

# Next steps

A guide to diplomas and professional development from ABRSM



## About this guide

Whether you are a musician looking to advance your studies beyond Grade 8, or a music teacher or director wanting to expand and enhance your professional skills, ABRSM offers a selection of diplomas and professional development options to suit your requirements.

This guide is designed to give an overview of the further qualifications that ABRSM offers so that you can decide the best direction for continuing your musical education.

If you have any queries about anything listed in this guide, please contact your local Representative. A list of Representatives appears on our website at:

**[www.abrsm.org/internationalreps](http://www.abrsm.org/internationalreps)**

Alternatively, please contact:

### **Diplomas**

T +44 (0)20 7467 8240

E [internationaldiplomas@abrsm.ac.uk](mailto:internationaldiplomas@abrsm.ac.uk)

### **Professional Development**

T +44 (0)20 7467 8226

E [profdev@abrsm.ac.uk](mailto:profdev@abrsm.ac.uk)



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# Diplomas

Whether you are intending to pursue a career in music, currently working as a professional and wish to broaden your qualifications, or are purely seeking the satisfaction of achieving a personal goal, you will find a diploma to suit you.

ABRSM diplomas are designed to stimulate achievement through acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding. We offer diplomas in the following subjects:

- Music Performance
- Music Direction
- Instrumental/Vocal Teaching

Each subject has three levels of award, each of which is letter-bearing:

- Diploma of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (DipABRSM)
- Licentiate of the Royal Schools of Music (LRSM)
- Fellowship of the Royal Schools of Music (FRSM)

As a broad comparison, in terms of level of demand rather than volume of study, the three levels of diploma can be related to higher education qualifications as follows:

<b>DipABRSM</b>	Certificate of higher education
<b>LRSM</b>	Bachelor's degree with honours
<b>FRSM</b>	Master's degree

At each level, specific prerequisites are required in order to establish a level of competence. However, in line with our aim to provide open access and to recognise your achievements, we offer a range of substitutions including previous learning and experience.

Diploma syllabuses are available for each subject. These provide comprehensive information on all aspects of the diploma exams including content, prerequisites and substitutions, guidance for candidates and the marking criteria.

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*Diploma syllabuses are available to download from our website at:*  
[www.abrsm.org/exams/diplomas](http://www.abrsm.org/exams/diplomas)

# Music Performance

DipABRSM | LRSM | FRSM

The three levels of Music Performance diplomas are designed to reflect your day-to-day experience as a performer, whether amateur or professional. The tasks include compiling a balanced recital programme and finding editions that best suit your interpretation, talking with confidence about the music, and putting on the best possible performance on the day.

As well as demonstrating your skills as a soloist, from LRSM level there is the opportunity for you to specialise as an orchestral player, chamber ensemble member or keyboard accompanist. There are also options, at all three levels, to perform on an instrument related to your main instrument for a part of your Recital and to perform repertoire of your own choice.



Each level of diploma comprises a number of requirements:

- **Instrumental or Vocal Recital**

- **Viva Voce**

A discussion with the examiners to demonstrate knowledge, approach and understanding.

- **Written assignment (relating to your Recital programme)**

At DipABRSM and LRSM levels this takes the form of Programme Notes. At FRSM level you are required to prepare a Written Submission relating to issues connected to your Recital repertoire.

- **Quick Study**

A performance of a short piece of unaccompanied and previously unseen music.

You will need to satisfy the examiners that you have a command of your chosen instrument, as well as your understanding of and sensitivity to the demands of different types of repertoire. As you move up through the diploma levels you will find that the repertoire becomes more demanding, the Recital time lengthens, and the challenge of the Quick Study and the scope and length of your written work increase.

# Music Direction

DipABRSM | LRSM | FRSM

The Music Direction diplomas are available to directors of instrumental groups or choirs. Through live and written components, you will be examined on your command of directing technique in rehearsal and performance, your understanding of the repertoire, and your knowledge of the instruments or voices within your ensemble. The tasks are designed to reflect your day-to-day experience as a director and include organising a venue and rehearsal, arranging a piece for your ensemble, compiling a programme and rehearsing the repertoire.

Each level of diploma comprises a number of requirements:

- **Rehearsal and Performance**

Using an instrumental or choral ensemble provided and directed by you.

- **Viva Voce**

A discussion with the examiners to demonstrate knowledge, approach and understanding.

- **Written assignment (relating to your Rehearsal and Performance programme)**

At DipABRSM and LRSM levels this takes the form of Programme Notes. At FRSM level you are required to prepare a Written Submission relating to issues connected with your Rehearsal and Programme repertoire.

- **Arrangement for your ensemble**

The diplomas balance the demands of the repertoire against the musical, technical and interpersonal skills needed by successful directors. As you move up through the diploma levels you will find that the repertoire becomes more demanding, the rehearsal and performance time lengthens, and the challenge of the required Arrangement and the scope and length of your written work increase.



# Instrumental/Vocal Teaching

DipABRSM | LRSM | FRSM

Our teaching diplomas are designed for candidates who are intending to take up or have already embarked upon the teaching of an instrument or singing. While the assessment components include educational theory and philosophy, curriculum studies and aspects of educational administration, the focus through these diplomas is the teaching of music as a practical activity. Through live and written components, you will be examined in your approaches to teaching, your competence as a performer and your understanding of repertoire.



Each level of diploma comprises a number of requirements:

- **Teaching Skills Viva Voce**

A discussion with the examiner including demonstrations of teaching approaches.

- **Written Submission**

At DipABRSM and LRSM levels the topic is chosen from the syllabus. At FRSM level this is an approved topic of your choice.

- **Quick Study**

A performance of a short piece of unaccompanied and previously unseen music.

- **Case Study Portfolio & Video of Teaching Practice (LRSM only)**

Written case studies of three pupils and a video of a typical lesson to be submitted on entry.

At each level of diploma your skills as a teacher of individuals and/or groups are explored and assessed in increasing depth. The DipABRSM assesses your knowledge and understanding of the teaching of your chosen instrument. The LRSM calls for a practical application of your knowledge and understanding of teaching pupils, while the FRSM requires you to apply higher-level academic skills to aspects of music education.



# Professional development

Researchers are unanimous about the positive impact of music education on the intellectual, social and personal development of young people, proving that instrumental and vocal teaching has a vital role to play in a rounded education. Working in an ever-changing environment, with new developments and initiatives on local, national and international levels, it is increasingly important for music teachers to keep abreast of the latest thinking and to refresh and enrich their professional skills and knowledge.

Music teachers often manage busy and demanding schedules with sometimes few, or infrequent, opportunities to meet up with colleagues. This means that they can miss out on the networking, training and stimulation found within other professions. As a result, an increasing number of instrumental and vocal teachers are recognising the many benefits of structured professional development.

We support continuing professional development for teachers worldwide at all levels through innovative courses and online learning, along with a range of short workshops and seminars each year. A variety of topics are covered by our courses including aural skills, improvisation, sight-reading, teaching theory, new exam syllabuses and instrumental masterclasses.

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*Further details about our teaching courses and seminars are available through your local Representative or at: [www.abrsm.org/teachers](http://www.abrsm.org/teachers)*

## CT ABRSM Plus

CT ABRSM | DipABRSM

The CT ABRSM Plus is a core professional development course offered by ABRSM every year in several different countries worldwide. The course combines two of our highly respected letter-bearing qualifications: the Certificate of Teaching (CT ABRSM) and the Principles of Teaching diploma (DipABRSM). Both qualifications are valued internationally and appeal to parents and students who recognise ABRSM as the worldwide authority on music education.

The CT ABRSM Plus course consists of:

- **Study days at a regional centre**  
Including whole group and subject-specific mentor group sessions.
- **Completion of a portfolio of work**  
Including three written assignments, two action-research projects, lesson observations, diary of teaching and personal profile.
- **One attempt at the Principles of Teaching diploma (DipABRSM) exam**

Designed to develop your teaching skills and help you to discover the right approach for you and your students, this course also includes focused study sessions in preparation for ABRSM's Principles of Teaching diploma. You will be allocated an individual mentor who shares your subject group specialism and offers guidance and advice on your CT ABRSM study and preparation for the DipABRSM exam.

The course is open to anyone aged 21 years or over who has a minimum of one year's teaching experience and teaches at least five students regularly. If you wish to take the diploma element of the course, you must also have passed ABRSM Grade 8 Practical and ABRSM Grade 6 Theory, or a permitted substitution.

We currently offer the CT ABRSM Plus course in Hong Kong, Singapore and the United Kingdom. Full details are available from our website at [www.abrsm.org/ctplus](http://www.abrsm.org/ctplus).



# Being an Effective Teacher

Online course

This online course, available worldwide, is designed to be flexible and fit around your teaching and personal commitments. During the course you will explore the latest theories and initiatives in music education and learn how to apply them to your teaching.

If you're new to teaching, this course offers a good grounding in effective teaching practice. For experienced teachers, this is an opportunity to refresh your thinking, gain new skills and try out new approaches in your own teaching.

The course is split into three sections, with an experienced ABRSM mentor providing feedback and advice at every stage:

- **Introductory tasks**  
Designed to assess your current teaching styles and learning needs.
- **Current issues in music education**  
Exploring teaching and learning in action.
- **Improving your teaching**  
A choice of two modules including: planning for a term's work, working with groups, improvising, and assessing and observing your teaching.

At the end of the course, you'll receive a certificate of successful completion.

The course runs over 15 weeks of study. You do not need any specific qualifications to enrol; we simply ask that you are aged 16 years or older, already an instrumental or vocal teacher, and are teaching at least one student regularly.

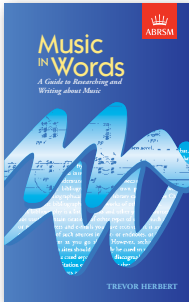
For more information, please visit our website at [www.abrsm.org/ecourse](http://www.abrsm.org/ecourse).



# Education resources

ABRSM offers a wide range of resources to support teachers and diploma candidates, including publications and online applications.

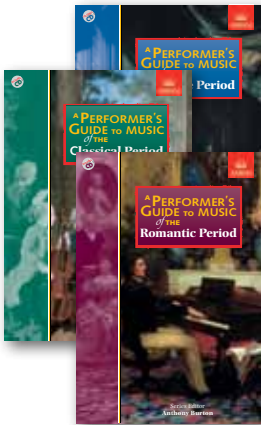
# Diploma publications



## Music in words: A Guide to Researching and Writing about Music

978-1-86096-236-3

- Much needed reference tool for diploma students
- Ideal support for the Written Submission requirement of a diploma exam



## A Performer's Guide to Music

978-1-86096-192-2 | 978-1-86096-193-9 | 978-1-86096-194-6

Available for the Baroque period, Classical period and Romantic period. Each edition includes:

- Chapters on musical interpretation, notation and historical background
- Specialist advice for keyboard, string and wind players, and singers
- Advice on how to achieve a stylish performance
- A CD containing musical examples



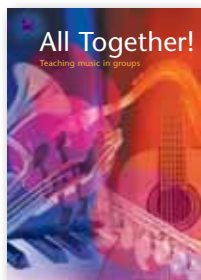
## Achieving Success DVD: Preparing for your diploma in Music Performance

with optional Chinese subtitles and Cantonese dubbing

NTSC 978-1-86096-596-8 | PAL 978-1-86096-399-5

- Demonstrates the standards required at each diploma level
- Features interviews with students and examiners offering preparation tips
- Contains exemplar performances on a variety of instruments with commentary

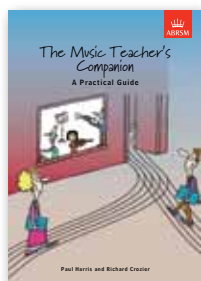
## Teaching publications



### All Together! Teaching music in groups

978-1-86096-398-8

- Explores issues central to group teaching, including group dynamics and motivation, and teaching mixed-ability groups
- Includes valuable practical and creative teaching strategies



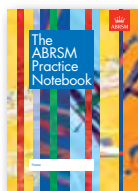
### The Music Teacher's Companion: A Practical Guide

UK & international edition 978-1-86096-219-6

Malaysia edition 978-1-86096-220-2

An essential handbook for instrumental and singing teachers, relevant for those working at home or in schools. Includes:

- Expert advice and teaching strategies
- Solutions to teaching problems and tips for lesson planning



### The ABRSM Practice Notebook

978-1-86096-930-0

- Designed for teachers to record a student's progress and set goals over the academic year and holidays
- Filled with useful hints and advice on practising

## Online resources

In addition to our publications, we offer a selection of free resources to support diploma candidates and teachers. For full details please visit [www.abrsm.org/nextsteps](http://www.abrsm.org/nextsteps).

### Writing Programme Notes: A guide for diploma candidates

A practical guide for Music Performance and Music Direction diploma candidates written by ABRSM Syllabus Director, Nigel Scaife.

### Reading list

A regularly updated list of written resources listed by subject and instrument.

### Podcasts

Our popular series of podcasts including what to do after Grade 8, the importance of aural, and developing teaching skills.

### ABRSM forums

Lively discussion forums for you to share views and seek advice from diploma candidates and music teachers.

### Libretto

ABRSM's magazine offering articles on a broad range of music education topics and news updates.

### Speedshifter

A new practice tool that allows you to vary the speed of a CD or MP3 without altering the pitch. Available to download free from our website.

### Exam videos

Recordings of complete exams available to watch via our YouTube channel.

### SoundJunction

The award-winning interactive resource for teachers and students providing online activities to support music learning.

### Newsletter

If you would like to receive our quarterly email newsletter for the latest news, events and teaching courses, please contact us at [www.abrsm.org/signup](http://www.abrsm.org/signup).



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