

ABRSM

Qualification Specification

Music Direction diplomas

Contents

Introduction	3
About ABRSM, 3	
This qualification specification, 3	
About these qualifications	4
Overview, 4	
Regulated qualification details, 5	
Music Direction diplomas	6
Syllabus, 6	
Entry requirements, 6	
Making an entry, 7	
Access (for candidates with specific needs), 7	
In the exam, 7	
Elements of the exam, 7	
General information about submitted work, 8	
Assessment objectives	10
About assessment objectives, 10	
DipABRSM (RQF Level 4), 10	
LRSM (RQF Level 6), 11	
FRSM (RQF Level 7), 12	
Exam requirements: Section 1	13
Overview, 13	
Scope of the assessment, 13	
Exam Music, 13	
Exam requirements: Section 2.1	14
Overview, 14	
Scope of the assessment, 14	
Exam requirements: Section 2.2	16
Overview, 16	
Scope of the assessment, 16	
Assessment	18
Mark allocation, 18	
Result categories, 18	
Marking criteria, 18	
Results	22
Results, mark forms and certificates, 22	
Malpractice and maladministration, 22	

Introduction

About ABRSM

Who we are

We are the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), a company registered in England and Wales (company registration number 1926395) and a registered charity (charity registration number 292182). Our registered office is at 4 London Wall Place, London EC2Y 5AU.

Our mission

ABRSM's mission is to inspire achievement in music. We do this in partnership with four Royal Schools of Music: Royal Academy of Music, Royal College of Music, Royal Northern College of Music and Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

We are passionate about music, its value as an art form and the importance of music education. We believe that being involved with music gives people unique, positive experiences with life-long benefits.

Through our world-leading assessments, books and resources we provide people worldwide with the tools they need to teach, learn, make and enjoy music. Our scholarships, donations, sponsorship and partnerships create opportunities for people of all ages to discover music and fulfil their potential. Everything we do is designed to support candidates and teachers on their musical journey. Find out more at www.abrsm.org.

How we are regulated

ABRSM diploma exams in Music Direction are regulated in the UK by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), Qualifications Wales and Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA Regulation). They are part of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) in England and Northern Ireland. For further information, see www.abrsm.org/regulation.

This qualification specification

What this specification covers

This specification includes all the information required to deliver a qualification, including regulated qualification details, and assessment and learning outcomes. It is designed to help teachers, candidates, parents and organisations when preparing for diploma exams in Music Direction in the exam subjects listed below. It should be read in conjunction with the Music Direction diploma syllabus, which contains details of the exam requirements.

Brass Band, Chamber Orchestra, Choir, String Orchestra, Symphony Orchestra, Wind and Military Bands.

Validity of this specification

This specification is valid from September 2021, and will be reviewed again in September 2022. We may change or add to this specification from time to time. The latest version will be available from www.abrsm.org.

About these qualifications

Overview

Qualification objectives

Encouraging diverse approaches to the performing of music, the diplomas stimulate enjoyment and achievement through the progressive acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. They are compatible with systems of assessment widely applied in higher education and encourage lifelong learning without restrictions on length of study or the requirement that the learner is taught in an institution. The diplomas are designed to reflect the learner's day-to-day experience as a director, whether amateur or professional, and to accommodate a variety of different kinds of ensemble – symphony, chamber and string orchestras, wind, military and brass bands, and choirs (accompanied or unaccompanied). The diplomas balance the demands of the repertoire against the musical, technical and interpersonal skills needed by successful directors.

Who the qualifications are for

Diploma exams in Music Direction provide an authoritative assessment framework for a wide range of musicians. Whether learners are intending to pursue a career in music, are currently working as a professional and wish to broaden their qualifications, or are purely after the satisfaction of achieving a personal goal, they will find that one of our diplomas is right for them. In order to establish basic levels of competence, a specific prerequisite is required before entry can be made to any level. However, in line with our aim to provide open access and to recognise learners' achievements, we offer a range of substitutions for these prerequisites, including previous learning and experience.

Progression route

As candidates move up through the diploma levels they will find that the repertoire becomes more demanding, the rehearsal and performance time lengthens, and the challenge of the required Arrangement, and the scope and length of the written work, increase.

Regulated qualification details

Qualification titles

The table below shows the regulated titles and qualification numbers of Music Direction diplomas. Further information can be found at <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk>.

Qualification number	Qualification title	ABRSM title*
600/1183/X	ABRSM Level 4 Diploma in Music Direction	DipABRSM
600/1184/1	ABRSM Level 6 Diploma in Music Direction	LRSM
600/1185/3	ABRSM Level 7 Diploma in Music Direction	FRSM

*Throughout the rest of this document, the ABRSM title is used to refer to each diploma.

Qualification size

The table below describes the size of the Music Direction diploma qualifications by showing the amount of time that a candidate would typically need to spend preparing for them:

- Under the guidance of a teacher (Guided Learning Hours);
- Under the guidance of a teacher *and* time spent preparing independently (Total Qualification Time);

and:

- The assigned credit value (which denotes the size of the qualification).

Diploma	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Total Qualification Time (TQT)	Credits
DipABRSM	54	900	90
LRSM	108	1800	180
FRSM	134	2250	225

The Guided Learning Hours and Total Qualification Time are estimates of the average amount of time that it might take a candidate to prepare for these qualifications, and should be used as guidance only; it is recognised that there will be variance dependent on each individual's level of experience and ability.

Music Direction diplomas

This section provides a summary of the information that candidates, teachers, parents and organisations need to know when preparing for Music Direction diploma exams.

Syllabus

Availability

When preparing for an exam, it is important to read the relevant syllabus. The syllabus sets out the rules for completing the exams listed in this specification. We update and refresh our syllabuses from time to time. For the most up to date version, please visit www.abrsm.org/exams. Advance notice of any significant changes will be given at www.abrsm.org/diplomas.

Amendments

Any updates to a syllabus – e.g. changes to publication details or other minor corrections or clarifications – will be posted at www.abrsm.org/syllabuscorrections.

Entry requirements

Candidates for Music Direction diploma exams must satisfy the following prerequisites for entry. Further information, including a list of permitted substitutions, is available in the Music Direction diploma syllabus and at www.abrsm.org/diplomas.

Diploma	Prerequisite
DipABRSM Performance	ABRSM Grade 8 (Practical or Performance) in the instrument presented or a permitted substitution (see www.abrsm.org/diplomas)
LRSM Performance	DipABRSM Music Direction in the instrument presented or a permitted substitution (see www.abrsm.org/diplomas)
FRSM Performance	LRSM Music Direction in the instrument presented or a permitted substitution (see www.abrsm.org/diplomas)

Supporting documentation

If fulfilling the prerequisite through one of the substitutions listed in the Music Direction diploma syllabus, candidates will need to enclose supporting documentation with the entry form. In the case of qualifications, a copy of the relevant certificate should be enclosed. For courses (or parts of courses), a signed declaration from the institution concerned is acceptable (standard wording for this declaration is given in the Music Direction diploma syllabus).

For candidates offering the standard ABRSM prerequisite, a photocopy of the certificate (or mark form) must be enclosed in all cases.

Appropriate professional experience

At all three levels, candidates may apply to offer appropriate professional experience as a substitution for the standard ABRSM prerequisite. This is done by filling in the application form in the Music Direction diploma syllabus and sending it to syllabus@abrsm.ac.uk for consideration. The form must reach ABRSM at least six weeks before the published closing date for the session in which the candidate wishes to be examined. It is important to note that applying for this substitution is a *separate* procedure from sending in your entry form, and that approval of professional experience must already have been given *before* the candidate can enter for the diploma. Further guidance is available in the Music Direction diploma syllabus.

Making an entry

Details of exam dates, locations, fees and how to book an exam are available at www.abrsm.org/exambooking.

Music Direction diploma candidates must carefully complete the checklist (on the entry form), enclosing any of the following required documentation and submitted work:

- documentation supporting the prerequisite or substitution for a prerequisite
- the Arrangement and recording with authenticating declaration form
- documentation supporting a substitution for the Arrangement
- (*FRSM only*) the Written Submission with authenticating declaration form
- ABRSM's letter approving appropriate professional experience
- ABRSM's letter approving any works in the programme not listed in the repertoire lists in the Music Direction diploma syllabus.

Access (for candidates with specific needs)

ABRSM aims to make its exams accessible to all candidates by providing access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. While changes may be made to the administration of the exam, ABRSM is not able to make any changes to the assessment standards; each candidate's performance is marked in line with the usual criteria.

ABRSM publishes guidelines for candidates with specific needs at www.abrsm.org/specificneeds. Where a candidate has specific needs that are not covered by the guidelines, ABRSM considers each case individually. Further information is available from the Access Co-ordinator (accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk) or from www.abrsm.org/specificneeds. We advise applicants to contact the Access Coordinator with any questions before making an entry.

Candidates who require access arrangements or reasonable adjustments must tick the relevant box on the entry form and include supporting evidence where required. Details of what supporting evidence is needed can be found at www.abrsm.org/specificneeds. If supporting evidence is not provided by the time of the exam, ABRSM may withhold results or impose a penalty. Candidates are also welcome to provide information relating to their specific needs in order that the examiner can be as sensitive and supportive as possible on the day.

ABRSM recognises that candidates who require access arrangements or reasonable adjustments may be giving personal and sensitive information as part of the entry process. We are committed to handling this information tactfully and securely. You can find our Privacy Policy at www.abrsm.org/privacypolicy. Applicants are responsible for getting appropriate consent to share information about a candidate's specific needs with ABRSM.

In the exam

Examiners

One or two examiners will be present in Music Direction diploma exams. At ABRSM's discretion, an additional person appointed by ABRSM may also be present for monitoring purposes. Where two examiners are present, one examiner will, wherever possible, be a specialist in the discipline, and the other will be a generalist. Both will have been fully trained by ABRSM. Each examiner will mark independently.

On the day of the exam candidates will need to provide the examiner(s) with a full score of each work chosen.

Monitoring

For monitoring and moderation purposes, the live aspects of each diploma will normally be audio-recorded by the examiners and returned to ABRSM's London office after the exam. By submitting an entry, candidates agree to their exam being recorded and to the recording becoming the property of ABRSM (no copy will be made available to the candidate and, for the avoidance of doubt, the audio-recording has the status of an examination script and is therefore exempt from subject access requests under the Data Protection Act 2018). The recording may be used anonymously for training purposes.

Elements of the exam

Structure

Music Direction diploma exams each consist of three sections, as follows:

Diploma	Section 1	Section 2.1	Section 2.2
DipABRSM	Rehearsal and Performance	Viva Voce <i>and</i> Programme Notes	Instrumental/Choral Arrangement
LRSM	Rehearsal and Performance	Viva Voce <i>and</i> Programme Notes	Instrumental/Choral Arrangement
FRSM	Rehearsal and Performance	Viva Voce <i>and</i> Written Submission	Instrumental/Choral Arrangement

Exam timings

The timings in the table below show the approximate length of each exam in minutes, including the candidate's entry and exit, any tuning time and time for the examiner to write between exams. Examiners may take more or less time than the given timings. Additional time is built into the timetable for Music Direction exams to allow for the smooth running of the exam.

Diploma	Section 1	Section 2.1	Section 2.2	Total
DipABRSM	30-35	up to 18	N/A	60
LRSM	40-45	up to 20	N/A	75
FRSM	55-60	up to 25	N/A	90

General information about submitted work

Candidates should be aware of the following:

- For quality assurance purposes, candidates should not identify their name on or inside any submitted work. Instead, candidates should include their candidate number on each submission.
- Permission to use copyright extracts from musical scores is not usually required for exam submitted work. Candidates must make sure, however, that the appropriate publisher credit is given. If in any doubt, candidates should contact the publisher concerned.
- Submitted work may not be drawn upon for future use at a higher level of ABRSM diploma, although reference to it may be cited.
- Below pass submitted work may form the basis of a resubmission at the same level.
- Submitted work must neither have been previously published nor submitted to any institution or agency for another academic award.
- ABRSM reserves the right to refuse examination of any submitted work if, in its view, it contains material of an suitable, unseemly or libellous nature.
- ABRSM regrets that it cannot return any submitted work, so candidates are advised to keep a copy for their records.

Declaration of genuine work

All submissions must genuinely be the candidate's own, and the candidate is required to complete a candidate declaration form substantiating each piece of work. This form can be found on our website at www.abrsm.org/entryforms.

In the case of the Written Submission and the Arrangement, the declaration form must be submitted with the candidate's entry. For Programme Notes, the candidate must present the examiners with the declaration form on the day of the exam, along with the Programme Notes themselves.

If the examiners perceive a significant discrepancy between the level of authority of a submission and the performance

in the Viva Voce (allowing for the fact that candidates may be nervous), it may be necessary to probe deeper to establish that the work is genuinely the candidate's own.

Plagiarism

ABRSM defines plagiarism as an attempt to pass off the work of others as one's own. This means that copying from a published or unpublished source without acknowledging it, constructing a précis of someone else's writing or ideas without citing that writer, or colluding with another candidate to submit the same or similar work, constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism applies to all sources including – but not limited to – printed and electronic books and articles, and website content.

Programme Notes must be written in candidates' own words. Where material has been cited in Written Submissions, candidates may use footnotes, endnotes or bibliography/discography, where appropriate, to acknowledge all sources. Any academic referencing system (e.g. Havard, Chicago, APA) may be used, but candidates should apply one style consistently.

The Quality and Compliance Officer, in accordance with the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy (www.abrsm.org/policies), will consider all suspected cases and will be penalised or disqualified if a charge of plagiarism is upheld. Candidates will have a right of appeal and representation if such a charge is made.

Assessment objectives

About assessment objectives

The Regulated Qualification Framework (RQF) level describes the difficulty level of the qualification. There are nine qualification levels in the framework, labelled in order of difficulty from Entry Level to Level 8. For further information, visit <https://register.ofqual.gov.uk>.

The information below describes the level of knowledge and skill required of candidates taking Music Direction diploma exams. The marking criteria used by examiners is available on pages 19 to 21 of this specification and in the Music Direction diploma syllabus.

DipABRSM (RQF Level 4)

Assessment objectives	Marking criteria
Learners will:	Learners can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rehearse and perform specified selections from a short, balanced, coherent, and stylistically contrasting programme of music of prescribed (or preapproved) difficulty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and use appropriate communication, interpersonal and directing skills to address musical and ensemble issues in rehearsal, adapting approach as necessary. Demonstrate musical, technical and interpretative skills appropriate to the demands of the chosen programme, effecting improvement in performance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce programme notes of a prescribed length for a general concert audience. Respond to questioning of defined length and scope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research, identify and analyse appropriate information about the chosen programme. Competently communicate a broad working knowledge and understanding of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire, and understanding of contextual and stylistic issues, verbally and in writing. Reflect critically on the rehearsal and performance, reviewing the effectiveness and appropriateness of techniques used to direct repertoire of a standard equivalent to DipABRSM level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrange a piano work (or folk song, for choral direction) for their ensemble, chosen from a set list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate musical and literacy skills by adapting a piece of music to match the resources of the chosen ensemble, including awareness of style and idiom, with attention to texture and balance. Demonstrate practical skills in presenting work legibly with adequate editorial control. Review the practicality and effectiveness of the arrangement in response to questioning.

LRSM (RQF Level 6)

Assessment objectives	Marking criteria
<p>Learners will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rehearse and perform specified selections from a balanced, coherent and stylistically contrasting programme of music of moderate length and prescribed (or preapproved) difficulty. 	<p>Learners can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify and use appropriate communication, interpersonal and directing skills to address musical and ensemble issues in rehearsal. Analyse and refine their approach in response. ▪ Demonstrate advanced musical, technical and interpretative skills appropriate to the demands of the chosen programme, effecting improvement in performance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce programme notes of a prescribed length for an informed reader. ▪ Respond to searching questioning of defined length and scope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Research, identify and evaluate appropriate information about the chosen programme. ▪ Competently communicate a broad working knowledge and understanding of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire, and understanding of contextual and stylistic issues, verbally and in writing. ▪ Reflect critically on the rehearsal and performance, evaluating the effectiveness of methods used to direct repertoire of a standard equivalent to LRSM level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrange a piano work (or folk song, for choral direction) for their ensemble, chosen from a set list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate musical and literacy skills by adapting a piece of music to match the resources of the chosen ensemble, including sense of style and idiom, with attention to texture and balance. ▪ Demonstrate practical skills in presenting work legibly with some editorial control. ▪ Evaluate the practicality and effectiveness of the arrangement in response to questioning.

FRSM (RQF Level 7)

Assessment objectives	Marking criteria
Learners will:	Learners can:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Rehearse and perform specified selections from a balanced, coherent and stylistically contrasting programme of music of extended length and prescribed (or preapproved) difficulty. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate expert technical command, specialised communication, interpersonal and directing skills through identifying and addressing musical and ensemble issues in rehearsal. Critically evaluate and modify their approach appropriately in response. ▪ Demonstrate artistic integrity and musical, technical and interpretative skills appropriate to the demands of the chosen programme, effecting improvement in performance.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Produce a written submission of a prescribed length for a specialist and non-specialist audience, exploring complex issues relating to the chosen programme. ▪ Respond to comprehensive questioning of defined length and scope. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate high-level research skills, personal insight and critical evaluation of sources. ▪ Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of theoretical and methodological perspectives. ▪ Synthesise, clearly communicate conclusions verbally and in writing, and respond with points of clarification, expansion and evaluation, as required. ▪ Reflect critically on the rehearsal and performance, and the techniques required to direct repertoire of a standard equivalent to FRSM level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrange a piano work (or folk song, for choral direction) for their ensemble, chosen from a set list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate musical and literacy skills by adapting a piece of music to match the resources of the chosen ensemble, including assured sense of style and idiom and vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. ▪ Demonstrate practical and technical skills by applying high-level editorial control in the presentation of the score. ▪ Critically evaluate the practicality and effectiveness of the arrangement in response to questioning.

Exam requirements: Section 1

Overview

For this section of the exam, candidates demonstrate directing skills in a practical performance context, including rehearsal technique, the use of gesture, aural awareness and responding to work in progress, score preparation and planning.

Scope of the assessment

Number and duration of works

Candidates should be prepared to rehearse and perform with their ensemble a set number of contrasting movements/works, to fit the combined total durations shown in the table below (in minutes). Instrumental directors must choose *two* movements/works, while choral directors must choose at least *two* or *three* movements/works (accompanied or unaccompanied, or a combination).

Diploma	Combined total duration of works	Rehearsal time	Total duration of section
DipABRSM	15-20	20	30-35
LRSM	20-25	25	40-45
FRSM	30-35	35	55-60

Programming

Lists of suitable instrumental and choral works are given in the Music Direction diploma syllabus. In their choice of repertoire, candidates should aim to present a programme that is balanced, coherent and containing stylistic contrast. It should also be appropriate to the venue.

Own choice repertoire

Candidates are free to create their programme either partly or entirely from works *not* listed in the syllabus, but comparable in level with them. In such cases, candidates must seek approval of their choices from ABRSM, at least six weeks before entry, by writing to syllabus@abrsms.ac.uk. In the case of unpublished works, candidates should enclose a copy of the score(s).

The ensemble

Candidates must provide their own ensemble, which in most cases will number at least 20 players or singers. It is not the standard of the ensemble itself that will form the basis of the examiners' appraisal but the quality of the candidate's rehearsal and directing techniques and their understanding of the various styles. That said, candidates should ensure that the ensemble allows them to reveal the full range of their skills and that can cope with the demands of the chosen repertoire.

Infringements

Candidates not meeting the syllabus requirements in any way, such as failing to achieve platform times or not being prepared to rehearse and/or perform the required number of movements/works or the whole of a work, will be liable to penalty. In addition, candidates may not bring into the exam room any material or equipment unconnected with their exam; any infringement of this rule may lead to disqualification.

Exam music

Editions

Candidates are free to choose any edition of the full score of the works listed in the Music Direction diploma syllabus or of any alternative work(s) approved by ABRSM. On the day of the exam, candidates will need to provide the examiners with a full score of each work that they have chosen.

Exam requirements: Section 2.1

Overview

The Viva Voce is an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, approach and understanding to the examiners. Questions cover the Rehearsal and Performance, Programme Notes (DipABRSM and LRSM) or Written Submission (FRSM) and Arrangement, as well as other aspects of directing. The Programme Notes should discuss and illuminate in the candidate's own words the works that they have chosen to rehearse and perform with their ensemble. In the Written Submission (FRSM), candidates are required address idiomatic features and performance issues connected with the Rehearsal and Performance.

Scope of the assessment

Duration and word count

The timings of the Viva Voce and the required length of the written work are shown in the table below. Written work may be up to 10% longer or 10% shorter than the given lengths; any work falling outside of these limits will be penalised.

Diploma	Viva Voce length	Programme Notes/ Written Submission length
DipABRSM	up to 18 minutes	1,100 words
LRSM	up to 20 minutes	1,800 words
FRSM	up to 25 minutes	4,500 words

Programme Notes (DipABRSM and LRSM) and Written Submission (FRSM) are pieces of prepared work that candidates will discuss with the examiners as part of the Viva Voce and which contribute to the Viva Voce (Section 2.1) mark.

Viva Voce

The Viva Voce is an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, approach and understanding to the examiners. Questions will cover the Rehearsal and Performance, Programme Notes (DipABRSM and LRSM)/Written Submission (FRSM), as well as other aspects of directing. Typical areas of discussion include: Musical outlook; technique, the Rehearsal and Performance, repertoire and Programme Notes/Written Submission; musical language and form, style and interpretation, the Arrangement, and professional values and practice. Candidates will have the opportunity to add any further points that they wish to draw the examiners' attention to before conclusion. Sample questions and indicative responses are given for each level in Appendix 1 of the Music Direction diploma syllabus.

Programme Notes format (DipABRSM and LRSM)

Candidates must present two identical copies of their Programme Notes to the examiners at the start of the exam. (If the Programme Notes are in a language other than English, one copy of the original should be submitted together with two copies of an independently verified translation into English.) The Notes should discuss and illuminate in the candidate's own words the works they have chosen to rehearse and perform with their ensemble. Candidates should be prepared to discuss their Programme Notes in the Viva Voce.

Programme Notes must be typed or printed in black. The title page must contain the following information:

- the full title of the diploma and the instrument
- the date of the exam
- the word count (excluding title page)
- the works in the programme

In addition, all pages must be consecutively numbered. Candidates must not identify their name anywhere on or inside their Programme Notes.

Written Submission format (FRSM)

Candidates must send their Written Submission with their entry. (If the Written Submission is in a language other than English, the original should be submitted together with an independently verified translation into English.) The Written Submission should address idiomatic features and performance issues connected with the Rehearsal and Performance. Candidates should be prepared to discuss their Programme Notes in the Viva Voce.

The Written Submission (FRSM) must be in the following format:

- typed or printed in black
- all pages must be consecutively numbered
- the title page must contain the following information: the full title of the diploma; the Submission's title; the date of submission; the word count (excluding title page, endnotes/footnotes, bibliography/discography)
- the title page must be followed by an outline or précis of the Submission of about 150–250 words and a contents page
- references to either endnotes or footnotes, if used, must be clearly inserted in the text
- the Submission must be consistent in its presentation and approach to the citation of sources
- a bibliography and, where appropriate a discography, must be included, citing all works used in the preparation of the Submission.

Candidates must not identify their name anywhere on or inside their Written Submission. See also page 8 for general information about submitted work.

Exam requirements: Section 2.2

Overview

In this section of the exam, candidates are required to arrange a prescribed piece of music for the ensemble they will be directing in the exam. The examiners will be looking for a sense of style and idiom, revealing imagination in the use of colour and textural contrast, as well as the technical quality, practicality and musical success of the Arrangement and its general presentation.

Scope of the assessment

Music

Instrumental directors are required to arrange one of the original piano works listed in the Music Direction syllabus for their level. The items reflect an increasing complexity of musical language in the progression from DipABRSM to FRSM levels. While candidates are expected to have researched the original composer's own instrumental styles, candidates are not necessarily required to attempt a pastiche or direct imitation in their Arrangement. The editions listed are recommendations only.

Choral directors are required to choose a folk song of their choice, from any country and in any language, and to make an *a cappella* (unaccompanied arrangement of it for their choir. For the purposes of this qualification, a folk song is defined as any traditional song originating among the common people of a region and forming part of their culture. The required performing time of the choral arrangements as shown in the table below:

Diploma	Required performing time
DipABRSM	2-3 minutes
LRSM	3-4 minutes
FRSM	3.5-5 minutes

In the recorded performance, the Choral Arrangement must reach the minimum time requirements given above in order to pass. If the maximum time is exceeded by more than 30 seconds, the Arrangement will be failed. If the maximum time is exceeded by up to 15 seconds, a penalty of 1 mark will be incurred, and for between 16 and 30 seconds there will be a penalty of 2 marks.

Format of the score

Only the full score (not the individual parts) must be submitted. The score must:

- either be clearly and legibly handwritten in black ink or produced by a music processor programme. There is no advantage in submitting computer-generated scores rather than handwritten ones.
- have one part to each stave, or, where appropriate, two instruments/voices to a stave.
- be laid out in the manner which is commonly accepted for the relevant ensemble
- follow all the usual and proper conventions for notation
- show the parts for transposing instruments in the relevant transposed keys
- contain the following information on the title page: the full title of the diploma; the title of the work (and the name of the composer, if applicable); the date of the submission
- have all its pages consecutively numbered.

If the score contains musical directions or terminology in a language other than Italian, German, French or English, a glossary of these must be provided with English translations. Candidates must not identify their name anywhere on or inside the Arrangement.

Format of the recording

The recording of the Arrangement must be an unedited performance directed by the candidate and performed by the ensemble which is to be present in the exam. The recording may be either video or audio. Acceptable formats include: MP3, M4A, MP4, WMV, MOV or MPG. If making a video recording, you are responsible for obtaining any necessary permissions, such as parental consent.

Most modern smartphones, tablets and laptops will be suitable for the audio or video recording. The file size must not exceed 2GB. Files which exceed this size may need to be compressed.

For video recordings, camera resolution should be 720p (and should be set before the recording is made); this will give appropriate clarity. Lower resolution (e.g. 480p) may produce an unclear, grainy picture and higher resolutions are likely to result in files that are too large to send. Video resolution can usually be altered in the device settings.

Assessment

Mark allocation

Marks are allocated for each section of Music Direction diploma exams, as shown in the table below. A pass in each section (Section 1, Section 2.1 and Section 2.2) is required to pass overall.

Section	Pass mark	Maximum mark	% Total mark
Section 1	24	60	60%
Section 2.1	10	25	25%
Section 2.2	6	15	15%
Total	40	100	100%

Result categories

The result categories for Music Direction diploma exams are set as follows:

Result category	Mark band
Distinction	70-100
Pass	40-69
Below Pass	0-39

Marking criteria

The tables on pages 19 to 21 of this specification show the marking criteria used by examiners. Examiners mark up or down from the pass mark for each element by balancing the extent to which the qualities and skills listed in the marking criteria are demonstrated and contribute towards the overall outcome.

Marking criteria

Section 1 Rehearsal	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
42-60 Distinction Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.	Assured and effective directing, demonstrating both artistic awareness and a secure technique.	Authoritative directing, demonstrating technical command and exceptional interpretative insight and imagination.	Charismatic directing, demonstrating outstanding interpretative insight.
36-41 A high pass Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.	Confident directing, demonstrating some sensitivity and good technique.	Assured and effective directing, demonstrating both artistic awareness and a secure technique.	24-41 Pass Authoritative directing, demonstrating artistic integrity and technical command.
30-35 A clear pass Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.	Solid, showing good technical competence and a broad musical understanding.	Confident directing, demonstrating some sensitivity and good technique.	
24-29 Pass Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.	Showing adequate technical competence and a musical understanding at a level beyond Grade 8.	Solid, showing good technical competence and a broad musical understanding.	
0-23 Fail Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.	Despite evidence of some competence, technical and musical grasp not equal to the demands of the programme at this level.	Insufficient evidence that the candidate has advanced significantly beyond the competence required at DipABRSM level.	Insufficient evidence that the candidate has advanced significantly beyond LRSM level.

Section 2.1 Viva Voce	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
19-25 Distinction Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.	Outstanding communication skills. A commanding knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. An excellent knowledge of professional values and practices.	Outstanding communication skills. A commanding knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. An excellent knowledge of professional values and practices.	Outstanding communication skills. An expert knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Written Submission. An excellent knowledge of professional values and practices.
16-18 A high pass Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.	Impressive communication skills. A comprehensive knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A firm grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A very good knowledge of professional values and practice.	Impressive communication skills. A comprehensive knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A firm grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A very good knowledge of professional values and practice.	24-41 Pass Impressive communication skills. A commanding knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A full understanding of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Written Submission. A very good knowledge of professional values and practice.
13-15 A clear pass Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.	Good communication skills. A sound working knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A broad grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A good knowledge of professional values and practice.	Good communication skills. A sound working knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. A broad grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A good knowledge of professional values and practice.	
10-12 Pass Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.	Competent communication skills. A broad working knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Adequate understanding of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A satisfactory knowledge of professional values and practice.	Competent communication skills. A broad working knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Adequate understanding of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. A satisfactory knowledge of professional values and practice.	
0-9 Fail Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.	Weak communication skills. Patchy knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. Insufficient knowledge of professional values and practice.	Weak communication skills. Patchy knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Programme Notes. Insufficient knowledge of professional values and practice.	Insufficient communication skills. Insufficient knowledge of the ensemble, its idiom and repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised by the Arrangement and Written Submission. Insufficient knowledge of professional values and practice.

Section 2.1	DipABRSM Programme Notes	LRSM Programme Notes	FRSM Written Submission
Distinction Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.	Notes are pertinent and persuasively written, with thoroughly researched and well-balanced commentary.	Notes are highly perceptive and persuasively written, with a high level of research and excellent organisation of material.	Submission is highly perceptive and convincing, clearly structured and expressed, with excellent organisation and control of materials. Very advanced research skills, personal insight and critical evaluation of sources. A comprehensive survey of relevant source material. Excellent use of musical and literary quotations.
A high pass Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.	Notes provide an interesting and relevant commentary on the items rehearsed/performed. The material is well-organised and logically researched.	Notes are pertinent and persuasively written. The material is well-organised and logically researched.	Pass Submission is pertinent and comprehensively argued, with good overall shape, use of language and organisation. A rigorous survey of relevant source material, with a high level of research, personal insight and critical evaluation. Apposite use of musical and literary quotations.
A clear pass Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.	Notes provide well-chosen detail on items rehearsed/performed, and firm evidence of helpful analysis based on sound research. Good presentation, structure, level of literacy and grammatical accuracy.	Notes provide well-chosen detail on items rehearsed/performed, and firm evidence of helpful analysis based on sound research. Good presentation, structure, level of literacy and grammatical accuracy.	
Pass Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.	Notes give background on items rehearsed/performed, with some evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Acceptable level of presentation, literacy and accuracy, avoiding unexplained technical language.	Notes give background on items rehearsed/performed, with some evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Acceptable level of presentation, literacy and accuracy, avoiding unexplained technical language.	
Fail Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.	Notes fail to give background on items rehearsed/performed or sufficient evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Inadequate presentation and grammatically weak.	Notes fail to give background on items rehearsed/performed or sufficient evidence of appropriate analysis and research. Inadequate presentation and grammatically weak.	Submission shows limited understanding, is poorly argued, lacks appropriate examples and quotations, and demonstrates little evidence of appropriately advanced research. Grammatically weak.

The Programme Notes do not receive a separate mark but contribute to the overall mark of Section 2.1.

Section 2.2 Instrumental Arrangement	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
12-15 Distinction Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.	Technically secure, with well developed sense of colour. Very good feel for style and idiom, and keen awareness of balance. Very good presentation of score, with clear editorial control.	Assured technique, with vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Excellent sense of style and idiom. Score professionally presented.	Authoritative technique, with full exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Complete identification with style and idiom. Score professionally presented.
10-11 A high pass Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.	Consistent technique, with some imaginative use of colour. An appreciation of style and good grasp of idiom. Appropriate doubling and score expansion. Well presented with good editorial control.	Technically secure, with well developed sense of colour. Very good feel for style and idiom, and keen awareness of balance. Very good presentation of score, with clear editorial control.	6-11 Pass Assured technique, with vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Excellent sense of style and idiom. Excellent editorial control and presentation of score.
8-9 A clear pass Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.	Developing technical security, a good sense of style and idiom, with balanced textures. Legible presentation and adequate editorial control.	Consistent technique, with some imaginative use of colour. An appreciation of style and good grasp of idiom. Appropriate doubling and score expansion. Well presented with good editorial control.	
6-7 Pass Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.	Some imagination shown. A sense of style and idiom. Attention to balancing of musical lines and chords, despite technical lapses. Legible presentation, perhaps with small errors. Limited editorial control.	Some imagination shown. A sense of style and idiom, and of balancing of musical lines and chords, despite some technical weakness. Legible presentation. Limited editorial control.	
0-5 Fail Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.	Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown in use of colour and textural contrast. Awkward doublings and lack of balance. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness.	Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown in use of colour and textural contrast. Awkward doublings and lack of balance. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness.	Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown despite some sense of style and idiom. Technical weakness apparent. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness.

Section 2.2 Choral Arrangement	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
12-15 Distinction Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.	Technically secure, with well developed sense of colour. Very good feel for style and idiom, and evidence of considerable originality in the development of material. Keen awareness of balance. Very good presentation of score, with clear editorial control.	Assured technique, with vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Excellent sense of style and idiom with considerable originality and insight in the development of material. Score professionally presented.	Authoritative technique, with full exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Style and idiom are fully characterized, showing personal creativity and perceptive insight in the development of material. Score professionally presented.
10-11 A high pass Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.	Consistent technique, with some imaginative use of colour. An appreciation of style and good grasp of idiom and evidence of genuine originality. Appropriate development of material. Well presented with good editorial control.	Technically secure, with well developed sense of colour. Very good feel for style and idiom, and evidence of considerable originality in the development of material. Keen awareness of balance. Very good presentation of score, with clear editorial control.	6-11 Pass Assured technique, with vivid exploitation of timbre and textural possibilities. Excellent sense of style and idiom combined with considerable originality and insight in the development of material. Excellent editorial control and presentation of score.
8-9 A clear pass Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall standard in most areas examined.	Developing technical security, a good sense of style and idiom, and evidence of some originality. Balanced textures and convincing development of material. Legible presentation and adequate editorial control.	Consistent technique, with some imaginative use of colour. An appreciation of style and good grasp of idiom and evidence of genuine originality. Appropriate development of material. Well presented with some evidence of editorial control.	
6-7 Pass Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.	Some imagination shown. A sense of style, idiom and structure. Attention to balancing of voice parts, despite technical lapses. Legible presentation, perhaps with small errors. Limited editorial control.	Some imagination shown. A sense of style, idiom and structure. Attention to balancing of voice parts, despite some technical weakness. Legible presentation. Limited editorial control.	
0-5 Fail Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.	Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown in use of colour and textural contrast. Awkward doublings and lack of balance. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness. Below minimum or above maximum performance time.	Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown in use of colour and textural contrast. Awkward doublings and lack of balance. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness. Below minimum or above maximum performance time.	Inconsistent technique and little imagination shown despite some sense of style and idiom. Technical weakness apparent. Poorly presented, with some editorial carelessness. Below minimum or above maximum performance time.

Results

Results, mark forms and certificates

Issuing results

On the day of the exam, the examiners will not give any indication of the result. After the examiners have returned the mark form and recorded evidence to ABRSM, a sample of these will be reviewed as part of our rigorous quality assurance procedures. ABRSM aims to release results 12 weeks after the exam. The examiners' mark form will be sent by email and the certificate (if successful) will follow by post. We regret that we are not able to give any results by telephone, nor can we accept any responsibility for the loss of certificates in the post.

Retakes

If candidates are unsuccessful in any part of their diploma, they may wish to consider a retake. The diploma must be completed within three years from the first attempt. Candidates may choose to retake the entire exam in order to aim for higher marks. Alternatively, they are entitled to carry credit forward from any component (Rehearsal and Performance, Viva Voce or Arrangement) from their previous attempt. The examiners will be aware of any credit carried forward, but this will in no way affect the objectivity of the assessment process. Details of retake options are included in the letter accompanying results. This letter also covers options for the Written Submission for candidates wishing to retake their diploma.

Appeals

Specific guidance for questions about results and marking appeals can be found at www.abrsm.org/send-exam-feedback.

Malpractice and maladministration

We are committed to inspiring achievement in music. Our qualifications are used by thousands of people to support their music learning or teaching. Many people also use them when applying to study at further and higher education institutions. It is therefore vital that our qualifications remain a valuable and reliable measure of a candidate's skills and knowledge. We therefore take any form of malpractice or maladministration very seriously.

- **Malpractice** is defined as any act which compromises or is an attempt to compromise the assessment process, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate. This also includes any act which damages our reputation or credibility as an awarding organisation.
- **Maladministration** is defined as any act which breaches the regulations through a mismanagement of administrative processes, particularly where such a breach could compromise the integrity of a qualification or assessment.

Applicants and candidates must follow the requirements set out in the exam regulations and all other ABRSM policies about the delivery of our exams. In cases where applicants or candidates have committed malpractice, a sanction or penalty may be given. Further information about our Malpractice and Maladministration Policy can be found at www.abrsm.org/policies.