

RSL CLASSICAL

GUITAR

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



1. What is the RSL Classical Guitar syllabus?

The RSL Classical Guitar syllabus sits alongside our Classical Piano & Violin syllabuses within our RSL Classical series. It covers instrumental grade exams from Debut – Grade 8 and supports learners in developing the skills, knowledge and understanding required to be a musician performing in the 21st-century music industry.

2. What repertoire is covered?

Across the graded syllabus, students will find 10 specially selected and arranged repertoire from composers working in a range of styles from across the Globe and throughout history to the present day. At Debut and Grade 1, there are six classical and four pop tracks. From Grade 2 – 8, there are seven classical and three pop tracks. Musicians should find a good blend of tried and tested tracks for Classical Guitarists alongside some great unexplored repertoire and new arrangements of tracks specially created for this syllabus.

3. Are the Tracks Unaccompanied or with Backing Tracks?

At Debut – Grade 3, the RSL Classical Guitar syllabus contains pieces played to backing tracks, solo pieces and duets. The duets can be played with a backing track or with your teacher. At Grade 4 – 8, the syllabus contains solo arrangements and pieces played to backing tracks.

Each graded book comes with full professionally-recorded exemplar audio and backing tracks providing you and your teacher with full flexibility for lessons, practice and the exam.

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4. How do I access the materials?

Everything you need is contained within one book. The sheet music; technical exercises; examples of unseen tests; fact files; performance notes and notation guide are all contained in each book at each grade. These also contain codes for you to download the exemplar audio and any backing tracks for the relevant grade.

The books are available in physical copy and digital copy. Please see our shop for more information.

5. Are there support materials available?

Each digital copy comes with Replay, our interactive Sheet Music Player where you can adjust the score view, tempo, balance of parts; loop sections and playalong with a live fretboard or piano keyboard.

The Classical Guitar syllabus is also available on our Learning Platform. This App provides a range of features including recording and feedback functionality and connectivity between teacher and student to help set tasks and monitor progress.

6. Is the Music presented as Staff Notation or Tab?

The physical and digital publications are both published in staff notation.

Tablature will also be available in digital format.

Please visit our store to find out more

7. What types of Exam are there?

Candidates can enter for the Graded Exam, comprising three pieces, technical exercises and unseen tests of the Performance Certificate, comprising five pieces only.

8. Can I do a Recorded Exam?

Yes. These can be recorded and submitted at any time either as a Performance Certificate or as a Graded Music Certificate (three pieces plus all the technical exercises but no unseen tests). You can also do a livestream exam at any time throughout the year where the examiner is connected to you via live video link-up. Further details can be found [here](#)

9. What about Face to Face Exams?

Within the UK and Republic of Ireland, a live-streamed exam, or private day of live exams can be organised at any time throughout the year as long as the venue meets certain criteria. Candidates can also visit a public exam centre at set times throughout the year, organised into Spring, Summer and Winter sessions. Outside the UK, exams are organised into 'tours' which take place at different times throughout the year. For more information, please contact your local Rockschooll representative.

10. What do candidates need to prepare for their exam?

For the Performance Certificate, learners can prepare five pieces and perform those for the exam.

For the Graded Music Exam, learners prepare three performance pieces, and also prepare Technical Exercises and practice for the Unseen Tests.

In a live exam, the examiner will ask you to play a selection of the technical exercises and some unseen tests.

In a recorded digital exam, you will need to submit an unedited recording of you performing all the technical exercises contained in the book.

11. What are the Technical Exercises and Unseen Tests?

The Technical Exercises require learners to prepare scales and double-stopped/harmonised scales, arpeggios & broken chords and Technical Studies. The Technical Studies are specially commissioned pieces of music covering three distinct genres (two classical studies and one flamenco study), and are designed to introduce increasingly challenging tonalities and instrumental techniques associated with the genre in question.

The Unseen Tests give students the choice of Sight-Reading or Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation; Melodic / Rhythmic / Harmonic Recall Ear Tests; and General Musicianship Questions.

Please refer to the syllabus for more information.

12. What feedback do I get on my exam?

Candidates will receive a digital marksheet and e-certificate shortly after taking their exam. This is usually issued within three weeks of taking your exam.

Candidates taking a recorded digital exam will also receive a recorded piece to camera from the examiner providing feedback on what went well and areas for development.

You can also apply for a printed certificate for a small fee at the point of entering for your exam.

13. Can I take my Classical Guitar exam at the same time as Rockschooll Guitarists?

We have a team of highly trained examiners who specialise in Classical exams and have many years experience of examining Rockschooll exams. This means we can curate an exam day made up of Rockschooll and Classical musicians.

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14. Can I use repertoire from outside the Syllabus?

We like to think that there is a really engaging range of pieces in our books. But, thanks to our Free Choice Piece option, you can choose up to three pieces for a Performance Certificate and up to two pieces for a Graded Exam/Certificate which are taken from anywhere else to prepare and submit instead. This includes pieces from other exam boards. Just make sure you read the Free Choice Piece guidance to make sure they are appropriate. Please see our website [here](#) for further information.

15. Can I play tracks from the Rockscool Electric and Acoustic Guitar syllabuses in my exam?

You can perform tracks from our contemporary syllabus as part of our Free Choice Piece option. Please refer to the guidance to make sure that you understand the regulations.

16. Can I play tracks from other exam boards in my exam?

Yes. These fall within our Free Choice Piece Guidelines. Please refer to these to ensure you understand the regulations.

17. How do I know what standard I need to be for each grade?

The syllabus provides information about the standard at each grade. You can also view our benchmarking criteria and sample tracks by downloading a Sample Pack available on our website [here](#).

18. Do I need to start at Debut and work my way up or can I start at any level?

There are no requirements to work through each grade in turn. We recommend that you look at the benchmarking criteria and the repertoire for each grade to identify which level you should start at.

19. I've already done Grade 4 Classical Guitar with another exam board, can I move straight across to Grade 5 RSL Classical Guitar or do I need to start again?

Our graded exams are benchmarked at set levels so that the learning you have done with another board should help you to transfer across to RSL Classical Guitar relatively easily. You can therefore transfer across to RSL Classical Guitar at any level; you just need to check the benchmarking criteria and repertoire lists to select pieces at the right level for you.

20. Do I need to have grade 5 theory to take an exam at Grade 6 – 8?

No. While theory grades are helpful, we do not require you to have passed a grade 5 theory exam in order to access and enter our higher grades.

21. Do I need to use a Classical Guitar to take my exam?

Due to the differences between the instruments, and the design of the syllabus around classical techniques, this syllabus does need to be performed with a nylon-stringed instrument.

22. Do I need to use a footstool to take my Classical Guitar exam?

There is no requirement for you to use a footstool. However, you may bring one to use with you for your exam if you wish.

23. How much do the exams cost?

Full information about our exam fees can be found [here](#).

24. Do the exams carry UCAS points?

Yes. The RSL Classical Guitar exams are recognised by Ofqual and carry 6 – 30 UCAS points from Grades 6 – 8. Further information can be found on our website [here](#).

25. I am used to performing as part of a group. Can I do my exam with other people?

The RSL Classical Guitar exams are for individual musicians. However, we do also have group exams and the Classical Guitar repertoire can be used for preparation towards those. Please see our website [here](#) for more information.

26. Can I take an Acoustic or Electric Guitar exam with RSL Awards?

Yes. Information can be found for **Electric Guitar** and **Acoustic Guitar** via the embedded links.

27. Where can I find out more information?

Our dedicated Classical Guitar webpage will be updated regularly with new information and guidance. You can also download our syllabus and Sample Pack free of charge direct from our website.

For further information and to discuss your requirements in more detail, contact business@rslawards.com.