

PIANO *(Subject Code: 01)*: Syllabus requirements

Instruments

ABRSM Centres provide a satisfactory piano (which may be upright or grand). Practice before the exam cannot be arranged, but examiners will recognize that the instrument may be one to which candidates are unaccustomed.

When exams are held at Visits (i.e. premises provided by the Applicant and visited by the examiner), a satisfactory piano must be provided. An electronic piano may be used, provided it has a clearly recognizable piano tone, a touch-sensitive keyboard with full-size weighted keys, and an action, compass and facilities that match those of an ordinary piano, including a sustaining pedal.

Programme planning

Candidates should use their discretion in their choice of three pieces to present a contrasted and balanced programme. One piece must be chosen from each of the three lists in each grade (A, B and C).

Scales, arpeggios and broken chords

Examiners will usually ask for at least one type of scale/arpeggio/broken chord required at each grade and, from Grade 6, will aim to hear a balance of legato and staccato as appropriate.

All scales, arpeggios and broken chords should:

- be played from memory
- ascend and descend according to the specified range (and pattern)
- be prepared legato, unless the syllabus specifies staccato (or both)
- be played without pedalling
- be played without undue accentuation and at a pace that is consistent with accuracy and distinctness

Recommended minimum speeds are given in *These Music Exams*, available free of charge from music retailers and from www.abrsm.org/exams; they are also to be found in the books of piano scale requirements published by ABRSM for each grade.

Any practical and systematic fingering that produces a good result will be accepted.

Candidates are free to start at any octave, provided the required ranges are covered. For all 'hands together' requirements, the hands should be one octave apart, unless otherwise indicated. Arpeggios, diminished and dominant sevenths are required in root position only, except where otherwise indicated. Scales in thirds or a third apart should begin with the tonic in the lower voice, while scales in sixths or a sixth apart should begin with the tonic in the upper voice.

Sight-reading

Candidates will be given a short interval of up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out any part of the test before they are required to perform it for assessment. The main parameters for the sight-reading tests for each grade are outlined in this syllabus; once introduced, they apply for all subsequent grades (albeit with a logical progression of difficulty). Books of specimen sight-reading tests are published for piano by ABRSM for each grade.

Performance and assessment

When marking, examiners will be assessing not only the accuracy of notes and rhythm, but also other elements inherent in a good performance, including quality of touch, variety and gradation of tone, suitable choice of tempo, and details of expression, phrasing and accent. Any practical and systematic fingering that produces a good result will be accepted. Effective use of the pedals will be taken into account, although examiners will make allowances for candidates who cannot reach the pedals, provided the result is musically satisfactory. The same applies to candidates whose hands are too small to play the music as written: chords may be 'spread' or notes occasionally omitted at wide stretches, provided the result is musically satisfactory. Further details of assessment criteria are given in *These Music Exams*.

Marking scheme

Schedule of maximum marks for all grades:

Scales and arpeggios/broken chords	21
Pieces: 1	30
2	30
3	30
Sight-reading	21
Aural tests	18
Total	<hr/> 150