staves write $\frac{6}{4} \frac{5}{3}$ (Ic-V) under two successive chords where this progression occurs.

 **Track 10 Context Question: Use of Tenor Clef (see extract above)**

- (iii) Rewrite the first left-hand piano chord of bar 5 so that it sounds the same, but using the tenor C clef. Remember to put in the clef and the key signature. 

Tips to help you

- Remember to add bar lines where necessary in your answers. The amanuensis will always make it clear that there is a bar line when reading out musical examples but, when dictating your answers, you must remember to do this. The amanuensis will not automatically add them in on your behalf.
- Remember to observe any sharp or flat signs that are read out, and don't forget to apply them wherever the relevant notes occur later. The amanuensis will read notes according to their position on the staff and will not remind you of any earlier key signature or accidentals.
- You may wish to have an extract read out several times, either in part or as a whole.
- You should be aware that, at the higher grades, musical examples can be quite long. Where amanuenses are required to read out an example, you may need to work on your memorisation skills in order to remember what is being read to you and to make sense of the extract as a whole.

This guidance was produced in consultation with the British Dyslexia Association and the RNIB.

Further information

If you would like any further information regarding these guidelines, please contact the Associated Board. For assistance on specific issues concerning candidates with learning difficulties or blind and partially sighted candidates please contact the relevant national organisation.

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music

Access Coordinator, 24 Portland Place, London, W1B 1LU

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textphone: 020 7637 2582

email: accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk

Theory Office, 24 Portland Place, London, W1B 1LU

telephone: 020 7467 8270

email: theory@abrsm.ac.uk

The British Dyslexia Association

The British Dyslexia Association, 98 London Road, Reading, RG1 5AU

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email: helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk

Royal National Institute of the Blind

Music Information Officer, RNIB, 105 Judd Street, London, WC1H 9NE

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Amanuensis agreement

By signing this agreement you are confirming that you fulfil the criteria for acting as an amanuensis in an ABRSM Theory exam, have read and understood all documents contained within this pack and will work within the parameters of the *Working with your Amanuensis* document.

Please read the following statements carefully before signing and dating this agreement and handing it to the invigilator, before the start of the exam.

1. I am musically literate and educated to at least the equivalent level of the exam being taken.
2. I have read the syllabus for the exam in question and understand what is required of the candidate.
3. I have discussed the candidate's requirements and understand whether a reader, a scribe, or both is needed.
4. I have discussed whether the candidate would like to be reminded of the time at any point, and if so, at what interval(s).
5. I will not normally lead the conversation or speak unless directed by the candidate.
6. I will not give any indication of whether the candidate's answers are right or wrong.
7. I will not read or re-read any questions or answers unless directed by the candidate.
8. I will not give the spelling of any word which does not appear in the theory paper.
9. I will not advise the candidate regarding which questions to do, when to move on to the next question, or the order in which the questions should be done.
10. I accept that, as part of ABRSM's quality assurance processes, a moderator may be present as an observer.
11. I have read and understood the documents contained within this pack.

Signed _____ Date _____