

## GRADE 6

**PREREQUISITE FOR ENTRY:** ABRSM Grade 5 (or above) in Music Theory, Practical Musicianship or any solo Jazz subject. For alternatives, see [www.abrsm.org/prerequisite](http://www.abrsm.org/prerequisite).

**THREE PIECES:** one chosen by the candidate from each of the three Lists, A, B and C:

	COMPOSER	PIECE / WORK / ARRANGER	PUBLICATION (PUBLISHER)
<b>A</b>	1 J. S. Bach	Invention in A minor, BWV 784	Piano Exam Pieces 2017 & 2018, Grade 6 (ABRSM)
	2 Handel	Courante (3rd movt from <i>Partita in C minor</i> , HWV 444)	Piano Exam Pieces 2017 & 2018, Grade 6 (ABRSM)
	3 Mozart	Rondo (3rd movt from <i>Sonata in C</i> , K. 545)	Piano Exam Pieces 2017 & 2018, Grade 6 (ABRSM)
	4 J. S. Bach	Andante (3rd movt from <i>Pastorella in F</i> , BWV 590), trans. Whittaker	Bach: Transcriptions for Piano (OUP)
	5 Beethoven	Andante (1st movt from <i>Sonata in G minor</i> , Op. 49 No.1)	Beethoven: Sonata in G minor, Op. 49 No.1 (ABRSM) <i>or</i> Beethoven: The 35 Piano Sonatas, Vol. 1 (ABRSM)
	6 D. Scarlatti	Sonata in F, Kp. 378, L. 276	Scarlatti: 3 Sonatas for Keyboard (Bärenreiter) <i>or</i> Scarlatti: 200 Sonatas, Vol. 3 (Editio Musica Budapest)
<b>B</b>	1 Gade	Scherzo (No. 2 from <i>Akvareller</i> , Op.19)	Piano Exam Pieces 2017 & 2018, Grade 6 (ABRSM)
	2 O. Merikanto	Valse lente, Op. 33	Piano Exam Pieces 2017 & 2018, Grade 6 (ABRSM)
	3 Skryabin	Prelude in E (No. 9 from <i>24 Preludes</i> , Op.11)	Piano Exam Pieces 2017 & 2018, Grade 6 (ABRSM)
	4 Cervantes	Los tres golpes	Beyond the Romantic Spirit, Book 1 (Alfred)
	5 Hummel	Andantino in A $\flat$ (No. 57 from <i>Klavierschule</i> )	Hummel: 16 Short Pieces (ABRSM)
	6 Martinů	Pohádka (No. 4 from <i>Loutky</i> , Book 1)	Martinů: Loutky, Book 1 (Bärenreiter) <i>or</i> Martinů: Loutky, Books 1–3 (Bärenreiter)
<b>C</b>	1 Bartók	Joc cu bâță (No. 1 from <i>Román népi táncok</i> )	Piano Exam Pieces 2017 & 2018, Grade 6 (ABRSM)
	2 Mel Leven	Cruella de Vil (from <i>The 101 Dalmations</i> ), arr. Churchill	Piano Exam Pieces 2017 & 2018, Grade 6 (ABRSM)
	3 Karen Tanaka	Masquerade	Piano Exam Pieces 2017 & 2018, Grade 6 (ABRSM)
	4 Mike Cornick	Modulations (from <i>Blue Piano</i> )	Mike Cornick: Blue Piano (Universal) <i>or</i> Encore, Book 3 (ABRSM)
	5 Dello Joio	Moderate (1st movt from <i>Suite for Piano</i> )	Dello Joio: Suite for Piano (G. Schirmer) <i>or</i> 20th Century American Composers – Upper Intermediate Level (G. Schirmer)
	6 Khachaturian	Study (No. 5 from <i>Pictures of Childhood</i> )	Khachaturian: Pictures of Childhood (Boosey & Hawkes)

**SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS:** from memory; for further details see page 10

	RANGE	REQUIREMENTS
<b>SCALES (SIMILAR MOTION)</b>		
all keys, major and minor (minors harmonic <i>and</i> melodic)	4 oct.	legato; hands together <i>or</i> separately, as directed by the examiner
<b>STACCATO SCALES</b>		
<i>Group 1 or Group 2 at candidate's choice</i> <i>Group 1:</i> A, E♭ majors <i>Group 2:</i> E, B♭ majors	4 oct.	staccato; hands separately
<b>CONTRARY-MOTION SCALES</b>		
<i>Same group as chosen above</i> <i>Group 1:</i> A, E♭ majors and harmonic minors <i>Group 2:</i> E, B♭ majors and harmonic minors	2 oct.	legato; hands beginning on the tonic (unison)
<b>STACCATO SCALE IN THIRDS</b>		
C major	2 oct.	staccato; hands separately
<b>CHROMATIC SCALES</b>		
beginning on any note named by the examiner	4 oct.	legato; hands together <i>or</i> separately, as directed by the examiner
<b>CHROMATIC CONTRARY-MOTION SCALE</b>		
beginning on A♯ (LH) and C♯ (RH)	2 oct.	legato; hands beginning a minor third apart
<b>ARPEGGIOS</b>		
all keys, major and minor	4 oct.	legato; hands together <i>or</i> separately, as directed by the examiner
<b>DIMINISHED SEVENTHS</b>		
beginning on B beginning on C♯	4 oct.	legato; hands together <i>or</i> separately, as directed by the examiner

**SIGHT-READING:** a short piece of previously unseen music; for further details see page 11

**AURAL TESTS:** administered by the examiner from the piano; for further details see pages 28 & 31

## PIANO GRADES: requirements and information

*This section provides a summary of the most important points that teachers and candidates need to know when taking ABRSM graded Piano exams. Further details, as well as administrative information relating to the exams, are given in ABRSM's Information & Regulations (available at [www.abrsm.org/regulations](http://www.abrsm.org/regulations)) which should be read before an exam booking is made.*

### Entering for an exam

**Eligibility:** There are eight grades for Piano and candidates may be entered for any grade irrespective of age and without previously having taken any other grade in Piano. Candidates for a Grade 6, 7 or 8 exam must already have passed ABRSM Grade 5 (or above) in Music Theory, Practical Musicianship or a solo Jazz instrument; for full details, including a list of accepted alternatives, see Regulation 1d at [www.abrsm.org/regulations](http://www.abrsm.org/regulations).

**Access:** ABRSM endeavours to make its exams as accessible as possible to all candidates, regardless of sensory impairments, learning difficulties or particular physical needs. There is a range of alternative tests and formats as well as sets of guidelines for candidates with particular access needs (see [www.abrsm.org/specificneeds](http://www.abrsm.org/specificneeds)). Where a candidate's needs are not covered by the guidelines, each case is considered on an individual basis. Further information is available from the Access Co-ordinator ([accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk](mailto:accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk)).

**Exam booking:** Details of exam dates, locations, fees and how to book an exam are available online at [www.abrsm.org/exambooking](http://www.abrsm.org/exambooking).

### Instruments

ABRSM Centres provide a piano suitable for exam purposes. The piano will be upright or grand. Practice before the exam cannot be arranged, but examiners will recognize that the instrument may be one to which candidates are unaccustomed. When exams are held at Visits (i.e. premises provided by the Applicant and visited by the examiner), a suitable piano must be provided. 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.

### Elements of the exam

All ABRSM graded Piano exams comprise the following elements: three Pieces; Scales and arpeggios/broken chords; Sight-reading; and Aural tests. In all grades, marks are allocated as follows:

Pieces: 1	30
2	30
3	30
Scales and arpeggios/broken chords	21
Sight-reading	21
Aural tests	18
Total	150

**Marking scheme:** 100 marks are required for a Pass, 120 for a Merit and 130 for a Distinction. A Pass in each individual section is not required to pass overall. See pp. 40–41 for the marking criteria used by examiners.

## **Pieces**

**Programme planning:** Candidates must choose one piece from each of the three lists (A, B and C) in each grade. In the exam, they should inform the examiner which pieces they are performing, and they are welcome to use the form on pp. 43/45 for this purpose.

**Exam music & editions:** 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). Information on obtaining exam music is given on p. 12.

**Interpreting the score:** Printed editorial suggestions such as fingering, 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. Ultimately, examiners’ marking will be determined by consideration of pitch, time, tone, shape and performance, and how control of these contributes to the overall musical outcome.

**Pedalling:** The use and control of pedalling, and its effect on tone and shape, will be taken into account by examiners, who will be assessing the overall musical outcome rather than the strict observance of any printed pedal indications (which may therefore be adapted or omitted, as appropriate). Pieces whose full musical effect is heavily reliant on pedalling (whether marked in the music or not) should be avoided if appropriate pedalling cannot be managed.

**Hand stretch:** Candidates should choose the most suitable pieces for their hand size from the syllabus lists. If necessary, they may occasionally adapt the music by ‘spreading’ chords or omitting notes at wide stretches, provided the result is musically satisfactory.

**Repeats:** 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.

**Performing from memory:** Candidates are free to perform any of their pieces from memory; in such cases they must ensure that a copy of the music is available for the examiner to refer to if necessary. No additional marks are awarded for playing from memory.

**Page-turns:** Examiners will be understanding if a page-turn causes a lack of continuity during a piece, and this will not affect the marking. A variety of solutions for awkward page-turns exists, including the use of an additional copy of the music or a photocopy of a section of the piece (but see ‘Photocopies’ on p. 10). 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@abrsm.ac.uk](mailto:syllabus@abrsm.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. Examiners are unable to help with page-turning.

**Photocopies:** Performing from unauthorized photocopies (or other kinds of copies) of copyright editions is not allowed. ABRSM may withhold the exam result where it has evidence of an illegal copy (or copies) being used. In the UK, copies may be used in certain limited circumstances – for full details, see the MPA's *Code of Fair Practice* at [www.mpaonline.org.uk](http://www.mpaonline.org.uk). In all other cases, application should be made to the copyright holder before any copy is made, and evidence of permission received should be brought to the exam.

## Scales and arpeggios/broken chords

Examiners will usually ask for at least one of each type of scale/arpeggio/broken chord etc. required at each grade, as well as aiming to hear, in Grades 6–8, a balance of the specified articulations. When asking for requirements, examiners will specify only:

- the key (including minor form – harmonic *or* melodic – in the Grade 6–8 scales) or the starting note
- left hand *or* right hand, *or* hands together
- the articulation (Grades 6–8)



All scales, arpeggios and broken chords should:

- be played from memory
- ascend and descend according to the specified range (and pattern)
- be prepared legato, unless the syllabus specifies staccato (or both)
- be played without pedalling
- be played without undue accentuation and at a pace that is consistent with accuracy and distinctness

Candidates are free to use any fingering that produces a successful musical outcome.

The following speeds are given as a general guide:

	Grade / Speed*							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Scales</b> (incl. contrary-motion, chromatic & whole-tone)	♩ = 60	♩ = 66	♩ = 80	♩ = 52	♩ = 63	♩ = 76	♩ = 80	♩ = 88
<b>Arpeggios</b> (incl. broken chords, dom. & dim. 7ths)	♩ = 46	♩ = 63	♩ = 69	♩ = 76	♩ = 88	♩ = 50	♩ = 56	♩ = 66
<b>Scales in 3rds</b>						♩ = 52	♩ = 46	♩ = 52
<b>Scales a 3rd apart</b>							♩ = 60	♩ = 63
<b>Scales in 6ths / a 6th apart</b>							♩ = 52	♩ = 63
<b>Chromatic scales a minor 3rd apart</b>								♩ = 76
<b>Chromatic scale in minor 3rds</b>								♩ = 52

\* All speeds relate to the rhythmic grouping , *except* for broken chords in Grade 1, where  applies.

Candidates are free to start at any octave, provided the required ranges are covered. For all 'hands together' requirements, the hands should be one octave apart, unless otherwise indicated.

Arpeggios and dominant sevenths are required in root position only, except where otherwise indicated. Scales in thirds or a third apart should begin with the tonic as the lower note, while scales in sixths or a sixth apart should begin with the tonic as the upper note.

Books of scale requirements are published for Piano by ABRSM for each grade.

## Sight-reading

Candidates will be asked to play a short unaccompanied piece of music which they have not previously seen. They will be given up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out all or any part of the test before they are required to play it for assessment. The table below shows the introduction of elements at each grade. Please note that these parameters are presented cumulatively, i.e. once introduced they apply for all subsequent grades (albeit within a logical progression of difficulty).

Grade	Length (bars)	Time	Keys	Hand position	Other features that may be included
1	4	4/4 3/4	C, G, F majors A, D minors	Each hand: • playing separately • in 5-finger position	Simple: • dynamics • note values • articulations Occasional accidentals (within minor keys only)
	6	2/4			
2			D major E, G minors	Hands playing together	• dotted notes • tied notes
3	up to 8	3/8	A, B $\flat$ , E $\flat$ majors B minor	Hands playing outside 5-finger position	• 2-note chords in either hand
4	c. 8	6/8			• anacrusis • chromatic notes • pause signs • tenuto
5	c. 8-12		E, A $\flat$ majors F $\sharp$ , C minors		• 4-part chords (2 notes max. in either hand) • simple syncopation • slowing of tempo at end
6	c. 12-16	9/8 5/8 5/4	C $\sharp$ , F minors		• triplet rhythms • clef changes • use of right pedal
7	c. 16-20	7/8 7/4			• tempo changes • 8va sign • use of una corda pedal
8	c. 1 page	12/8	B, D $\flat$ majors		• 3-part chords in either hand • spread chords • simple ornaments

For practice purposes, books of specimen sight-reading tests are published for Piano by ABRSM for each grade.

## **Aural tests**

The requirements are the same for all subjects. Full details of the Aural tests are given on pp. 28–33.

## **In the exam**

**Examiners:** Generally, there will be one examiner in the exam room; however, for training and quality assurance purposes, a second examiner may sometimes be present. Examiners may ask to look at the music before or after the performance of a piece. They may also decide to stop the performance of a piece when they have heard enough to form a judgment. Examiners will not issue, or comment on, a candidate's result; instead, the mark form (and certificate for successful candidates) will be issued by ABRSM after the exam.

**Before beginning:** Candidates are welcome to adjust the piano stool height (the examiner will help with this if necessary) and to play a few notes to try out and get used to the piano.

**Order of the exam:** The individual sections of the exam may be undertaken in any order, at the candidate's choice.

## **Assessment**

The tables on pp. 40–41 show the marking criteria used by examiners. These criteria (newly revised and amended) have been in use in exams from January 2014. In each element of the exam, ABRSM operates the principle of marking from the required pass mark positively or negatively, rather than awarding marks by deduction from the maximum or addition from zero. In awarding marks, examiners balance the extent to which the qualities and skills listed on pp. 40–41 (broadly categorized by pitch, time, tone, shape and performance) are demonstrated and contribute towards the overall musical outcome.

## **Obtaining exam music**

Exam music is available from music retailers as well as online, including at the ABRSM music shop: [www.abrsm.org/shop](http://www.abrsm.org/shop). Every effort has been made to ensure that all the publications listed will remain available for the duration of the syllabus. Candidates are advised to obtain their music well in advance of the exam in case of any delays with items not kept in stock by retailers. Apart from queries relating to exams, all enquiries about the music (e.g. editorial, availability) should be addressed to the relevant publisher: contact details are listed at [www.abrsm.org/publishers](http://www.abrsm.org/publishers).

## **AURAL TESTS:** included in the Practical exams for all subjects

Listening lies at the heart of all good music-making. Developing aural awareness is fundamental to musical training because having a ‘musical ear’ impacts on all aspects of musicianship. Singing, both silently in the head and out loud, is one of the best ways to develop the ‘musical ear’. It connects the internal imagining of sound, the ‘inner ear’, with the external creation of it, without the necessity of mechanically having to ‘find the note’ on an instrument (important though that connection is). By integrating aural activities in imaginative ways in the lesson, preparation for the aural tests within an exam will be a natural extension of what is already an essential part of the learning experience.

### **In the exam**

Aural tests are an integral part of all Practical graded exams.

The tests are administered by the examiner from the piano. For any test that requires a sung response, pitch rather than vocal quality is the object. The examiner will be happy to adapt to the vocal range of the candidate, whose responses may be sung to any vowel (or consonant followed by a vowel), hummed or whistled (and at a different octave, if appropriate).

### **Assessment**

A number of tests allow for a second attempt or for an additional playing by the examiner, if necessary. Also, where there is hesitation on the part of the candidate, the examiner will be ready to prompt, if necessary. In any such cases, this will affect the assessment.

Marks are not awarded for each individual test nor deducted for mistakes but reflect the candidate’s overall response in this section. The marking criteria for the aural tests are given on p. 41.

### **Specimen tests**

Examples of the tests are given in *Specimen Aural Tests* and *Aural Training in Practice* (from 2011), available for purchase from music retailers and from [www.abrsm.org/shop](http://www.abrsm.org/shop).

### **Deaf or hearing-impaired candidates**

Deaf or hearing-impaired candidates may opt to respond to alternative tests in place of the standard tests, if requested at the time of entry. Further information, including the syllabus for the alternative tests, is available at [www.abrsm.org/specificneeds](http://www.abrsm.org/specificneeds).



- A To sing or play from memory the *upper* part of a two-part phrase played twice by the examiner.** The upper part will be within the range of an octave, in a major or minor key with up to three sharps or flats. First the examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note and then count in two bars. (If the candidate chooses to play, the examiner will also name the key-chord and the starting note, as appropriate for the instrument.) If necessary, the examiner will play the phrase again and allow a second attempt (although this will affect the assessment).
- B To sing a melody from score, with an accompaniment played by the examiner.** The candidate may choose to sing from treble or bass clef. The melody will be within the range of an octave, in a major or minor key with up to three sharps or flats. First the examiner will name and play the key-chord and the starting note and then give the pulse. A brief period of preparation will follow during which the candidate may sing out loud. The examiner will play the key-chord and the starting note again and then count in two bars. If necessary, the examiner will allow a second attempt (although this will affect the assessment).
- C To identify the cadence at the end of a phrase as perfect or imperfect.** The phrase will be in a major or minor key and will be played twice by the examiner. The chords forming the cadence will be in root position. Before the first playing, the examiner will play the key-chord.
- D(i) To answer questions about two features of a piece played by the examiner.** Before playing, the examiner will tell the candidate which two features the questions will be about. The first will be: texture or structure; the second will be *one* of the following: dynamics, articulation, tempo, tonality, character, style and period, texture/structure.
- (ii) To clap the rhythm of the notes in an extract from the same piece, and to identify whether it is in two time, three time or four time.** The examiner will play the extract twice (unharmonized), after which the candidate should clap back the rhythm. The examiner will then ask whether the music is in two time, three time or four time. The candidate is *not* required to state the time signature.