

MTB Exams

Awards in Music Performance

(Graded Exams 1-8 plus Pre-Grades)

February 2021

The qualifications' objective,

MTB Exams Awards in Music Performance (Grades 1-8 plus Pre Grade Introductory and Pre Grade Higher) are intended to provide targets to enable candidates to develop their mastery of the skills and knowledge required to play and perform on musical instruments or as a singer, from a very basic to advanced level.

With these qualifications, the Music Teachers' Board aims to increase accessibility to graded instrumental music exams by enabling professional instrumental music teachers to oversee and verify audio recordings of examinations for their students or for candidates to record and submit video recordings without the need for a teacher to be present. These graded instrumental and vocal music examinations are submitted online and marked by an MTB Exams' specialist examiner. This is designed to remove some of the barriers candidates and teachers sometimes encounter when taking graded music examinations. The nature of delivery of our qualifications means that our qualifications are available to candidates of any age, in any location worldwide at any time, without the need to enter a long time in advance or adhere to visiting examiner dates or limited exam periods. We also have a Reasonable Adjustments Policy (available via our website) to further maximise accessibility to our qualifications.

Regulation

MTB Exams (The Music Teachers' Board) graded awards in Music Performance are regulated in England by Ofqual (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation).

Recognition by Ofqual is a mark of quality – it shows that as a board we meet their rules and requirements and are able to combine expertise in assessment with effective operational delivery. In turn, this provides assurance that the learners who have taken our Ofqual regulated qualifications have the required level of knowledge and skills in the relevant subject area.

UCAS

MTB Grades 6-8 are eligible for the following UCAS Tariff points.

Grade – Tariff points			
	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Distinction	12	16	30
Merit	10	14	24
Pass	8	12	18

Who may submit our qualifications

These qualifications are designed to enable professional instrumental, vocal and music teachers to oversee, verify and submit graded practical or performance examinations recorded in audio for their students *or* to allow candidates to record and submit video recordings of themselves without the need to have a teacher present. There is no visiting examiner and the candidate's recording may be made during a normal lesson time or at any other time on any day of the year. Candidates have up to 1 year from making an entry to submitting it to MTB Exams.

This means that professional music teachers or organisations employing professional music teachers (such as schools or music services) may register to oversee, verify and submit audio recordings for marking or candidates can enter and submit video recordings themselves. We define a professional instrumental or vocal teacher as someone who earns all or part of their income from either instrumental, vocal or classroom music teaching. To be able to oversee and verify one of our graded qualifications, organisations such as schools or music services may register as a centre on behalf of their staff, or teachers may register as an individual instrumental/vocal teacher. When registering as an individual instrumental/vocal teacher you will be required to provide a referee who can confirm your professional status. This may be a current or previous employer or professional colleague for example. The referee will only be contacted in order to confirm that you are a professional instrumental or vocal teacher and will not be asked to provide a written reference for you or any other comment on your teaching.

Organisations or teachers not based in the UK will automatically be required to use video recordings and will need to apply for to be eligible to use audio. Not all examinations overseen by a teacher or organisation will be eligible to use audio recordings.

Teachers or candidates submitting our qualifications must adhere to our rules, regulations and policies which are available to view on our website. **Crucially, recordings must be made in one single unedited take to replicate a live performance and not using multiple recordings.** To facilitate this, MTB Exams offer a 'Record & Submit' app allowing the recording and submission process to take place using just a phone or tablet.

The Specification

This specification provides the information required to help Teachers, Centres, Parents and Candidates to prepare for our qualifications and facilitate their delivery. It should be read along with the syllabuses which are available via the website www.mtbexams.com

Specification Review

The specification is valid from February 2021 and will be reviewed in September each year. The specification may be updated from time to time and the most recent version will be available at all times from www.mtbexams.com

The qualifications we offer are as follows:

Qualification Number	Qualification Title
603/4179/8	MTB Entry Level Award in Music Performance – Pre Grade Introductory
603/4178/6	MTB Entry Level Award in Music Performance – Pre Grade Higher
603/4177/4	MTB Level 1 Award in Music Performance – Grade 1
603/4176/2	MTB Level 1 Award in Music Performance – Grade 2
603/4167/1	MTB Level 1 Award in Music Performance – Grade 3
603/4166/X	MTB Level 2 Award in Music Performance – Grade 4
603/4165/8	MTB Level 2 Award in Music Performance – Grade 5
603/3976/7	MTB Level 3 Award in Music Performance – Grade 6
603/3977/9	MTB Level 3 Award in Music Performance – Grade 7
603/3978/0	MTB Level 3 Award in Music Performance – Grade 8

The Guided Learning Hours (GLH), Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Credits for each grade are as follows:

Grade	GLH	TQT	Credit Value
Pre Grade Introductory	6	20	2
Pre Grade Higher	12	40	4
Grade 1	12	60	6
Grade 2	18	90	9
Grade 3	18	120	12
Grade 4	24	150	15
Grade 5	24	180	18
Grade 6	36	220	22
Grade 7	48	270	27
Grade 8	54	320	32

Specialisations

These qualifications allow candidates to specialise in the following:

Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Alto Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Recorder, Ocarina, Trumpet, Cornet, Eb Tenor Horn, French Horn, Euphonium, Baritone, Soprano Trombone, Trombone, Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, Piano, Classical Guitar, Contemporary Guitar, Keyboard, Ukulele, Drums, Contemporary Drums, Singing, Contemporary Singing – However, not every specialisation is available at all grades. Please see the syllabus for each specialisation for details.

What will be assessed

MTB Exams offer two routes to our graded qualifications.

Route 1. Practical Grades

Route 2. Performance Grades

Practical Grades:

The assessment has three sections all of which are assessed separately.

1. **Recital (Accuracy/Expression/Technique)** – This is the performance of compositions or arrangements and the skills being assessed here are the ability to play the correct

notes and rhythms fluently and the tempo and intonation. Also, the understanding of the appropriate stylistic expectations of the music, expressive elements such as dynamics and phrasing plus any relevant technical ability required to successfully convey the music to an audience such as tone quality, breath control, bow control, shifts across strings, clarity and quality of articulation, other particular techniques relevant to the piece being performed, staccato, legato, accents, technical control of passagework etc.

2. **Technical Section** – This assesses the development of particular techniques relevant to the specialisation such as tone, articulation, fingering, bowing patterns, playing patterns in a variety of keys and modes, slurring etc through exercises specifically designed to test these elements as well as scales and arpeggios and chords as appropriate to the chosen specialisation.
3. **Musicianship** – This assesses Reading Skills: the understanding of and ability to read rhythms in a variety of time signatures, through prepared clapping of rhythmic patterns against a regular pulse at a variety of tempi including crotchets, quavers, semiquavers, minims and semibreves plus dotted rhythms, swung rhythms, triplet, quintuplet and changing time signatures and Listening Skills: performance of a duet or prepared sung aural tests including singing back notes, melodies, notes from chords and intervals plus scales arpeggios and modes as well as clapping back rhythmic patterns.

There are no unprepared elements (such as unprepared sight reading or aural tests) in these MTB Exams' Practical Grades. Candidates are expected to practice **all** elements to be presented in the assessment (included the published Reading and Listening Skills) as part of their preparation for taking the examination.

To see the detailed marking criteria for Practical Grades [Click Here](#)

Performance Grades:

Performance Grades comprise the performance of Four or Five Pieces and a Target Duration

1. **Recital Accuracy/Expression/Technique** - This is the performance of compositions or arrangements and the skills being assessed here are the ability to play the correct notes and rhythms fluently and the tempo and intonation. Also, the understanding of the appropriate stylistic expectations of the music, expressive elements such as dynamics and phrasing plus any relevant technical ability required to successfully convey the music to an audience such as tone quality, breath control, bow control, shifts across strings, clarity and quality of articulation, other particular techniques relevant to the piece being performed, staccato, legato, accents, technical control of passagework etc.
2. **Stagecraft & Sense of Performance** – This assesses the presentation of the recital plus communication with the audience and other performers such as accompanists, engagement with the music and the listener, any verbal communication, posture, deportment, confidence, pace of delivery etc.

- 3. Programme** – This is the substance of the chosen programme including, length, level of content, balance, variety, imagination and how clearly the programme content has been conveyed be this verbally or through a written programme.

Target Durations for Performance Grades are as follows:

Grades 1-5

For grades 1-5 Target Durations are a flexible guide to help candidates create a programme of appropriate length, substance and content for each grade. For this reason, performances that deviate from the Target Duration even substantially would only be penalised if this negatively impacted on the level of content.

Gd 1 – 5 minutes

Gd 2 – 6 minutes

Gd 3 – 8 minutes

Gd 4 – 10 minutes

Gd 5 – 12 minutes

Grades 6-8

At these levels, it is expected that the performer will be responsible the Target Duration of their programme. It should be a skill which has been acquired over time and candidates should by these levels have the confidence to use Target Durations to benefit their planning. For this reason, from grades 6-8 there is a minimum and maximum time for recitals at each grade as well as a target duration. Performances with a total length outside of these parameters will be penalised.

Gd 6 –Target Duration: 15 minute (Minimum duration 12 minutes – maximum 18 minutes)

Gd 7 – Target Duration: 18 minutes (Minimum duration 15 minutes – maximum 21 minutes)

Gd 8 – Target Duration: 22 minutes (Minimum duration 19 minutes – maximum 25 minutes)

For further detail about Performance Grades please [Click Here](#)

To see the detailed marking criteria for Performance Grades [Click Here](#)

The exact content of the syllabus is available on the website www.mtbexams.com 'syllabus' page and is tailored to the specialisation (e.g. violin, trumpet, piano etc) of the candidate. Although therefore, the sections above are common to all specialisations, the exact content of each section may vary between the syllabuses as appropriate for each specialisation.

The method of assessment

Assessment is through a recorded practical examination (audio recording), delivered by the teacher/assessor. The process for this is as follows:

Practical Grades - are recorded and overseen by the teacher and so the examination can be taken at any time to suit both teacher and pupil. Candidates will need an accompanist (where relevant) and it is acceptable for the teacher to accompany their own student if they would like to do so or for pre-recorded accompaniments to be used. Teachers will also need a means to record the examination.

Performance Grades – are videoed and do not require a teacher to oversee the process. The examination can be taken at any time. Candidates will need an accompanist (where relevant) and it is acceptable for the teacher to accompany their own student if they would like to do so or for pre-recorded accompaniments to be used. Candidates will also need a means to video the examination.

The simplest way to record (or video) and submit an MTB Exam is to use the MTB Exams Record and Submit App on a phone or tablet. The App is available through the App stores on either Android or IOS devices or it can be accessed via the MTB App page on the MTB Exams website. Although using the app is recommended, it is not compulsory and other devices may be used to record an exam and there is a submission portal (page) on the website www.mtbexams.com through which exams recorded on other devices can be uploaded.

Before beginning the assessment, the teacher should check they have the following:

- Audio recording equipment
- List of the scales (if relevant)
- Any music needed in order to deliver the Reading & Listening Skills Section of the assessment (if relevant)

The above paperwork can be downloaded from the MTB Exams website:

www.mtbexams.com

Using the app or alternative recording device please follow the following process.

1. Start the recording equipment and state clearly: candidate name, instrument, grade, teacher/assessor's name and the exam reference number (see top of the assessment sheet)
2. Ask the candidate to complete each element of the assessment in turn – they may be performed in any order.

Ask the **candidate** to:

- Announce the title and perform each piece in turn
- Perform **all** of the scales/arpeggios etc. for this grade
- Perform the Technical Exercises required for this grade
- Perform the Reading Skills for this grade
- Perform the Listening Skills for this grade

3. Candidate reads aloud the verification statement (or signs and dates the Front Cover form where indicated)

4. Teacher/assessor reads aloud the verification statement (or adds their name and signs and dates the form where indicated on the Front Cover)

5. Once all elements have been completed, turn off the recording equipment. (The recording equipment should be left running throughout and should not be turned off at any point during the assessment)

6. Scan or photograph any music performed (and the Front Cover if not using the app)
7. To submit the exam: upload and send the recording, scanned music and signed assessment/verification sheet to MTB Exams either directly from the app or by clicking on 'submit an exam' on the MTB Exams website and following the instructions.

The criteria against which learners' levels of attainment will be measured

The following are the expected levels of expectation at each grade:

Depending, whether the Practical or Performance Grade route is being used, relevant elements from the following will apply.

RQF Entry Level – Pre Grades Introductory & Higher:

Ability to perform very elementary repertoire with very simple technical and musical demands. Also, technical exercises demonstrating elementary control of the very basic techniques associated with their specialisation (e.g. violin, piano etc) and an understanding of very basic reading of rhythm, and aural awareness.

RQF Level 1 – Grades 1-3

Ability to perform simple repertoire with basic technical and musical demands. Also, technical exercises demonstrating basic control of a range of simple techniques associated with their specialisation (e.g. violin, piano etc) and an understanding of simple reading of rhythm, and aural awareness.

RQF Level 2 – Grades 4&5

Ability to perform straightforward repertoire with straightforward intermediate technical and musical demands. Also, technical exercises demonstrating a moderate, straightforward level of control of most techniques associated with their specialisation (e.g. violin, piano etc) and an understanding of straightforward reading of rhythms of a moderate difficulty, and a moderate level of aural awareness in straightforward situations.

RQF Level 3 – Grades 6-8

Ability to perform complex repertoire with sophisticated complex technical and musical demands. Also, technical exercises demonstrating an advanced level of control of the full range of techniques including complex techniques associated with their specialisation (e.g. violin, piano etc) and an understanding of complex reading of rhythm, and a high degree of aural awareness.

Levels of attainment.

The examination is marked out of 100 with a pass mark of 60

Levels of attainment are categorised as follows:

87-100 Distinction

75-86 Merit

60-74 Pass

45-59 Blue

0-44 White

Breakdown of mark allocation

Because the specific skills vary as appropriate to the specialisation (e.g. violin/piano etc) the mark scheme has slight variations to take account of this. The syllabus clearly explains the mark allocation per element of the examination for each specialisation but the full list of mark schemes are also shown below.

Pre Grades

Exam element	Maximum mark available
Piece 1	25
Piece 2	25
Piece 3	25
Technical Section	25
Total	100

Grades 1-8 (Classical Practical Grades)

Exam element	Maximum mark available
Piece 1	20
Piece 2	20
Piece 3	20
Technical Section	25
Reading & Listening Skills	15
Total	100

Grades 1-8 (Contemporary Practical Grades)

Exam element	Maximum mark available
Piece 1	20
Piece 2	20
Piece 3	20
Piece 4	20
Technical Section	20
Total	100

Grades 1-8 (Performance Grades)

Exam element	Maximum mark available
Accuracy	25
Expression	25
Technique	25
Stagecraft & Sense of Performance	15
Programme	10
Total	100

Equipment required to deliver the qualification

In delivering the assessment the teacher will make an unedited audio recording of the whole assessment. Although it is recommended that the MTB Exams Record & Submit App is used for this, any device which will produce this may be used to make the recording. The quality of recording needs to be of sufficient quality, volume and clarity for it to be easily marked by our examiners. If using the MTB Exams Record & Submit App, the exam is submitted directly from the app. If not using the app, the recording is uploaded by the teacher/centre as a digital file via the submission route on our website using the 'submit an exam' page. It should ideally be presented as an mp3 or wav file although other file types are acceptable provided the board are able to access it for marking. If a file type proves to be inaccessible, a request for the recording to be sent as an mp3 or wav file will be sent to the teacher/centre

Supporting materials

All printed materials required or supplied to assist in the delivery of the assessment such as any technical section requirements, reading & listening scales etc. can be found on the website www.mtbeams.com 'syllabus' pages.

Submitting exams for marking

Scans/photos of the music for the recital section and the verification form should be uploaded along with the recording using the app or the 'submit an exam' page on the website www.mtbexams.com NOTE: For Practical Exams, the verification form should be signed by both the candidate and teacher if the verification statements are not read aloud verbally on the recording.

Results

All exams submitted are marked by a specialist MTB Exams' examiner. By this we mean that only an examiner who plays or teaches the instrument played by the candidate will mark an exam for that instrument. e.g. a trombone specialist will mark a trombone exam, a violin specialist a violin exam etc.

The result will be emailed to the teacher/centre usually within 2 weeks of submission and a certificate posted to the address supplied by the teacher/centre after confirmation by the exam board. Certificates will normally be issued/posted within 4-6 weeks of receiving the marksheet. Receipt may vary depending on the speed of the postage delivery service.

Syllabus guidelines

All repeats, DC and DS marks should be observed (unless the syllabus specifies otherwise)

For the recital section of the exam, the candidate should introduce each piece they are about to perform by stating its title.

The candidate should be asked to play **all** the scales and arpeggios set on the syllabus during the exam (where applicable).

The candidate should be asked to play all the required technical exercises (as set on the syllabus) during the exam (where applicable).

The teacher/assessor may help the candidate tune up before the exam begins. This should be done before starting the recording.

The composer's dynamics, phrasing etc should be observed in the pieces presented for the recital section of the exam. However, any editorial markings may be altered to allow for a personal interpretation.

The teacher/assessor is encouraged to speak to the candidate during the exam to put them at ease or to help them understand what is being requested.

The recording should not be turned off at any point during the exam until all elements of the assessment have been completed. When using the app, if the recording is accidentally stopped or stops due to a technical issue it must be resumed as soon as possible and this must be within 5 minutes. Recordings on the app are time stamped so that MTB can track the length of a gap if the recording stops and restarts midway through the exam. Please explain the reason for any stop or restart of a recording using the submission note. MTB Exams may reject a submission for any reason if it is felt that that a recording does not comply to our expectations in this regard. If the app is not used for the recording, it must be in one continuous unedited take and cannot have any extra recorded sections added.

Candidates are encouraged to practice the sung aural tests or duet (Listening Skills) and Reading Skills tests as part of their preparation prior to taking the examination (where relevant).

For the duet option (if selected), the other part (i.e. not the candidate) may be performed on any instrument from the same family (wind/brass/strings etc) and octave transpositions made as necessary. A recorded version of the other part (i.e. not the candidate) may be used or it may also be played by the teacher, another pupil or any suitable person.

Customer Services

If you require clarification of any aspect of our exams or their delivery, please contact us via the 'contact us' page on the website www.mtbexams.com