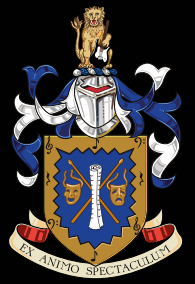


# CLASSICAL GUITAR



**SYLLABUS SPECIFICATION**

2022 Edition

**RSL CLASSICAL**

## **Welcome to the RSL Awards 2022 syllabus for Classical Guitar**

This syllabus guide is designed to give teachers, learners and candidates practical information on the graded qualifications run by RSL Awards.

### **This syllabus guide covers the following qualifications**

- Graded Exams: Debut to Grade 8
- Graded Certificates: Debut to Grade 8
- Performance Certificates: Debut to Grade 8

### **Period of operation**

This syllabus specification covers graded qualifications in Classical Guitar from 2022.

# Classical Guitar

**SYLLABUS SPECIFICATION**

2022 Edition

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

**Catalogue Number:** RSK200189

**ISBN:** 978-1-78936-411-8

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# PREFACE

## QUALIFICATIONS AT A GLANCE

### Qualification titles and sizes

#### Graded Examinations in Popular Music Performance

Qualification title	QAN	Total number of units	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Credit	Total qualification time (TQT)
RSL Entry Level Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Entry 3)	501/0370/2	1	8	4	40
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 1	5501/0391/X	1	12	6	60
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 2	501/0646/6	1	18	9	90
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 3	501/0647/8	1	18	12	120
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 4	501/0389/1	1	24	15	150
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 5	501/0643/0	1	24	18	180
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 6	501/0390/8	1	36	22	220
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 7	501/0645/4	1	48	27	270
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 8	501/0648/X	1	54	32	320

**Graded Certificates in Popular Music Performance**

Qualification title	QAN	Total number of units	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Credit	Total qualification time (TQT)
RSL Entry Level Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance (Entry 3)	610/4760/0	1	8	4	40
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 1	610/4761/2	1	12	6	60
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 2	610/4762/4	1	18	9	90
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 3	610/4763/6	1	18	12	120
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 4	610/4764/8	1	24	15	150
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 5	610/4765/X	1	24	18	180
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 6	610/4766/1	1	36	22	220
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 7	610/4767/3	1	48	27	270
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 8	610/4768/5	1	54	32	320



## Performance Certificates in Popular Music Performance

Qualification title	QAN	Total number of units	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Credit	Total qualification time (TQT)
RSL Entry Level Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance (Entry 3)	610/4770/3	1	8	4	40
RSL Level 1 Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 1	610/4771/5	1	12	6	60
RSL Level 1 Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 2	610/4772/7	1	18	9	90
RSL Level 1 Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 3	610/4773/9	1	18	12	120
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 4	610/4774/0	1	24	15	150
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 5	610/4775/2	1	24	18	180
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 6	610/4776/4	1	36	22	220
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 7	610/4777/6	1	48	27	270
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 8	610/4778/8	1	54	32	320

## Assessment Overview

Assessment	
Form of assessment	All assessments are carried out by external examiners. Candidates are required to carry out a combination of practical tasks and underpinning theoretical assessment.
Assessment bands	There are four bands of assessment (Distinction, Merit, Pass and Unclassified) for the qualification as a whole.
Quality assurance	Quality assurance ensures that all assessments are carried out to the same standard by objective sampling and reassessment of candidates' work. A team of external examiners is appointed, trained and standardised by RSL.

## PREFACE

### Learning Outcomes

#### Performance Certificate

Learners will be able to:

- Perform music in a range of musical styles

#### Graded Certificate

Learners will be able to:

- Perform music in a range of musical styles
- Demonstrate technical ability on an instrument/voice through responding to set technical demands

#### Graded Exam

Learners will be able to:

- Perform music in a range of musical styles
- Demonstrate technical ability on an instrument/voice through responding to an unseen selection of set technical demands
- Demonstrate musical understanding through a range of an unseen selection of set tests

## THE VALUE OF RSL QUALIFICATIONS

### RSL qualifications

We are committed to maintaining and improving our reputation for excellence by providing high quality education and training through our syllabuses, examinations, music and resources. We advocate an open access approach to qualifications, providing a range of syllabuses designed to accommodate a wide variety of candidates of different ages, experience and levels of achievement. RSL qualifications are listed on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) in England and Northern Ireland by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

### Progression routes

RSL's graded qualifications provide a flexible progression route for candidates. They are a positive means of determining progress and enable candidates to learn the necessary techniques to gain entry to industry, and to further education (FE) and higher education (HE) courses. Graded qualifications operate according to a well-established methodology of 'progressive mastery'. They allow candidates to be tested in discrete stages in the development of a wide range of skills. They tend to be more rigorous than other types of exams and for that reason employers are confident that candidates with graded qualifications will have the necessary skills to work in a variety of different areas.

### UCAS points

For students applying for work or university, many potential employers and institutions see graded exams in a very positive way. Recognised qualifications demonstrate an ability to dedicate commitment to extracurricular activities, providing evidence of versatility, which many students find beneficial within UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) applications and for university entrance interviews. Our qualifications at Level 3 (Grades 6 to 8) carry allocated points on the UCAS tariff. For full details relating to the allocation of UCAS points please see [rslawards.com/about-us/ucas-points](https://www.rslawards.com/about-us/ucas-points).

## QUALIFICATION SUMMARY

### Aims and broad objectives

The aim of graded music performance qualifications is to provide a flexible, progressive mastery approach to the knowledge, skills and understanding required for popular music performance. RSL's graded qualifications motivate and encourage candidates of all ages and levels through a system of progressive mastery, enabling candidates to develop and enhance skills, knowledge and understanding in a safe and consistent way. The qualifications are beneficial for candidates wishing to progress at their own pace through smaller steps of achievement.

### Expectations of knowledge, skills and understanding

The graded examination system is one based on the principle of 'progressive mastery' – each step in the exam chain demonstrates learning, progression and skills in incremental steps. Successful learning is characterised by a mastery of the fundamentals of the skills demanded in each grade.

### Qualification structure

A graded qualification consists of a range of both practical and knowledge based elements, which are based on detailed requirements outlined in the relevant syllabus. Therefore, requirements for each grade will be set out in detail in the unit specifications (pages 28 onwards). The learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit will require knowledge, skills and understanding of these syllabus requirements to be demonstrated at the grade entered.

### Quality assurance

All RSL examinations and graded qualifications are standardised according to the processes and procedures laid down by RSL.

## CANDIDATE ACCESS AND REGISTRATION

### Access and registration

The qualifications will:

- Be available to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standards
- Be free from any barriers that restrict access and progression
- Offer equal opportunities for all wishing to access the qualifications

### Entry requirements

These qualifications are open to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standard; there are no entry requirements. However, candidates should be aware that the content at the higher grades will require a level of knowledge and understanding covered in previous qualifications. At the point of application, RSL will ensure that all candidates are fully informed about the requirements and demands of the qualification.

### Age groups

These qualifications are suitable for candidates in the Under 16, 16+, 16–18 and 19+ age groups.

### Recommended prior learning (RPL)

Learners are not required to have any prior learning for these qualifications. However, learners should ensure that they are aware of the requirements and expectations of each grade prior to entering for an assessment.

### Exam entry

Candidates may enter online for any of the qualifications at various points in the calendar year in territories throughout the world. For further details on exam dates and fees, and to enter for a graded Classical Guitar qualification, visit the RSL website at: [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com).

**Please Note:** Candidates may not perform pieces in their exam that they have previously performed for an RSL Assessment. This includes re-sits of their exams.

## FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT

### Information and support

The RSL website [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com) has detailed information on all aspects of RSL examinations, including examination regulations, detailed marking schemes and assessment criteria as well as examples to help you prepare for our qualifications.

### Complaints and appeals

All procedural complaints and appeals, including malpractice and requests for reasonable adjustments / special considerations, can be made through the website: [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com).

### Equal opportunities

RSL's Equal Opportunities policy can be found on the website: [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com).

### Contacts for help and support

All correspondence should be directed to [info@rslawards.com](mailto:info@rslawards.com); or to:

### RSL

Harlequin House  
7 High Street  
Teddington  
Middlesex  
TW11 8EE

# EXAM GUIDELINES

### GENERAL GUIDELINES

#### RSL grade books

RSL publishes individual grade books for each grade. Each book contains a diverse selection of ten pieces, selected to give students a fun, engaging and rewarding learning experience, all of the required technical work for the grade, and examples and guidance of the other exam elements. Audio recordings of the pieces, backing tracks, technical exercises and supporting tests (where applicable) are available from [rslawards.com/downloads](https://www.rslawards.com/downloads) using the download code included in the grade book.

#### Candidate notes

It is permitted to use grade books that contain handwritten notes made during the course of a candidate's study. However, for General Musicianship Questions that ask about a specific piece from the grade book, if the candidate's copy of the score contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the piece as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

#### Photocopying pages

Candidates are allowed to photocopy relevant pages of sheet music as necessary to alleviate page turns but all copied materials must be handed to the examiner at the end of the examination. The examiner will not facilitate page turning for the candidate during their performance.

### PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

#### Repertoire

Candidates taking a Grade Examination or Graded Certificate must perform at least one piece from the relevant grade book. Candidates taking a Performance Certificate must perform at least two pieces from the relevant grade book. Candidates are allowed to perform a number of 'free choice' pieces – guidelines on the selection and performance of these is given in the next section of this syllabus.

#### Performing from memory

Candidates are permitted to perform any or all of their pieces from their sheet music or from memory. Performing from memory is not compulsory and no additional marks will be awarded for doing so.

#### Fingering Guidance

##### Pieces

In general, picking and fretting hand annotation is given as a guide only, and will not be assessed. Candidates are advised to use any picking approach that best facilitates projection of the notated material.

Scales, Double-Stopped Exercises and Harmonised Scales, Arpeggios and Broken Chords

Where indicated, 'p' (thumb) indications should be observed.

#### Technical Studies

*Pima* indications are stipulated for the purposes of the technical study, and whilst not assessed, the successful performance of these studies may be impacted by the use of alternative fingerings to those given by the composer, for example in thumb and finger development studies, *rasgueado* technique, etc.

## EXAM GUIDELINES

### Adaptation and personalisation

Candidates should perform pieces as notated, except where they choose to embellish or rework any sections. In these instances, as well as where there are performance indications to improvise and/or develop, candidates will be marked on their ability to present the personalised material in a stylistically appropriate way, commensurate with the grade level.

A small degree of adaptation is allowed where, for example, hand stretches do not facilitate the required notated parts.

Marks may be deducted if adaptation results in oversimplification of the notation. If in doubt you can submit any adaptation enquiries to [info@rslawards.com](mailto:info@rslawards.com). Note that Technical Exercises and unseen tests must be performed exactly as written.

### Accompaniment

All grade book pieces must be performed to a backing track or with live accompaniment unless written for solo performance. Candidates should inform RSL in advance if they are using a piano accompanist, and check with the examination centre for the availability of a piano ahead of their scheduled exam.

## FREE CHOICE PIECES

### Overview

Candidates taking a Grade Examination or Graded Certificate are allowed to perform up to two 'free choice' pieces (pieces which aren't included in the relevant RSL grade book). Candidates taking a Performance Certificate are allowed to perform up to three free choice pieces. Free choice pieces must be available in fully notated sheet music and candidates must bring a copy of the sheet music for the examiner to refer to during the examination. This material will be retained by the examiner at the end of the examination.

### Selection of free choice pieces

Free choice pieces can be from any genre. Own compositions are acceptable. Free choice pieces must demonstrate a comparable level of technical and musical demand to the pieces given in the set selections in the grade books, which can be referred to as an indication of appropriate level. Pieces should be selected carefully to ensure that they provide suitable opportunity for candidates to demonstrate the relevant assessment criteria. If a chosen free choice piece does not meet these requirements this may impact on the level of achievement possible within the examination.

### Performance of free choice pieces

Free choice pieces can be performed to a backing track (without the examined part on the track), with live accompaniment or unaccompanied. If performing to a backing track the candidate must provide a device containing the audio. This can be any device with a 3.5mm jack output (e.g. mp3 player, portable CD player, phone or tablet). We recommend that where possible two different sources are brought, so there is a backup. Note that audio cannot be streamed as we cannot guarantee that good internet connectivity will be available in all venues.

### Further guidance

A list of wider repertoire for Classical Guitar is available at [rslawards.com/free-choice-pieces](http://rslawards.com/free-choice-pieces). This page also contains grade-specific free choice criteria and wider requirements which need to be observed in full to be eligible for use in the exam. Prior approval is not required, but any deviation/simplification/omissions from any aspect of the criteria or requirements may be reflected in the marks awarded. If there is doubt about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, advice on its suitability is available by emailing [freechoicepieces@rslawards.com](mailto:freechoicepieces@rslawards.com).

# GRADE EXAMINATIONS



## EXAM ELEMENTS

Grade Examinations consist of the following elements:

Grade	Prepared work	Unprepared work
<b>Debut to Grade 8</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Performance Pieces (x3)</li> <li>▪ Technical Exercises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sight Reading OR Contemporary Improvisation &amp; Interpretation</li> <li>▪ Ear Tests</li> <li>▪ General Musicianship Questions</li> </ul>

## EXAM DURATIONS

Exam	Debut	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
<b>Duration (minutes)</b>	15	20	20	25	25	25	30	30	30

## ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

### Assessment methodology

Grade Examinations are assessed via an examination. All assessment of these is external and is undertaken by RSL Examiners. The assessment is divided into the following sections, the first two of which are prepared in advance, the following three are unseen until the exam. Candidates can choose to perform the Technical Exercises first if they wish – at the beginning of the exam, the examiner will ask the candidate if they want to begin with Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises.

### 1. Performance Pieces (60%)

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be 'free choice'.

### 2. Technical Exercises (15%)

Candidates will perform prepared technical tests covering knowledge of (depending on each grade): scales, double-stopped exercises, arpeggios & broken chords, and technical studies.

### 3. Sight Reading OR Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation (10%)

Candidates have a choice of performing a piece of sight reading or taking a test of improvisation and interpretation.

### 4. Ear Tests (10%)

Candidates will be given two ear tests, assessing melodic recall and rhythmic recall from Debut to Grade 3, and melodic and harmonic recall from Grade 4 to Grade 8.

### 5. General Musicianship Questions (5%)

Candidates will be asked five general musicianship questions.

## MARKING SCHEME

Grade Examinations are marked out of 100. The marks available are as follows:

Exam element and total marks available	Attainment band and mark range		
	Distinction	Merit	Pass
<b>Performance Piece 1</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
<b>Performance Piece 2</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
<b>Performance Piece 3</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
<b>Technical Exercises</b> (15 marks)	18-20	11-12	9-10
<b>Sight Reading OR Improvisation &amp; Interpretation</b> (10 marks)	9-10	7-8	6
<b>Ear Tests</b> (10 marks)	9-10	7-8	6
<b>General Musicianship Questions</b> (5 marks)	5 correct responses	4 correct responses	3 correct responses

## ATTAINMENT BANDS

The attainment bands for Grade Examinations are as follows:

Attainment band	Distinction	Merit	Pass
<b>Mark range</b>	90-100	74-89	60-73
<b>Percentage</b>	90-100%	74-89%	60-73%

# PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

## EXAM ELEMENTS

Performance Certificates are available from Debut to Grade 8. They consist of five performance pieces, performed in any order. There are no unseen tests or technical exercises.

## EXAM DURATIONS

Exam	Debut	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Duration (minutes)	12	15	15	18	22	22	25	25	28

## ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

### Assessment methodology

Performance Certificates are assessed via an examination. All assessment of these is external and is undertaken by RSL Examiners. Candidates perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be 'free choice'.

## MARKING SCHEME

Performance Certificates are marked out of 100. The marks available are as follows:

Exam element and total marks available	Attainment band and mark range		
	Distinction	Merit	Pass
<b>Performance Piece 1</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
<b>Performance Piece 2</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
<b>Performance Piece 3</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
<b>Performance Piece 4</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
<b>Performance Piece 5</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14

## ATTAINMENT BANDS

The attainment bands for Performance Certificates are as follows:

Attainment band	Distinction	Merit	Pass
Mark range	90-100	74-89	60-73
Percentage	90-100%	74-89%	60-73%

# GRADED CERTIFICATES

## GRADED CERTIFICATES

### EXAM ELEMENTS

Graded Certificates are available from Debut to Grade 8. They consist of three performance pieces and technical exercises. There are no unseen tests

### EXAM DURATIONS

All Graded Certificates are taken as Recorded Digital Exams, and therefore do not have any set timings.

### ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

#### Assessment methodology

Graded Certificates are assessed via a Recorded Digital Exam. All assessment of these is external and is undertaken by RSL Examiners. Candidates perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be 'free choice' and the technical exercises.

### MARKING SCHEME

Graded Certificates are marked out of 80. The marks available are as follows:

Exam element and total marks available	Attainment band and mark range		
	Distinction	Merit	Pass
<b>Performance Piece 1</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
<b>Performance Piece 2</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
<b>Performance Piece 3</b> (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
<b>Technical Exercises</b> (20 marks)	18-20	11-12	9-10

### ATTAINMENT BANDS

The attainment bands for Graded Certificates are as follows:

Attainment band	Distinction	Merit	Pass
<b>Mark range</b>	72-80	60-73	48-72
<b>Percentage</b>	90-100%	74-89%	60-73%

# ASSESSMENT AND GRADING CRITERIA

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes describe the skills and knowledge that candidates will be able to demonstrate during the exam. Grade Examinations and Graded Certificates reference all three learning outcomes below, whereas Performance Certificates only require the first outcome to be met:

**Learners will be able to:**

- Perform music in a range of musical styles
- Demonstrate technical ability on an instrument/voice through responding to set technical demands
- Demonstrate musical understanding through a range of set tests

### ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following assessment criteria are used to assess the learning outcomes:

Assessment criteria	Definition
Command of Instrument	The quality of the sound produced from the instrument, including the consistency of sound/tone and control of sound/tone commensurate with grade.
Sync or Pulse	Alignment of the performance to backing track, metronome or applied to a solo performance, observing notation markings. For unaccompanied pieces candidates should maintain a secure internal pulse and adjust the pulse where instructed within the music.
Accuracy and Understanding	Representing the written notation accurately, except by instruction through performance notes, or interpreting the written part with equivalent skills demonstrated. Secure understanding of musical structure evidenced through transitions of phrases, bars and sections.
Style and Expression	An expressive and commanding performance of the notated material dictated by the demands of the performance piece.

The assessment criteria that apply to each element of the exam are shown in the following tables. Assessment criteria within each element are equally weighted: for example, in the Performance Pieces each assessment criteria makes up 25% of the total marks, whereas in the Ear Tests the Accuracy and Understanding criteria makes up 100% of the marks.



## GRADING CRITERIA

### Performance Pieces

Assessment criteria	Grading criteria and mark range				
	Distinction (18–20)	Merit (15–17)	Pass (12–14)	Below Pass 1 (6–11)	Below Pass 2 (0–5)
<b>Command of Instrument</b>	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
<b>Sync or Pulse</b>	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
<b>Accuracy and Understanding</b>	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced	
<b>Style and Expression</b>	Consistently convincing projection of the music.	Mostly convincing projection of the music.	Some convincing projection of the music.	Music not projected convincingly	No attempt and/or incomplete performance

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING CRITERIA

### Technical Exercises

Assessment criteria	Grading criteria and mark range				
	Distinction (13–15)	Merit (11–12)	Pass (9–10)	Below Pass 1 (4–8)	Below Pass 2 (0–3)
<b>Command of Instrument</b>	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
<b>Sync or Pulse</b>	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
<b>Accuracy and Understanding</b>	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced	

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING CRITERIA

### Sight Reading / Improvisation & Interpretation

Assessment criteria	Grading criteria and mark range				
	Distinction (9–10)	Merit (7–8)	Pass (6)	Below Pass 1 (3–5)	Below Pass 2 (0–2)
<b>Command of Instrument</b>	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
<b>Sync or Pulse</b>	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
<b>Accuracy and Understanding</b>	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced	

### Ear Tests

Assessment criteria	Grading criteria and mark range				
	Distinction (9–10)	Merit (7–8)	Pass (6)	Below Pass 1 (3–5)	Below Pass 2 (0–2)
<b>Accuracy and Understanding</b>	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced	

## ASSESSMENT AND GRADING CRITERIA

### General Musicianship Questions

Assessment criteria	Grading criteria and mark range				
	Distinction (5)	Merit (4)	Pass (3)	Below Pass 1 (2)	Below Pass 2 (0-1)
Responses to questions	5 correct responses	4 correct responses	3 correct responses	2 correct responses	0-1 correct responses

# DEBUT

The Debut Classical Guitar exam is for candidates who have been learning a short time and have developed elementary skills, techniques, coordination and musical understanding.

## GRADE EXAMINATION

### TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are two groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempo given for the scales is the recommended minimum tempo for this grade.

#### Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
C major, A minor	Tonic up to 5th, back to Tonic	♩ = 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
G major pentatonic	1 octave	♩ = 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>

#### Group B: Technical Studies

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

### PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Andean Folk Song, arr. Yvon Rivoal	Ojos Azules
Laura Snowden	The Secret City
Mauro Giuliani	Andante in C
Beyoncé	If I Were a Boy
The Lumineers	Ho Hey
Bill Withers	Lean on Me
Fernando Sor	Study in C, No. 1
Ludwig van Beethoven	Ode to Joy
from Frozen 2	All Is Found
Gustav Holst	Jupiter

See page 12 for further information on free choice pieces.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

### SIGHT READING

#### Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be one of the following:

*either*

- A four-bar melody on the 1st string (high E), on the notes E, F and G, played in minims;

*or*

- A four-bar single-note rhythm on the 6th string (low E), containing rhythms drawn from semibreves (whole notes), minims (half notes) and crotchets (quarter notes).

All sight reading tests at Debut should be performed at the minimum tempo of ♩ = 60.

#### Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

### CONTEMPORARY IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

#### Requirements

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression, over which they will improvise melodic lines to complement the backing track. The chord progression will be 5 bars long, in the key of C major. The test will start and end on the tonic chord, and will only contain chords I, IV and V. The tempo will be ♩ = 65.

#### Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count-in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

## EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given two tests: melodic recall and rhythmic recall.

### MELODIC RECALL

#### Requirements

The examiner will play two notes. Candidates will be asked to identify whether the second note is higher or lower than the first. The notes will both be minims (half notes) at ♩ = 85.

#### Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a 4-beat vocal count in. After the second playthrough candidates will give their answer. Candidates may use the words 'higher' or 'lower or 'up' and 'down' in their answer.

### RHYTHMIC RECALL

#### Requirements

The examiner will play a two-bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the lowest-sounding E string. Candidates will hear the test twice and will be asked to play the rhythm back. Candidates will then be asked to identify the rhythm from two printed examples shown to them by the examiner.

#### Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next there will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the rhythm to the drum backing. The tempo is ♩ = 85.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions based on one of the pieces performed in the exam (chosen by the candidate), and the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

### Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to identify:

- the stave
- the treble clef
- semibreves (whole notes), minims (half notes) and crotchets (quarter notes)

### Part 2: Knowledge of the Instrument

There will be one question about the candidate's knowledge of their instrument, chosen by the examiner from the list below.

Candidates will be asked to identify one of the following parts of their guitar:

- neck, body, tuning-pegs or bridge



## DEBUT

### PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

#### PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

### GRADED CERTIFICATE

#### PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces.

#### TECHNICAL EXERCISES

At Debut there are two groups of technical exercises. Candidates must perform both of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

# GRADE 1

The Grade 1 Classical Guitar exam is for candidates who have mastered the key Debut level skills and have since acquired greater use of technique, rhythms, coordination and musical understanding. There is also an opportunity to build on basic improvisation.

## GRADE EXAMINATION

### TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales & Double Stopped Exercise, Arpeggios, and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales, double-stopped exercise and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

#### Group A: Scales & Double-Stopped Exercise

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major scales</b>			
G, F, C major	1 octave	♩ = 75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Minor scales</b>			
A minor, E minor <i>Natural or harmonic minor (candidate choice)</i>	1 octave	♩ = 75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb only</li> </ul>
<b>Double-Stopped Exercise</b>			
G major Double-Stopped Exercise	<i>As shown in grade book</i>	♩ = 75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>

#### Group B: Arpeggios

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even crotchets. Over-ringing of notes is acceptable at this grade.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major arpeggios</b>			
G major	1 octave	♩ = 75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
F major	1 octave	♩ = 75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb only</li> </ul>
<b>Minor arpeggios</b>			
E minor	1 octave	♩ = 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>

#### Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

## PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / artists	Piece
Laura Snowden	In My Heart
David Guetta feat. Sia	Titanium
Helen Sanderson	Lotus Flower
Calvin Harris feat. Rihanna	We Found Love
Nick Powlesland	It's Just a Matter of Time
Gary Ryan	Snake in a Basket
John Dowland	What If I Never Speed
Peter Nuttall	Seville
Ed Sheeran	Perfect
Leonard Cohen	Hallelujah

See page 12 for further information on free choice pieces.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

### SIGHT READING

#### Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be:

#### *Either:*

A four-bar melody on the 1st string (high E) on the notes E, F and G in open/first position, and 2nd string (B) on the notes B, C and D in open/first position, played in minims (half notes);

#### *Or:*

A four-bar single-note rhythm on the open 6th string (low E), open 5th string (A), and open 4th string (D), containing minims (half notes), crotchets (quarter notes) and quavers (8th notes).

#### Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

**IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION****Requirements**

In the Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation test, candidates will be given a five-bar chord progression in the key of C major or A minor. The tempo is ♩ = 75.

At Grade 1, candidates only need to improvise single-note melodies in the key of C major or A minor. Both tests will start and end on the tonic chord in their respective key. The chord symbols show the chord progression of the backing track only.

- The C major test will contain the chords I, IV and V
- The A minor test will contain the chords Im, IVm and Vm

**Process**

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

**EAR TESTS**

Candidates will be given two tests: melodic recall and rhythmic recall.

**MELODIC RECALL****Requirements**

The examiner will play three notes. Candidates will be asked to identify whether the notes are higher or lower (up or down) in sequence. The notes will be one semibreve (whole note) followed by two (half notes) at ♩ = 85.

**Process**

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a 4-beat vocal count in. After the second playthrough candidates will give their answer. Candidates may use the words 'higher' or 'lower' / 'up' or 'down' in their answer.

**RHYTHMIC RECALL****Requirements**

The examiner will play a two-bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the lowest-sounding E string. Candidates will hear the test twice and will be asked to play the rhythm back. Candidates will then be asked to identify the rhythm from two printed examples shown to them by the examiner.

**Process**

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next there will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the rhythm to the drum backing. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

**GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS**

Candidates will be asked five questions. Three of these will be music knowledge questions, based on one of the pieces performed in the exam (chosen by the candidate), the fourth will be about knowledge of chord construction, and the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

**Part 1: Music Knowledge**

There will be three music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

The questions will be drawn from the following:

- identify the treble clef
- identify the time signature
- identify rhythm values from the following: semibreve (whole note), minim (half note), crotchet (quarter note) and quaver (eighth note) values

The fourth question will be on chord construction. Candidates will be asked to:

- explain the difference between a major and a minor chord

**Part 2: Knowledge of the Instrument**

There will be one question about the candidate's knowledge of their instrument, chosen by the examiner from below:

- identify two of the following parts of your guitar: neck, fretboard, body, tuning-pegs, nut or bridge, soundhole
- identify the pitches of open strings (in standard tuning)

**PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

**GRADED CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces.

**TECHNICAL EXERCISES**

At Grade 1 there are three groups of technical exercises. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com)

# GRADE 2

The Grade 2 Classical Guitar exam is for candidates who have mastered the key skills up to Grade 1 and since acquired greater use of technique, rhythms, coordination and musical understanding. There is also the continuing opportunity to develop improvisation skills.

## GRADE EXAMINATION

### TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales & Double-Stopped Exercise, Arpeggios and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales, double-stopped exercise and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

#### Group A: Scales & Double-Stopped Exercise

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major scales</b>			
D major	Root to the 12th	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
C major	1 octave	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb only</li> </ul>
<b>Minor scales</b>			
D harmonic minor	1 octave	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>B minor:</b> <i>Natural or harmonic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	1 octave	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb only</li> </ul>
<b>Chromatic scale</b>			
Chromatic scale starting on A	1 octave	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb only</li> </ul>
<b>Double-stopped exercise</b>			
G minor double-stopped exercise	1 octave	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>



## GRADE 2

### Group B: Arpeggios

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers. Over-ringing of notes is acceptable at this grade.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major arpeggios</b>			
D major	Root to the 12th	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
C major	1 octave	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
<b>Minor arpeggios</b>			
D minor	1 octave	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>

### Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

## PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Edvard Grieg	In the Hall of the Mountain King
Laura Snowden	Song for a Friend
Taylor Swift	We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together
<i>from A Star Is Born</i>	Shallow
Ignatius Sancho	Le Douze de Décembre
Lee Sollory	Magnetic South
Antonio Vivaldi	Spring
George Frideric Handel	The Harmonious Blacksmith
Nathanael Diesel	Menuet
Nina Simone	Feeling Good

See page 12 for further information on free choice pieces.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

### SIGHT READING

#### Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The sight reading test will be up to eight bars long, in one of the following keys:

- C major
- A minor
- G major

#### Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

**IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION**

In the Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation test, candidates will be given a five-bar chord progression in the key of D major or B minor. The tempo is ♩ = 85.

At Grade 2, candidates only need to improvise single-note melodies in the key of D major or B minor. The chord symbols show the chord progression of the backing track only:

- The D major test will contain chords drawn from the following: I, II<sup>m</sup>, IV, V<sup>7</sup>, VI<sup>m</sup>.
- The B minor test will contain chords drawn from the following: I<sup>m</sup>, III, IV<sup>m</sup>, VI, VII<sup>7</sup>.

**Process**

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

**EAR TESTS**

Candidates will be given two tests: melodic recall and rhythmic recall.

**MELODIC RECALL****Requirements**

The examiner will play a two-bar melody using the C major scale. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be ascending. Candidates will play the melody back on their instrument.

**Process**

The test will be played twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the melody to the metronome click. The tempo is ♩ = 85.

**RHYTHMIC RECALL****Requirements**

The examiner will play a two-bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the lowest-sounding E string. Candidates will hear the test twice and will be asked to play the rhythm back. Candidates will then be asked to identify the rhythm from two printed examples shown to them by the examiner.

**Process**

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next there will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the rhythm to the drum backing. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

**GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS**

Candidates will be asked five questions. Three of these will be music knowledge questions based on one of the pieces performed in the exam (chosen by the candidate), the fourth will be about knowledge of chord construction, and the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

**Part 1: Music Knowledge**

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There will be three music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

The questions will be drawn from the following:

- identify the pitch names of notes
- explain the meaning of the time signature marking
- identify rhythm values from the following: semibreve (whole), minim (half), crotchet (quarter), quaver (eighth) and semiquaver (16th note) values, and their associated rests

The fourth question will be on chord construction. Candidates will be asked to:

- explain the construction of a major or minor chord

**Part 2: Knowledge of the Instrument**

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There will be one question about the candidate's knowledge of their instrument, chosen by the examiner from below:

- identify three of the following parts of your guitar: neck, fretboard, body, tuning-pegs, nut, soundhole, or bridge
- identify the pitches of all open strings (in standard tuning)

**PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

**GRADED CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces.

**TECHNICAL EXERCISES**

At Grade 2 there are three groups of technical exercises. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com)

# GRADE 3

The Grade 3 Classical Guitar exam is for candidates who are ready to consolidate their final stage as a beginner player. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 2 and have since acquired greater use of technique, rhythms, coordination and musical understanding. Candidates have started to develop the beginnings of stylistic awareness and there is also the opportunity to improvise, with improvisation growing in confidence and articulation.

## GRADE EXAMINATION

### TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales & Double-Stopped Exercises, Arpeggios & Broken Chords, and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales, double-stopped exercises and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

#### Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates must perform the scales in quavers, and the double-stopped exercises in the rhythms shown in the grade book.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major scales</b>			
C major	1 octave	♩ = 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
G major	2 octaves	♩ = 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Minor scales</b>			
E harmonic minor	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
B harmonic minor	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
B natural minor	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Chromatic scale</b>			
Chromatic scale starting on D	1 octave	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Double-stopped exercises</b>			
A minor double-stopped exercise in 3rds	As shown in grade book	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
C major double-stopped exercise in 6ths	As shown in grade book	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>

## GRADE 3

### Group B: Arpeggios & Broken Chords

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers, without over-ringing. Broken chords must be played as shown in the grade book, with over-ringing of notes.

Arpeggio	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major &amp; minor arpeggios</b>			
G major E, B minor	2 octaves	♩ = 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
<b>Broken Chords</b>			
Broken chords in the key of D major (IIm, V7, I), <i>tirando</i> , thumb and fingers	As shown in grade book	♩ = 130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>

### Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

## PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Yvon Rivoal	Cueca
Laura Snowden	Walking with Grandma
Ferdinando Carulli	Waltz, Op. 241, No. 21
Francisco Tárrega	Estudio
Henry Mancini	The Pink Panther
Nick Powlesland	Ecstatic Chromatic
Ignatius Sancho	La Jour de May
Coldplay	In My Place
Pharrell Williams	Happy
Leo Brouwer	Étude No. 1

See page 12 for further information on free choice pieces.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

### SIGHT READING

#### Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The sight reading test will be up to eight bars long, in one of the following keys:

- C major
- G major
- A minor

#### Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.



**IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION**

In the Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation test, candidates will be given a five-bar chord progression in the key of G major or E minor. The tempo is ♩ = 95.

At Grade 3, candidates only need to improvise single-note melodies in the key of G major or E minor. At this grade, all chords will be diatonic to the key of the test.

**Process**

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

**EAR TESTS**

Candidates will be given two tests: melodic recall and rhythmic recall.

**MELODIC RECALL****Requirements**

The examiner will play a two-bar melody using the G major scale. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be ascending. Candidates will play the melody back on their instrument.

**Process**

The test will be played twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the melody to the metronome click. The tempo is ♩ = 85.

**RHYTHMIC RECALL****Requirements**

The examiner will play a two-bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the lowest-sounding E string. Candidates will hear the test twice and will be asked to play the rhythm back. Candidates will then be asked to identify the rhythm from two printed examples shown to them by the examiner.

**Process**

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next there will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the rhythm to the drum backing. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

**GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS**

Candidates will be asked five questions. Three of these will be music knowledge questions, based on one of the pieces performed in the exam (chosen by the candidate), the fourth will be about knowledge of chord construction, and the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

**Part 1: Music Knowledge**

There will be three music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

The questions will be drawn from the following:

- identify the names of pitches
- explain the meaning of the time signature marking
- identify rhythm values from the following: semibreve (whole note), minim (half note), crotchet (quarter note),
- quaver (eighth note), triplet quaver (triplet eighth-notes) and semiquaver (16th note) values, and their associated rests

The fourth question will be on chord construction. Candidates will be asked to:

- explain the construction of a dominant 7 chord

**Part 2: Instrument & Technical Knowledge**

There will be one question about the candidate's knowledge of their instrument, chosen by the examiner from below:

- identify three of the following parts of your guitar: neck, fretboard, body, tuning-pegs, nut, soundhole, or bridge
- explain the difference between *apoyando* and *tirando* technique
- identify the pitches of all open strings (in standard tuning)

**PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

**GRADED CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces.

**TECHNICAL EXERCISES**

At Grade 3 there are three groups of technical exercises. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com)

# GRADE 4

The Grade 4 Classical Guitar exam is for candidates who are ready for intermediate level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 3 and have since acquired greater use of technique, more complex rhythms, coordination and musical understanding. Candidates will be developing a sense of expression and continuing to broaden their stylistic awareness, and there is also the opportunity to improvise, which will be growing in assurance and articulation.

## GRADE EXAMINATION

### TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios & Broken Chords, and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

#### Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Major, minor and chromatic scales are to be performed in quavers, and the harmonised scale is to be performed in crotchets.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major scales</b>			
D, A major	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Minor scales</b>			
F# harmonic minor	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
C melodic minor	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (candidate choice)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Chromatic scales</b>			
Chromatic scale starting on E	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Harmonised Scale</b>			
F major in 6ths	1 octave	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>

## GRADE 4

### Group B: Arpeggios & Broken Chords

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers, without over-ringing of notes. Broken chords are to be performed as written in the grade book, with over-ringing of notes.

Arpeggio / Broken Chord	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major &amp; minor arpeggios</b>			
D major F# minor, B minor	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
<b>Dominant 7 arpeggios</b>			
D dominant 7th	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
<b>Broken Chords</b>			
Broken chords in the key of C major (I, V7, I)		♩ = 160	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>

### Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

## PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Andrew York	Garden Steps
Helen Sanderson	West Coast
Robert Johnson	Alman
Metallica	Nothing Else Matters
Red Hot Chili Peppers	Road Trippin'
Madame Sidney Pratten	A Lament
Gabriel Fauré	Sicilienne, Op. 78
John Williams	Star Wars (Main Theme)
David Cottam	Amontillado
Tatiana Stachak	Tango

See page 12 for further information on free choice pieces.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

### SIGHT READING

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

#### Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The sight reading test will be up to eight bars long, in the keys of:

- D major or B minor
- F major or D minor
- G major or E minor

#### Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

**IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION****Requirements**

In the Contemporary Improvisation & Interpretation test, candidates will be given one of the following, to be performed to backing track:

- A 12-bar blues in the key of G or C, containing the chords I7, IV7 and V7.
- A 12-bar piece based on a contemporary style (e.g., pop, rock, soul, R&B) in the key of A major or F# minor, containing diatonic chords (including 7ths).

At Grade 4, candidates may improvise either single-note melodies or a chordal accompaniment (candidate choice). The tempo is ♩ = 95.

**Process**

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

**EAR TESTS**

Candidates will be given two tests: melodic recall and harmonic recall.

**MELODIC RECALL****Requirements**

The examiner will play a two-bar melody using the A major scale. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be descending. Candidates will play the melody back on their instrument.

**Process**

The test will be played twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the melody to the metronome click. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

**HARMONIC RECALL****Requirements**

The examiner will play a tonic chord followed by a two-bar chord sequence in the key of C major played to a metronome click. The sequence will be drawn from the I, IV and V chords and may occur in any combination. Candidates will be asked to identify the chord sequence, stating the progression either with the chord names (C, F, G) or numerals (I, IV, V).

**Process**

Each time the test is played the sequence is: four clicks, tonic, four clicks, chords. There will be a short gap to prepare after the second playthrough of the test. Candidates will then be asked to state the chord progression. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Three of these will be music knowledge questions, based on one of the pieces performed in the exam (chosen by the candidate), the fourth will be about knowledge of chord construction, and the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

### Part 1: Music Knowledge

There will be three music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

The questions will be drawn from the following:

- identify the names of pitches
- explain the meaning of the time signature and key signature markings
- explain the meaning of repeat marks, first and second time bars, D.C., D.S., al Coda and al Fine markings
- identify rhythm values from the following: semibreve (whole note), minim (half note), crotchet (quarter note), quaver (eighth note), quaver triplet (eighth-notes triplet) and semiquaver (16th note) values, and their associated rests

The fourth question will be on chord construction. Candidates will be asked to:

- explain the construction of major7, minor7 or dominant7 chords

### Part 2: Technical Knowledge

The examiner will also ask one question regarding a technical consideration of the candidate's chosen piece, in relation to:

- Picking hand: Strumming or picking technique for a short phrase (up to one bar) – demonstration is acceptable
- Fretting hand: Fretting position and fingering used to play a short phrase (up to one bar) – demonstration is acceptable

The examiner will choose the section of music and will ask you to give a brief explanation as to why the technique was appropriate for the chosen section.

*(Note: Demonstrations are acceptable to support an explanation, but must have the spoken understanding).*

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

### PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.



## **GRADED CERTIFICATE**

### **PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces.

### **TECHNICAL EXERCISES**

At Grade 4 there are three groups of technical exercises. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

# GRADE 5

The Grade 5 Classical Guitar exam is for candidates who have fully consolidated their intermediate level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 4 and have since acquired a greater use of appropriate technique, more complex rhythms, coordination and musical understanding. Candidates will have developed a good sense of expression, have a strong grasp of stylistic awareness, and there is also the opportunity to improvise, which is now individual, assured, accurate and expressive.

## GRADE EXAMINATION

### TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios & Broken Chords, and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales arpeggios and broken chords are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

#### Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Major, minor and chromatic scales are to be performed in quavers, and the harmonised scales are to be performed in crotchets.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major scales</b>			
E, B <sup>b</sup> major	2 octaves	♩ = 96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Minor scales</b>			
C harmonic minor	2 octaves	♩ = 96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
G melodic minor			
<b>Chromatic scales</b>			
Starting on A	2 octaves	♩ = 96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Harmonised scales</b>			
C major in 6ths	As shown in grade book	♩ = 96	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
A harmonic minor in 6ths			
G major in 10ths			

## GRADE 5

### Group B: Arpeggios & Broken Chords

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers, without over-ringing of notes. Broken chords are to be performed as written in the grade book, with over-ringing of notes.

Arpeggio	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major &amp; minor arpeggios</b>			
E, B $\flat$ major	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 96$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
C, G minor	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 96$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
<b>Broken Chords</b>			
Broken chords in the key of E minor	as shown in grade book	$\text{♩} = 96$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
G major broken chords	as shown in grade book	$\text{♩} = 96$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>

### Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

## PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Laura Snowden	The Fairground
Norah Jones	Don't Know Why
Leo Brouwer	Étude No. 6
Francisco Tárrega	Lágrima
Eva Cassidy	Songbird
Matteo Carcassi	Étude No. 3
Tatiana Stachak	Country Étude
Sting	Shape of My Heart
Eduardo Sainz de la Maza	Paseo
Giorgio Serci	African Sunset

See page 12 for further information on free choice pieces.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

### SIGHT READING

#### Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The sight reading test will be up to twelve bars long, in the keys of:

- C major or A minor
- F major or D minor
- D major or B minor

#### Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

## IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

### Requirements

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise either single-note melodies or a chordal accompaniment (candidate choice) to complement the backing track. The chord progression will meet the following criteria:

- A 12-bar blues in the key of D or A, containing the chords I, IIm, IV, IVdim and V7
- A piece up to 16 bars long based on a contemporary style (e.g., pop, rock, soul, R&B) in the key of B♭ major or G minor, which may include any diatonic triads, inversions, 7th chords and occasional secondary dominant chords

### Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

## EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given two tests: melodic recall and harmonic recall.

### MELODIC RECALL

#### Requirements

The examiner will play a two-bar melody using the B♭ major scale. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be descending. Candidates will play the melody back on their instrument.

#### Process

The test will be played twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the melody to the metronome click. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

### HARMONIC RECALL

#### Requirements

The examiner will play a tonic chord followed by a four-bar chord sequence in the key of G major played to a metronome click. The sequence will be drawn from the I, IV V and VIIm chords and may occur in any combination. Candidates will be asked to identify the chord sequence, stating the progression either with the chord names (G, C, D, Em) or numerals (I, IV, V, VIIm).

#### Process

Each time the test is played the sequence is: four clicks, tonic, four clicks, chords. There will be a short gap to practise after the second playthrough of the test. Candidates will then be asked to state the chord progression. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

**GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS**

Candidates will be asked five questions, divided into the topics as shown below:

**Part 1: Music Knowledge**

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At Grade 5 candidates will be asked three questions based on their choice of a piece of music they have played in the exam. The questions will be drawn from the following:

- identify the names of pitches
- explain the meaning of the time signature and the key signature markings
- explain the meaning of repeat marks, first and second time bars, D.C., D.S., al Coda and al Fine markings
- identify rhythm values from the following: semibreve (whole note), minim (half note), crotchet (quarter note), quaver (eighth note), triplet quaver (triplet eighth-note) and semiquaver (16th note) values, and their associated rests

Candidates will also be asked one question on chord construction, drawn from the following:

- explain the construction of major7, minor7 or dominant7 chords
- explain the meaning of a sus2 or sus4 chord

**Part 2: Technical Knowledge**

---

The examiner will also ask one question regarding a technical consideration of the candidate's chosen piece, in relation to:

- Picking hand: Strumming or picking technique for a short phrase (up to one bar) – demonstration is acceptable
- Fretting hand: Fretting position and fingering used to play a short phrase (up to one bar) – demonstration is acceptable

The examiner will choose the section of music and will ask you to give a brief explanation as to why the technique was appropriate for the chosen section.

*(Note: Demonstrations are acceptable to support an explanation, but must have the spoken understanding).*

**PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

**GRADED CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces.

**TECHNICAL EXERCISES**

At Grade 5 there are three groups of technical exercises. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com)

# GRADE 6

The Grade 6 Classical Guitar exam is for candidates who have reached the first stage of advanced level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 5 and have since developed appropriate technique, expressive devices, rhythmic complexity, coordination and musical understanding. Candidates will have an increased extent of individuality, enhanced stylistic awareness and there is an option to demonstrate assured and articulate improvisation. Candidates will demonstrate a good understanding of form and structure with clear musical communication.



## GRADE EXAMINATION

## TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios & Broken Chords, and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales, arpeggios and broken chords are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

**Group A: Scales**

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Major, minor and chromatic scales are to be performed in quavers, and the harmonised scales are to be performed in crotchets finishing on a minim.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major &amp; minor scales</b>			
A $\flat$ , E $\flat$ major	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 112$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
C $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$ harmonic minor	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 112$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
C $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$ melodic minor			
<b>Chromatic scale</b>			
Chromatic scale starting on C	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 112$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Harmonised Scales</b>			
D major in 3rds	1 octave	$\text{♩} = 112$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
F major in octaves			
E harmonic minor in 6ths			

## GRADE 6

### Group B: Arpeggios & Broken Chords

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers, without over-ringing of notes. Broken chords are to be performed as written in the grade book, with over-ringing of notes.

Arpeggios & Broken Chords	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major &amp; minor arpeggios</b>			
A <sup>b</sup> , E <sup>b</sup> major	2 octaves	♩ = 112	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
C <sup>#</sup> minor, G <sup>#</sup> minor	2 octaves	♩ = 112	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
<b>Dominant seventh arpeggio</b>			
B <sup>b</sup> dominant seventh arpeggio	2 octaves	♩ = 112	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
<b>Broken Chords</b>			
Exercise 1: E minor	<i>As shown in grade book</i>	♩ = 112	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li><li>▪ thumb and fingers</li></ul>
Exercise 2: A major			

### Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

## PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Celso Machado	Xaranga do Vôvô
José González	Heartbeats
Seal	Kiss from a Rose
from Toy Story	You've Got a Friend in Me
Naoko Ikeda	Moonlight Rose
Agustín Barrios	El Sueño de la Muñequita
Yvonne Bloor	Promise
Julio Salvador Sagreras	Maria-Luisa (Mazurka)
Florence Price	The Deserted Garden
Frantz Casseus	Romance (1978)

See page 12 for further information on free choice pieces.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION &amp; INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

## SIGHT READING

**Requirements**

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The sight reading test will be up to twelve bars long, in the keys of:

- G major or E minor
- F major or D minor
- D major or B minor

**Process**

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

## IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise either single-note melodies or a chordal accompaniment (candidate choice) to complement the backing track. The chord progression will meet the following criteria:

- A repeated 8-bar blues in C minor or C# minor, containing occasional non-diatonic chords
- A 16-bar test in a contemporary genre (pop, soul, rock etc.) in E $\flat$  major or E major, including II-V-I progressions and occasional secondary dominant chords

### Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

## EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given two tests: melodic recall and harmonic recall.

### MELODIC RECALL

#### Requirements

The examiner will play a two-bar melody using the E $\flat$  major scale or the C# harmonic minor scale. The examiner will state the key before the first playthrough of the test. The first note of the melody will be the root note or the fifth, and the first interval will be either ascending or descending. Candidates will play the melody back on their instrument.

#### Process

The test will be played twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the melody to the metronome click. The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 90$ .

### HARMONIC RECALL

#### Requirements

The examiner will play a tonic chord followed by a four-bar chord sequence in the key of D major played to a metronome click. The sequence will be drawn from the I, II $\text{m}$ , III $\text{m}$ , IV, V and VI $\text{m}$  chords and may occur in any combination. Chord V may be a major chord or a dominant 7th chord. Candidates will be asked to identify the chord sequence, stating the progression either with the chord names (e.g. D, E $\text{m}$ ) or numerals (e.g. I, II $\text{m}$ ).

#### Process

Each time the test is played the sequence is: four clicks, tonic, four clicks, chords. There will be a short gap to prepare after the second playthrough of the test. Candidates will then be asked to state the chord progression. The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 90$ .

**GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS****Part 1: Music Knowledge**

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At Grade 6 candidates will be asked four questions based on their choice of a piece of music they have played in the exam. The questions will be drawn from the following:

- explain the meaning of any tempo marking on the page
- identify the key signature and give the relative major or minor key of the piece
- identify any pitches found on the score, as selected by the examiner
- identify rhythmic values (notes and/or rests) from any rhythmic values found on the score, as chosen by the examiner
- identify and explain any expressive markings found on your score, as chosen by the examiner
- give a brief explanation and demonstration of either the stylistic or technical considerations in preparation of the chosen piece

**Part 2: General Music and Instrument Knowledge**

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At Grade 6 you will be asked to do one of the following:

- state the chord progression of a perfect cadence in the key of C major or F major, as chosen by the examiner
- state the chord progression of an imperfect cadence in the key of C or F major, as chosen by the examiner
- explain how to execute a natural harmonic

*(Note: Demonstrations are acceptable to support an explanation, but must have the spoken understanding).*

**PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

**GRADED CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces.

**TECHNICAL EXERCISES**

At Grade 6 there are three groups of technical exercises. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com)

# GRADE 7

The Grade 7 Classical Guitar exam is for candidates who have extended their advanced level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 6 and developed notable security of appropriate technique, use of expressive devices, rhythmic complexity, fluency and musical understanding. There will be mature and authentic stylistic awareness, with developing individuality and communication. Candidates will have a strong understanding of musical form and structure and there is an option to improvise, demonstrating conviction and personality.

## GRADE EXAMINATION

## TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios & Broken Chords, and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

**Group A: Scales**

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. All scales are to be performed in even quavers.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Major scales</b>			
Major scale, root 6, in the keys of G, A <sup>b</sup> , A, B <sup>b</sup> and B major	2 octaves	♩ = 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
Major scale, root 5, in the keys of C, D <sup>b</sup> , D, E <sup>b</sup> and E major	2 octaves	♩ = 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
G major scale	3 octaves	♩ = 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Minor scales</b>			
Harmonic AND melodic minor scales, root 6, in the keys of G, A <sup>b</sup> , A, B <sup>b</sup> and B minor	2 octaves	♩ = 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
Harmonic AND melodic minor scales, root 5, in the keys of C, C <sup>#</sup> /D <sup>b</sup> , D <sup>#</sup> /E <sup>b</sup> and E minor	2 octaves	♩ = 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
G harmonic minor scale G melodic minor scale	3 octaves	♩ = 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Chromatic scale</b>			
Starting on E	3 octaves	♩ = 144	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>

**Group B: Arpeggios & Broken Chords**

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be

## GRADE 7

performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers, without over-ringing of notes. Broken chords are to be performed as written in the grade book, with over-ringing of notes.

Arpeggio	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Two-octave major &amp; minor arpeggios</b>			
Root 6 Starting notes: G, G#/A <sup>b</sup> , A, A#/B <sup>b</sup> , B  Root 5th Starting notes: C, C#/D <sup>b</sup> , D, D#/E <sup>b</sup> , E	2 octaves	♩ = 126	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Three-octave major &amp; minor arpeggios</b>			
Root 6th Starting on G	3 octaves	♩ = 126	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Two-octave diminished 7th arpeggios</b>			
Root 6th Starting notes: G, G#/A <sup>b</sup> , A, A#/B <sup>b</sup> , B  Root 5th Starting notes: C, C#/D <sup>b</sup> , D, D#/E <sup>b</sup> , E	2 octaves	♩ = 126	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Two-octave dominant 7th arpeggios</b>			
Root 6th Starting notes: G, G#/A <sup>b</sup> , A, A#/B <sup>b</sup> , B  Root 5th Starting notes: C, C#/D <sup>b</sup> , D, D#/E <sup>b</sup> , E	2 octaves	♩ = 126	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Broken Chords</b>			
Exercise 1 in D major Exercise 2 in A minor	As shown in grade book	♩ = 126	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>

### Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.



## PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Leo Brouwer	Un Dia de Novembre
Heitor Villa-Lobos	Prélude No. 3
Johann Sebastian Bach	Allemande
Madame Sidney Pratten	Forgotten
Charlie Haden and Pat Metheny	Our Spanish Love Song
João Gilberto	Desafinado
Florence Price	Ticklin' Toes
Fernando Sor	Estudio No. 18 in E $\flat$ Major
Alicia Keys	If I Ain't Got You
PinkPantheress	Reason

See page 12 for further information on free choice pieces.

## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION &amp; INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

## SIGHT READING

**Requirements**

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The sight reading test will be up to 18 bars long, in the keys of:

- D major or B minor
- B major or G# minor
- A major or F# minor

**Process**

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

## IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise either single-note melodies or a chordal accompaniment (candidate choice) to complement the backing track. The chord progression will meet the following criteria:

- A funk/blues or jazz/blues test with a tonal centre of A, C or G
- A test in a contemporary style such as pop/soul/motown, using chords derived from a combination of mixolydian and aeolian modes, based on a tonal centre of A, C or G

### Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

## EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given two tests: melodic recall and harmonic recall.

### MELODIC RECALL

#### Requirements

The examiner will play a two-bar melody using the A $\flat$  major scale or the G $\sharp$  harmonic minor scale. The examiner will state the key before the first playthrough of the test. The first note of the melody will be the root note or the fifth, and the first interval will be either ascending or descending. Candidates will play the melody back on their instrument.

#### Process

The test will be played twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the melody to the metronome click. The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 90$ .

### HARMONIC RECALL

#### Requirements

The examiner will play a tonic chord followed by a four-bar chord sequence in the key of A major played to a metronome click. The sequence will be drawn from the I, II $\text{m}$ , III $\text{m}$ , IV, V and VI $\text{m}$  chords, and may occur in any combination. The II $\text{m}$ , III $\text{m}$  and VI $\text{m}$  chords can be either minor or minor 7th chords. Candidates will be asked to identify the chord sequence, stating the progression either with the chord names (e.g. A, B $\text{m}7$ ) or numerals (e.g. I, II $\text{m}7$ ).

#### Process

Each time the test is played the sequence is: four clicks, tonic, four clicks, chords. There will be a short gap to prepare after the second playthrough of the test. Candidates will then be asked to state the chord progression. The tempo is  $\text{♩} = 90$ .

**GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS**

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about general music and instrument knowledge. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

**Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)**

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to:

- explain the meaning of any tempo marking on the page
- identify the key signature and give the relative major or minor key of the piece
- identify any pitches found on the score, as selected by the examiner
- identify rhythmic values (notes and/or rests) found on the score, as chosen by the examiner
- identify and explain any expressive markings found on the score, as chosen by the examiner
- give a brief explanation and demonstration of either the stylistic or technical considerations in preparation of the chosen piece

**Part 2: General Music and Instrument Knowledge**

There will be one question about the candidate's general music and instrument knowledge, chosen by the examiner from the list below.

Candidates may be asked to:

- state the chord progression of two of the following cadences in the key of G or D major, as chosen by the examiner: perfect, imperfect, plagal or deceptive
- explain the difference between *sul ponticello* and *sul tasto* technique

**PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

**GRADED CERTIFICATE****PERFORMANCE PIECES**

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces.

**TECHNICAL EXERCISES**

At Grade 7 there are three groups of technical exercises. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com)

# GRADE 8

The Grade 8 Classical Guitar exam is for candidates who have now consolidated their playing to a high level. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 7 and have since developed heightened technique, use of expressive devices, rhythmic complexity, fluency, coordination and musical understanding. Candidates will demonstrate seamless musical form and structure. There will be an innate stylistic conviction and distinctive musicality with strong individuality. Communication will be commanding. There is an option to improvise to an advanced level, demonstrating effortless assurance and personality.

## GRADE EXAMINATION

### TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios & Broken Chords, and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

#### Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. All scales are to be performed in even quavers.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Two-octave major scales</b>			
Major scale, root 6th, in the keys of F $\sharp$ – B (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
Major scale, root 5th, in the keys of B – E (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Three-octave major scale</b>			
E major scale	3 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Two-octave minor scales</b>			
Harmonic minor and melodic minor scales, root 6th, in the keys of F $\sharp$ – B (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
Harmonic and melodic minor scales, root 5th, in the keys of B – E (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Three-octave minor scales</b>			
E harmonic minor scale E melodic minor scale	3 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>
<b>Chromatic scale</b>			
Starting on G	3 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i> or <i>apoyando</i> (examiner choice – candidates must prepare for both technical requirements)</li> <li>▪ fingers only</li> </ul>

**Group B: Arpeggios & Broken Chords**

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers.

Arpeggio	Range	Tempo	Fingering requirements
<b>Two-octave major arpeggios</b>			
Major arpeggio, root 6th, in the keys of F $\sharp$ –B (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
Major arpeggio, root 5th, in the keys of B–E (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Two-octave minor arpeggios</b>			
Minor arpeggio, root 6th, in the keys of F $\sharp$ –B (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
Minor arpeggio, root 5th, in the keys of B–E (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Three-octave arpeggios</b>			
Major arpeggio, root 6th, from the starting notes of E–G (chromatically)	3 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
Minor arpeggio, root 6th, from the starting notes of E–G (chromatically)	3 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Dominant 7 arpeggios</b>			
Dominant 7 arpeggio, root 6th, starting notes of F $\sharp$ –B (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
Dominant 7 arpeggio, root 5th, starting notes of B–E (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Diminished 7 arpeggios</b>			
Diminished 7 arpeggio, root 6th, starting notes of F $\sharp$ –B (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
Diminished 7 arpeggio, root 5th, starting notes of B–E (chromatically)	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 144$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
<b>Broken Chords</b>			
Exercise 1: A minor	As shown in grade book	$\text{♩} = 70$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>tirando</i></li> <li>▪ thumb and fingers</li> </ul>
Exercise 2: A minor			

**Group C: Technical Study**

Candidates are to perform one of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.



## PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Ida Presti	Étude No. 5
Hiatus Kaiyote	Breathing Underwater
Johann Sebastian Bach	Gavotte I and II, BWV 995
Giorgio Serci	Samba di Else
Niccolò Paganini	Romanze
João Pernambuco	Reboliço
Chick Corea	Spain
Frantz Casseus	On Sunday (Dance)
Francisco Tárrega	Capricho Árabe
Stanley Myers	Cavatina

See page 12 for further information on free choice pieces.



## SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION &amp; INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

## SIGHT READING

**Requirements**

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The sight reading test will be up to 26 bars long, in the keys of:

- D major or B minor
- B $\flat$  major or G minor
- A major or F $\sharp$  minor

**Process**

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

## IMPROVISATION &amp; INTERPRETATION

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise either single-note melodies or a chordal accompaniment (candidate choice) to complement the backing track. The chord progression will meet the following criteria:

*either:*

- A repeated 12-bar jazz/blues test in the key of B $\flat$  or E

*or:*

- A 24-bar jazz/swing test in the key of E $\flat$  or A $\flat$

**Process**

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

## EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given two tests: melodic recall and harmonic recall.

## MELODIC RECALL

**Requirements**

The examiner will play a two-bar melody using the F# major scale or the F# harmonic minor scale. The examiner will state the key before the first playthrough of the test. The first note of the melody will be the root note, third or fifth and the first interval will be either ascending or descending. Candidates will play the melody back on their instrument.

**Process**

The test will be played twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one-bar count-in. There will be a short gap to practise. Next will be a vocal count-in and candidates will then play the melody to the metronome click. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

## HARMONIC RECALL

**Requirements**

The examiner will play a tonic chord followed by a four-bar chord sequence in the key of E major played to a metronome click. The sequence will be drawn from the I, II<sup>m</sup>, III<sup>m</sup>, IV, V and VI<sup>m</sup> chords, and may occur in any combination. The I and IV chords can be either major or major 7<sup>th</sup> chords. You will be asked to identify the chord sequence, stating the progression either with the chord names (e.g. E, A<sup>m</sup>7) or numerals (e.g. I, IV<sup>m</sup>7).

**Process**

Each time the test is played the sequence is: four clicks, tonic, four clicks, chords. There will be a short gap to prepare after the second playthrough of the test. Candidates will then be asked to state the chord progression. The tempo is ♩ = 90.

## GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about general music and instrument knowledge. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

### Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to:

- explain the meaning of any tempo markings found on your score
- identify the key signature and give the relative major or minor key
- identify any pitches in a melodic sequence found on your score, as chosen by the examiner
- identify rhythmic values (notes and/or rests) from any rhythmic values found on your score, as chosen by the examiner.
- identify and explain any expressive markings in your piece
- briefly explain and demonstrate one stylistic and one technical consideration in preparation and performance of the chosen piece

### Part 2: General Music and Instrument Knowledge

There will be one question about the candidate's general music and instrument knowledge, chosen by the examiner from the list below.

Candidates may be asked to:

- state the chord progressions of any of the following cadences in the keys of C, D, F or G major, as chosen by the examiner: perfect, imperfect, plagal or deceptive
- explain how to play artificial harmonics

## PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

### PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

## GRADED CERTIFICATE

### PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces.

### TECHNICAL EXERCISES

At Grade 7 there are three groups of technical exercises. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](http://rslawards.com)

## REVISION HISTORY

### **14 Sep 2022**

No revisions

### **31 Mar 2025**

Added information about Graded Certificate exam type, including exam information and Qualification codes.

Added Learning Outcomes to Syllabus

Page 15: Added guidance on selection of performance pieces stipulating that candidates may not be assessed on the same performance pieces more than once