

MUSIC PERFORMANCE DIPLOMAS

from 2024

LRSM (Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music)

FRSM (Fellowship of the Royal Schools of Music)



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Introduction

About ABRSM

ABRSM is The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and a global music education charity. At the heart of everything we do is our belief that music enriches lives. Building on our heritage, we offer face-to-face and digital exams, sheet music, recordings, apps and courses for students and teachers across the world. Our music qualifications provide clear goals, reliable and consistent marking, and guidance for future learning.

In partnership with four Royal Schools of Music, we carry on a long legacy of musical excellence. More than an awarding organisation, we support learners from the first note they play, and empower teachers who help build musical skills and encourage progress around the world.

As a charity, we use all of the surpluses we generate to make significant donations towards music education initiatives and to develop our support for learners and teachers around the world. We advocate for music and its many forms, playing our part to ensure the future of music education and its place in society.

Together with our partners, our teachers and others around the world, we've been nurturing the future of music since 1889 – to help people start or continue their journey.

This qualification specification

What it covers

This specification provides all the relevant requirements and information learners need to prepare for the following qualifications:

- ABRSM Level 6 Diploma in Music Performance (LRSM)
- ABRSM Level 7 Diploma in Music Performance (FRSM)

Repertoire lists specific to individual instruments and levels can be found at: www.abrsm.org/other-assessments/diplomas/music-performance

Validity of this specification

This specification is valid from November 2023 until further notice. We may update this document from time to time but will not make changes to the syllabus other than in exceptional circumstances. In such cases, advance notice of any changes will be posted on our website.

Validity of the repertoire lists

The LRSM and FRSM repertoire lists are valid from November 2023 and we may expand these periodically. The latest versions can be found at: www.abrsm.org/other-assessments/diplomas/music-performance

LRSM and FRSM diplomas at a glance

Diploma content

Unit 1: [Your Performance](#)

Unit 2: [LRSM Performance in Context](#)
[FRSM Research and Reflection](#)

Assessment

Unit 1: Your Performance (LRSM and FRSM)

What is assessed

This unit assesses the performance of a programme of music, comprising pieces selected from the published lists and own choice repertoire, including

- Instrumental (or singing) technical control
 - Musical interpretation
 - Communication
 - Delivery
-
- 45 minutes duration ($\pm 10\%$) (LRSM)
 - 55 minutes duration ($\pm 10\%$) (FRSM)

How it is assessed

A live performance, digitally assessed

- Pieces/Songs presented 30 marks (40%)
- Performance as a whole 30 marks (40%)

60 marks total (80% of Diploma)

Unit 2: Performance in Context (LRSM) Research and Reflection (FRSM)

What is assessed

A written or spoken piece of work connected to the Unit 1 Performance, chosen from a list of four options.

1. Informing your audience
2. Detailed analysis of a work or works
3. Programming your Performance
4. Preparation for Performance

LRSM: Written: 2000 words ($\pm 10\%$) or
Spoken: 10 minutes ($\pm 10\%$)

FRSM: Written: 3500 words ($\pm 10\%$) or
Spoken: 17 minutes ($\pm 10\%$)

How it is assessed

- Written: one or more documents in pdf format **OR**
- Spoken: one video presentation

15 marks (20% of Diploma)

About these qualifications

Qualification objectives

Encouraging diverse approaches to music, these diplomas stimulate enjoyment and achievement through the progressive development of skills, knowledge and understanding, and enable a learner's advanced performance skills to be formally recognised and rewarded. They encourage lifelong learning without restrictions on length of study or the need for formal study in a college or university.

Who the qualifications are for

Our LRSM and FRSM Music Performance Diplomas provide a pathway for a wide range of musicians and have been developed to reflect the day-to-day performance experience, whether amateur or professional. They also allow a learner to measure their abilities against internationally recognised levels:

- Level 6 - equivalent in level to the final year of an undergraduate degree course
- Level 7 - equivalent in level to a master's level degree course

ABRSM Diplomas are available to anyone who is able to demonstrate the appropriate level of skill and understanding required for the qualification. Information about entry requirements can be found below.

Progression routes

As learners move through the diploma levels, they will find that the repertoire becomes more demanding, stamina increases as the length of the performance time extends, and the complexity of the supporting evidence required increases.

The LRSM and FRSM Diplomas are progressive from the ARSM, our Level 4 Diploma in Music Performance. This qualification is progressive in level of demand from ABRSM's two suites of graded music exams: Practical Music and Music Performance. Both give learners flexibility and responsibility in programme building, as well as providing further opportunity to develop performance technique while extending their repertoire. Details of the ARSM in Music Performance can be found at: www.abrsm.org/other-assessments/diplomas/music-performance

Through a combination of live performance and written or spoken components, learners at LRSM and FRSM level demonstrate an advanced level of musicianship, evaluation skills and provide contextual evidence to support the performance decisions they have made.

Irrespective of a learner's personal motivation to achieve one of ABRSM's Performance diplomas, each qualification can provide a pathway to:

- Higher level qualifications offered by other awarding organisations
- Graduate or Postgraduate programmes of study
- Employment in the creative arts sector

Further details of our diploma suite of qualifications can be found at: www.abrsm.org/other-assessments/diplomas

Entry requirements

There are no lower or upper age limits. For both LRSM and FRSM, candidates must already have passed ABRSM Grade 8 (Practical Music or Music Performance) or equivalent in the instrument being presented or be able to demonstrate appropriate professional experience (detailed below).

Candidates should ensure that their music performance and supporting skills are commensurate with the level of diploma they wish to be examined in. Further information on the requirements of each diploma can be found on the relevant page.

In place of an ABRSM Grade 8, we accept the equivalent qualification from these awarding organisations:

- Australian Music Examinations Board
- Dublin Institute of Technology Conservatory of Music & Drama
- Guildhall School of Music & Drama
- London College of Music
- Music Teachers' Board
- Royal Conservatory of Music (Canada) (Grade 9)
- Royal Irish Academy of Music
- University of South Africa
- Trinity College London

We also accept Grade 8 in an instrument closely related to that being examined:

- Piano - Harpsichord - Organ
- Violin - Viola
- Harp (Pedal) - Harp (Non-pedal)
- Soprano Saxophone - Alto Saxophone - Tenor Saxophone - Baritone Saxophone
- Trumpet - Cornet (B♭ Cornet or E♭ Soprano Cornet) - Flugelhorn
- Trombone - Bass Trombone
- Baritone - Euphonium - Tuba
- Percussion - Percussion (Combined) - Tuned Percussion - Timpani - Snare Drum
- Singing - Singing for Musical Theatre

We may request a copy of the appropriate certificate as evidence of the entry requirement. If this cannot be provided when requested, the exam entry will be rejected without refund of the fee.

Appropriate professional experience

Learners may apply to offer appropriate professional experience as a substitution for the Grade 8 entry requirement. For more details on how to apply, please see: www.abrsm.org/other-assessments/diplomas

Important: Applying for this substitution is a *separate* procedure from registering for the qualification and can take up to six weeks. Approval of professional experience must already have been granted **before a candidate enters** for a diploma.

How we are regulated

ABRSM exams are regulated in the UK by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), Qualifications Wales and Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA Regulation). They are part of the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) in England and Northern Ireland.

Regulated qualification details

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

Qualification number	Qualification title	ABRSM title*
610/3336/4	ABRSM Level 6 Diploma in Music Performance	LRSM
610/3337/6	ABRSM Level 7 Diploma in Music Performance	FRSM

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

Regulation (rest of world)

Information on how ABRSM exams are recognised in individual countries can be found at: www.abrsm.org/more-information/regulation-and-ucas-points

Qualification size

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

The GLH and TQT are estimates of the average time required and should be used as guidance only; it is recognised that there will be variance dependent on each individual's level of experience and ability.

Malpractice and maladministration

We take any form of malpractice or maladministration very seriously.

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

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

Plagiarism

ABRSM defines plagiarism as an attempt by the candidate to reuse the work of others as their own. This means that copying from a published or unpublished source without acknowledging it, constructing a précis of someone else's writing or ideas without citing that writer, or colluding with another candidate to submit the same or similar work, constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism applies to all sources.

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

Infringements

It is important that the relevant exam requirements as set out in this Qualification Specification are read and understood in full. If these are not met in any way, it could lead to a warning, mark deduction or disqualification at ABRSM's discretion. Examples of infringements include:

- Offering an inappropriate standard of own-choice repertoire.
- Presenting a programme or supporting evidence that is too short or too long.
- Presenting a programme containing more than the required minutes of own-choice music, without prior approval.
- Presenting music from the relevant diploma repertoire lists, but not as specified (e.g., incorrect number of movements).
- Submitting a video of the performance that has not been made in one single take or that has been edited in some other way.

The above list is not exhaustive. Action is typically taken as follows:

- Warnings, in the form of written correspondence, are applied to minor infringements.
- Mark deductions from a component of the exam are applied to more serious cases (e.g. own-choice repertoire of an inappropriate standard) and may be two marks, or more, depending on the circumstances.

-
- Disqualification is applied to cases where requirements are not fulfilled in a fundamental way:
 - programmes that are significantly too short
 - where the performance recording has been edited in some way
 - where we believe evidence submitted may not be the candidate's own
 - evidence (the performance or written/spoken work) is posted on any social media channels

Examiners report infringements to ABRSM who investigate and decide what action is to be taken. This process may delay the release of the exam result.

ABRSM's decision on any infringement is final. Prior acceptance of an infringement without penalty does not set a precedent and appeals will not be accepted on this basis.

Access (for candidates with specific needs)

We are committed to providing fair access to our assessments for candidates with specific needs by putting in place access arrangements and reasonable adjustments. ABRSM's Fair Access Guidelines and Specific Needs Policy are available at: www.abrsm.org/about-our-exams/specific-needs

Where a candidate's needs are not covered by the guidelines, each case is considered individually.

Special considerations

Special consideration is given to candidates who suffer temporary illness, injury or indisposition, or adverse circumstances at or near the time of the assessment that are beyond the candidate's control. This will not result in an adjustment to marks and will not change the assessment criteria. Please refer to our Special Consideration Policy at: www.abrsm.org/more-information/policies

Diversity

ABRSM is committed to creating greater diversity, equality and inclusion in the field of music and we are actively working to achieve this across our portfolio of assessments, and wider organisation. Our Diversity and Inclusion Plan is available at: www.abrsm.org/diversity-inclusion

Music Performance diplomas

General information

Exam Regulations

When preparing for an exam, it is important to read ABRSM's Exam Regulations, which set out the rules for completing the exams listed in this specification. This information is available at: www.abrsm.org/about-our-exams/exam-regulations

Amendments

Any updates to this specification, such as minor corrections or clarifications, will be posted at: www.abrsm.org/about-our-exams/syllabuses

Making an entry

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

Available subjects

The LRSM and FRSM diplomas are available for the following subjects:

Keyboard: Piano, Harpsichord, Organ

Strings: Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, Guitar, Harp

Woodwind: Recorder, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Saxophone

Brass: Horn, Trumpet, Cornet, Flugelhorn, Eb Horn, Trombone, Bass Trombone, Baritone, Euphonium, Tuba

Percussion

Singing

Related-instrument option

For certain instruments, candidates have the option to play work(s) on a related instrument, while ensuring that the majority of the programme is performed on their main instrument. Further information is contained in the Diploma Repertoire Lists.

LRSM Level 6 and FRSM Level 7 Diploma Syllabus

LRSM (Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music) and FRSM (Fellowship of the Royal Schools of Music) are both performance-focused diplomas, designed to showcase performance skills at a level beyond the ARSM (Level 4). They provide musicians with flexibility and responsibility in programme building, encouraging and equipping them to extend and explore repertoire for their instrument. They also provide further opportunity for musicians to develop their performance technique and interpretative skills and to provide contextual evidence to support the performance decisions they have made.

Candidates awarded the diploma can use the relevant letters LRSM or FRSM after their name.

These qualifications allow learners to receive formal recognition of their level of achievement, in addition to feedback to support their learning journey. They provide learners wishing to hone and refine their performance skills with motivation and structure, as well as providing an opportunity to demonstrate contextual understanding of the music they are performing.

Structure

These exams have been carefully designed to synoptically assess the underpinning knowledge and understanding required for music performance. Performers' creative skills are presented through the technical control of an instrument, interpretation of repertoire, the delivery and successful communication of a sustained programme of repertoire, and an understanding of the context in which both the music and the individual performance take place. Candidates are also provided with the opportunity for critical evaluation and self-reflection, allowing for continuous improvement in musical dexterity.

How the exams work

- Both the LRSM and FRSM exams are delivered as digital exams, where a video recording of the candidate's performance and the supporting evidence (written or spoken) are assessed by one of our examiners.

These exams are 'on demand' in nature, and the performances can be presented and recorded at a venue of the candidates choosing. Further guidance on digital exams is provided on page 12.

Exam content

The LRSM and FRSM exams consist of two components: Unit 1 and Unit 2.

LRSM

Unit 1: Performance (45-minute ($\pm 10\%$))
performance of a programme chosen by the candidate

- At least 50% of repertoire must be selected from the LRSM published list
and
- The remainder of the programme may be own-choice repertoire (at or beyond ARSM standard)

Unit 2: Performance in Context

2000-word written submission or 10-minute video submission ($\pm 10\%$) on a topic selected from given options

FRSM

Unit 1: Performance (55-minute ($\pm 10\%$))
performance of a programme chosen by the candidate

- At least 50% of repertoire must be selected from the FRSM repertoire list
and
- The remainder of the programme may be own-choice music (at or beyond LRSM standard)

Unit 2: Research and Reflection

3500-word written submission or 17-minute video submission ($\pm 10\%$) on a topic selected from given options

Unit 1: Your Performance (LRSM and FRSM)

What is assessed

The performance component of both diplomas is designed to give you the opportunity to demonstrate a combination of key performance-related skills such as: instrumental (or singing) technical control, musical interpretation, communication, and delivery, over a sustained programme of music.

How it is assessed

Two separate marks will be awarded for the following:

- Your Performance (30 marks)
- Performance as a Whole (30 marks)

Your Performance and Performance as a Whole

Performing repertoire is at the heart of the Music Performance Diplomas. Designing balanced and varied programmes that play to learners' strengths as performers, and then delivering them with a real sense of musical intent and communication, is central to musical development. This also builds stamina and embeds the technical control required to play an extended programme of music, including managing the transitions from one piece to another.

Successful candidates should be able to deliver performances that are broadly consistent across the entire programme of selected music. Repertoire choices should be made that allow for creativity, communication of personal involvement and musical characterisation, interpretation of musical elements, and effective technical control of the instrument. Candidates should also be aware of the ensemble skills needed whilst performing with an accompaniment or with others, as well as the stamina to maintain and deliver a reliable performance.

Selecting repertoire

Performance duration: LRSM 45-minute ($\pm 10\%$)
 FRSM 55-minute ($\pm 10\%$)

This is the total performance time, from the first note, to the last. (Not including prior tuning)

- The total performance time includes any transition between items.
- Woodwind, brass and singing candidates may take one break of up to four minutes (LRSM) or five minutes (FRSM) (within the prescribed programme length). The exam recording must not be paused or stopped during the break.

Programming

The minimum requirement is to perform 50% of pieces/songs chosen from the published repertoire lists. The remainder of the programme may be own choice music of the appropriate standard, but is not mandatory. The entire programme can be selected from the published relevant Diploma lists, should you prefer.

Allowing up to 50% own choice music provides individuals with as much autonomy, creativity and ownership of the music they love to perform as whilst allowing them to demonstrate the appropriate breadth and depth of skills to be demonstrated.

If candidates wish to perform more than 50% own choice music, and therefore less than the prescribed 50% of repertoire from the published lists, prior authorisation must be obtained. Please email syllabus@abrsm.ac.uk for more information.

Further detail on programming music can be found on the next page.

The diploma repertoire lists are available at: www.abrsm.org/other-assessments/diplomas/music-performance

Unit 1: Administrative information

Programming Music

The programme should be balanced and varied, containing:

- a variety of moods, keys and tempi
- at least two contrasting (by period or style) pieces, or movements from larger works
- Candidates can perform music of their own choice for both the LRSM and FRSM diplomas.

Candidates should perform all works/movements complete, unless otherwise indicated in the repertoire list. All other additional instructions shown in the relevant repertoire list must be followed.

Own-choice repertoire:

LRSM: Maximum of 50% of own-choice repertoire, at or beyond ARSM standard

FRSM: Maximum of 50% of own-choice repertoire, at or beyond LRSM standard

- Own-choice repertoire may be a candidate's own composition or arrangement (see below)
- Prior approval from ABRSM cannot be given to standardise own-choice repertoire.
- In cases where there is a concern about the standard of any own-choice piece presented, ABRSM reserves the right to request a copy, which may delay the issuing of the exam result.
- The first page (only) of own choice pieces must be uploaded as PDFs at the same time as the performance video and written/spoken evidence.

Own composition

ABRSM welcomes the inclusion of candidates' own compositions or arrangements to be performed as own-choice repertoire. We will not judge or provide feedback on the structure or quality of the composition, only the performance of it. However, as with all other own-choice repertoire, the technical demand of the composition must be at or above the standard expected for the level of qualification.

Performing from memory

Although there is no specific requirement to perform from memory, candidates are encouraged to do so if they consider it will enhance their Performance.

Accompaniment

All music published with an accompaniment should be performed as such. Accompaniment may be provided by any suitable instrument(s), so long as the performer remains the main soloist throughout. It is the candidate's responsibility to arrange any accompanists and/or ensemble members. Pre-recorded accompaniments are not permitted, unless originally intended by the composer.

Exam music and editions

Candidates may use any edition that matches the piece and composer/arranger information given in the repertoire lists. All own-choice repertoire must exist in a legible and fully notated score.

Photocopies

Performing from unauthorised photocopies of copyright editions is not allowed. We may withhold the exam result where there is evidence of an illegal copy (or copies) being used. In the UK, copies may be used in some limited circumstances – for full details, see the MPA's Code of Fair Practice at: www.mpaonline.org.uk

Audiences

Candidates are encouraged, but not required, to perform to an audience at both levels of the Music Diplomas. Candidates should take into account whether to invite an audience and consider its intended size when choosing their venue and their option for Unit 2.

Digital exams

Venues, instruments and equipment

Candidates' performances are video-recorded and submitted to ABRSM for assessment. The recording is made at a venue of the candidate's choosing. This can be any location with the required space for performance, any audience and available instruments. The candidate is responsible for organising the venue and any equipment needed to run the exam (e.g., music stand, recording device).

Making the recording

The repertoire must be performed and recorded in one continuous take and the recording must not be paused at any point during that take. Where candidates are under 18, the recording process must be overseen by a Responsible Adult who must be aged 18 or over, and may be the Applicant, teacher or parent/carer.

Detailed instructions on how to record and submit the exam are given in the guidance available at:
www.abrsm.org/other-assessments/diplomas/music-performance

Overlong performances

The examiner may stop listening to the recording if a candidate's performance goes over the time limit.

Unit 2: Performance in Context (LRSM) Research and Reflection (FRSM)

This component of both the LRSM and FRSM diplomas is designed to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their contextual understanding of the music presented in their Performance and share the results of the personal research and reflection they have engaged in as part of its preparation.

For both the LRSM and FRSM diplomas, candidates have been provided with four topics, from which they must choose **one**. The choices have been designed to provide every candidate with the opportunity to showcase their strengths - irrespective of whether that is an academic approach with detailed musical analysis, or a more practical approach focusing on performance preparation. The topics are listed on the following pages.

What is assessed

This component of the Diplomas is a piece of written work or a verbal presentation, video recorded. It can include musical examples, and instrumental/vocal demonstration. As well as the content outlined in the topics below, your submission should include examples of where reflection informed your choices, an evaluation of the effectiveness of your approach and how it evolved over time, and any specific insights that will inform your approach in the future. The verbal presentation (if chosen) does not have to be recorded at the same time as the Unit 1 Your Performance.

- Candidates can submit the written document in any language. If English is not used, a certified translation into English must be provided at the same time. All written evidence must be uploaded in PDF format, including PowerPoint Presentations, MS Word documents, etc.
- Candidates can give their verbal presentation in any language. If English is not used, English subtitles must be provided on the video recording.
- Some candidates may choose to submit a video recording of a PowerPoint presentation delivered to a group, or a similar scenario where documentation is used with video. Should this be the case, both the video recording and accompanying documents in PDF format must be uploaded.

How is it assessed?

For this unit, examiners are looking for evidence of analytical skills, well-developed and convincing insights, based on thorough and relevant research, confident communication, whether written or verbal, and thorough self-evaluation, based on significant personal investment and thought. Specific assessment criteria can be found on the relevant pages.

Unit 2: Performance in Context (LRSM) topics

LRSM candidates must choose **ONLY ONE** of the four topics listed below.

The submission must be 2000 written word ($\pm 10\%$) **or** 10 minutes ($\pm 10\%$) spoken word.

Candidates are encouraged to read the assessment criteria on page 23.

Option 1: Informing your audience

Provide an informative overview of the music in your LRSM performance. Suitable for a generalist concert audience, your work should:

1. inform and support others to see the pieces in context
2. identify musical features such as structure, style, and character, and how these relate to one another
3. engage the listener and make the music accessible to them

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- background information about the composer(s)
- the contextual place of the work(s) in the output of the composer(s)
- supporting detail concerning musical periods and styles
- an overview of the musical structures and forms involved
- points of note relating to instrumental / vocal technique
- character and mood

You should conclude with a short reflection on how effectively you achieved the aim of informing your audience, and how this insight will influence your approach in the future

Option 2: Detailed programme analysis

Choose a 20-minute section of your LRSM programme and provide a thorough and detailed exploration, through **one** of the following lenses:

- A. **Context and analysis** (including information about the composer(s) and musical period(s), influences on the origins of the work(s), their significance in musical development more widely, etc.)
- B. **Performance history/discography** (including piece dedications, premieres and/or early performances through to contemporary concerts, references to recordings, notable performers/performances, etc.)
- C. **Significance in the development of your instrument** (including information about the composer(s) and musical period(s), the impact of technical developments in the construction of the instrument, relationship to other key works in the history of your instrument, etc.)

You should conclude with a short reflection on the impact this research has had on your own practice as a performer, and an evaluation of how this will continue to inform your approach in the future.

Option 3: Programming your performance

Consider your LRSM performance programme as a whole and provide a thorough and detailed commentary on your reasons for choosing this programme and its order.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- overarching themes
- contrasts in musical periods and styles
- the ways in which the research informed your developing interpretation
- which works suit your performing style and the reasons for this
- areas of challenge and strategies employed
- how you managed the transitions between pieces/movements
- the suitability of works you have chosen for the venue

You should conclude with a short reflection on the insights you gained through preparing your programme, particularly how they have impacted your performance and continuing performance practice. You should also include an evaluation of the effectiveness of your approach and of the programme itself.

Option 4: Preparation for performance

Provide a holistic overview of your preparation for your LRSM performance from the very beginning of your preparatory journey to the final performance. Give a detailed account of the technical and musical demands required, and of your specific preparation to master these.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- researching and choosing repertoire
- programme planning, including strategies for overcoming the technical and interpretative challenges your chosen programme presents
- contextual information from your own personal research that has informed your interpretation, including available discography
- your approach to communicating as a performer
- reference to published literature and technical exercises you studied
- practice strategies you developed to prepare the programme, including any teacher input

You should conclude with a short reflection on the insights you gained from the preparation process, particularly how they have impacted your performance and continuing performance practice. You should also include an evaluation of the effectiveness of your approach and of the eventual result.

Unit 2: Research and Reflection (FRSM) topics

FRSM candidates must choose **ONLY ONE** of the four topics listed below.

The submission must be 3500 written word ($\pm 10\%$) or 17 minutes ($\pm 10\%$) spoken word.

Candidates are encouraged to read the assessment criteria on page 27.

Option 1: Informing your audience

Present information, suitable for an audience at a professional public concert venue, that will enhance your audience's understanding of and engagement with your programme. Drawing on substantial personal research and reflection, provide information covering each work in your FRSM performance that will support an informed and experienced audience to see the works in context and identify features of the music that may be new to them.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- background information about the composer(s)
- the contextual place of the work(s) in the output of the composer(s)
- supporting detail concerning musical periods and styles
- an overview of the musical structures and forms involved
- points of note relating to instrumental / vocal technique
- character and mood, and musical analysis.

The information you present is designed to enhance your audience's understanding and share insights about the music that are original and authentic. You should conclude with a short evaluation of how effectively you realised this aim.

Option 2: Detailed programme analysis

Choose a 30-minute section of your FRSM programme and explore the music you have chosen in depth. You should provide a thorough and detailed analysis of this part of your programme through **one** of the following lenses:

- A. Musical analysis (including information about the composer(s) and musical period(s), influences on the origins of the work/s, their significance in musical development more widely, etc.)
- B. Performance history/discography (including information on any dedications on the part of the composer, premières and / or early performances through to contemporary concerts as appropriate, references to recordings, or champions of a work, etc.)
- C. Significance in the development of your instrument (including information about the composer(s) and musical period(s), how the impact of technical developments in the construction of the instrument has opened new tonal possibilities, relationship to other key works in the history of your instrument, etc.)

You should conclude with a short reflection on the impact this research has had on your own practice as a performer, and an evaluation of how this will continue to inform your approach in the future.

Option 3: Programming your performance

Consider your FRSM performance programme as a whole and explore the music you have chosen in depth. You should provide a thorough and detailed commentary on your reasons for choosing this programme and its order.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- overarching themes
- contrasts in musical periods and styles, and how this has influenced your interpretation
- the ways in which personal research informed your developing interpretation
- ways in which one or more work(s) suit your performing style and strengths, and others have challenged you to develop
- how you managed the transitions between pieces
- musical insights gained through the preparation process
- suitability of works you have chosen for the venue

You should conclude with a short reflection on the insights you gained through preparing your programme, and how they impacted your performance and continuing performance practice. You should also include an evaluation of the effectiveness of your approach and of the programme itself.

Option 4: Preparation for performance

Provide a holistic overview of your preparation for your FRSM performance from the very beginning of your preparatory journey to the final performance. Give a detailed illustration of the technical and musical demands required, and of your specific preparation to master these.

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- researching and choosing repertoire
- programme planning, including strategies for overcoming the technical and interpretative challenges your chosen programme presents
- contextual information from your own personal research that has informed your interpretation, including available discography
- your approach to communicating as a performer
- reference to published literature and technical exercises you studied
- practice strategies you developed to prepare the programme, including any teacher input

You should conclude with a short reflection on the impact the insights you gained from the preparation process have had and will continue to have on your own practice as a performer, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of both your approach, and the performance you delivered.

Unit 2: Administrative information

Submitting written or spoken evidence for LRSM and FRSM (Unit 2)

In addition to a live performance recording (Unit 1), candidates must also submit supporting evidence which can be either written or spoken (video-recorded) at their choice. Candidates should be aware of the following:

- For quality assurance purposes, candidates should use their Contact ID, not their name, on any submitted work
- Submitted work may not be re-used at a higher level of ABRSM diploma, although reference to it can be made
- ABRSM reserves the right to refuse examination of any submitted work if it contains material of an unsuitable nature

Written evidence format

Candidates must upload their Unit 2 written evidence together with their Unit 1 Performance recording, along with any necessary translation.

The document must be in the following format:

- typed and saved as a .pdf file
- all pages must be numbered
- the front page must contain:
 - ABRSM Contact ID
 - instrument
 - chosen option title
 - date
 - word count (excluding any footnotes, bibliography/ discography)
- the work must be consistent in its presentation and referencing style

Spoken evidence format

Candidates must upload the video of their Unit 2 spoken evidence together with their Unit 1 performance, along with any supporting documentation if appropriate (e.g. PowerPoint slides). If this is in a language other than English, English subtitles must be provided on the video recording.

The spoken evidence must:

- be saved in an identical video format to the Unit 1 Performance
- be recorded with the candidate visible to camera throughout
- follow the guidance on recording and submission at: www.abrsm.org/other-assessments/diplomas/music-performance
- The spoken evidence does not have to be recorded in one continuous take
- include a verbal introduction by the candidate, which includes:
 - ABRSM Contact ID
 - instrument
 - chosen option title
 - date
 - length of video (excluding any footnotes, bibliography/ discography)
- include reference to sources, including bibliography/discography

ABRSM regrets that it cannot return any submitted work; candidates are advised to keep a copy for their records.

Declaration of genuine work

All evidence must be the candidate's own, and they are required to complete the candidate declaration form as part of the online submission process.

LRSM Assessment and marking

Assessment objectives and Learning outcomes

The following table describes the level of knowledge and skills required of the candidate. It also shows the specific expertise successful candidates will be able to demonstrate.

LRSM (RQF Level 6)

Assessment objectives	Learning outcomes
<p>Perform a programme of music of prescribed length, with a variety of mood, key and tempo, of which a significant proportion will be at a level beyond ARSM.</p> <p>40%</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Perform a 45-minute programme of technically demanding repertoire with fluency and accuracy.2. Demonstrate advanced musicianship skills and contextual awareness throughout a sustained programme of music.3. Communicate a thorough knowledge of the different techniques and strategies relevant to music performance.
<p>Design, deliver and sustain the performance as a whole, matching the demands of the performance context and programme.</p> <p>40%</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Devise and deliver a stylistically balanced and sustained programme of music, with confidence.2. Demonstrate a developed understanding and control of advanced performance skills, such as performance awareness, textures and ensemble skills.3. Demonstrate musical connectivity to the score, to others, and to the performance situation.
<p>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the musical context of the performance by presenting persuasively and convincingly the results of personal research and reflection, by preparing either a written or spoken submission chosen from a specified list.</p> <p>20%</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Demonstrate the ability to gather, process, and analyse information related to a subject.2. Appraise different perspectives that influence performance choices, including self-evaluation and reflection.3. Structure and communicate information relating to the performance in context, with autonomy and creativity.

Mark allocation

Marks are allocated for each component of the assessment, as shown in the table below:

Component	Maximum marks	% of total mark
<i>Pieces/Songs presented</i>	30	40%
<i>Performance as a whole</i>	30	40%
<i>Performance in Context</i>	15	20%
TOTAL	75	100%

Result categories

The result categories for the LRSM diploma are set as follows. A Pass in each component of the assessment is not required to pass overall.

Result category	Mark band
<i>Distinction</i>	68-75
<i>Merit</i>	60-67
<i>Pass</i>	50-59
<i>Below Pass 1</i>	37-49
<i>Below Pass 2</i>	25-36

Assessment criteria – Unit 1: Your Performance

	Distinction 30-27 marks	Merit 26-24 marks	Pass 23-20 marks
PIECES OR SONGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritative performance • Engaging and persuasive characterisation, demonstrating extensive understanding of the chosen music • Acute awareness and sensitive exploration of the tonal colours of the instrument • Expressive and idiomatic musical shaping and detail with sophisticated stylistic awareness • Performance underpinned by excellent technical and musical control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good performance • Engaging characterisation, demonstrating thorough understanding of the chosen music • Sensitive awareness and exploration of the tonal colours of the instrument • Expressive musical shaping and detail with good stylistic awareness • Performance underpinned by adept technical and musical control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competent performance • Sufficient characterisation, demonstrating overall understanding of the chosen music • Some awareness and exploration of the tonal colours of the instrument • Some musical shaping, detail and stylistic awareness • Performance underpinned by reliable technical and musical control
PERFORMANCE AS A WHOLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritative and well-projected performance style, with strong musical conviction and vivid communication across the programme • Sophisticated control of textures and ensemble, with assured blending and balancing • Authoritative management of the performance situation • Highly effective sequence and pacing of programme • Profound musical understanding is demonstrated, through assured stylistic interpretation and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well-projected performance style, with musical conviction and strong communication across the programme • Adept control of textures and ensemble, with effective blending and balancing • Skilful management of the performance situation • Effective sequence and pacing of programme • Thorough musical understanding is demonstrated, through accomplished stylistic interpretation and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally well-projected performance style, with some musical conviction and communication across the programme • Good control of textures and ensemble, with competent blending and balancing • Proficient management of the performance situation • Good sequence and pacing of programme • Musical understanding is demonstrated, through competent stylistic interpretation and delivery

Assessment criteria - Unit 1: Your Performance (Cont.)

	Below Pass 1 19-15 marks	Below Pass 2 14-10 marks
PIECES OR SONGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insecure Performance • Inconsistent characterisation, demonstrating limited understanding of the chosen music • Limited awareness and exploration of the tonal colours of the instrument • Limited musical shaping, detail and stylistic awareness • Unreliable technical and musical control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate Performance • Little evidence of characterisation or understanding of the chosen music • Little or no awareness and exploration of the tonal colours of the instrument • Little or no musical shaping,-detail and stylistic awareness • Inadequate technical and musical control
PERFORMANCE AS A WHOLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistently projected performance style, with limited musical conviction and communication across the programme • Poor control of textures and ensemble, with inconsistent blending and balancing • Ineffective management of the performance situation • Unconvincing sequence and pacing of programme • Limited musical understanding is demonstrated, through inconsistent stylistic interpretation and communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance style lacks projection, musical conviction and communication across the programme • Little control of textures and ensemble, with frequent lapses in blending and balancing • Inadequate management of the performance situation • Incoherent sequence and pacing of programme • Inadequate musical understanding is demonstrated, with little or no stylistic interpretation and communication

Assessment criteria – Unit 2: Performance in Context

Distinction 15-14 marks	Merit 13-12 marks	Pass 11-10 marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophisticated and perceptive evaluation of the music, with evidence of strong analytical skills • Submission brings together material from an extensive range of sources, with evidence of detailed and relevant research • Submission is excellently structured; specific terminology is appropriate throughout and conclusions are authoritative and convincing • Content is entirely relevant to the chosen task and communication is compelling • Self-evaluation is comprehensive, with compelling evidence of significant personal insight, reflection and original thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insightful and detailed evaluation of the music, with evidence of solid analytical skills • Submission brings together material from a wide range of sources, with evidence of relevant research • Submission is effectively structured; specific terminology is mostly appropriate and conclusions are convincing • Content is largely relevant to the chosen task and communication is strong • Self-evaluation is thorough, with detailed evidence of personal insight and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough evaluation of the music, with evidence of developing analytical skills • Submission brings together material from a range of sources, with evidence of research • Submission is clearly structured; specific terminology is generally appropriate and conclusions are coherent • Content is generally relevant to the chosen task and communication is clear • Self-evaluation is sufficient, with clear evidence of personal insight and reflection
Below Pass 1 9-7 marks	Below Pass 2 6-5 marks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconvincing evaluation of the music, with limited evidence of analytical skills • Submission brings together material from a narrow range of sources, with limited evidence of research • The submission is poorly structured; specific terminology is rarely appropriate and conclusions are unconvincing • Content is inconsistently relevant to the chosen task and communication is only partially clear • Self-evaluation is unconvincing, with limited evidence of personal insight and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of the music is weak, with little or no evidence of analytical skills • Submission brings together material from few sources, with no evidence of research • The submission is unstructured; specific terminology is used inappropriately and conclusions are incoherent • Content is not relevant to the chosen task and communication is unclear • Lacking self-evaluation with little or no evidence of personal insight and reflection 	

FRSM Assessment and marking

Assessment objectives and Learning outcomes

The following table describes the level of knowledge and skills required of candidates taking an FRSM diploma. It also shows the specific expertise successful candidates will be able to demonstrate.

FRSM (RQF Level 7)

Assessment objectives	Learning outcomes
<p>Perform a programme of music of prescribed length, with a variety of mood, key and tempo, of which a significant proportion will be at or beyond LRSM level.</p> <p>40%</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Perform a 55-minute programme of technically challenging repertoire with flair, artistry and creativity. 2. Demonstrate, across an extended programme of music, a level of musicianship skill and contextual awareness commensurate with a professional performance standard. 3. Demonstrate exceptional instrumental/vocal dexterity and a wide range of different techniques and strategies within music performance.
<p>Design, deliver and sustain the performance as a whole, matching the demands of the performance context and programme.</p> <p>40%</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Devise and seamlessly deliver a creative programme of music, emphasising the technical and expressive capabilities of the instrument or voice. 2. Communicate an advanced understanding and control of the differing interpretative skills, such as performance awareness, textures and ensemble skills, required across distinct styles or genres of music, revealing new and original musical insights in the process. 3. Demonstrate musical connectivity and empathy to all aspects of the performance situation.
<p>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the musical context of their performance by presenting persuasively and convincingly the results of personal research and reflection, by preparing either a written or verbal submission chosen from a specified list.</p> <p>20%</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Demonstrate critical thinking and analytical skills to facilitate the evaluation and synthesis of material or information, presenting comprehensive and convincing arguments to support conclusions. 2. Critically evaluate different perspectives that influence performance choices, from a range of sources including self-evaluation and reflection, to reach innovative conclusions. 3. Structure and communicate research and reflection findings to a musically informed and experienced audience or recipient.

Mark Allocation

Marks are allocated for each component of the assessment, as shown in the table below:

Component	Maximum marks	% of total mark
<i>Pieces/Songs presented</i>	30	40%
<i>Performance as a whole</i>	30	40%
<i>Research and Reflection</i>	15	20%
TOTAL	75	100%

Result categories

The result categories for the FRSM diploma are set as follows. A Pass in each component of the assessment is not required to pass overall.

Result category	Mark band
<i>Distinction</i>	68-75
<i>Merit</i>	60-67
<i>Pass</i>	50-59
<i>Below Pass 1</i>	37-49
<i>Below Pass 2</i>	25-36

Assessment criteria – Unit 1: Your Performance

	Distinction 30-27 marks	Merit 26-24 marks	Pass 23-20 marks
PIECES OR SONGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly accomplished and thoroughly engaging performance - to the standard of a public recital Consummate exploration of the tonal colours of the instrument Expressive, idiomatic playing at an exceptionally high level of musical artistry and communication Authoritative and vivid characterisation, demonstrating personal individuality and profound stylistic understanding Performance underpinned by exemplary technical and musical control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accomplished and engaging performance Skilful and effective exploration of the tonal colours of the instrument Expressive, idiomatic playing at a high level of musical artistry and communication Assured and persuasive characterisation, demonstrating thorough stylistic understanding Performance underpinned by excellent technical and musical control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly accomplished performance Good and effective exploration of the tonal colours of the instrument Expressive, idiomatic playing with musical artistry and communication Clear and engaging characterisation, demonstrating good stylistic understanding Performance underpinned by good technical and musical control
PERFORMANCE AS A WHOLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compelling and authoritative performance style, with exceptional musical communication and commitment across the programme - a strong musical voice Outstanding control of textures and ensemble and artistic blending and balancing Commanding management of all aspects of the performance situation Exemplary sequence and pacing of programme Exceptional musical understanding is demonstrated, through consummate stylistic interpretation and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authoritative performance style, with excellent musical communication and commitment across the programme Sophisticated control of textures and ensemble with assured blending and balancing Authoritative management of the performance situation Highly effective sequence and pacing of programme Profound musical understanding is demonstrated, through assured stylistic interpretation and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convincing performance style, with good musical communication and commitment across the programme Adept control of textures and ensemble with effective blending and balancing Skilful management of the performance situation Effective sequence and pacing of programme Thorough musical understanding is demonstrated, through good stylistic interpretation and delivery

Assessment criteria - Unit 1: Your performance (cont.)

	Below Pass 1 19-15 marks	Below Pass 2 14-10 marks
PIECES OR SONGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partially secure performance Partial and inconsistent exploration of the tonal colours of the instrument Inconsistently expressive and idiomatic playing, with limited musical artistry and communication Intermittent characterisation, demonstrating inconsistent stylistic understanding Partially reliable technical and musical control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Insecure Performance Limited exploration of the tonal colours of the instrument Playing lacks expression and musical artistry Little or no characterisation, demonstrating limited stylistic understanding Unreliable technical and musical control
PERFORMANCE AS A WHOLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unconvincing performance style with limited musical communication and commitment across the programme Partial control of textures and ensemble with inconsistently effective blending and balancing Inconsistent management of the performance situation Partially effective sequence and pacing of programme Musical understanding is inconsistently demonstrated; ineffective stylistic interpretation and delivery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little or no performance style with weak musical communication and commitment across the programme Limited control of textures and ensemble with frequent lapses in blending in balancing Ineffective management of the performance situation Ineffective sequence and pacing of programme Limited musical understanding is demonstrated; little or no stylistic interpretation and delivery

Assessment criteria - Unit 2: Research and Reflection

Distinction 15-14 marks	Merit 13-12 marks	Pass 11-10 marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sophisticated and perceptive critical evaluation of the music, with evidence of highly developed analytical skills • Submission brings together and synthesises material from an extensive range of sources, with evidence of comprehensive and relevant research • Submission is expertly structured; specific terminology is appropriate throughout and conclusions are authoritative and convincing • Content is entirely relevant to the chosen task, creating an authoritative and persuasive argument; communication is compelling and captivating • Outstanding self-evaluation – comprehensive and perceptive, with compelling evidence throughout of significant personal insight, reflection and original thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insightful and detailed critical evaluation of the music, with evidence of strong analytical skills • Submission brings together material from a wide range of sources, with evidence of detailed and relevant research • Submission is excellently structured; specific terminology is largely appropriate and conclusions are convincing • Content is relevant to the chosen task, creating a persuasive argument; communication is compelling • Excellent self-evaluation – thorough, with detailed evidence of personal insight, reflection and original thought 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough critical evaluation of the music, with evidence of solid analytical skills • Submission brings together material from a range of sources, with evidence of relevant research • Submission is effectively structured; specific terminology is mostly appropriate and conclusions are coherent • Content is largely relevant to the chosen task, creating a cohesive argument; communication is strong • Good self-evaluation – clear, with detailed evidence of personal insight and reflection
Below Pass 1 9-7 marks	Below Pass 2 6-5 marks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconvincing critical evaluation of the music, with limited evidence of analytical skills • Submission brings together material from few sources, with limited evidence of research • Submission is ineffectively structured; specific terminology is only generally appropriate and conclusions are mostly unconvincing • Content is partially relevant to the chosen task, creating a partially cohesive argument; communication is inconsistently clear • Unconvincing self-evaluation - partially clear, with limited evidence of personal insight and reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak critical evaluation of the music, with little or no evidence of analytical skills • Submission brings together material from very few sources, with no evidence of research • The submission is poorly structured; specific terminology is rarely appropriate and conclusions are unconvincing • Content is inconsistently relevant to the chosen task, creating an unclear argument; communication is weak • Lacking in self-evaluation - unclear, with little evidence of personal insight and reflection 	

Grading and awarding

In order to achieve either the LRSM or FRSM, candidates must:

- Complete all tasks relevant to the qualification
- Achieve the minimum mark required across the totality of the qualification.

Marking

The evidence submitted by candidates is measured using the assessment criteria found on the preceding pages.

Awarding

An examiner's assessment will be based on the performance given at that time towards the Diploma. Prior performances of the same pieces will not be considered for the qualification, nor will marking appeals be accepted on that basis.

For *digital exams*, a recording can only be submitted as evidence for any qualification once. It cannot be re-used for the same or a different qualification at any point in time. If a previously submitted video is uploaded as evidence a second time, this will be discounted, and the candidate disqualified from that second assessment.

Synoptic assessment

Synoptic assessment is a form of assessment that requires candidates to demonstrate that they can identify and effectively use a selection of skills, techniques, concepts and knowledge to carry out a key task. The diploma allows candidates to demonstrate their ability to draw together different skills, knowledge and understanding: theory, notation, instrument control, listening skills, creative interpretation – and apply these collectively during the performance of a sustained programme of music.

Results

All candidates receive a copy of their mark form. Successful candidates also receive a certificate that shows the qualification title as well as the subject and level that they have been examined in. We aim to release results for Diplomas in line with the schedules at: www.abrsm.org/about-our-exams/results-and-certificates; **however**, some results may take longer if selected for random sampling. We regret that we are not able to give any results by telephone, nor can we accept any responsibility for the loss of certificates in the post.

Unless otherwise requested at the time of booking, mark forms and certificates are issued to the applicant, whose responsibility it is to pass them on to candidates.

Postnominals

Candidates awarded the diploma can use the relevant LRSM or FRSM letters after their name.

Appeals and feedback

Appeals

If a candidate has received an unexpected exam result, this can be appealed by requesting a Results Review. This process allows us to revisit the marks awarded by an examiner and, subject to the outcome of the review, may result in a mark amendment.

Feedback

In addition to a Results Review, we also welcome feedback about other matters, such as the overall exam experience or the mark form. All feedback is logged and plays a valuable part in our commitment to continuous improvement and quality assurance procedures.

For further information on our processes and deadlines for appealing a result, or submitting feedback, visit: www.abrsm.org/about-our-exams/results-and-certificates/appeals-and-feedback

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