

ABRSM

Exam Regulations

UK & Ireland
2017

Exam Regulations

These Regulations apply to all ABRSM exams except Music Medals and the DipABRSM, LRSM and FRSM diplomas, for which separate syllabuses containing distinct regulations are available.

1 ABRSM subjects, exams and prerequisites

- a ABRSM exam subjects are listed at www.abrsm.org/exams.
- b For the graded exams, there are eight grades, numbered progressively in order of difficulty from 1 to 8. ARSM is a post-Grade 8 exam.
- c Candidates may be entered for any exam irrespective of age. For ARSM, the date of birth must be stated on the entry form. Candidates for graded exams are not required to have previously taken any other grade in the same subject.
- d Prerequisites for entry apply to the following ABRSM exams:
 - i) Practical Grades 6, 7 and 8: candidates must already have passed one of the qualifications listed at www.abrsm.org/prerequisite. This must have been passed *before the closing date* for the Practical exam and the certificate or mark form must be supplied at the time of entry, *except for* ABRSM qualifications gained in or after Period C 1993 and taken in the UK or Ireland (for which supporting documentation will only be required in cases where ABRSM is unable to verify the qualification from its records).
 - ii) ARSM: candidates must already have passed ABRSM Grade 8 in the same subject or one of the alternatives listed at www.abrsm.org/prerequisite-arm. This must have been passed *before the closing date* for the ARSM exam. A copy of the certificate is not required at the time of entry (although ABRSM may request one later – NB if not provided, the exam entry will be cancelled without refund).

2 Introduction and overlap of syllabuses

- a Syllabuses for the various subjects are updated periodically. All new syllabuses are valid from 1 January of their year of introduction. Advance notice of any syllabus change is given in the syllabus updates (inside back cover of the syllabus booklets, where applicable) and on ABRSM's website (www.abrsm.org/exams). The introduction of new scale requirements, sight-reading and/or aural tests does not necessarily coincide with the introduction of new pieces (the latter being the most frequent element of syllabus review).
- b In the first year of any new Practical syllabus, candidates in Period A *only* (exams taken before or on 31 May) may choose to perform pieces as set in the lists of the preceding syllabus, but they may not combine pieces from the preceding and new syllabuses (except in the case of items that appear in both). No such overlap period necessarily applies to any new scale requirements, sight-reading and/or aural tests, which normally take effect from 1 January of their year of introduction.

3 Applicant's role and responsibilities

- a The Applicant is the person (aged 18 or over) who submits the exam entry and acts on behalf of the candidate(s) by being ABRSM's principal point of contact. A candidate aged 18 or over who submits an entry is the Applicant for that entry.
- b The Applicant's responsibilities are: to read and undertake to abide by these Exam Regulations, ensuring that those connected with the exam are aware of relevant matters; to submit the exam entry, ensuring the accuracy of the information supplied, including name spellings, levels and exam subjects, and any specific needs; to make payment for the exam; to notify the candidate of the exam date, time and venue; and to receive the exam mark form/certificate and to pass them on to the candidate.
- c Each Applicant is assigned a personal Applicant Number and confidential password on the first occasion that an entry is submitted. The Applicant Number should be quoted in all communications with ABRSM. The confidential password is used in conjunction with the Applicant Number and a registered e-mail address to gain access to online exam services. The password should not be disclosed to anyone else and may be changed by the Applicant at any time.
- d All written communications by ABRSM relating to the acceptance of an entry, payment, the appointment allocated and the result are sent to the Applicant. Responsibility for an entry cannot be transferred to

another party without the Applicant's written consent. While the Applicant remains ABRSM's principal point of contact in all matters, ABRSM reserves the right to share information regarding an exam with another party in response to a valid enquiry. ABRSM cannot become involved in any dispute or communication breakdown between an Applicant and the candidate on whose behalf the entry has been submitted (or the parent/guardian).

- e ABRSM does not check the identity of Applicants and therefore it cannot verify degrees or qualifications of Applicants appearing on the certificates it issues.

4 Exam entry

- a Entries must be submitted by the Applicant by the published closing date (www.abrsm.org/dates), using either the online entry form or (by post) a paper entry form. Entries cannot be accepted by letter, e-mail, fax or telephone.
- b **Online entry** (available for all UK exams other than Choral Singing, Ensembles, DipABRSM, LRSM and FRSM) is made via ABRSM's website (www.abrsm.org/exambooking). The Applicant gains access to the online entry form using the Applicant Number and confidential password (→ *Reg. 3c*).
- c **Postal entry** is made using the current paper entry form, published by ABRSM each year. Paper entry forms are downloadable from www.abrsm.org/exambooking and available from ABRSM's office in London.
- d Entries can be accepted by ABRSM only in accordance with the conditions and regulations contained in this document, and on the understanding that in all matters the decision of ABRSM must be accepted as final.
- e ABRSM reserves the right to refuse, invalidate or cancel any entry and to return any entry received after the closing date has passed. In such cases, the entry fee(s) will be returned (→ *Reg. 1dii* for ARSM exception).
- f Candidates for Theory exams should be entered only in the Period in which the specified day and time are suitable for them (see www.abrsm.org/dates). Candidates may be entered for only one Theory exam in any given Period.
- g ABRSM has a Late Entry Policy, available at www.abrsm.org/lateentry.

5 Payment

- a Exam fees must be paid in full at the time of entry.
- b For postal entries, payment must be made by cheque. Where the entry is made on behalf of more than one candidate, a single payment (i.e. one cheque) must be made by the Applicant.
- c Once an entry and payment have been submitted, the entry fee cannot be refunded other than in accordance with ABRSM's regulations for withdrawals, non-attendance and fee refunds (→ *Reg. 10*).
- d Any query regarding a payment made, or an outstanding amount, is notified to the Applicant by ABRSM as soon as possible after the entry has been processed. Where any such query has not been resolved by the date of the exam, ABRSM reserves the right to withhold the release of exam results/certificates for all candidates entered by the Applicant. In cases where payment is made with a dishonoured cheque and ABRSM is obliged to pursue payment, a fee (www.abrsm.org/fees) is incurred to cover administrative costs and bank charges.

6 Place of exams: ABRSM Centres

- a ABRSM provides exam Centres for Practical and/or Theory exams in the areas listed at www.abrsm.org/centres.
- b The Centre name indicates the general area in which the Centre is located. The precise exam venue cannot be confirmed until after the examining timetables have been arranged; it is notified to the Applicant with the exam appointment(s).
- c ABRSM reserves the right not to open a Centre if the number of entries is insufficient. In such cases, an appointment is offered at an alternative Centre.
- d A suitable exam environment, which is quiet as well as properly lit, heated and ventilated, is offered at all Centres. For Practical exams, Centres provide: a waiting room (or area); and an exam room, which contains a suitable piano (this may be upright or grand) and which is, where possible, out of hearing of the waiting room. A steward is present at all Centres. For Theory exams, an exam room is provided, with tables that

allow reasonable spacing of candidates. An invigilator is present for the duration of the exam. All Centres are regularly monitored by ABRSM.

- e It is recommended that candidates under the age of 15 are accompanied to the Centre by a responsible adult. Space in the waiting room may be limited and candidates should therefore bring no more than one escort nor arrive more than ten minutes before the exam appointment.
- f For Practical exams, where possible an additional room (or area) is made available where candidates may briefly warm up, but ABRSM cannot guarantee to provide such a facility.
- g All ABRSM Centres provide a music stand, but candidates are welcome to bring their own if they prefer.

7 Place of exams: Visits

- a Practical and/or Theory exams may be held at premises provided by the Applicant in accordance with the regulations and requirements stipulated below. Applicants hosting a Visit have a duty of care towards examiners as well as candidates and their escorts and, as such, they are advised to carry out a risk assessment and to make appropriate arrangements to comply with health and safety legislation. ABRSM cannot accept liability for any damage, injury, expense or loss (including consequential loss) incurred during the course of a Visit.

Practical exams

- b The entry options are presented at www.abrsm.org/visits and cater either for Applicants with sufficiently large numbers of candidates (Visit and Special Visit) or for candidates whose subjects cannot be taken at an ABRSM Centre (Harp, Organ, Percussion, Choral Singing, Jazz Ensemble). Harp exams may be taken either at a Visit or at an ABRSM Centre.
- c The Applicant must ensure that the entry fulfils the minimum time requirement (see www.abrsm.org/visits and www.abrsm.org/examtimings). The Applicant should also take into account the following parameters used by ABRSM when organizing Visit timetables: exams do not normally begin before 9.00 or end later than 17.30; each morning and afternoon session normally includes a break of 15 minutes; where the total examining time exceeds 3 hours 45 minutes, a lunch break of 1 hour 5 minutes is included; the standard exam day is 6 hours 10 minutes of examining time – entries exceeding this are normally timetabled on consecutive days (except for Special Visits, where up to 7 hours of examining may be timetabled on a single day).
- d Two or more Applicants may combine their entries in order to meet the minimum time requirement but the exams must be held at a single venue. An Applicant wishing to participate in another Applicant's Visit must seek permission from that Applicant before submitting an entry. The Applicant hosting the Visit is responsible for the provision of suitable facilities and arrangements (→ Reg. 7e) and for the receipt of instructions and timetables from ABRSM.
- e Applicants hosting a Visit are responsible for ensuring suitable facilities and arrangements at their own cost: a waiting room (or area); an exam room, which is quiet as well as properly lit, heated and ventilated, and which contains a suitable piano (→ Reg. 7f) and is, where possible, out of hearing of the waiting room; a suitable person to act as steward outside the exam room for the duration of the exams in accordance with ABRSM's instructions; transport for the examiner, if requested (→ Reg. 7g).
- f A piano must be provided in the exam room (unless the Visit is solely for an ARSM exam where no accompaniment is needed). It must be properly regulated and in tune (a' = 440). A digital piano may be used, provided it has a clearly recognizable piano tone, a touch-sensitive keyboard with full-size weighted keys, and an action, compass and facilities that match those of a conventional acoustic piano, including a sustaining pedal.
- g If requested by the examiner, transport between the Visit venue and a station, hotel or other examining venue must be provided by the Applicant. The Applicant may invoice ABRSM for any such travel expenses after the Visit has taken place. Transport expenses cannot be reimbursed where the Visit is solely for a Harp, Harpsichord, Organ, Percussion, Choral Singing or Jazz Ensemble exam.
- h Where a Visit is solely for a Choral Singing exam, an examiner attendance fee is charged (www.abrsm.org/fees).

Theory exams

- i Theory exams may be held, as a Visit, at any school of general education or LEA music centre approved by ABRSM. Completion of the entry form requires the head teacher to accept responsibility for the safe custody of the papers and proper conduct of the exam. Theory exams cannot be held at teachers' private studios or houses.
- j Applicants hosting a Visit are responsible for ensuring suitable facilities and arrangements at their own cost: an exam room, which is quiet as well as properly lit, heated and ventilated, and with tables that allow the reasonable spacing of candidates; a responsible person appointed by the head teacher to act as invigilator within the exam room for the duration of the exam in accordance with ABRSM's instructions.

8 Date of exams: allocation and notification of appointments**Practical exams**

- a Dates are dependent on the entry option chosen by the Applicant (www.abrsm.org/visits). Two options (Visit and Special Visit) allow the Applicant to select the date (respectively within or outside the three annual exam Periods: www.abrsm.org/dates). All other options (ABRSM Centre and Visit for Harp, Harpsichord, Organ, Percussion, Choral Singing or Jazz Ensemble) operate on the basis that ABRSM allocates the date (within the three annual exam Periods: www.abrsm.org/dates).
- b Where ABRSM allocates the exam date, it takes into account, wherever possible, any date preferences indicated by the Applicant at the time of entry (e.g. preferred week: see www.abrsm.org/visits). However, date allocations are decided on the basis of scheduling examiners' time most efficiently while providing convenient appointments to as many candidates as possible, and consequently ABRSM cannot guarantee to fulfil any preferences indicated by the Applicant. The Applicant must therefore ensure that candidates are ready for an exam from the first day of the Period in question. ABRSM cannot accept entries that are conditional on particular dates being allocated or avoided. For further information, see ABRSM's Practical Exam Appointment Guidance, available at www.abrsm.org/appointmentguidance.
- c Notification of the exam date, time and venue is sent to the Applicant as soon as possible after appointments have been allocated and examiners have been booked, and no later than two weeks before the exam date. For entries made online, notification is by e-mail only. If notification has not been received by the first day of the exam Period, the Applicant should contact ABRSM.
- d The notification also confirms the names, levels and subjects of candidates entered, and any request for special arrangements/tests (→ *Reg. 19*). The Applicant is required to check these details and notify ABRSM immediately of any error or correction.

Theory exams

- e Theory exams are held on one day only in each of the three annual exam Periods, and at a specified time (→ *Reg. 4f*).
- f Notification is sent to the Applicant, confirming names and grades of candidates entered, and any request for special arrangements (→ *Reg. 19*). The Applicant is required to check these details and notify ABRSM immediately of any error or correction. A name label is enclosed for each candidate, which must be brought by the candidate to the exam room (→ *Reg. 11f*).

9 Changes of appointment (Practical exams)

- a It is recognized that, on occasion, an allocated appointment will coincide with another important commitment. In such circumstances, ABRSM endeavours to offer an alternative appointment, in accordance with the regulations and requirements stipulated immediately below. For further information, see ABRSM's Practical Exam Appointment Guidance, available at www.abrsm.org/appointmentguidance.
- b Any request for an alternative appointment should normally be made by the Applicant, and by telephone; if made by another party, that person must confirm that the Applicant's agreement has been given. Notification of any new appointment is sent to the Applicant by e-mail.
- c Should ABRSM be able to meet a request for an alternative appointment, the appointment offered may be at any time within the exam Period in question and at any Centre within the area. For Visits and Special Visits, a charge may be made.

- d If an alternative appointment offered by ABRSM is declined and the candidate chooses not to take the exam on the date originally allocated, the entry fee can be refunded only under the circumstances outlined in *Reg. 10* (and described in full in ABRSM's Policy for Withdrawals, Non-Attendance and Fee Refunds, available at www.abrsm.org).

10 Withdrawals, non-attendance and fee refunds

- a If a candidate is withdrawn from an exam, or does not attend, the Applicant must notify ABRSM's office in London immediately in writing, and no later than the day of the exam. Notice given only to an examiner, Honorary Local Representative, steward or invigilator is not sufficient to qualify for a refund, if applicable (→ *Regs 10b-f*).
- b A candidate who is withdrawn from an exam, or who does not attend, may be eligible for a partial refund, but only under the circumstances outlined in *Regs 10c-f* (and described in full in ABRSM's Policy for Withdrawals, Non-Attendance and Fee Refunds, available at www.abrsm.org).
- c **Illness or injury:** a refund of 75% is given, provided that the conditions in *Reg. 10a* are met and that the written notification is supported by documentary evidence, i.e. a medical certificate (an official letter from someone in authority, e.g. a head teacher or school nurse, confirming the candidate's illness or injury may also be accepted). The documentary evidence must be sent no later than four weeks after the exam date.
- d **Exceptional personal circumstances:** a discretionary refund may be given on compassionate grounds in cases such as bereavement, family crisis or personal trauma, provided that the conditions in *Reg. 10a* are met and that the written notification is supported by full details substantiating the application.
- e **Death or serious indisposition of teacher:** a discretionary refund may be given to a candidate whose exam preparation is severely curtailed by the teacher's death or long-term serious illness. (In cases of occasional missed lessons due to the teacher's minor or short-term illness, or cases of a dispute with the teacher leading to lessons being discontinued, no refund can be made.) Application for such a refund must be made in accordance with the conditions in *Reg. 10a*, although it may be made by someone other than the Applicant. ABRSM may request details of an independent person who may be contacted by ABRSM to verify the application.
- f **Circumstances beyond the candidate's control:** where a Practical exam is missed due to circumstances beyond the candidate's control (e.g. a major travel incident or damage to the candidate's instrument immediately before the exam), as a first recourse ABRSM endeavours to offer an alternative appointment at the earliest opportunity within the current exam Period (this may be at any Centre within the area). Should this not be possible, a discretionary refund of up to 75% may be given, provided that the conditions in *Reg. 10a* are met and that the written notification is supported by full details substantiating the application. Where a Theory exam is missed due to circumstances beyond the candidate's control, a discretionary refund of up to 75% may also be given, provided that the conditions in *Reg. 10a* are met and that the written notification is supported by full details substantiating the application.
- g A candidate who is withdrawn from an exam may be re-entered in the next exam Period. In such cases, a new entry and full payment must be made, as entry details/payment cannot be transferred from one Period to the next.
- h A candidate in quarantine for any infection must be withdrawn. If exams are cancelled owing to quarantine, alternative appointments/fee refunds may be offered at ABRSM's discretion.

11 Theory exams: timings and conduct

- a Timings for the Theory exams are:
Grades 1-3: 1½ hours
Grades 4-5: 2 hours
Grades 6-8: 3 hours
- b Candidates with sensory impairments, learning difficulties or particular physical needs may qualify for an additional time allowance (→ *Reg. 19*).
- c Candidates are advised to attend 10 minutes before the start of the exam and to bring the name label previously sent to the Applicant (→ *Reg. 8f*).

- d No candidate arriving more than 35 minutes after the start of the exam will be admitted.
- e An invigilator is present for the duration of the exam.
- f The invigilator opens the sealed packet of exam papers in the exam room in the presence of the candidates, and informs them that:
 - they must complete their question paper without help and without reference to notes, musical calculators, or books of any kind, and that any candidate infringing this rule or helping another will be disqualified;
 - they must stick their name label (→ *Reg. 8f*) at the top of their paper;
 - they must write their answers clearly and legibly, otherwise marks may be lost;
 - they are not allowed to take copies of the papers nor their rough notes from the room;
 - the time allowed is printed at the top of each question paper.
- g ABRSM provides plain ruled manuscript paper on which candidates may do any rough working. Candidates should bring their own pens or pencils. They may not bring mobile phones, other electronic devices or any unauthorized material or equipment (such as their own manuscript or other paper, any representation of the piano keyboard or any recording device) into the exam room. Candidates must not attempt to communicate with one another during the exam. Any candidate infringing these rules may be disqualified.
- h Candidates may hand in their papers at any time after 40 minutes from the start of the exam but, having done so, must leave the room and may not return. Once candidates have left the exam room, they are no longer under the invigilator's supervision or ABRSM's temporary care (→ *Reg. 20a*).
- i As each paper is handed in, the invigilator ensures that the candidate's full name appears legibly at the top.
- j The invigilator despatches the papers to ABRSM in accordance with the instructions issued by ABRSM, having first sealed them in secure envelopes before leaving the exam room.
- k ABRSM does not accept responsibility for the loss of any papers in the post after their despatch to ABRSM by the invigilator. In such cases, the entry fees are returned.

12 Practical exams: timings and conduct

- a Timings for the Practical exams are given at www.abrsm.org/examtimings. These timings indicate the approximate duration of each exam and allow for the candidate's entry and exit, any tuning time, as well as time for the examiner to complete the mark form between exams. Examiners may, at their discretion, take more or less time than the specified timings.
- b Candidates with sensory impairments, learning difficulties or particular physical needs may qualify for an additional time allowance (→ *Reg. 19*).
- c Candidates are advised to attend 10 minutes before the start of the exam.
- d It is not permitted to bring any unauthorized material or equipment (such as recording devices) into the exam room, and mobile phones must be switched off. Anyone infringing this rule may be disqualified.
- e Generally, one examiner only is present in the exam room. At ABRSM's discretion, a second examiner may be present, for reasons of examiner training or quality assurance.
- f For monitoring, training and moderation purposes, exams may, from time to time, be recorded by ABRSM. Exams may also be recorded for use in public seminars and for marketing purposes. Such recordings become the property of ABRSM but remain strictly anonymous.
- g The examiner despatches the mark forms to ABRSM in accordance with the instructions issued by ABRSM.
- h ABRSM does not accept responsibility for the loss of any mark forms in the post after their despatch to ABRSM by the examiner. In such cases, ABRSM arranges for duplicate mark forms to be provided by the examiner with minimum delay.

13 Candidate list and attendance order

ABRSM Centres

- a The steward is provided with a candidate list showing the timetable for each day, including each candidate's appointment time. Wherever possible, candidates are timetabled in the same order as they were listed at the time of entry.

- b If a candidate is withdrawn from an entry (or given an alternative appointment), the appointment times for other candidates in the same entry must remain the same, i.e. later candidates may not be brought forward.

Visits

- c The Applicant hosting a Visit is sent a candidate list showing the timetable for the Visit. The list indicates the start and end times and any scheduled breaks. Wherever possible, candidates are timetabled in the same order as they were presented by the Applicant at the time of entry.
- d Should the Applicant hosting a Visit wish to alter the order in which candidates are examined, the following instructions must be observed: the overall time allocated to the Visit must not be changed; the timing of any scheduled lunch break and 15-minute morning/afternoon break (→ *Reg. 7c*) must not be affected; the revised candidate list (indicating precisely the new appointment time for each candidate) must be presented to the examiner and the steward; any other Applicants whose candidates are participating in the Visit must be duly notified.

14 Accompanists, interpreters, page-turners and escorts

- a Candidates must provide their own accompanist. The candidate's teacher may act as accompanist; under no circumstances will the examiner do so (except in the Prep Test). For graded exams, the accompanist may remain in the exam room only while engaged in accompanying. If necessary, the accompanist may simplify any part of the piano accompaniment, provided the result is musically satisfactory. Candidates in solo Jazz subjects (except Piano) who opt to use ABRSM's published backing tracks in place of a live accompaniment must provide their own CD player and CD.
- b All exams are conducted in English. A candidate who is not comfortable using English is permitted to bring an independent person (who is neither the candidate's music teacher nor a relative) to the exam room as interpreter; prior permission is not required.
- c With the exception of an accompanist and/or interpreter, the candidate is normally not permitted to bring another person into the exam room with him/her. However, in exceptional circumstances permission may be given at ABRSM's discretion for someone to be present in the exam room with the candidate. To request this, at the time of entry the Applicant should nominate someone who is neither the candidate's music teacher nor a relative of the candidate, giving details of the reasons for the request.
- d Page turns:
- i) Graded exams: candidates are normally required to make any page-turns in their music themselves. In cases where candidates believe there is no solution to a particularly awkward page-turn, they may apply to bring a page-turner to the exam. The request must be made to syllabus@abrsms.ac.uk no later than the closing date for entry, and details of the piece, edition and nature of the difficulty should be given. If permission is granted, a confirmation letter will be issued which must be taken to the exam as verification. Organ candidates at any grade may bring a page-turner (who may also act as registrant); prior permission is not required. Examiners are unable to help with page-turning. (→ *Reg. 15k* regarding the legality of photocopying music.)
 - ii) ARSM exams: candidates are permitted to bring a page-turner to assist with awkward page-turns; prior permission is not required. Examiners are unable to help with page-turning. (→ *Reg. 15k* regarding the legality of photocopying music.)
- e In a Grade 8 or ARSM exam, a candidate's accompanist is permitted to bring a page-turner to assist with page-turns in the piano part; prior permission is not required.

15 Exam music and performance requirements

Practical exams (except ARSM)

- a The individual sections of the exam may be undertaken in any order, at the candidate's choice (although, ideally, accompanied pieces should be performed consecutively). If an accompanied exam begins with any section other than the pieces, the steward should be advised in advance so that the accompanist can be summoned at the appropriate time.
- b Teachers and candidates are advised to pay close attention to the instrument-specific (and instrumental family-specific) regulations contained in each syllabus booklet, as well as to the requirements indicated in the current lists of syllabus pieces. A 'piece' comprises all the music set under one number-heading in the

syllabus lists (unless an option is specifically indicated). Therefore, a 'piece' may comprise more than one movement from a work or more than one item from an album.

- c Where appropriate, the initial tempo indication (or section title) of a piece/movement is listed in the syllabus. Where a piece/movement comprises more than one tempo indication (or section title), the whole piece/movement is still required to be played in the exam (unless otherwise indicated).
- d Candidates failing to observe specific syllabus requirements or regulations (i.e. performing a piece not listed in the syllabus, or not being prepared to perform the full extent of a piece as indicated in the syllabus) may be penalized, or, in certain cases, disqualified.
- e ABRSM offers a limited overlap period, during which pieces from the preceding syllabus may, under certain conditions, be performed (→ *Reg. 2b*).
- f Wherever the syllabus includes an arrangement or transcription, the edition listed in the syllabus must be used in the exam; in all such cases the abbreviation 'arr.' or 'trans.' appears in the syllabus entry. For all other pieces, the editions quoted in the syllabus are given for guidance only and candidates may use any edition of their choice (in- or out-of-print or downloadable).
- g Printed editorial suggestions such as fingering, bowing, phrasing, metronome marks, realization of ornaments etc. need not be strictly observed. Whether the piece contains musical indications or not, candidates are always encouraged to interpret the score in a stylistically appropriate manner.
- h All da capo and dal segno indications should be observed but all other repeats (including first-time bars) should be omitted unless they are very brief (i.e. of a few bars) or unless the syllabus specifies otherwise.
- i Performing pieces from memory is optional, except for singers, who must perform all items from memory, other than items from oratorios, cantatas or other large-scale sacred works. Candidates performing from memory must ensure that a copy of the music is available for the examiner to refer to if necessary.
- j Examiners may ask to look at the music before or after the performance of a piece (a separate copy is not required: the candidate's or accompanist's copy will suffice). Examiners may decide to stop the performance of a piece when they have heard enough to form a judgment.
- k The Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988 does not permit the making or use of photocopies (or other kinds of copies) of copyright works. However, the Music Publishers' Association's Code of Fair Practice (available at www.mpaonline.org.uk) allows copies to be made in certain limited circumstances (such as a difficulty with a particular page-turn) but only if the copyright holder is listed on the MPA website or in Appendix C of the Code. In all other cases, application should be made to the copyright holder before any copy is made. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that candidates act within the law with respect to the making and use of photocopies (or other copies). ABRSM reserves the right to withhold the exam result of any candidate where it has evidence of the use of an illegal copy (or copies) in connection with that exam.

ARSM exams

- l Candidates are required to complete a programme form and to give it to the examiner at the start of the exam.
- m Teachers and candidates are advised to pay close attention to the exam requirements, as well as to the requirements indicated in the current repertoire lists. An ARSM item comprises all the music set under one number-heading in the ARSM repertoire lists (unless an option is specifically indicated) and may comprise more than one movement from a work or more than one item from an album.
- n Where appropriate, the initial tempo indication (or section title) of a piece/movement is listed in the repertoire lists. Where the piece/movement comprises more than one tempo indication (or section title), the whole piece/movement is still required to be played in the exam (unless otherwise indicated).
- o Candidates failing to observe specific exam requirements or regulations (e.g. offering an inappropriate standard of own-choice piece, presenting a programme that is too short/long, or not performing repertoire chosen from the set lists as specified) may be penalized, or, in certain cases, disqualified.
- p Wherever the repertoire lists include an arrangement or transcription, the edition listed must be used in the exam; in all such cases the abbreviation 'arr.' or 'trans.' appears in the list entry. For all other pieces, the editions quoted in the repertoire lists are given for guidance only and candidates may use any edition of their choice (in- or out-of-print or downloadable).

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- q The observance of repeats and interpretative decisions regarding phrasing, the realization of ornaments, the use of vibrato or pedalling etc. are matters in which candidates are expected to use their discretion to achieve a stylistically appropriate and musically satisfying performance.
 - r Performing pieces from memory is optional, but candidates are encouraged to do so if they consider it will enhance their performance. Candidates performing from memory must ensure that a copy of the music is available for the examiner to refer to if necessary.
 - s Examiners may ask to look at the music before or after the performance of the whole programme (a separate copy is not required: the candidate's or accompanist's copy will suffice). Examiners may decide to stop the performance if the upper time limit is exceeded.
 - t Use of photocopies: → *Reg. 15k*.

16 Special consideration

- a Special consideration may be given, at ABRSM's discretion, to a candidate whose performance in an exam is felt to have been affected by, or who does not complete an exam owing to, circumstances beyond the candidate's control (e.g. a personal trauma shortly before, or at the time of, the exam, such as bereavement or family crisis; a minor injury immediately before, or illness occurring during, the exam; instrument failure/malfunction immediately before, or during, the exam; a serious disturbance or disruption at the time of the exam, such as power failure, fire alarm or noise from nearby building work). Further details are contained in ABRSM's Special Consideration Policy, available at www.abrsm.org. (NB these arrangements do not apply to candidates suffering illness or injury in advance of an exam, for whom the recommended course of action is withdrawal (→ *Reg. 16g*).)
- b Application for special consideration should be made only by the Applicant and must be sent in writing to the Head of Global Operations as soon as possible, and no later than seven days, after the exam. Where appropriate, the application should be supported by documentary evidence, i.e. a medical certificate or a statement from an involved party. Should the Applicant be unavailable in the seven days after the exam, an initial application may be made in writing by another concerned party (e.g. the accompanist or a parent/guardian) but must be followed by formal confirmation by the Applicant as soon as possible, in accordance with the conditions outlined immediately above.
- c Examiners are not permitted to determine whether special consideration should be given. Such decisions are made only by ABRSM, provided that the conditions in *Reg. 16b* are met.
- d Candidates can be assessed only on the performance given during an exam and consequently an application for special consideration will not normally result in an adjustment to marks. Where a section of a graded exam is not attempted, marks for that section cannot be awarded, but a candidate may still be successful and be awarded a certificate, provided that the marks awarded for the sections attempted total 100 or more in a Practical exam and 66 marks or more in a Theory exam.
- e Should an application for special consideration prove successful, the following possible outcomes will be considered by ABRSM in consultation with the Applicant:
 - i) discussion of the provisional outcome (i.e. informal notification by ABRSM of whether or not the candidate has passed) and a decision by the Applicant to accept the result, with a written acknowledgement from ABRSM that external circumstances may have affected the candidate's performance;
 - ii) invalidation of the exam result and the opportunity for the candidate to retake the exam at the earliest opportunity and at no extra cost (for Practical exams, within the same exam Period where possible, although this may mean attending at an alternative venue);
 - iii) invalidation of the exam result and a discretionary refund of up to 75% of the entry fee.
- f Application for special consideration may delay the release of the exam result while investigation is carried out.
- g For a candidate who has fallen ill or suffered injury in advance of the exam, the recommended course of action is withdrawal, followed by application for a partial refund (→ *Reg. 10c*): it is not advisable for a candidate who is unwell to attend an exam, nor for a candidate suffering illness or injury to attempt an exam under disadvantageous circumstances that cannot be taken into account by the examiner.

17 Results and certificates

- a ABRSM's marking schemes are outlined at www.abrsm.org/markingcriteria as well as in the individual syllabus booklets.
- b Examiners report direct to ABRSM and are not permitted to divulge any information regarding exam results to any other person.
- c No marks are awarded for the Prep Test or Performance Assessment. A certificate with constructive comments is written by the examiner and presented to the candidate at the end of the assessment.
- d Results for Practical exams are usually issued two to three weeks after the exam date. Results for Theory exams are usually issued approximately six weeks after the exam date. Prior to their issue, results are subject to various standard checks and quality-assurance processes. Additional checks to a selection of results means that, in some instances, their release takes longer, but every effort is made to keep any delay to a minimum.
- e A mark form is issued for each candidate. For Practical exams, the mark form gives a breakdown of the marks awarded for each section and the total number of marks as well as the examiner's comments. (When a candidate achieves marks totalling less than half the overall pass mark, a mark form showing only the examiner's comments will normally be issued, i.e. with no marks recorded.) For Theory exams, the mark form gives a breakdown of the marks awarded for each question and the total number of marks. Theory papers are not returned after marking.
- f All successful candidates receive a certificate, which specifies the subject and level at which they have been examined. Successful ARSM candidates may append the letters of the qualification after their name. While indicating a high standard at the level, a Distinction in Grade 8 or ARSM does not necessarily imply suitability for admission to any of the Royal Schools of Music or any higher education institution, or for a professional career in music. Certificates do not certify that the holders are qualified to teach.
- g Unless the Applicant requests otherwise and in writing, the results (mark forms/certificates) are posted to the Applicant, whose responsibility it is to pass them on to candidates. Results are also made available to the Applicant at www.abrsm.org and can be accessed using the Applicant Number and confidential password (→ *Reg. 3c*).
- h Results are issued only in accordance with the procedures described in *Reg. 17g*; ABRSM will not disclose exam results by telephone or e-mail.
- i ABRSM does not accept responsibility for the loss or non-receipt of any results after their despatch by post. If results have not been received within the expected time (→ *Reg. 17d*), the Applicant should notify ABRSM and, if they are confirmed to have been despatched, contact the local sorting office in case they are being held for collection following unsuccessful delivery. ABRSM allows a period of 28 days after the original despatch date in order to allow for undelivered or wrongly delivered results to be returned; during this time, written confirmation of marks may be requested by the Applicant. If after this period results are still missing, the Applicant should notify ABRSM and arrangements will be made for replacement mark forms/certificates to be issued.
- j While ABRSM's policy is to release results only to the Applicant (→ *Reg. 17g*), ABRSM reserves the right to confirm results to another concerned party (e.g. a parent/guardian or head teacher) under the following circumstances: serious illness or death of the Applicant; failure by the Applicant to pass on results within eight weeks of their despatch by ABRSM. ABRSM will endeavour to verify any such circumstances, following which written confirmation of results and/or duplicate certificates may be issued.
- k On application, the result of a past exam may be confirmed in writing to a concerned party (e.g. an Applicant, candidate, parent/guardian):
 - i) *Exams taken in 1994 or later*: the candidate's name, the date and place of the exam and the Applicant's name (and Applicant Number) must be supplied. The total marks gained are confirmed in writing by ABRSM for no charge. On payment of a fee (www.abrsm.org/fees), a duplicate certificate is provided, if requested.
 - ii) *Exams taken before 1994*: a past results search form (available from ABRSM's office in London or from www.abrsm.org) must be completed. A confirmation of marks fee is charged (www.abrsm.org/fees) and a duplicate certificate is included, if requested.

- l Following government accreditation of ABRSM graded music exams, the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) includes Grades 6–8 in the tariff for UK university and college entrance. At the discretion of individual institutions, students may benefit from points recommendations (www.ucas.com). Where the date of birth and gender have been supplied at the time of entry, all results for candidates at these grades are passed on to UCAS in strict confidence in order to allow them to verify UCAS applications.
- m The UK government requires exam data from ABRSM for all candidates between the ages of 11 and 18. Results for candidates between these ages are therefore passed on to the Department for Education (DfE) and to Llywodraeth Cymru (Welsh Government) in strict confidence.

18 Enquiries, complaints, appeals and feedback

a Enquiries

All mark forms are clerically checked and reviewed prior to issue; therefore, enquiries concerning the arithmetical accuracy of results are normally unnecessary.

b Complaints

Complaints concerning either i) the examiner's conduct of an exam or ii) environmental issues to do with the exam, venue, or facilities for exams, should be made in writing within seven days of the exam. In order for ABRSM to investigate complaints fully and promptly prior to the dispatch of results, it is essential that the appropriate ABRSM person is made aware of any issues immediately, by telephone or e-mail. Details of the complaint must be confirmed in writing (by e-mail or post) and received within seven days of the exam. ABRSM aims to acknowledge such complaints within three working days. Complaints should be addressed to:

- i) *Examiner's conduct of an exam*: the Manager, Quality Assurance: Grades (qa-grades@abrsms.ac.uk);
- ii) *Environmental issues (exam, venue or facilities)*: the Head of Global Operations (abrsms@abrsms.ac.uk).

c Appeals

The appeals procedure exists to investigate the unusual situation in which a candidate receives a significantly lower result than anticipated.

- i) *Practical exams (Grades & ARSM)*: To make a formal marking appeal against the marks awarded for a graded or ARSM exam, an appeal/feedback form (downloadable from www.abrsms.org/examconcerns) should be completed, signed by the Applicant and submitted together with the relevant mark form(s) to the Manager, Quality Assurance: Grades at ABRSM's office in London. The appeal should be made to ABRSM as soon as possible, and no later than six weeks after the date of the exam (unless otherwise advised by ABRSM). If ABRSM's initial investigation of an appeal proves to be inconclusive, ABRSM may request the Applicant to submit an unedited recording of the candidate performing the exam pieces and, for graded exams, a selection of scales and arpeggios or the Unaccompanied Traditional Song (on CD, mini-disc or a digital recording).

If the appeal is upheld, depending on the circumstances of each case, ABRSM will issue *either*:

- a voucher equivalent to the value of the original exam (this can be used to enter for the same exam free of charge within one year of issue or as part payment towards a higher grade within the same timeframe); *or*
- a full refund of the original exam fee.

No marks can be amended retrospectively as a result of a formal marking appeal.

ABRSM aims to acknowledge receipt of appeal correspondence within three working days and to resolve all appeals within four weeks of the acknowledgement. If a formal marking appeal remains unresolved by the deadline for entry to the next exam Period, candidates intending to retake should be entered in the normal way, meeting the entry deadline (postal or online). Any formal marking appeal upheld after the entry deadline will result in a full refund of the exam fee paid in lieu of a voucher being issued.

- ii) *Practical exams (DipABRSM, LRSM & FRSM)*: A separate procedure exists for DipABRSM, LRSM and FRSM appeals. Please refer to the relevant Diploma Syllabus for further information.
- iii) *Theory exams*: To make a formal appeal against the marking of a Music Theory exam, a Music Theory exam appeal form (downloadable from www.abrsms.org/examconcerns) should be completed, signed

by the Applicant and submitted to the Manager, Quality Assurance: Theory at ABRSM's office in London. In order for a full and thorough investigation by a moderator to proceed, the appeal form must be posted within twelve weeks of the exam, and section 4 (payment details) of the form must also be completed. ABRSM aims to acknowledge receipt of appeal correspondence within three working days and to resolve all appeals within four weeks of the acknowledgement. If the appeal is not upheld, the investigation fee (www.abrsm.org/fees) will be charged and a detailed response provided. If the appeal is upheld, no charge will be made and an amended result will be issued. Completed Music Theory papers cannot be returned.

Candidates intending to retake should be entered in the normal way, meeting the published entry deadline. Any appeal upheld after the entry deadline will result in a full refund of the exam fee (if the candidate no longer wishes to retake).

d Independent Review

In the exceptional circumstance that an Applicant does not accept ABRSM's decision regarding an appeal, the Applicant may seek an independent review as to the correctness of the application of ABRSM's appeals procedure in the particular case. A request for this should be made within 14 days of the dispatch of ABRSM's decision and must be addressed in writing to the Chief Executive, accompanied by a fee (www.abrsm.org/fees). ABRSM aims to acknowledge the request within three working days and to respond with the outcome within four weeks of the acknowledgement. If ABRSM is unable to respond within this timeframe, the Applicant will be kept informed. An independent person, unconnected with ABRSM, will be involved in the independent review process. The findings of the independent review will be fully taken into account by the Chief Executive, who will make the final decision. If the independent review is upheld, the review fee will be refunded.

e Feedback

ABRSM encourages comments about its services, including feedback on exam results. In cases where Applicants, parents or candidates wish to provide informal feedback about results or other matters, an appeal/feedback form (downloadable from www.abrsm.org/examconcerns) should be completed and submitted together with the relevant mark form(s) to the Manager, Quality Assurance: Grades, either by e-mail (qa-grades@abrsm.ac.uk) or by post to ABRSM's office in London. All feedback is logged and plays a valued part in ABRSM's quality assurance procedures and will be acknowledged, although a response is not guaranteed.

19 Access (for candidates with specific needs)

- a ABRSM endeavours to make its exams accessible to all candidates, although it should be understood that, while the examiner is informed of candidates' needs, no special concession or allowance in marking is made, and each candidate's performance is judged according to the standard normally expected. ABRSM publishes separate guidelines covering provisions for blind and partially sighted candidates, deaf and hearing-impaired candidates, candidates with dyslexia, dyspraxia or other learning difficulties, candidates with autistic spectrum disorders (including Asperger syndrome) and candidates with other specific needs. Where ABRSM's guidelines are not applicable, or a candidate has particular physical access needs, each case is considered on an individual basis. Guidelines and further information are available from the Access Co-ordinator (accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk), by textphone (020 7637 2582) or from www.abrsm.org/specificneeds.
- b When making an entry for a graded exam, Prep Test or Performance Assessment, the Applicant should record the relevant code on the entry form. (Details of all current codes are given in ABRSM's guidelines (→ *Reg. 19a*) as well as on the entry form.) Where further arrangements are required, or the codes are not applicable, the Applicant should attach a covering letter to the entry form giving full details. For entries made online, any additional information should be e-mailed separately to accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk or sent by post. When making an entry for an ARSM exam, the Applicant should contact the Access Co-ordinator with details of any access requirements.

Some provisions require a supporting document to be submitted, which should be the most recent available. In such cases, if ABRSM does not receive the relevant supporting document in advance of the exam, results may be withheld or a penalty imposed.

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- c **Blind or partially sighted candidates:** special arrangements exist for the sight-reading element and also for Aural Test B at Grades 4–8. Further information about amanuenses, tests, specimen tests, extra time and entry form codes is available in the relevant guidelines (→ *Reg. 19a*).
 - d **Deaf or hearing-impaired candidates:** alternative aural tests are available for deaf or hearing-impaired candidates taking graded exams. Further information about tests, specimen tests, sign-language interpreters, extra time and entry form codes is available in the relevant guidelines (→ *Reg. 19a*).
 - e **Candidates with dyslexia, dyspraxia or other learning difficulties:** candidates with dyslexia, dyspraxia or other learning difficulties may be eligible for extra time and/or other provisions. A current supporting document (→ *Reg. 19b*) must be submitted before any provisions can be granted. Further information about extra time, supporting documents and the administration of the exam is available in the relevant guidelines (→ *Reg. 19a*).
 - f **Candidates with autistic spectrum disorders (ASD):** it is recognized that candidates with ASD have a variety of different needs, which may include extra time for communication. Where extra time is required for sight-reading, or where a third party is required in the exam room, a current supporting document (→ *Reg. 19b*) must be submitted. Further information about extra time, supporting documents and the administration of the exam is available in the relevant guidelines (→ *Reg. 19a*).
 - g Candidates of any age whose needs mean that they are not able to access graded exams may enter for the Performance Assessment, in which they may perform a programme of pieces entirely of their own choice and lasting no more than 15 minutes.

20 The safeguarding of children

- a ABRSM acknowledges that it has a responsibility for the safety and welfare of children taking its exams or otherwise under its temporary care. All staff and volunteers working on behalf of ABRSM are required to accept this responsibility and are committed to practices that protect children from harm.
- b ABRSM's Safeguarding Children Policy, produced in consultation with NSPCC, is available at www.abrsm.org. The Policy includes a Code of Practice for all who work on behalf of the organization. ABRSM is committed to reviewing its Safeguarding Children Policy and Code of Practice at regular intervals.

21 Equal opportunities

- a ABRSM is committed to providing equality of opportunity and treatment for all, and will not unlawfully or unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly on the basis of gender, age, ethnic origin or disability in its dealings with any candidate, parent/guardian, teacher, examiner, representative or steward.

22 Data protection

- a The processing of personal data by ABRSM is regulated by the Data Protection Act 1988, under which ABRSM is registered (registration number Z6618494). ABRSM respects the right of individuals to access and check the accuracy of any personal data that is held concerning them. For further details, see www.abrsm.org/privacypolicy.

23 Environmental management

- a ABRSM is committed to minimizing its environmental impact throughout its operations. In line with its Environmental Management Policy, ABRSM seeks to integrate environmental considerations into its daily activities, encouraging reuse and recycling while minimizing waste. Where practicable, ABRSM uses recycled paper for all printed publications and packaging materials; where this is not possible, pulp is sourced from sustainable forestry.