Your guide to ABRSM diplomas
Introduction

ABRSM diplomas offer varied routes to professional qualification for a wide range of musicians, including performers, teachers and directors.

Whether you are intending to pursue a career in music, are currently working as a professional and wish to broaden your qualifications, or are purely after the satisfaction of achieving a personal goal, then one of our diplomas is right for you.

We offer diplomas in three subjects:
- Music Performance
- Instrumental/Vocal Teaching
- Music Direction

Each subject has three levels of award:
- DipABRSM: Diploma of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music
- LRSM: Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music
- FRSM: Fellowship of the Royal Schools of Music

Benefits of taking an ABRSM diploma:
- Receive an internationally recognised letter-bearing qualification.
- Broaden your musical horizons.
- Gain feedback on your skills and abilities before choosing an advanced specialism at a higher education institution.

Diploma syllabuses are available for each subject. They provide comprehensive information on all aspects of the exam:
- Content
- Prerequisites and substitutions
- Guidance for candidates
- Marking criteria

Download your syllabus at www.abrsm.org/diplomas.

To read about the transition between Grade 8 and our diplomas go to www.abrsm.org/diplomasupport.
The three levels of Music Performance diplomas are designed to reflect your day-to-day experience as a performer, whether amateur or professional.

**Requirements:**

**Instrumental or Vocal Recital**
You will need to compile and present a balanced recital programme and demonstrate your understanding of and sensitivity to the demands of different types of repertoire.

**Viva Voce**
A discussion with the examiner(s) to demonstrate your knowledge, approach and understanding.

**Written assignment**
*DipABRSM and LRSM:*
Programme Notes relating to your Recital programme.
*FRSM:*
Written Submission relating to matters connected to your Recital repertoire.

**Quick Study**
A performance of a short piece of unaccompanied and previously unseen music.

As you move up through the diploma levels the repertoire becomes more demanding, the Recital time lengthens, and the challenge of the Quick Study and the scope and length of your written work increase.
Instrumental/Vocal Teaching
DipABRSM | LRSM | FRSM

Our teaching diplomas are designed for candidates who are intending to take up or have already begun instrumental or vocal teaching.

At each level of diploma your skills as a teacher of individuals and/or groups are explored and assessed in increasing depth.

| DipABRSM: Assesses your knowledge and understanding of the teaching of your chosen instrument. | LRSM: Calls for a practical application of your knowledge and understanding of teaching pupils. | FRSM: Requires you to apply higher-level academic skills to aspects of music education. |

The focus of these diplomas is the teaching of music as a practical activity. Through live and written sections, you will be examined in your approaches to teaching, your ability to give competent practical demonstrations in lessons and your understanding of repertoire.

Our teaching diplomas also cover educational theory and philosophy, curriculum studies and aspects of educational administration.

Requirements:

**Teaching Skills Viva Voce**
A discussion with the examiner(s) including demonstrations of teaching approaches. This section will encourage you to think about your methods and reassess your teaching technique.

**Written Submission**
*DipABRSM and LRSM:*
A topic chosen from the syllabus.

*FRSM:*
An approved topic of your choice.

**Quick Study**
A performance of a short piece of unaccompanied and previously unseen music.

**Case Study Portfolio & Video of Teaching Practice (LRSM only)**
Written case studies of three pupils and a video of teaching practice showing your work with at least two pupils to be submitted on entry.
The Music Direction diplomas are available to directors of instrumental groups or choirs and are designed to reflect your day-to-day experience as a director.

These diplomas balance the demands of the repertoire against the musical, technical and interpersonal skills needed by successful directors.

Through live and written sections, you will be examined on your command of directing technique in rehearsal and performance, your understanding of the repertoire, and your knowledge of the instruments or voices in your ensemble.

Requirements:

Rehearsal and Performance
Using an instrumental or choral ensemble provided and directed by you.

Viva Voce
A discussion with the examiner(s) to demonstrate your knowledge, approach and understanding. This section will encourage you to think about your methods and technique, and justify your choices.

Written assignment
*DipABRSM* and *LRSM*: Programme Notes relating to your Rehearsal and Performance programme.

*FRSM*: Written Submission relating to matters connected with your Rehearsal and Performance programme.

Arrangement for your ensemble
This section encourages you to learn more about your chosen ensemble and gain a better understanding of harmonisation, orchestration and style.

As you move up through the diploma levels the repertoire becomes more demanding, the Rehearsal and Performance time lengthens, and the challenge of the Arrangement and the scope and length of your written work increase.
Resources

Diploma publications
- Piano Specimen Quick Studies
- An Extraordinary Life
  Composer biographies of Bach, Beethoven, Britten, Elgar, Mozart and Purcell
- Music in Words: A guide to researching and writing about music, Trevor Herbert
- A Performer’s Guide to Music
  Books on the Baroque, Classical and Romantic periods
- The Form of Music, William Cole
- Achieving Success (DVD)
- All Together!
  Teaching music in groups
- The Music Teacher’s Companion: A Practical Guide

Online resources
www.abrsm.org/diplomasupport
- Diploma reading list (PDF)
- Diploma Specimen Quick Study tests (PDF)
- Guide to writing programme notes, Nigel Scaife (PDF)
- Guide to the Viva Voce requirements (PDF)
- Diplomas at a Glance (PDF)
- Speedshifter – tool to slow down practice tracks
- ABRSM forums

You can buy ABRSM publications from your local music retailer and www.abrsm.org/shop.
Teacher support

We provide regular workshops, seminars and courses for teachers. Our annual conferences in the UK and South East Asia feature a range of practical and thought-provoking sessions for instrumental and vocal teachers at all stages of their careers.

In addition, our examiners present workshops and meetings for teachers as part of their international examining tours. We also work closely with Music Services and Music Education Hubs in the UK to provide INSET days and seminars.

To keep up-to-date with events and courses near you, visit www.abrsm.org/events.
ABRSM is the exam board of the Royal Schools of Music. We are committed to actively supporting high quality music making, learning and development throughout the world, and to producing the best possible resources for music teachers and students.