

rockschool<sup>®</sup>

# PIANO

SYLLABUS SPECIFICATION

*Also suitable for Keyboards*

2016 Edition



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# **Piano**

# **Syllabus Specification**

2016 Edition

## Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

Welcome to the Rockscool 2015-2018 syllabus specification for Piano. This syllabus specification is designed to give teachers, students and candidates practical information on the graded examinations run by Rockscool.

The Rockscool website, [www.rslawards.com](http://www.rslawards.com) has detailed information on all aspects of our examinations, detailed marking schemes and assessment criteria as well as notated and audio examples to help candidates prepare for the examination.

All candidates are required to read the Rockscool Exam Regulations which can be found via the following link: [www.rslawards.com/about-us/regulations](http://www.rslawards.com/about-us/regulations)

This Syllabus Specification covers the following examinations:

- Graded Examinations Debut–8
- Performance Certificates Debut–8

## EXAMINATIONS

Rockscool offers **two** types of graded music examination; Grade Examinations and Performance Certificates.

**Note:** Piano can also be performed as part of a Rockscool Band Exam: [www.rslawards.com/music/graded-music-exams/band-exam](http://www.rslawards.com/music/graded-music-exams/band-exam)

### GRADE EXAMINATIONS

Piano Grade Examinations are available from Debut to Grade 8 and consist of the following elements:

- Three Performance Pieces: Debut–8
- Technical Exercises: Debut–8
- Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation: Debut–5
- Quick Study Piece: Grades 6–8
- Ear Tests: Debut–8
- General Musicianship Questions: Debut–8

These elements fall into **two** categories:

- **Prepared work:** This consists of three Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises
- **Unprepared work:** This consists of Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation (Debut–5), Quick Study Piece (Grades 6–8), Ear Tests (Debut–8) and General Musicianship Questions (Debut–8)

### PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

Piano Performance Certificates are available from Debut to Grade 8 and consist of the following elements:

- **Five** Performance Pieces

## EXAMINATION STRUCTURE

The examination structure for the Grade Examination is shown below:

### Debut-5

- Performance Pieces\*
- Technical Exercises\*
- Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

### Grade 6-8

- Performance Pieces\*
- Technical Exercises\*
- Quick Study Piece
- Ear Tests
- General Musicianship Questions

\*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request

## EXAMINATION TIMINGS

### Grade Exams

- Debut: 15 minutes
- Grade 1: 20 minutes
- Grade 2: 20 minutes
- Grade 3: 25 minutes
- Grade 4: 25 minutes
- Grade 5: 25 minutes
- Grade 6: 30 minutes
- Grade 7: 30 minutes
- Grade 8: 30 minutes

### Performance Certificates

- Debut: 12 minutes
- Grade 1: 15 minutes
- Grade 2: 15 minutes
- Grade 3: 18 minutes
- Grade 4: 22 minutes
- Grade 5: 22 minutes
- Grade 6: 25 minutes
- Grade 7: 25 minutes
- Grade 8: 28 minutes

## General Notes

The following general notes apply to both Grade and Performance Certificate Examinations:

## FREE CHOICE PIECES

For all piano grades, candidates are able to play a number of free choice pieces in the examination:

- Grade Examinations: **Two** Free Choice Pieces (at least one piece must be from the grade book)
- Performance Certificates: **Three** Free Choice Pieces (at least two pieces must be from the grade book)

Visit [www.rslawards.com](http://www.rslawards.com) for grade specific Free Choice Criteria and wider requirements which need to be observed in full to be eligible for use in the exam. Prior approval is not required but any deviation/simplification/omissions from any aspect of the criteria or requirements may be reflected in the marks awarded.

All pieces must be performed to a backing track (without the examined part on the track) except in cases where pieces have been selected from previous Rockscool syllabi and do not have a backing track.

If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, it would be acceptable to email it to [info@rslawards.com](mailto:info@rslawards.com) and a member of the Rockscool team will advise.

## NOTATION

All notated work is to be played as written. There should be no changes or arrangement (unless previously agreed with Rockscool). Each piece is specifically written/presented carefully to achieve a number of outcomes appropriate for the grade.

### Exclusions:

- At Debut and Grade 1, if any three or four voiced chords notated in the pieces are unachievable, candidates may either reduce the amount of notes in the voicing or play as a spread chord if stylistically appropriate.
- At all grades, if any two handed/open voiced chords notated in the pieces are not achievable, candidates may either reduce the amount of notes in the voicing or play as a spread chord if stylistically appropriate.
- At all grades, candidates are free to execute voiced chords notated in the pieces with either hand or combination of hands.
- In any Level 3 piece containing chord symbols, voicings may be presented as deemed appropriate.

## MUSICAL INTERPRETATION

For all piano grades, Rockscool encourages individual musicality, articulation, expression and use of dynamics when performing. This would include for example own legato/staccato, pedalling, dynamic levels, accentuation, cresc.../dim, phrasing etc. This also applies anywhere in the exam, whether within a performance piece or any other prepared/unprepared element.

Musical Interpretation is assessed as a requirement at all grades in both the Full Grade Exam and Performance Certificate.

**Note:** where there is notated articulation, expression, dynamic or pedal markings, these have been specifically written and must be observed.

## PIANO SPECIFICATION

The following instruments are accepted for use in Piano exams, at all grades.

- **Acoustic Piano**
- **Digital Piano**

A number of our exam centres in the UK have acoustic pianos. The remainder have digital pianos. Candidates are advised to contact Rockscool to check their nearest centre if they specifically wish to perform the exam on an acoustic piano.

See also <https://www.rslawards.com/music/find-a-centre>

## USING OWN EQUIPMENT

Candidates may bring their own digital piano or keyboard for use in the exam, which must fit the following criteria:

- **Debut-Grade 4:** Minimum of five octaves/61 keys, touch sensitive, weighted or unweighted keys and a sustain pedal.
- **Grades 5-8:** 88 note keyboard, touch sensitive, weighted or unweighted keys and a sustain pedal.
- **Candidates must use a 'realistic' piano sound for their exam.**

Candidates will need to note on the application form that they wish to use their own equipment when applying to take the exam. Owing to scheduling constraints and the potential impact on subsequent exam times, the absence of prior notification to Rockschoo will result in the examiner refusing candidates own equipment on the day.

Rockschoo also recommends that candidates who wish to bring in their own equipment contact their exam centre to make any practical arrangements beforehand and also bring their own assistance to carry the equipment in/out of the exam room.

Own equipment needs to be practicable and reasonably portable so as not to impact on exam timings.

Note also that whilst it is acceptable for candidates to use their own equipment for use in the exam, if any outcomes required at a particular grade either cannot be demonstrated or are demonstrated less securely as a result of the equipment, this may be reflected in the marks awarded. Rockschoo cannot advise whether or not candidates use their own equipment. A decision to do so is entirely at a candidate's discretion/risk on this basis.

Candidates cannot use either pre-programmed backing tracks or internally generated, pre-programmed rhythms.

## MAKING NOTES IN THE EXAM

**It is not permitted to make any notes at any time during the exam.**

With the exception of Technical Exercises where memory requirements apply, it is permitted to use grade books which contain notes made during the course of a candidate's study.

For General Musicianship Questions, the examiner may use his or her version of the selected piece as the basis to ask the questions if such notes contained on the candidate's version are deemed sufficiently extensive or might assist the candidate when answering the questions

# Debut

The Debut Piano exam is for candidates who have been learning a short time and have developed elementary skills, techniques, co-ordination and musical understanding. There is also an opportunity for basic improvisation.

There are two types of exam available at Debut, either a **Grade Exam** or **Performance Certificate**. (Refer to the Introduction for an explanation of the differences).

## Debut

### GRADE EXAMS

#### PREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play **three** Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises which cover scales, arpeggios and chord voicings.

#### UNPREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to complete either a Sight Reading or Improvisation/Interpretation test and **two** Ear Tests that begin to develop melodic recall and chord recognition.

The final part of the exam comprises **five** questions which are designed to explore simple harmony, melody, rhythmic, technical and stylistic knowledge.

### EXAM STRUCTURE

The Debut exam lasts **15 minutes** and is taken in the following order:

- **Performance Pieces\***
- **Technical Exercises \***
- **Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation:** Candidates are given an unseen test to prepare and perform.
- **Ear Tests:** Candidates respond to two aural tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic.
- **General Musicianship Questions:** Candidates answer five questions based on one of the pieces performed.

*\*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request*

#### Pieces

The pieces in the grade book can be used for both the Grade Exam and Performance Certificate. At Debut they are short, typically up to one minute in duration. The expectation and length of pieces are designed so candidates can concentrate on the requirements of notation accuracy, values, evenness of sound, tone quality/consistency, technical control and sync at a beginner level.

#### Setting the level of the backing track

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Note: the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

## TECHNICAL WORK

At Debut there are **three** groups of technical work: Scales, Arpeggios/Broken Chords and Chord Voicings.

All exercises need to be played hands separately, in straight feel, ascending and descending.

The examiner will ask for a selection from each group and Groups A and B need to be played to a compulsory metronome click. Group C does not require a metronome and can be played at a tempo of the candidate's choice.

The book can be used in the exam for Groups A and B. Group C needs to be played from memory. For Group C, candidates will be required to close their grade books or ensure the information on the KR player is out of view.

**Note: the use of any notes or any reading from the grade book when performing Group C will result in a deduction of marks for this element. (See Assessment Criteria).**

Any fingerings shown in the grade book are for suggestions only.

### GROUP A: SCALES

**Tempo:** 52bpm

**Range:** One octave

**Rhythms:** Eighth notes, finishing on a quarter note

- C major (right hand)
- C major (left hand)
- A minor (right hand)
- A minor (left hand)

### GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

**Tempo:** 92bpm

**Time signatures:** 3/4

**Rhythms:** Quarter notes, finishing on a dotted half note

- C major broken chord (right hand)
- C major broken chord (left hand)
- A minor broken chord (right hand)
- A minor broken chord (left hand)

### GROUP C: CHORD VOICINGS

Candidates will be asked to play one voicing of both the following chords (2 total):

- C major
- C minor

Candidates need to choose and perform the voicing, one for each chord, from memory, from three options given for each chord in the grade book. The three options comprise right hand, left hand and both hands. In the exam, there will be no need to state which one beforehand.

There will be no requirement to present the chosen voicing to a particular tempo or a backing / metronome click but the examiner will be looking for speed of response.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Debut, candidates will be offered the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. Both are previously unseen and an example of each is shown in the grade book.

### SIGHT READING

**Key: C major**

**Tempo: 60bpm**

**Time signature: 4/4**

**Rhythms: Whole, half, quarter notes, associated rests**

The Sight Reading test is in the form of a 4-6 bar melody.

Candidates are required to play hands separately and only single notes will be required to be played with both left and right hands.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

### IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

**Key: C major**

**Tempo: 60bpm**

**Time signature: 4/4**

The Improvisation test is in the form of a 4-6 bar chord progression, with all chord symbols indicated.

Candidates are required to improvise single note melodies with either left or right hand. It is permissible to play chord voicings, or use both hands, but marks will only be awarded for melodic content.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

## EAR TESTS

At Debut there are **two** ear tests: Melodic Recall and Chord Recognition. Both are previously unseen and an example of each is shown in the grade book.

### MELODIC RECALL

**Tempo: 95bpm**

**Rhythms: Half notes**

The examiner will play two half notes one after the other. Candidates are to state whether the second note is higher or lower in pitch than the first note. The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will also be a C root note at the beginning of the test for reference. For this exercise, candidates are to use the words 'higher' or 'lower'.

Credit will be given for speed of response.

### CHORD RECOGNITION

**Tempo: 95bpm**

**Rhythms: Whole notes**

The examiner will play two chords, each with a C root note. Candidates are to state which chord played was major and which chord played was minor. The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a one-bar count-in.

Credit will be given for speed of response.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

At debut candidates will be asked five questions, one from each of the following groups:

- One question relating to harmony
- One question relating to melody
- One question relating to rhythms
- One question relating to technical requirements
- One question relating to genre

Candidates can choose the piece on which basis the questions will be asked. It must be one of the pieces performed in the exam. The exact bars or phrases will be chosen by the examiner.

The questions will cover the following topics:

### Group 1: Harmony

Identification of major / minor triad chord symbols.

### Group 2: Melody

A pitch in the treble clef within the stave.

### Group 3: Rhythm

Whole / half / quarter notes.

### Group 4: Technical

Fingering used in a crotchet length phrase. (Either hand)

### Group 5: Genre

Genre of the piece.

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate plays five pieces in their preferred chosen order. The exam will last **12 minutes**.

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Once the level has been established, the examiner will then commence with the first piece in full. Note: the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

DEBUT : PERFORMANCE PIECES				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–11	12–14	15–17	18–20
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Inconsistent awareness of timing/pulse</li> <li>■ Inconsistent use of rhythm, duration and phrasing</li> <li>■ Insecure sync/continuity</li> <li>■ Insecure use of articulation, expression and dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure basic techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing/pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately some of the time</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity some of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing/pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately most of the time</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity most of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing/pulse throughout</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately throughout</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity throughout</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics throughout</li> </ul>

DEBUT : TECHNICAL EXERCISES (SCALES, ARPEGGIOS, CHORD VOICINGS)				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–8	9–10	11–12	13–15
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to maintain pulse or tempo accurately</li> <li>■ Inability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo consistently</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases consistently</li> </ul>

DEBUT: SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–4	5–6	7–8	9–10
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure ability to read basic notation OR inability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation some of the time OR Secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation OR Mostly secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation OR Consistently secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>

<b>DEBUT : EAR TESTS</b>				
<b>Attainment Band</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria not met</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Merit</b>	<b>Distinction</b>
<b>Mark Range</b>	<b>0-4</b>	<b>5-6</b>	<b>7-8</b>	<b>9-10</b>
<b>Grade Descriptor</b>	■ Incorrect responses	■ Some correct responses	■ Mostly correct responses	■ Consistently correct responses

<b>DEBUT : GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS</b>				
<b>Attainment Band</b>	<b>Assessment Criteria not met</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Merit</b>	<b>Distinction</b>
<b>Mark Range</b>	<b>0-2 correct responses</b>	<b>3 correct responses</b>	<b>4 correct responses</b>	<b>5 correct responses</b>

# Grade 1

The Grade 1 Piano exam is for candidates who have been typically learning for six months to one year. They have mastered the key basic debut level skills and have since acquired greater use of technique, rhythms, co-ordination and musical understanding.

There is also an opportunity to build on basic improvisation.

There are two types of exam available at Grade 1, either a **Grade Exam** or **Performance Certificate**. (Refer to the Introduction for an explanation of the differences).

## Grade 1

### GRADE EXAMS

#### PREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play **three** Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises which cover scales, arpeggios and chord voicings.

#### UNPREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to complete either a Sight Reading or Improvisation/Interpretation test and **two** Ear Tests that begin to develop melodic recall and chord recognition.

The final part of the exam comprises **five** questions which are designed to explore simple harmony, melody, rhythmic, technical and stylistic knowledge.

### EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 1 exam lasts **20 minutes** and is taken in the following order:

- **Performance Pieces\***
- **Technical Exercises \***
- **Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation:** Candidates are given an unseen test to prepare and perform.
- **Ear Tests:** Candidates respond to two aural tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic.
- **General Musicianship Questions:** Candidates answer five questions based on one of the pieces performed.

*\*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request*

#### Pieces

The pieces in the grade book can be used for both the Grade Exam and Performance Certificate. At Grade 1 they are short, typically one to one and a half minutes in duration. The expectation and length of pieces are designed so candidates can concentrate on the requirements of notation accuracy, values, evenness of sound, tone quality/consistency, technical control and sync at a beginner level.

#### Setting the level of the backing track

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Note: the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

## TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 1 there are **three** groups of technical work: Scales, Arpeggios and Chord Voicings.

All exercises need to be played hands separately, in straight feel, ascending and descending.

The examiner will ask for a selection from each group and Groups A and B need to be played to a compulsory metronome click. Group C does not require a metronome and can be played at a tempo of the candidate's choice.

The book can be used in the exam for Groups A and B. Group C needs to be played from memory. For Group C, candidates will be required to close their grade books or ensure the information on the KR player is out of view.

**Note: the use of any notes or any reading from the grade book when performing Group C will result in a deduction of marks for this element. (See Assessment Criteria).**

Any fingerings shown in the grade book are for suggestions only.

### GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 60bpm

Range: One octave

Rhythms: Eighth notes, finishing on a quarter note

- |                                |                                 |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ■ F major (right hand)         | ■ E natural minor (right hand)  |
| ■ F major (left hand)          | ■ E natural minor (left hand)   |
| ■ G major (right hand)         | ■ C Dorian (right hand)         |
| ■ G major (left hand)          | ■ C Dorian (left hand)          |
| ■ D natural minor (right hand) | ■ C harmonic minor (right hand) |
| ■ D natural minor (left hand)  | ■ C harmonic minor (left hand)  |

### GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 100bpm

Time signature: 3/4

Rhythms: Quarter notes, finishing on a dotted half note

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ■ F major broken chord (right hand) | ■ E minor broken chord (right hand)  |
| ■ F major broken chord (left hand)  | ■ E minor broken chord (left hand)   |
| ■ G major broken chord (right hand) | ■ C augmented arpeggio (right hand)  |
| ■ G major broken chord (left hand)  | ■ C augmented arpeggio (left hand)   |
| ■ D minor broken chord (right hand) | ■ C diminished arpeggio (right hand) |
| ■ D minor broken chord (left hand)  | ■ C diminished arpeggio (left hand)  |

### GROUP C: CHORD VOICINGS

Candidates will be asked to play one voicing of both the following chords (2 total):

- C diminished
- C augmented

Candidates need to choose and perform the voicing, one for each chord, from memory, from three options given for each chord in the grade book. The three options comprise right hand, left hand and both hands. In the exam, there will be no need to state which one beforehand.

There will be no requirement to present the chosen voicing to a particular tempo or a backing track/ metronome click but the examiner will be looking for speed of response.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 1, candidates will be offered the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. Both are previously unseen and examples of each are given in the grade book.

### SIGHT READING

**Key: F major or G major**

**Tempo: 70bpm**

**Time signature: 4/4**

**Rhythms: Whole, half, quarter notes, associated rests**

The Sight Reading test is in the form of a 4-6 bar melody.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

### IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

**Key: F major or G major**

**Tempo: 70bpm**

**Time signature: 4/4**

The Improvisation test is in the form of a 4-6 bar chord progression, with all chord symbols indicated.

Candidates are required to improvise single note melodies with either left or right hand. It is permissible to play chord voicings, or use both hands, but marks will only be awarded for melodic content.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

## EAR TESTS

At Grade 1 there are two ear tests: Melodic Recall and Chord Recognition. Both are previously unseen and an example of each is shown in the grade book.

### MELODIC RECALL

**Tempo: 95bpm**

**Rhythms: Whole, half notes**

The examiner will play three notes one after the other. Candidates are to state whether the second note is higher or lower in pitch than the first and whether the third note is higher or lower in pitch than the second. The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will also be a C root note at the beginning of the test for reference. For this exercise, candidates are to use the words 'higher' or 'lower'.

Credit will be given for speed of response.

### CHORD RECOGNITION

**Tempo: 95bpm**

**Rhythms: Whole notes**

The examiner will play a sequence of chords each with a C root note, then ask the candidate to state the chord quality of each chord from a choice of major, minor, diminished or augmented. The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a one-bar count-in.

Credit will be given for speed of response.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

At Grade 1 candidates will be asked **five** questions, one from each of the following groups:

- One question relating to harmony
- One question relating to melody
- One question relating to rhythms
- One question relating to technical requirements
- One question relating to genre

Candidates can choose the piece on which basis the questions will be asked. It must be one of the pieces performed in the exam. The exact bars or phrases will be chosen by the examiner.

The questions will cover the following topics:

### Group 1: Harmony

Interval construction of major / minor / augmented / diminished triad chords

### Group 2: Melody

Pitches in the bass clef within the stave.

### Group 3: Rhythm

Whole, half, quarter, eighth notes, associated rests. Eighth note triplets.

### Group 4: Technical

Fingering used in a minim length phrase. (Either hand).

### Group 5: Genre

Different artists from the same genre as the piece chosen.

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate plays five pieces in their preferred chosen order. The exam will last **15 minutes**.

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Once the level has been established, the examiner will then commence with the first piece in full.

**Note:** the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

GRADE 1 : PERFORMANCE PIECES				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–11	12–14	15–17	18–20
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Inconsistent awareness of timing/pulse</li> <li>■ Inconsistent use of rhythm, duration and phrasing</li> <li>■ Insecure sync/continuity</li> <li>■ Insecure use of articulation, expression and dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure basic techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing/ pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately some of the time</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity some of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing/ pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately most of the time</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity most of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing / pulse throughout</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately throughout</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity throughout</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 1 : TECHNICAL EXERCISES (SCALES, ARPEGGIOS, CHORD VOICINGS)				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–8	9–10	11–12	13–15
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to maintain pulse or tempo accurately</li> <li>■ Inability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo consistently</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases consistently</li> </ul>

GRADE 1 : SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–4	5–6	7–8	9–10
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure ability to read basic notation OR inability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation some of the time OR Secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation OR Mostly secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation OR Consistently secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>

GRADE 1 : EAR TESTS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Grade Descriptor	■ Incorrect responses	■ Some correct responses	■ Mostly correct responses	■ Consistently correct responses

GRADE 1 : GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-2 correct responses	3 correct responses	4 correct responses	5 correct responses

# Grade 2

The Grade 2 Piano exam is for candidates who have been typically learning for one year to eighteen months. They have mastered the key basic skills up to Grade 1 and since acquired greater use of technique, rhythms, co-ordination and musical understanding. There is also the continuing opportunity to develop improvisation skills.

There are two types of exam available at Grade 2, either a **Grade Exam** or **Performance Certificate**. (Refer to the Introduction for an explanation of the differences).

## Grade 2

### GRADE EXAMS

#### PREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play **three** Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises which cover scales, arpeggios and chord voicings.

#### UNPREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play either a Sight Reading or Improvisation/Interpretation test and two Ear Tests that continue to develop melodic recall and chord recognition. The final part of the exam comprises **five** questions which are designed to explore growing harmony, melody, rhythmic, technical and stylistic knowledge.

### EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 2 exam lasts **20 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- **Performance Pieces\***
- **Technical Exercises \***
- **Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation:** Candidates are given an unseen test to prepare and perform.
- **Ear Tests:** Candidates respond to two aural tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic.
- **General Musicianship Questions:** Candidates answer five questions based on one of the pieces performed.

*\*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request*

#### Pieces

The pieces in the grade book can be used for both the Grade Exam and Performance Certificate. At Grade 2 they are becoming longer, typically one to two minutes in duration. The expectation and length of pieces are designed so candidates can increase their understanding and execution of notation accuracy, values, evenness of sound, tone quality/consistency, technical control, articulation, expression and sync at a beginner level.

#### Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

## TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 2 there are three groups of technical work: Scales, Arpeggios and Chord Voicings.

All exercises need to be played in straight feel, ascending and descending, hands together (except for the chromatic scales and arpeggios which need to be played hands separately).

The examiner will ask for a selection from each group and Groups A and B need to be played to a compulsory metronome click. Group C does not require a metronome and can be played at a tempo of the candidate's choice.

The book can be used in the exam for Groups A and B. Group C needs to be played from memory. For Group C, candidates will be required to close their grade books or ensure the information on the KR player is out of view.

**Note: the use of any notes or any reading from the grade book when performing Group C will result in a deduction of marks for this element. (See Assessment Criteria).**

Any fingerings shown in the grade book are for suggestions only.

### GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 66bpm

Range: Two octaves (chromatic one octave)

Rhythms: Eighth notes, finishing on a quarter note

- |                    |                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ D major          | ■ C Mixolydian              |
| ■ Bb major         | ■ C melodic minor           |
| ■ B natural minor  | ■ D chromatic (right hand)  |
| ■ G natural minor  | ■ D chromatic (left hand)   |
| ■ B harmonic minor | ■ Bb chromatic (right hand) |
| ■ G harmonic minor | ■ Bb chromatic (left hand)  |

### GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 63bpm

Time signature: 3/4, 4/4

Rhythms: 3/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a dotted half note. 4/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a whole note.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| ■ D major arpeggio (right hand)  | ■ B minor arpeggio (left hand)         |
| ■ D major arpeggio (left hand)   | ■ G minor arpeggio (right hand)        |
| ■ Bb major arpeggio (right hand) | ■ G minor arpeggio (left hand)         |
| ■ Bb major arpeggio (left hand)  | ■ C dominant 7th arpeggio (right hand) |
| ■ B minor arpeggio (right hand)  | ■ C dominant 7th arpeggio (left hand)  |

### GROUP C: CHORD VOICINGS

Candidates will be asked to play one voicing of both the following chords (2 total):

- C dominant 7
- C minor 6

Candidates need to choose and perform the voicing, one for each chord, from memory, from three options given for each chord in the grade book. The three options comprise right hand, left hand and both hands. In the exam, there will be no need to state which one beforehand.

There will be no requirement to present the chosen voicing to a particular tempo or a backing / metronome click but the examiner will be looking for speed of response.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 2 candidates will be offered the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. Both are previously unseen and examples of each are given in the grade book.

### SIGHT READING

**Key:** Bb major or D major

**Tempo:** 60-95 bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**Rhythms:** Whole, dotted half, half, quarter, eighth notes, associated rests.

The Sight Reading test is in the form of a 4-6 bar melody.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

### IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

**Key:** Bb major or D major

**Tempo:** 60-95 bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

The Improvisation test is in the form of a 4-6 bar chord progression, with all chord symbols indicated.

Candidates are required to improvise single note melodies with either left or right hand. It is permissible to play chord voicings, or use both hands, but marks will only be awarded for melodic content.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning. The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

## EAR TESTS

At Grade 2 there are two ear tests: Melodic Recall and Chord Recognition. Both are previously unseen and an example of each is shown in the grade book.

### MELODIC RECALL

**Key: C major**

**Tempo: 95bpm**

**Time Signature: 4/4**

**Rhythms: Whole, half, quarter notes**

The examiner will play a 2 bar diatonic melody in the key of C major, with a range up to a fourth.

There will be a C root note at the beginning of the test, then the melody will be played twice. After this, candidates need to play the melody back to a metronome click. Both playings of the melody and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

The first note of the melody will be the root.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

### CHORD RECOGNITION

**Tempo: 95bpm**

**Rhythms: Whole notes**

The examiner will play a sequence of chords each with a C root note, then ask the candidate to state the chord quality of each chord from a choice of major, minor, diminished, augmented or dominant 7. The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a one-bar count-in.

The same chord quality may appear more than once within the sequence.

Credit will be given for speed of response.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

At Grade 2 candidates will be asked **five** questions, one from each of the following groups:

- One question relating to harmony
- One question relating to melody
- One question relating to rhythms
- One question relating to technical requirements
- One question relating to genre

Candidates can choose the piece on which basis the questions will be asked. It must be one of the pieces performed in the exam. The exact bars or phrases will be chosen by the examiner.

The questions will cover the following topics:

### Group 1: Harmony

Interval construction of major / minor triad, augmented / diminished triad, dom7 / sus4 chords.

### Group 2: Melody

Pitches in the treble clef within the stave.

### Group 3: Rhythm

Whole, half, quarter, eighth notes, dotted quarters and eighth notes, associated rests. Eighth note triplets and associated rests

### Group 4: Technical

Fingering used in a bar length phrase. (Either hand)

### Group 5: Genre

Different song titles from the same genre as the piece chosen.

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate plays **five** pieces in their preferred chosen order. The exam will last **15 minutes**.

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Once the level has been established, the examiner will then commence with the first piece in full.

**Note:** the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

GRADE 2 : PERFORMANCE PIECES				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–11	12–14	15–17	18–20
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Inconsistent awareness of timing/pulse</li> <li>■ Inconsistent use of rhythm, duration and phrasing</li> <li>■ Insecure sync/continuity</li> <li>■ Insecure use of articulation, expression and dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure basic techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing/ pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately some of the time</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity some of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing/ pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately most of the time</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity most of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing / pulse throughout</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately throughout</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity throughout</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 2 : TECHNICAL EXERCISES (SCALES, ARPEGGIOS, CHORD VOICINGS)				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–8	9–10	11–12	13–15
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to maintain pulse or tempo accurately</li> <li>■ Inability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo consistently</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases consistently</li> </ul>

GRADE 2 : SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–4	5–6	7–8	9–10
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure ability to read basic notation OR inability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation some of the time OR Secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation OR Mostly secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation OR Consistently secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>

GRADE 2 : EAR TESTS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Grade Descriptor	■ Incorrect responses	■ Some correct responses	■ Mostly correct responses	■ Consistently correct responses

GRADE 2 : GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-2 correct responses	3 correct responses	4 correct responses	5 correct responses

# Grade 3

The Grade 3 Piano exam is for candidates who have been typically learning for eighteen months to two years and who are ready to consolidate their final stage as a beginner player. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 2 and since acquired greater use of technique, rhythms, co-ordination and musical understanding. Improvisation phrasing is now confident and articulate and candidates have started to develop the beginnings of stylistic awareness.

There are two types of exam available at Grade 3, either a **Grade Exam** or **Performance Certificate**. (Refer to the Introduction for an explanation of the differences).

## Grade 3

### GRADE EXAMS

#### PREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play three Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises which cover scales, arpeggios and chord voicings.

#### UNPREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play either a Sight Reading or Improvisation/Interpretation test and **two** Ear Tests that continue to develop melodic recall and chord recognition. The final part of the exam comprises **five** questions which are designed to explore harmony, melody, rhythmic, technical and stylistic knowledge at Grade 3 level.

### EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 3 exam lasts **25 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- **Performance Pieces\***
- **Technical Exercises \***
- **Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation:** Candidates are given an unseen test to prepare and perform.
- **Ear Tests:** Candidates respond to two aural tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic.
- **General Musicianship Questions:** Candidates answer five questions based on one of the pieces performed.

*\*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request*

#### Pieces

The pieces in the grade book can be used for both the Grade Exam and Performance Certificate. At Grade 3 they are becoming longer, typically in the region of two minutes in duration. The expectation and length of pieces are designed so candidates can continue their understanding and execution of notation accuracy, values, evenness of sound, tone quality/consistency, technical control, expression, articulation and sync at a high beginner level. At Grade 3 pieces also introduce the needs for stylistic awareness as part of the assessment.

#### Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

## TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 3 there are three groups of technical work: Scales, Arpeggios and Chord Voicings.

All exercises need to be played in straight feel, ascending and descending, hands together (except for the chromatic scales and arpeggios which need to be played hands separately).

The examiner will ask for a selection from each group and Groups A and B need to be played to a compulsory metronome click. Group C does not require a metronome and can be played at a tempo of the candidate's choice.

The book can be used in the exam for Groups A and B. Group C needs to be played from memory. For Group C, candidates will be required to close their grade books or ensure the information on the KR player is out of view.

**Note: the use of any notes or any reading from the grade book when performing Group C will result in a deduction of marks for this element. (See Assessment Criteria).**

Any fingerings shown in the grade book are for suggestions only.

### GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 80 bpm

Range: Two octaves

Rhythms: Eighth notes, finishing on a quarter note.

- |                              |                             |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ A major                    | ■ C harmonic minor          |
| ■ A major (contrary motion)  | ■ C Lydian                  |
| ■ Eb major                   | ■ A chromatic (right hand)  |
| ■ Eb major (contrary motion) | ■ A chromatic (left hand)   |
| ■ F# natural minor           | ■ Eb chromatic (right hand) |
| ■ C natural minor            | ■ Eb chromatic (left hand)  |
| ■ F# harmonic minor          |                             |

### GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 69 bpm

Time Signature: 3/4, 4/4

Rhythms: 3/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a dotted half note. 4/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a whole note.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| ■ A major arpeggio  | ■ C minor arpeggio                                 |
| ■ Eb major arpeggio | ■ C major seventh arpeggio                         |
| ■ F# minor arpeggio | ■ C major ninth sharp eleven arpeggio (right hand) |
|                     | ■ C major ninth sharp eleven arpeggio (left hand)  |

### GROUP C: CHORD VOICINGS

Candidates will be asked to play one voicing of both the following chords (2 total):

- C major 7
- C dominant 9sus4

Candidates need to choose and perform the voicing, one for each chord, from memory, from three options given for each chord in the grade book. The three options comprise right hand, left hand and both hands. In the exam, there will be no need to state which one beforehand.

There will be no requirement to present the chosen voicing to a particular tempo or a backing / metronome click but the examiner will be looking for speed of response.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 3 candidates will be offered the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. Both are previously unseen and examples of each are given in the grade book.

### SIGHT READING

**Key:** Eb major or A major

**Tempo:** 60-95 bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**Rhythms:** Whole, dotted half, half, dotted quarter, quarter, eighth notes, eighth note ties, associated rests.

The Sight Reading test is in the form of a 4-8 bar melody.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

### IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

**Key:** Eb major or A major

**Tempo:** 60-95 bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

The Improvisation test is in the form of a 4-8 bar chord progression, with all chord symbols indicated.

Candidates are required to improvise single note melodies with either left or right hand. It is permissible to play chord voicings, or use both hands, but marks will only be awarded for melodic content.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

## EAR TESTS

At Grade 3 there are **two** ear tests: Melodic Recall and Chord Recognition. Both are previously unseen and an example of each is shown in the grade book.

### MELODIC RECALL

**Key:** C major

**Tempo:** 95bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**Rhythms:** Whole, half, quarter notes

The examiner will play a 2 bar diatonic melody in the key of C major, with a range up to a fifth.

There will be a C root note at the beginning of the test, then the melody will be played twice. After this, candidates need to play the melody back to a metronome click. Both playings of the melody and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

The first note of the melody will be the root.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising.

### CHORD RECOGNITION

**Tempo:** 95bpm

**Rhythms:** Whole notes

The examiner will play a sequence of chords each with a C root note, then ask the candidate to state the chord quality of two of the chords from a choice of major, minor, diminished, augmented, dominant 7 and major 7th. The examiner will select which two chords.

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a one-bar count-in.

Credit will be given for speed of response.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

At Grade 3 candidates will be asked **five** questions, one from each of the following groups:

- One question relating to harmony
- One question relating to melody
- One question relating to rhythms
- One question relating to technical requirements
- One question relating to genre

Candidates can choose the piece on which basis the questions will be asked. It must be one of the pieces performed in the exam. The exact bars or phrases will be chosen by the examiner.

The questions will cover the following topics:

### Group 1: Harmony

Chord degrees of the scale.

### Group 2: Melody

Identification of pitches in the bass clef within the staff.

### Group 3: Rhythm

Whole, half, quarter, eighth and associated dotted notes/rests, quarter/eighth note triplets and associated rests within one crotchet length.

### Group 4: Technical

Fingering used in a bar length phrase. (Both hands)

### Group 5: Genre

Different artists and song titles from the same genre as the piece chosen.

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate plays **five** pieces in their preferred chosen order. The exam will last **18 minutes**.

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Once the level has been established, the examiner will then commence with the first piece in full.

**Note:** the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

GRADE 3 : PERFORMANCE PIECES				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–11	12–14	15–17	18–20
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Inconsistent awareness of timing/pulse</li> <li>■ Inconsistent use of rhythm, duration and phrasing</li> <li>■ Insecure sync/continuity</li> <li>■ Insecure use of articulation, expression and dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure basic techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing/ pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately some of the time</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity some of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing/ pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately most of the time</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity most of the time</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure basic techniques</li> <li>■ Awareness of timing / pulse throughout</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use rhythm, duration and phrasing accurately throughout</li> <li>■ Use of basic sync/continuity throughout</li> <li>■ Basic ability to use articulation, expression and dynamics throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 3 : TECHNICAL EXERCISES (SCALES, ARPEGGIOS, CHORD VOICINGS)				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–8	9–10	11–12	13–15
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to maintain pulse or tempo accurately</li> <li>■ Inability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to maintain pulse and tempo consistently</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases consistently</li> </ul>

GRADE 3 : SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–4	5–6	7–8	9–10
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure ability to read basic notation OR inability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation some of the time OR Secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation OR Mostly secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to read basic rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation OR Consistently secure ability to improvise basic rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>

GRADE 3 : EAR TESTS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Grade Descriptor	■ Incorrect responses	■ Some correct responses	■ Mostly correct responses	■ Consistently correct responses

GRADE 3 : GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-2 correct responses	3 correct responses	4 correct responses	5 correct responses

# Grade 4

The Grade 4 Piano exam is for candidates who have been typically learning for two to three years and who are ready for intermediate level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 3 and since acquired greater use of technique, more complex rhythms, co-ordination and musical understanding. Candidates will be developing a sense of expression and continuing to broaden their stylistic awareness, and there is also the opportunity to improvise which will be growing in assurance and articulation.

There are two types of exam available at Grade 4, either a **Grade Exam** or **Performance Certificate**. (Refer to the Introduction for an explanation of the differences).

## Grade 4

### GRADE EXAMS

#### PREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play three Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises which cover scales, arpeggios and chord voicings

#### UNPREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play either a Sight Reading or Improvisation/Interpretation test and **two** Ear Tests, the first continuing to develop melodic recall and the second introducing harmonic recall. The final part of the exam comprises **five** questions which are designed to explore harmony, melody, rhythmic, technical and stylistic knowledge at Grade 4 level.

### EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 4 exam lasts **25 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- **Performance Pieces\***
- **Technical Exercises \***
- **Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation:** Candidates are given an unseen test to prepare and perform.
- **Ear Tests:** Candidates respond to two aural tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic.
- **General Musicianship Questions:** Candidates answer five questions based on one of the pieces performed.

*\*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request*

#### Pieces

The pieces in the grade book can be used for both the Grade Exam and Performance Certificate. At Grade 4 they are typically in the region of two to two and a half minutes in duration. The expectation and length of pieces are designed so candidates can acquire a solid understanding and execution of notation accuracy, values, evenness of sound, tone quality/consistency, technical control, articulation, expression, style awareness and sync at an early intermediate level.

#### Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

## TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 4 there are three groups of technical work: Scales, Arpeggios and Chord Voicings.

All exercises need to be played ascending and descending, hands together (except for the extended arpeggio which needs to be played hands separately), in either straight or swung feel, as directed by the examiner.

The examiner will ask for a selection from each group and Groups A and B need to be played to a compulsory metronome click. Group C does not require a metronome and can be played at a tempo of the candidate's choice.

In this grade, all Technical Exercises need to be played from memory. Candidates will be required to close their grade books or ensure the information on the KR player is out of view.

**Note: the use of any notes or any reading from the grade book during the technical exercises will result in a deduction of overall marks for this section. (See Assessment Criteria).**

Any fingerings shown in the grade book are for suggestions only.

### GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 104 bpm

Range: Two octaves

Rhythms: Eighth notes, finishing on a quarter note.

- |                              |                     |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| ■ E major                    | ■ C# harmonic minor |
| ■ E major (contrary motion)  | ■ F harmonic minor  |
| ■ Ab major                   | ■ C phrygian        |
| ■ Ab major (contrary motion) | ■ E chromatic       |
| ■ C# natural minor           | ■ Ab chromatic      |
| ■ F natural minor            |                     |

### GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 76 bpm

Time Signature: 3/4, 4/4

Rhythms: 3/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a dotted half note. 4/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a whole note.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| ■ E major arpeggio  | ■ C minor seventh arpeggio               |
| ■ Ab major arpeggio | ■ C minor eleventh arpeggio (right hand) |
| ■ C# minor arpeggio | ■ C minor eleventh arpeggio (left hand)  |
| ■ F minor arpeggio  |  |

### GROUP C: CHORD VOICINGS

Candidates will be asked to play two voicings of both the following chords (4 total):

- C dominant 9
- C minor 7

Candidates need to choose and perform the two voicings for each chord, from memory, from three options given for each chord in the grade book. The three options comprise right hand, left hand and both hands. In the exam, there will be no need to state which ones beforehand.

There will be no requirement to present the chosen voicings to a particular tempo or a backing / metronome click but the examiner will be looking for speed of response.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 4 candidates will be offered the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. Both are previously unseen and examples of each are given in the grade book.

### SIGHT READING

**Key:** Ab major or E major

**Tempo:** 60-130 bpm

**Time Signature:** 3/4, 4/4

**Rhythms:** Whole, dotted half, half, dotted quarter, quarter, eighth notes, associated rests.

The Sight Reading test is in the form of a 8-16 bar melody, with possible geographical instruction.

At Grade 4, there is an element of improvisation within the sight reading test. Candidates are required to play all notation and create appropriate parts to chord symbols. This is a graduation towards the Quick Study pieces at Grades 6-8 which combine sight reading and improvisation as a compulsory test.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

### IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

**Key:** Ab major or E major

**Tempo:** 60-130 bpm

**Time Signature:** 3/4, 4/4

The Improvisation test is in the form of a 8-16 bar chord progression with all chord symbols indicated.

Candidates are required to improvise diatonic single note melodies with right hand and chords in left hand.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

## EAR TESTS

At Grade 4 there are two ear tests: Melodic Recall and Harmonic Recall. Both are previously unseen and an example of each is shown in the grade book.

### MELODIC RECALL

**Key:** C major

**Tempo:** 95bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**Rhythms:** Half, quarter, eighth notes

The examiner will play a 2 bar diatonic melody in the key of C major, with a range up to a sixth.

There will be a C root note at the beginning of the test, then the melody will be played twice. After this, candidates need to play the melody back to a metronome click. Both playings of the melody and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

The first note of the melody will be the root.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising.

### HARMONIC RECALL

**Key:** C major

**Tempo:** 95bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**Rhythms:** Whole notes

The examiner will play a chord progression containing chords I, IV, V in any order or combination in the key of C major. Candidates will hear the test twice, then play the chords back to a metronome click. Both playings of the initial test and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

Note: there is no requirement for the chords to be voicing specific but the diatonic progression needs to be correct.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

At Grade 4 candidates will be asked **five** questions, one from each of the following groups:

- One question relating to harmony
- One question relating to melody
- One question relating to rhythms
- One question relating to technical requirements
- One question relating to genre

Candidates can choose the piece on which basis the questions will be asked. It must be one of the pieces performed in the exam. The exact bars or phrases will be chosen by the examiner.

The questions will cover the following topics:

### Group 1: Harmony

Identification of note intervals relative to a chord symbol. (Root/3rd/5th/7th)

### Group 2: Melody

Identification of pitches within the staff. (Treble or bass clef)

### Group 3: Rhythm

Whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth and associated dotted notes/rests and quarter/eighth note triplets and associated rests, up to one crotchet length.

### Group 4: Technical

Fingering used to play the 3rd//5th/7th note of a chord.

### Group 5: Genre

Melodic / harmonic / rhythmic devices indicative of the genre chosen.

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate plays **five** pieces in their preferred chosen order. The exam will last **22 minutes**.

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Once the level has been established, the examiner will then commence with the first piece in full.

**Note:** the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

GRADE 4 : PERFORMANCE PIECES				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–11	12–14	15–17	18–20
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Insecure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Insecure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing</li> <li>■ Insecure use of timing/pulse</li> <li>■ Inconsistent stylistic awareness</li> <li>■ Insecure sync/continuity</li> <li>■ Insecure use of articulation, expression and dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure physical techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure expressive techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Strong stylistic awareness some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of sync/continuity some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Mostly secure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Strong stylistic awareness most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of sync/continuity most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Consistently secure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse throughout</li> <li>■ Strong stylistic awareness throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of sync/continuity throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 4 : TECHNICAL EXERCISES (SCALES, ARPEGGIOS, CHORD VOICINGS)				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–8	9–10	11–12	13–15
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to maintain pulse or tempo accurately</li> <li>■ Inability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to maintain pulse and tempo some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to maintain pulse and tempo most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to maintain pulse and tempo consistently</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases consistently</li> </ul>

GRADE 4 : SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–4	5–6	7–8	9–10
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure ability to read notation</li> <li>■ Inability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>

GRADE 4 : EAR TESTS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Grade Descriptor	■ Incorrect responses	■ Some correct responses	■ Mostly correct responses	■ Consistently correct responses

GRADE 4 : GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-2 correct responses	3 correct responses	4 correct responses	5 correct responses

# Grade 5

The Grade 5 Piano exam is for candidates who have been typically learning for three years or more and who have fully consolidated their intermediate level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 4 and since acquired a greater use of appropriate technique, more complex rhythms, co-ordination and musical understanding. Candidates will have developed a good sense of expression, have a strong grasp of stylistic awareness, and there is also the opportunity to improvise which is now individual, assured, accurate and expressive.

There are two types of exam available at Grade 5, either a **Grade Exam** or **Performance Certificate**. (Refer to the Introduction for an explanation of the differences).

## Grade 5

### GRADE EXAMS

#### PREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play **three** Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises which cover scales, arpeggios and chord voicings.

#### UNPREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play either a Sight Reading or Improvisation/Interpretation test and there are also **two** Ear Tests which continue to develop melodic and harmonic recall. The final part of the exam comprises **five** questions which are designed to explore harmony, melody, rhythmic, technical and stylistic knowledge at Grade 5 level.

### EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 5 exam lasts **25 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- **Performance Pieces\***
- **Technical Exercises \***
- **Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation:** Candidates are given an unseen test to prepare and perform.
- **Ear Tests:** Candidates respond to two aural tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic.
- **General Musicianship Questions:** Candidates answer five questions based on one of the pieces performed.

*\*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request*

#### Pieces

The pieces in the grade book can be used for both the Grade Exam and Performance Certificate. At Grade 5 they remain typically in the region of two to two and a half minutes in duration. The expectation and length of pieces are designed so candidates can acquire a growing security and execution of notation accuracy, values, evenness of sound, tone quality/consistency, technical control, articulation, expression, style awareness and sync at intermediate level

#### Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

## TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 5 there are three groups of technical work: Scales, Arpeggios and Chord Voicings.

All exercises need to be played ascending and descending, hands together (except for the extended arpeggio which needs to be played hands separately), in either straight or swung feel, as directed by the examiner.

The examiner will ask for a selection from each group and Groups A and B need to be played to a compulsory metronome click. Group C does not require a metronome and can be played at a tempo of the candidate's choice.

In this grade, all Technical Exercises need to be played from memory. Candidates will be required to close their grade books or ensure the information on the KR player is out of view.

**Note: the use of any notes or any reading from the grade book during the technical exercises will result in a deduction of overall marks for this section. (See Assessment Criteria).**

Any fingerings shown in the grade book are for suggestions only.

### GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 126 bpm

Octave range: 3 octaves (except contrary motion scales - 2 octaves)

Rhythms: Eighth notes, finishing on a quarter note.

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| ■ B major                                | ■ G# harmonic minor |
| ■ B major (contrary motion) (2 octaves)  | ■ Bb harmonic minor |
| ■ Db major                               | ■ C locrian         |
| ■ Db major (contrary motion) (2 octaves) | ■ B chromatic       |
| ■ G# natural minor                       | ■ Db chromatic      |
| ■ Bb natural minor                       |                     |

### GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 88 bpm

Time Signature: 3/4, 4/4

Octave range: 3 octaves

Rhythms: 3/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a dotted half note. 4/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a whole note.

- |                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| ■ B major arpeggio  | ■ Bb minor arpeggio  |
| ■ Db major arpeggio | ■ C minor seventh flat five<br>(or C half diminished) arpeggio |
| ■ G# minor arpeggio | ■ C diminished seventh arpeggio                                |

### GROUP C: CHORD VOICINGS

Candidates will be asked to play two voicings of both the following chords (4 total):

- C diminished 7
- C minor 7b5

Candidates need to choose and perform the two voicings for each chord, from memory, from three options given for each chord in the grade book. The three options comprise right hand, left hand and both hands. In the exam, there will be no need to state which ones beforehand.

There will be no requirement to present the chosen voicings to a particular tempo or a backing / metronome click but the examiner will be looking for speed of response.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 5 candidates will be offered the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. Both are previously unseen and examples of each are given in the grade book.

### SIGHT READING

**Key:** Db major or B major

**Tempo:** 60-130 bpm

**Time Signature:** 3/4, 4/4

**Rhythms:** Whole, dotted half, half, dotted quarter, quarter, eighth, sixteenth notes, associated rests. Eighth, quarter, sixteenth note ties.

**Dynamic Markings:** *p* – *f*

The Sight Reading test is in the form of a 8-16 bar melody, with possible geographical instruction.

At Grade 5, there is an element of improvisation within the sight reading test. Candidates are required to play all notation and create appropriate parts to chord symbols. This is a graduation towards the Quick Study pieces at Grades 6-8, which combine sight reading and improvisation as a compulsory test.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds.

### IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

**Key:** Db major or B major

**Tempo:** 60-130 bpm

**Time Signature:** 3/4, 4/4

The Improvisation test is in the form of a 8-16 bar chord progression with all chord symbols indicated.

Candidates are required to improvise diatonic single note melodies with right hand and chords in left hand.

Candidates will have **90** seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track to practise during the 90 seconds..

## EAR TESTS

At Grade 5 there are two ear tests: Melodic Recall and Harmonic Recall. Both are previously unseen and an example of each is shown in the grade book.

### MELODIC RECALL

**Key: C major**

**Tempo: 95bpm**

**Time Signature: 4/4**

**Rhythms: Half, quarter, eighth notes. (Notes may be tied)**

The examiner will play a 2 bar diatonic melody in the key of C major, with a range up to an octave.

There will be a C root note at the beginning of the test, then the melody will be played twice. After this, candidates need to play the melody back to a metronome click. Both playings of the melody and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

The first note of the melody will be either the root or fifth.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising

### HARMONIC RECALL

**Key: C major**

**Tempo: 95bpm**

**Time Signature: 4/4**

**Rhythms: Half notes.**

The examiner will play a chord progression containing chords I, II, IV, V, VI in any order or combination in the key of C major. At this grade, seventh chords are introduced. Candidates will hear the test twice, then play the chords back to a metronome click. Both playings of the initial test and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

**Note:** there is no requirement for the chords to be voicing specific but the diatonic progression needs to be correct.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

At Grade 5 candidates will be asked **five** questions, one from each of the following groups:

- One question relating to harmony
- One question relating to melody
- One question relating to rhythms
- One question relating to technical requirements
- One question relating to genre

Candidates can choose the piece on which basis the questions will be asked. It must be one of the pieces performed in the exam. The exact bars or phrases will be chosen by the examiner.

The questions will cover the following topics:

### Group 1: Harmony

Identification of intervals relative to a chord symbol. (Root/3rd/5th/7th/9th/11th/13th).

### Group 2: Melody

Identification of pitches in the within the staff. (Treble or bass clef)

### Group 3: Rhythm

Whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth and associated dotted notes/rests and quarter/eighth note triplets and associated rests, up to one crotchet length.

### Group 4: Technical

Fingering used to play the 3rd//5th/7th/9th note of a chord

### Group 5: Genre

Melodic / harmonic / rhythmic devices indicative of the genre chosen.

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate plays **five** pieces in their preferred chosen order. The exam will last **22 minutes**.

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Once the level has been established, the examiner will then commence with the first piece in full.

**Note:** the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

GRADE 5 : PERFORMANCE PIECES				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–11	12–14	15–17	18–20
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Insecure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Insecure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing</li> <li>■ Insecure use of timing/pulse</li> <li>■ Inconsistent stylistic awareness</li> <li>■ Insecure sync/continuity</li> <li>■ Insecure use of articulation, expression and dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure physical techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure expressive techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Strong stylistic awareness some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of sync/continuity some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Mostly secure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Strong stylistic awareness most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of sync/continuity most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Consistently secure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse throughout</li> <li>■ Strong stylistic awareness throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of sync/continuity throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 5 : TECHNICAL EXERCISES (SCALES, ARPEGGIOS, CHORD VOICINGS)				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–8	9–10	11–12	13–15
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to maintain pulse or tempo accurately</li> <li>■ Inability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases accurately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to maintain pulse and tempo some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to maintain pulse and tempo most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ability to maintain pulse and tempo consistently</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases consistently</li> </ul>

GRADE 5 : SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–4	5–6	7–8	9–10
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure ability to read notation</li> <li>■ Inability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>

GRADE 5 : EAR TESTS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Grade Descriptor	■ Incorrect responses	■ Some correct responses	■ Mostly correct responses	■ Consistently correct responses

GRADE 5 : GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-2 correct responses	3 correct responses	4 correct responses	5 correct responses

# Grade 6

The Grade 6 Piano exam is for candidates who have been typically learning in the region of four or more years and who have reached the first stage of advanced level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 5 and have since developed appropriate technique, expressive devices, rhythmic complexity, co-ordination and musical understanding.

Candidates will have an increased extent of individuality, enhanced stylistic awareness and will be able to improvise with convincing shape and articulation. There will be good understanding of form and structure with clear musical communication.

There are two types of exam available at Grade 6, either a **Grade Exam** or **Performance Certificate**. (Refer to the Introduction for an explanation of the differences).

## Grade 6

### GRADE EXAMS

#### PREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play **three** Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises which cover scales, arpeggios, chord voicings and stylistic studies.

#### UNPREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to prepare and perform a Quick Study Piece which incorporates both sight reading and improvisation, and there are also **two** Ear Tests which continue to develop melodic and harmonic recall. The final part of the exam comprises **five** questions which are designed to explore harmony, melody, rhythmic, technical and stylistic knowledge at Grade 6 level.

### EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 6 exam lasts **30 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- **Performance Pieces\***
- **Technical Exercises \***
- **Quick Study Piece:** Candidates are given an unseen test to prepare and perform
- **Ear Tests:** Candidates respond to two aural tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic.
- **General Musicianship Questions:** Candidates answer five questions based on one of the pieces performed.

*\*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request*

#### Pieces

The pieces in the grade book can be used for both the Grade Exam and Performance Certificate. At Grade 6 they are longer, typically in the region of two and a half to three minutes in duration. The expectation and length of pieces are designed so candidates can confidently understand and execute notation accuracy, values, evenness of sound, tone quality/consistency, technical control, articulation, style awareness and sync at an early advanced level. There will be assured presentation of musical structure with clear, convincing expressive communication.

#### Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

## TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 6 there are **four** groups of technical work: Scales, Arpeggios, Chord Voicings, Stylistic Studies.

All exercises need to be played ascending and descending, hands together, in either straight or swung feel as directed by the examiner and with either normal or legato articulation as directed by the examiner.

The examiner will ask for a selection from each group and Groups A and B need to be played to a compulsory metronome click. Group C does not require a metronome and can be played at a tempo of the candidate's choice. Group D is played to the backing track.

In this grade, all Technical Exercises (including the stylistic study) need to be played from memory. Candidates will be required to close their grade books or ensure the KR player is out of view.

**Note:** the use of any notes or any reading from the grade book during the technical exercises will result in a deduction of overall marks for this section. (See Assessment Criteria).

Any fingerings shown in the grade book are for suggestions only.

### GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 152 bpm

Octave range: 4 octaves (except contrary motion scales - 2 octaves)

Rhythms: Eighth notes, finishing on a quarter note.

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| ■ F# major                               | ■ D#harmonic minor  |
| ■ F# major (contrary motion) (2 octaves) | ■ Eb harmonic minor |
| ■ Gb major                               | ■ C lydian dominant |
| ■ Gb major (contrary motion) (2 octaves) | ■ C altered scale   |
| ■ D# natural minor                       | ■ F# chromatic      |
| ■ Eb natural minor                       |                     |

### GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Tempo: 100 bpm

Time Signature: 3/4, 4/4

Octave range: 4 octaves (except extended arpeggios - 2 octaves).

Rhythms: 3/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a dotted half. 4/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a half note.

- |                     |                               |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| ■ F# major arpeggio | ■ Eb minor arpeggio           |
| ■ Gb major arpeggio | ■ C13#11 arpeggio (2 octaves) |
| ■ D# minor arpeggio |                               |

## GROUP C: CHORD VOICINGS

Candidates will be asked to play three voicings of both the following chords (6 total):

- **C dominant 7#11**
- **C altered**

The three voicings required for each chord are shown in the grade book and comprise right hand, left hand and both hands.

In the exam, there is no requirement to present the voicings to a particular tempo or a backing / metronome click, but the test is played from memory and the examiner will be looking for speed of response.

## GROUP D: STYLISTIC STUDIES

**Tempo: 65-240 bpm**

**Time Signature: 4/4, 12/8, 7/8**

Candidates will need to choose and prepare one of the stylistic studies given in the grade book, from the list of styles below. The stylistic study will be played back in full to the backing track.

- **Pop and Rock**
- **Jazz, Blues and Soul**
- **Film and Musical Theatre**

## QUICK STUDY PIECE

**Key: Gb major, F# major, Eb minor, D# minor**

**Time Signature: Simple or compound**

At Grade 6 candidates will need to prepare and perform a short Quick Study Piece (QSP) to a backing track. The QSP is in the form of a lead sheet and includes both sight-reading and the creation of improvised parts where directed.

The piece will be between 16-24 bars in length and rhythms and chords will be indicated, with written notation, articulation, expressive/dynamic markings and musical directions. At Grade 6, note lengths and rhythm values will typically be Grade 4 standard.

Candidates will need to choose the style grouping from the list below. It is acceptable if candidates wish to choose the same group as the stylistic study.

- **Pop and Rock**
- **Jazz, Blues and Soul**
- **Film and Musical Theatre**

First, the examiner will give the lead sheet to the candidate. Then the candidate will hear a full mix version of the piece, including both the notated parts and an example version of the improvised parts. After the full mix, candidates will have three minutes to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice, with the piano parts now absent. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in.

During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track (without piano parts) to practise during the **90** seconds.

## EAR TESTS

At Grade 6 there are two ear tests: Melodic Recall and Harmonic Recall. Both are previously unseen and an example of each is shown in the grade book.

### MELODIC RECALL

**Key:** C major

**Tempo:** 95bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**Rhythms:** Half, quarter, eighth notes.

The examiner will play a 2 bar diatonic melody in the key of C major, with a range up to an octave.

There will be a C root note at the beginning of the test, then the melody will be played twice. After this, candidates need to play the melody back to a metronome click. Both playings of the melody and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

The first note of the melody will be either the root or fifth.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising.

### HARMONIC RECALL

**Key:** C major

**Tempo:** 95bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**Rhythms:** Whole, half notes

The examiner will play a chord progression containing chords I, II, III, IV, V, VI in any order or combination in the key of C major, including seventh chords. Candidates will hear the test twice, then play the chords back to a metronome click. Both playings of the initial test and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

**Note:** there is no requirement for the chords to be voicing specific but the diatonic progression needs to be correct.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

At Grade 6 candidates will be asked **five** questions, one from each of the following groups:

- One question relating to harmony
- One question relating to melody
- One question relating to rhythms
- One question relating to technical requirements
- One question relating to genre

Candidates can choose the piece on which basis the questions will be asked. It must be one of the pieces performed in the exam. The exact bars or phrases will be chosen by the examiner.

The questions will cover the following topics:

### Group 1: Harmony

Appropriate modes which can be played over maj7 / min7 / dom7 / sus4 / 9sus4 / maj9# chords.

### Group 2: Melody

Interval of any note relative to the chord symbol.

### Group 3: Rhythm

Whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth, thirty-second notes, any dotted notes, triplets, any associated rests up to one crotchet length.

### Group 4: Technical

Fingering used to play the 3rd//5th/7th/9th/11th note of a chord.

### Group 5: Genre

Melodic / harmonic / rhythmic devices indicative of the genre chosen.

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate plays **five** pieces in their preferred chosen order. The exam will last **25** minutes.

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Once the level has been established, the examiner will then commence with the first piece in full.

**Note:** the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

GRADE 6 : PERFORMANCE PIECES				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–11	12–14	15–17	18–20
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Insecure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Insecure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing</li> <li>■ Insecure use of timing/pulse</li> <li>■ Inconsistent stylistic awareness</li> <li>■ Insecure sync/continuity</li> <li>■ Insecure use of articulation, expression and dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure physical techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure expressive techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to demonstrate stylistic awareness some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of sync/continuity some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Mostly secure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to demonstrate stylistic awareness most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of harmony and melody most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Consistently secure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse throughout</li> <li>■ Ability to demonstrate stylistic awareness throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of harmony and melody throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 6 : TECHNICAL EXERCISES (SCALES, ARPEGGIOS, CHORD VOICINGS, STYLISTIC STUDY)				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–8	9–10	11–12	13–15
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to maintain pitch, pulse or rhythm accurately</li> <li>■ Inability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases accurately</li> <li>■ Insecure use of diction, articulation and phrasing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to play with accuracy, pitch, rhythm and pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of diction, articulation and phrasing some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to play with accuracy, pitch, rhythm and pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of diction, articulation and phrasing most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to play with accuracy, pitch, rhythm and pulse consistently</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases consistently</li> <li>■ Secure use of diction, articulation and phrasing throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 6 : QUICK STUDY				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–4	5–6	7–8	9–10
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Inability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>

GRADE 6 : EAR TESTS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Grade Descriptor	■ Incorrect responses	■ Some correct responses	■ Mostly correct responses	■ Consistently correct responses

GRADE 6 : GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-2 correct responses	3 correct responses	4 correct responses	5 correct responses

# Grade 7

The Grade 7 Piano exam is for candidates who have been typically learning for four to five years and have extended their advanced level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 6 and developed notable security of appropriate technique, use of expressive devices, rhythmic complexity, fluency and musical understanding. Candidates will be able to improvise with conviction and personality plus demonstrate strong musical form and structure. There will be mature and authentic stylistic awareness, with developing individuality and communication.

There are two types of exam available at Grade 7, either a **Grade Exam** or **Performance Certificate**. (Refer to the Introduction for an explanation of the differences).

## Grade 7

### GRADE EXAMS

#### PREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play three Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises which cover scales, arpeggios, chord voicings and Stylistic Studies.

#### UNPREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to prepare and perform a Quick Study Piece which incorporates both sight reading and improvisation, and there are also **two** Ear Tests which continue to develop melodic and harmonic recall. The final part of the exam comprises **five** questions which are designed to explore harmony, melody, rhythmic, technical and stylistic knowledge at Grade 7 level.

### EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 7 exam lasts **30 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- **Performance Pieces\***
- **Technical Exercises \***
- **Quick Study Piece:** Candidates are given an unseen test to prepare and perform
- **Ear Tests:** Candidates respond to two aural tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic.
- **General Musicianship Questions:** Candidates answer five questions based on one of the pieces performed.

*\*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request*

#### Pieces

The pieces in the grade book can be used for both the Grade Exam and Performance Certificate. At Grade 7 they are longer, typically up to three minutes in duration. The expectation and length of pieces are designed so candidates can convincingly understand and execute notation accuracy, values, evenness of sound, tone quality/consistency, technical control, articulation, style awareness and sync at an advanced level. There will be highly assured presentation of musical structure with fluent, individually shaped and highly expressive communication.

#### Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

## TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 7 there are **four** groups of technical work: Scales, Arpeggios, Chord Voicings, Stylistic Studies.

All exercises need to be played ascending and descending, hands together, in either straight or swung feel as directed by the examiner and with either staccato or legato articulation as directed by the examiner.

The examiner will ask for a selection from each group and Groups A and B need to be played to a compulsory metronome click. Group C does not require a metronome and can be played at a tempo of the candidate's choice. Group D is played to the backing track.

In this grade, all Technical Exercises (including the stylistic study) need to be played from memory. Candidates will be required to close their grade books or ensure the KR player is out of view.

**Note:** the use of any notes or any reading from the grade book during the technical exercises will result in a deduction of overall marks for this section. (See Assessment Criteria).

Any fingerings shown in the grade book are for suggestions only.

### GROUP A: SCALES

**Tempo:** 160 bpm

**Octave range:** 4 octaves (except contrary motion scales - 2 octaves)

**Rhythms:** Eighth notes, finishing on a quarter/dotted half note.

- |  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| ■ C# major                               | ■ Ab natural minor  |
| ■ C# major (contrary motion) (2 octaves) | ■ A# harmonic minor |
| ■ Cb major                               | ■ Ab harmonic minor |
| ■ Cb major (contrary motion) (2 octaves) | ■ C wholetone       |
| ■ A# natural minor                       |                     |

### GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

**Tempo:** 112 bpm

**Time Signature:** 3/4, 4/4

**Octave range:** 4 octaves (except extended arpeggio - 1 octave).

**Rhythms:** 3/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a dotted half note. 4/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a whole/half note.

- |                     |                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------|
| ■ C# major arpeggio | ■ G7 arpeggio              |
| ■ Cb major arpeggio | ■ F7 arpeggio              |
| ■ A# minor arpeggio | ■ D7 arpeggio              |
| ■ Ab minor arpeggio | ■ Bb7 arpeggio             |
| ■ D Dim7 arpeggio   | ■ C9#5 arpeggio (1 octave) |
| ■ Bb Dim7 arpeggio  |                            |

## GROUP C: CHORD VOICINGS

Candidates will be asked to play three voicings of two of the following three chords (6 total). The examiner will select which two:

- C dominant 7b9
- C dominant 7#5
- C dominant 9#5

The three voicings required for each chord are shown in the grade book and comprise right hand, left hand and both hands. In the exam, there is no requirement to present the voicings to a particular tempo or a backing / metronome click, but the test is played from memory and the examiner will be looking for speed of response.

## GROUP D: STYLISTIC STUDIES

**Tempo: 90-140 bpm**

**Time Signature: 4/4, 12/8**

Candidates will need to choose and prepare one of the stylistic studies given in the grade book, from the list of styles below. The stylistic study will be played back in full to the backing track.

- Pop and Rock
- Jazz, Blues and Soul
- Film and Musical Theatre

## QUICK STUDY PIECE

**Key: Any key**

**Time Signature: Simple or compound**

At Grade 7 candidates will need to prepare and perform a short Quick Study Piece (QSP) to a backing track. The QSP is in the form of a lead sheet and includes both sight-reading and the creation of improvised parts where directed.

The piece will be between 14-28 bars in length and rhythms and chords will be indicated, with written notation, articulation, expressive/dynamic markings and musical directions. At Grade 7, note lengths and rhythm values will typically be Grade 5 standard.

Candidates will need to choose the style grouping from the list below. It is acceptable if candidates wish to choose the same group as the stylistic study.

- Pop and Rock
- Jazz, Blues and Soul
- Film and Musical Theatre

First, the examiner will give the lead sheet to the candidate. Then the candidate will hear a full mix version of the piece, including both the notated parts and an example version of the improvised parts. After the full mix, candidates will have three minutes to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice, with the piano parts now absent. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in.

During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track (without piano parts) to practise during the **90** seconds.

## EAR TESTS

At Grade 7 there are **two** ear tests: Melodic Recall and Harmonic Recall. Both are previously unseen and an example of each is shown in the grade book.

### MELODIC RECALL

**Key: C major or C minor**

**Tempo: 95bpm**

**Time Signature: 4/4**

**Rhythms: Half, quarter, eighth notes.**

The examiner will play a 2 bar diatonic melody in the key of either C major or C minor, with a range up to an octave.

There will be a C root note at the beginning of the test, then the melody will be played twice. After this, candidates need to play the melody back to a metronome click. Both playings of the melody and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

The first note of the melody will be either the root or fifth.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising.

### HARMONIC RECALL

**Key: C major**

**Tempo: 95bpm**

**Time Signature: 4/4**

**Rhythms: Whole, half notes**

The examiner will play a chord progression containing any combination of chords from the C major scale, including seventh chords. Candidates will hear the test twice, then play the chords back to a metronome click. Both playings of the initial test and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

**Note:** there is no requirement for the chords to be voicing specific but the diatonic progression needs to be correct.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

At Grade 7 candidates will be asked **five** questions, one from each of the following groups:

- One question relating to harmony
- One question relating to melody
- One question relating to rhythms
- One question relating to technical requirements
- One question relating to genre

Candidates can choose the piece on which basis the questions will be asked. It must be one of the pieces performed in the exam. The exact bars or phrases will be chosen by the examiner.

The questions will cover the following topics:

### Group 1: Harmony

Scales / modes which are being played.

### Group 2: Melody

Intervallic construction of melodic phrases within the piece up to crotchet length.

### Group 3: Rhythm

Whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth, thirty-second notes, any dotted notes, triplets or any associated rests up to one minim length.

### Group 4: Technical

Fingering used to play the 3rd//5th/7th/9th/11th/13th note of a chord.

### Group 5: Genre

Melodic / harmonic / rhythmic devices indicative of the genre chosen.

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate plays **five** pieces in their preferred chosen order. The exam will last **25** minutes.

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Once the level has been established, the examiner will then commence with the first piece in full.

**Note:** the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

GRADE 7 : PERFORMANCE PIECES				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–11	12–14	15–17	18–20
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Insecure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Insecure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing</li> <li>■ Insecure use of timing/pulse</li> <li>■ Inconsistent stylistic awareness</li> <li>■ Insecure sync/continuity</li> <li>■ Insecure use of articulation, expression and dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure physical techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure expressive techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to demonstrate stylistic awareness some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of sync/continuity some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Mostly secure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to demonstrate stylistic awareness most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of harmony and melody most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Consistently secure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/pulse throughout</li> <li>■ Ability to demonstrate stylistic awareness throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of harmony and melody throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 7 : TECHNICAL EXERCISES (SCALES, ARPEGGIOS, CHORD VOICINGS, STYLISTIC STUDY)				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–8	9–10	11–12	13–15
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to maintain pitch, pulse or rhythm accurately</li> <li>■ Inability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases accurately</li> <li>■ Insecure use of diction, articulation and phrasing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to play with accuracy, pitch, rhythm and pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of diction, articulation and phrasing some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to play with accuracy, pitch, rhythm and pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of diction, articulation and phrasing most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to play with accuracy, pitch, rhythm and pulse consistently</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases consistently</li> <li>■ Secure use of diction, articulation and phrasing throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 7 : QUICK STUDY				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–4	5–6	7–8	9–10
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Inability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>

GRADE 7 : EAR TESTS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Grade Descriptor	■ Incorrect responses	■ Some correct responses	■ Mostly correct responses	■ Consistently correct responses

GRADE 7 : GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-2 correct responses	3 correct responses	4 correct responses	5 correct responses

# Grade 8

The Grade 8 Piano exam is for candidates who have been typically learning for five years or more and have now consolidated their playing to a high level. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 7 and developed heightened technique, use of expressive devices, rhythmic complexity, fluency, co-ordination and musical understanding. Candidates will be able to improvise to an advanced level with effortless assurance and personality plus demonstrate seamless musical form and structure. There will be an innate stylistic conviction and distinctive musicality with strong individuality. Communication will be commanding.

There are two types of exam available at Grade 8, either a **Grade Exam** or **Performance Certificate**. (Refer to the Introduction for an explanation of the differences).

## Grade 8

### GRADE EXAMS

#### PREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to play three Performance Pieces and Technical Exercises which cover scales, arpeggios, chord voicings and stylistic studies.

#### UNPREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to prepare and perform a Quick Study Piece which incorporates both sight reading and improvisation, and there are also **two** Ear Tests which continue to develop melodic and harmonic recall. The final part of the exam comprises **five** questions which are designed to explore harmony, melody, rhythmic, technical and stylistic knowledge at Grade 8 level.

### EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 8 exam lasts **30 minutes** and will be taken in the following order:

- **Performance Pieces\***
- **Technical Exercises \***
- **Quick Study Piece:** Candidates are given an unseen test to prepare and perform
- **Ear Tests:** Candidates respond to two aural tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic.
- **General Musicianship Questions:** Candidates answer five questions based on one of the pieces performed.

*\*These elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request*

#### Pieces

The pieces in the grade book can be used for both the Grade Exam and Performance Certificate. At Grade 8 they are longer, typically in the region of three to three and a half minutes in duration. The expectation and length of pieces are designed so candidates can demonstrate complete ownership of notation accuracy, values, evenness of sound, tone quality/consistency, technical control, articulation, style awareness and sync at an advanced level. There will be instinctive presentation of musical structure with effortlessly fluent, maturely expressive communication.

#### Setting the level of the backing track

At the start of the exam the examiner will conduct a sound check to ensure that the level of the backing track is satisfactory for the candidate. Candidates will be asked to sing along to the backing track for the first few bars of the first Performance Piece. The sound check is not marked and once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will start the exam with either the Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises at the candidate's choice. Note that the sound check is only conducted for the first piece.

## TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 8 there are **four** groups of technical work: Scales, Arpeggios, Chord Voicings, Stylistic Studies.

All exercises need to be played ascending and descending, hands together, in either straight or swung feel as directed by the examiner and with either staccato or legato articulation as directed by the examiner.

The examiner will ask for a selection from each group and Groups A and B need to be played to a compulsory metronome click. Group C does not require a metronome and can be played at a tempo of the candidate's choice. Group D is played to the backing track.

In this grade, all Technical Exercises (including the stylistic study) need to be played from memory. Candidates will be required to close their grade books or ensure the KR player is out of view.

**Note:** the use of any notes or any reading from the grade book during the technical exercises will result in a deduction of overall marks for this section. (See Assessment Criteria).

Any fingerings shown in the grade book are for suggestions only.

### GROUP A: SCALES

**Tempo:** 176 bpm

**Octave range:** 4 octaves

**Rhythms:** Eighth notes, finishing on a whole note.

**Rhythms:** Eighth notes, finishing on a quarter/dotted half note.

- C half-whole diminished
- C whole-half diminished

### GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

**Tempo:** 132 bpm

**Time Signature:** 3/4, 4/4

**Octave range:** 4 octaves (except extended arpeggio shown below, 1 octave)

**Rhythms:** 3/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a dotted half note. 4/4: Eighth notes, finishing on a whole note.

- |                |                                |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| ■ A7 arpeggio  | ■ Db7 arpeggio                 |
| ■ Eb7 arpeggio | ■ F#7 arpeggio                 |
| ■ E7 arpeggio  | ■ Gb7 arpeggio                 |
| ■ Ab7 arpeggio | ■ C13b9#11 arpeggio (1 octave) |
| ■ B7 arpeggio  |                                |

#### Additional Scale

Candidates will be asked to perform **one** additional scale from any of the Group A exercises in any of the previous grades, selected by the examiner. The scale will need to be played ascending and descending, in eighth notes and hands together. The examiner will confirm the scale, number of octaves, whether straight or swung, tempo and time signature.

#### Additional Arpeggio

Candidates will be asked to perform **one** additional arpeggio from any of the Group B exercises in any of the previous grades, selected by the examiner. The scale will need to be played ascending and descending, in eighth notes and hands together. The examiner will confirm the scale, number of octaves, whether straight or swung, tempo and time signature.

## GROUP C: CHORD VOICINGS

Candidates will be asked to play three voicings of two of the following three chords (6 total):

- C dominant 13b9
- C diminished major 7

The three voicings required for each chord are shown in the grade book and comprise right hand, left hand and both hands.

In the exam, there is no requirement to present the voicings to a particular tempo or a backing / metronome click, but the test is played from memory and the examiner will be looking for speed of response.

## GROUP D: STYLISTIC STUDIES

**Tempo: 75-170 bpm**

**Time Signature: 4/4**

Candidates will need to choose and prepare one of the stylistic studies given in the grade book, from the list of styles below. The stylistic study will be played back in full to the backing track.

- Pop and Rock
- Jazz, Blues and Soul
- Film and Musical Theatre

## QUICK STUDY PIECE

**Key: Any key**

**Time Signature: Simple or compound**

At Grade 8 candidates will need to prepare and perform a short Quick Study Piece (QSP) to a backing track. The QSP is in the form of a lead sheet and includes both sight-reading and the creation of improvised parts where directed.

The piece will be between 14-28 bars in length and rhythms and chords will be indicated, with written notation, articulation, expressive/dynamic markings and musical directions. At Grade 8, note lengths and rhythm values will typically be Grade 8 standard.

Candidates will need to choose the style grouping from the list below. It is acceptable if candidates wish to choose the same group as the stylistic study

- Pop and Rock
- Jazz, Blues and Soul
- Film and Musical Theatre

First, the examiner will give the lead sheet to the candidate. Then the candidate will hear a full mix version of the piece, including both the notated parts and an example version of the improvised parts. After the full mix, candidates will have three minutes to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice, with the piano parts now absent. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. For each playthrough, the backing track will begin with a one bar count-in.

During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

**Note:** it is acceptable for candidates to also ask for additional playing(s) of the backing track (without piano parts) to practise during the **90** seconds.

## EAR TESTS

At Grade 8 there are **two** ear tests: Melodic Recall and Harmonic Recall. Both are previously unseen and an example of each is shown in the grade book.

### MELODIC RECALL

**Key:** C major, C natural minor or C harmonic minor

**Tempo:** 95bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**Rhythms:** Half, quarter, eighth notes.

The examiner will play a 2 bar diatonic melody in the key of either C major, C natural minor or C harmonic minor, with a range up to an octave.

There will be a C root note at the beginning of the test, then the melody will be played twice. After this, candidates need to play the melody back to a metronome click. Both playings of the melody and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

The first note of the melody will be either the root, third or fifth.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising.

### HARMONIC RECALL

**Key:** C major or C minor

**Tempo:** 95bpm

**Time Signature:** 4/4

**Rhythms:** Whole, half notes

The examiner will play a chord progression containing any combination of chords from either the C major or C minor scale, including seventh chords. Candidates will hear the test twice, then play the chords back to a metronome click. Both playings of the initial test and the metronome backing for the exam version will be preceded by a one bar count-in.

**Note:** there is no requirement for the chords to be voicing specific but the diatonic progression needs to be correct.

It is acceptable for candidates to play over the track as the test is being played and there will be 10 seconds to practise after the second playing. The piano can be used to assist at any time prior to being counted in to perform the exam version.

**Note:** the 10 seconds is pre-recorded on the audio track so the count-in for the exam version may begin while candidates are still practising.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

At Grade 8 candidates will be asked **five** questions, one from each of the following groups:

- One question relating to harmony
- One question relating to melody
- One question relating to rhythms
- One question relating to technical requirements
- One question relating to genre

Candidates can choose the piece on which basis the questions will be asked. It must be one of the pieces performed in the exam. The exact bars or phrases will be chosen by the examiner.

The questions will cover the following topics:

### Group 1: Harmony

Scales / modes which are being played.

### Group 2: Melody

Intervallic construction of melodic phrases within the piece up to crotchet length.

### Group 3: Rhythm

Whole, half, quarter, eighth, sixteenth, thirty-second notes, any dotted notes, triplets or any associated rests up to one minim length.

### Group 4: Technical

Fingering required to execute voice leading between two consecutive chord voicings.

### Group 5: Genre

Melodic / harmonic / rhythmic devices indicative of the genre chosen.

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate plays **five** pieces in their preferred chosen order. The exam will last **28** minutes.

At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place along to the backing track. Once the level has been established, the examiner will then commence with the first piece in full.

**Note:** the sound check is undertaken for the first piece only.

GRADE 8 : PERFORMANCE PIECES				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–11	12–14	15–17	18–20
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insecure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Insecure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Insecure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing</li> <li>■ Insecure use of timing/ pulse</li> <li>■ Inconsistent stylistic awareness</li> <li>■ Insecure sync/continuity</li> <li>■ Insecure use of articulation, expression and dynamics</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure physical techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure expressive techniques some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/ pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to demonstrate stylistic awareness some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of sync/continuity some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Mostly secure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/ pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to demonstrate stylistic awareness most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of harmony and melody most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure physical techniques</li> <li>■ Consistently secure expressive techniques</li> <li>■ Secure use of rhythm, duration and phrasing throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of timing/ pulse throughout</li> <li>■ Ability to demonstrate stylistic awareness throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of harmony and melody throughout</li> <li>■ Secure use of articulation, expression and dynamics throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 8 : TECHNICAL EXERCISES (SCALES, ARPEGGIOS, CHORD VOICINGS, STYLISTIC STUDY)				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–8	9–10	11–12	13–15
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to maintain pitch, pulse or rhythm accurately</li> <li>■ Inability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases accurately</li> <li>■ Insecure use of diction, articulation and phrasing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to play with accuracy, pitch, rhythm and pulse some of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of diction, articulation and phrasing some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to play with accuracy, pitch, rhythm and pulse most of the time</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases most of the time</li> <li>■ Secure use of diction, articulation and phrasing most of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Basic ability to play with accuracy, pitch, rhythm and pulse consistently</li> <li>■ Ability to recall musical and rhythmic phrases consistently</li> <li>■ Secure use of diction, articulation and phrasing throughout</li> </ul>

GRADE 8 : QUICK STUDY				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0–4	5–6	7–8	9–10
Grade Descriptor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Inability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Inability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation some of the time</li> <li>■ Secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody some of the time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Mostly secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to read rhythmic, harmonic and melodic notation</li> <li>■ Consistently secure ability to improvise rhythm, harmony and melody</li> </ul>

GRADE 8 : EAR TESTS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-4	5-6	7-8	9-10
Grade Descriptor	■ Incorrect responses	■ Some correct responses	■ Mostly correct responses	■ Consistently correct responses

GRADE 8 : GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS				
Attainment Band	Assessment Criteria not met	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Mark Range	0-2 correct responses	3 correct responses	4 correct responses	5 correct responses

## REVISION HISTORY

**Revised: 10 May 2017**

Cover: Added "Also suitable for Keyboards"

Page 8: The section on "Using Own Equipment" has been updated to show that unweighted keyboards may be used in examinations.