

BOWED STRINGS SYLLABUS REQUIREMENTS

Instruments

Candidates are required to perform on acoustic instruments (electric instruments are not permitted).

Tuning-up

In Grades 1–5 the teacher or accompanist may tune the candidate's instrument (or advise on tuning) before the exam begins. The examiner will not do so. In Grades 6–8 candidates must tune their instrument themselves.

Music stands and stools

All ABRSM Centres provide a music stand, but candidates are welcome to bring their own if they prefer. Candidates should provide their own stool if required.

Programme planning

Candidates should use their discretion in their choice of three pieces to present a contrasted and balanced programme. One piece must be chosen from each of the three lists in each grade (A, B and C).

Accompaniment

A live piano accompaniment is required for all pieces, except those which are published as studies or unaccompanied works and those Double Bass List C pieces marked 'solo'. Candidates must provide their own accompanist, who may remain in the exam room *only* while engaged in accompanying. The candidate's teacher may act as accompanist; under no circumstances will the examiner do so.

Tuttis and cadenzas

Accompanists should make cuts to extensive orchestral tuttis in concerto (or similar) movements. Cadenzas should not be played unless specified in the syllabus.

Fingering and bowing

Candidates are not compelled to adhere to the fingering or bowing marks indicated in the music: any good practical fingering and bowing will be accepted. In Violin and Viola Grades 1 and 2, candidates are not expected to play in any but the first position; Cello and Double Bass pieces in these grades may include very simple changes of position. By Grade 4, candidates are expected to have begun exploring position changes matching the demands and style of the music.

Vibrato

Candidates should have acquired some skill in vibrato by Grade 5.

Scales and arpeggios

Examiners will usually ask for at least one of each type of scale/arpeggio etc. required at each grade, as well as aiming to hear a balance of separately-bowed and slurred requirements. When asking for requirements, examiners will specify only:

- the key (including minor form – harmonic *or* melodic – in the Grade 6–8 scales)

- separate bows *or* slurred (except for where the requirements are to be prepared with separate bows *only* – e.g. Grade 1 arpeggios)

All scales and arpeggios should:

- be played from memory
- be played from the lowest possible tonic/starting note, unless the syllabus indicates otherwise
- ascend and descend according to the specified range

Bowing will generally dictate the tempi of slurred scales and arpeggios. Separately-bowed requirements should be played briskly, using no more than half the bow length. For guidance, suggested minimum speeds are given in the books of scale requirements published for all bowed strings by ABRSM.

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

For major and minor scales (and double-stop scales in parallel sixths/octaves) candidates may choose between two rhythm patterns: even notes *or* long tonic. Arpeggios, dominant and diminished sevenths are required in root position only. All dominant sevenths must finish by resolving on the tonic.

Examples of scale/arpeggio etc. patterns found in this syllabus are given on pp. 8–9.

Sight-reading

The sight-reading tests are without accompaniment. 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 test before they are required to perform it for assessment. The main parameters for the sight-reading tests for each subject are outlined in this syllabus, grade by grade; once introduced, these parameters apply for all subsequent grades (albeit with a logical progression of difficulty). Books of specimen sight-reading tests are published for all bowed strings by ABRSM.

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 intonation, production and quality of tone, bowing and finger action, posture, suitable choice of tempo, and expression and phrasing. 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:

Pieces: 1	30
2	30
3	30
Scales and arpeggios	21
Sight-reading	21
Aural tests	18
Total	<hr/> 150