

ABRSM Examinations Regulations Fact Sheet

These nationally recognised music qualifications are awarded by the Associated Board, an external examination body. The qualification comprises 8 grades, numbered progressively in order of difficulty from 1-8. Most students commence their exams at Grade 1. However, taking each exam in turn is not necessary to progress to a higher grade. For example, a student could commence exams at Grade 1, miss Grade 2 and then take Grade 3. The only stipulation is that for practical Grades of 6, 7 and 8, a pass at Grade 5 theory is a pre-requisite achievement.

The Exam

The candidate should arrive at the designated examination centre approximately 15-20 minutes prior to their examination time. A steward will check the candidate's details. The candidate should proceed to warm up and run through their pieces with the pianist, if a piano is available at the venue.

The examination consists of the following sections, each carrying a different mark weighting.

- i) 3 pieces:
 - 2 accompanied by a pianist (30 marks each)
 - 1 study, unaccompanied (30 marks)
- ii) A selection of scales and arpeggios (21 marks)
- iii) Playing at sight (21 marks)
- iv) Aural tests (18 marks)

The examination carries a total of 150 marks, and gradings are as follows:

Pieces

Pieces are chosen by the Associated Board from the examination syllabus. The syllabus is available free of charge but changes every two years. Please call

- i) (01208) 743527 if you require a copy. Each examination comprises three lists, and the candidate or teacher must choose:
 - 1 piece from List A
 - 1 piece from List B
 - 1 piece from List C

Scales and Arpeggios (21 marks)

The syllabus also outlines the scale and arpeggio requirements for each grade. These differ from instrument to instrument. The scales should be played from memory and prepared both slurred and tongued.

- ii) Scale and arpeggio books for the various instruments are also available by calling (01283) 743527.

Sightreading Test (18 marks)

Playing at sight involves the candidate performing a short, "unseen" piece. The candidate is given approximately 30 seconds to read or play sections of the music prior to playing and should pay special attention to the key signature, dynamics, articulation, rhythm and accidentals and most importantly, once they commence the piece, keep going.

- iv) Aural Tests (21 marks)

Aural tests comprise 4 listening tests played by the examiner on a piano. The tests differ and increase in difficulty towards the higher grades. For their first grade, candidates are requested to:

- A Tap or clap the pulse and state the time of a piece played by the examiner
- B Sing, whistle or hum 3 short phrases as an echo
- C Recognise and explain changes in a short phrase Identify certain features of a short piece played by the examiner
- D e.g. dynamics

The times allocated for each wind grade are as follows:

Grade 1	12 minutes
Grades 2 & 3	14 minutes
Grades 4 & 5	18 minutes

The exam commences with the two accompanied pieces, (note the pupil may be expected to name the pieces they are playing, and the composer). The pianist leaves the room and the candidate may proceed with the study, scales, sight reading and aural tests in whatever order they choose. The examination will end after completion of the above.

When considering entering a child for Associated Board examinations, parents must take into account the following expenses:

Examination Fees

The fee comprises the Associated Board exam fee, a pianist fee (for the actual examination), an administration fee, and, where applicable, the cost of hiring a venue.

Parents will be required to purchase 2-3 books for the examination, and only original copies may be used for the examination. The Foundation appreciates that the cost of music is considerable; therefore, all teachers are advised to recommend books that can be used from both Lists A and B where possible and also & have both instrument and piano parts. However, some books may require the purchase of an additional piano part. Examples include the "Learn as you play" series and most C Clarinet music.

Accessories, Reeds, etc

Teachers may advise a pupil to purchase other accessories which may help with their examination. For example, clarinet and saxophone pupils may be advised to purchase a better quality reed.

Pupils may wish to purchase piano accompaniment tapes or CD's, so they can practice their pieces accompanied.

Transportation to the Examination Centre

Parents are responsible for transporting candidates to the examination centre. Where possible, candidates are entered in school groups so that parents may share transport.

Normal Entry Visit

These exams take place at a designated Associated Board Examination Centre. However, as *MjSF* are unable to request exam dates and periods, this can cause problems regarding the availability of a pianist or earlier than expected exam dates.

Pupil Entry

Entry is made by visiting www.misyork.org.uk and going to the exam section. Here you will find the 'Make an Entry' button that takes you to a secure area to proceed with entry. Payment can be made by credit/debit card or Paypal.

Please note it is essential that:

- i) the candidate's name is spelt correctly
- ii) a contact email and telephone number is given
- iii) the type of instrument is specified

Notice of Dates and Times of Examinations

The Associated Board gives approx. 10-14 days notice of examination dates and times to *MjSF*. As soon as we are informed we will return email you detailing venue location, date and time of the examination etc.

Notice of Cancellation or Withdrawal of Candidates by the Tutor

Should a candidate wish to withdraw from the examinations, please contact *MjSF* on (01977) 555995 immediately, and we will advise the Associated Board. Where the absence is due to sickness, the Associated Board refund will be approx. 50% of the entry fee, providing notice was sent and a medical certificate produced. Other refunds are entirely at the discretion of the Board.

If the *MjSF* tutor is not satisfied that the pupil has reached the required standard, we reserve the right to withdraw the candidate. Should the candidate be withdrawn after fees have been forwarded to the Associated Board, no refunds can be made. Should a candidate be withdrawn prior to forwarding fees, the Foundation will destroy the examination fee cheque.

Inconvenient Dates

A refund of fees cannot be made if the examination date is inconvenient.

With reference to all the above, the Associated Board regulations also stipulate that fees may not be carried forward to another examining period.

Notification of Results

Any failures will be notified prior to results being distributed. The *MjSF* tutor will contact you personally. Successful candidates will receive a report sheet in their lesson. Certificates may be given to the Headteacher to award in school assembly. In some cases, report sheets and certificates will be posted to the pupil's home address.

Re-Print Certificates

The Foundation is unable to accept any liability for lost certificates. Re-prints can be arranged and the Associated Board charge a fee of £5.00 for this service. Copies of report sheets and re-print certificates are organised by *MjSF*.

Your Decision

The examinations are offered to provide pupils with the opportunity to achieve a recognised music qualification. Pupils are encouraged, but do not have to take examinations. Pupils can work through the exam material without sitting the exam. Teachers are aware that examinations affect all pupils differently. We always endeavour not to place pupils under too much pressure. However, when approaching the examination, pupils should practice regularly and conscientiously.

This leaflet has been provided to allow you the parent to make an informed decision as to whether you wish your child to take the examination route and also to enable you to offer support and guidance.

Whilst the Foundation supports the examinations offered, parents must not lose sight that the whole music playing experience is not just about music examinations, but should be enjoyable, and most importantly, fun.

Please retain this leaflet, as the information is applicable for future grades.