

Music Theory Guidance

And Practice Resources

ABRSM Music
Theory
Grades 1-5



Contact Us

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Shaping Minds

— Since 2008 —

Music Theory Grade 1-5

Music Theory exams for Grades 1 to 5 are conducted online, offering the flexibility to take the exam at any convenient time and place, provided there's a suitable computer setup with internet and webcam.

Once booked, candidates have 28 days to complete the exam via their ABRSM account, though some exceptions apply, detailed on the dates and fees page.

PSI, a company experienced in delivering millions of assessments annually, manages the exam platform, ensuring secure and proctored testing.

The Responsible Adult

A responsible adult must be available for candidates under 18, for vulnerable adults and for venues hosting multiple candidates.

This can be anyone over the age of 18 but should not be the candidate's teacher unless no one else is available.

For individual candidates – the responsible adult must be in the room for the exam set up. They can then decide whether to stay in the room or not for the exam.

What can the responsible adult do?

- Help with logging in, the pre-exam set up and any technical problems during the exam
- Contact PSI for technical support
- Remind the candidate to tear up their rough paper at the end of the exam
- Leave and re-enter the room, unless there are multiple candidates, in which case you must stay in the room

What should the responsible adult not do?

- Communicate with the candidate during the exam, unless giving technical help
- Help the candidate with questions or remind them to check their answers
- Distract the candidate
- Display anything that shows musical notation or a piano keyboard
- Try to view the exam questions or reproduce any of the exam content

Room and Technical Requirements

The Exam Room

The room where you take the exam should:

- be quiet and well-lit
- have a clear desk or table to work from
- be free from notes, books and any representation of a piano keyboard. If this is not possible, make sure books are closed and out of reach, and cover or hide anything showing musical notation or representing a piano keyboard, including an actual piano.

Technical requirements

You will need a laptop or desktop computer with webcam facility and internet access as specified below. It is not possible to take the exam on a tablet, mobile phone or Chromebook.

- Download – ability to download and install software (admin rights required)
- Operating system – Windows 10 and 11 64bit (x64) / Mac OS 11 (Big Sur), 12 (Monterey) and 13 (Ventura)
- RAM – 16 GB is recommended; 8 GB minimum
- Free disk space – the secure browser requires 500 MB of available disk storage to download and install
- Recommended resolution – 1920 x 1080 or higher in 32-bit colour.
- Minimum resolution – 1024 x 768 in 16-bit colour

- Bandwidth – broadband (DSL, cable, fibre optic or LAN/WAN) minimum 750 kbps, 3 Mbps or higher is recommended. You can check your connection through [Twilio Video Diagnostics App](#).
- Minimum web camera resolution – 640 x 480
- Webcam – that allows a 360-degree scan of the exam room. If this is not possible on your computer you can scan the room using a mobile phone or digital camera, then play this footage back to the webcam. The recording of the room scan must be done live during the room scan section of the exam set up so that we can confirm the room is suitable for the exam.
- Microphone – in-built or external

Additional Technical Guidance

- Only one monitor is allowed. An additional monitor cannot be attached to a laptop.
- Candidates must not access the internet during their exam. If they try to access the internet, the PSI system will shut down.
- All laptop brands (i.e. Lenovo, Sony, ASUS, Dell, Mac, Acer, Samsung, etc.) that have touchscreen capability are subjected to troubleshooting.
- For the best experience during the exam, use the latest version of the Chrome browser.
- Corporate security settings and firewalls on devices issued by employers or other organisations can prevent the PSI software from operating properly. Schools should check in advance that their browser has pop-ups allowed for our online service and that the exam is allowed through their smoothwall/firewall.

Taking the Exam

- Test your computer equipment and internet connection using the [PSI RPNow System Check](#). We recommend Google Chrome for this.
- Take a [free online practice exam](#).
- Watch our videos on setting up and taking the exam and read the Exam Set Up Reference Guide, all available at the top of this page.
- Check that you have photo ID to show to the camera. This can be a passport, photo driver's license, college or university ID card, rail or transport card, National ID card or a completed [ABRSM candidate identification form](#).

Setting Up on the Day

Do not click the 'launch exam' button until you are ready to do the exam. When you confirm and choose 'launch exam', the exam will be available for three hours. You will not be able to launch the exam again.

Before logging in to take the exam

- Prepare the exam room following the requirements above.
- Have your photo ID ready to show the camera.
- You can use blank paper (plain or manuscript) during the exam. There must be no text, notation or images on the paper. Show both sides of the blank paper to the exam during the room scan.

- You can have water or other drinks during the exam but these must be in a transparent container with no writing or design on it.
- Visit the toilet. If needed, you can have one five-minute toilet break during the exam. See 'during the exam' below.
- It is not possible to download the exam software in advance of an exam. The download link is only available when you click on 'Start Music Theory Exam' followed by 'launch exam'. You should only do this when you are ready to take the exam. The software should be installed each time the exam is taken.

When you are ready to take the exam

- Log in to your ABRSM account and click 'start Music Theory exam' then 'launch exam'. This launches and installs the RPNOW exam software. Once you have clicked 'launch exam' you have three hours to complete the pre-exam set up and take the exam.
- The exam software guides you through the pre-exam set-up including: closing other apps, programmes and browsers, showing your photo ID, doing the room scan and taking your photo.
- If your computer does not allow a 360-degree room scan you can video the room scan on a phone or digital camera and play this back to the webcam. You must do this during the room scan section of the exam set up. Remember to show your blank paper during the room scan and your photo ID when requested.
- From now on the exam will be recorded (desktop, webcam, and audio) until you close the exam window at the end of the exam.

During the Exam

- After the pre-exam set-up the exam will be available on your screen.
- A timer in the right-hand corner of the screen shows the time remaining to complete the exam.
- If you need to take a toilet break you must first look at the camera and say: 'I am taking a toilet break'. You can also write this down and show the paper to the camera.
- The exam will close automatically if you are inactive for 30 minutes. If this happens you will need to log in, re-open the exam software and do the pre-exam checks again before finishing the exam. This is only possible within three hours of first launching the software.

- Do not use the internet during the exam. If you do this, the exam will shut down.
- Exams are confidential, so do not photograph or reproduce the exam in any way.
- When you have completed the exam, click 'End Test'.
- Before you close the exam window, tear up any paper you used in front of the camera.
- If you experience any technical problems during the exam the candidate or responsible adult can:
 - check our Troubleshooting Guide - available to download at the top of this page
 - click 'Contact Support' at the top of the exam screen to use PSI's Live Chat
 - phone PSI Customer Support - see 'Help and support' below for details

Specific Needs

ABRSM has a number of access arrangements and reasonable adjustments available for candidates with specific needs, including the option to take a paper exam. You can find more information on their [Specific Needs pages](#).

Special Consideration

If you experience technical difficulties that prevent you from taking the exam, the applicant must contact us within seven days of the exam date. We cannot change marks but can consider a refund or opportunity to sit the exam again for free.

Malpractice

Candidates must not cheat in their exam. This includes using prohibited items, collusion and trying to access the internet. After the exam we review all potential infringements raised by the PSI proctors and investigate any suspected malpractice in line with our [Malpractice and Maladministration Policy](#). We will not issue results until we complete our investigations. If malpractice has taken place, we may disqualify the candidate.

Practice resources for Music Theory Grades 1 to 5

You can use the free resources to prepare for your exam:

- Free online practice exams
- Free downloadable papers
- Information about question types

NEW - for extra help with exam preparation, sign up for [Music Theory Practice Platform](#) where you can buy additional online practice papers. These provide an environment similar to the online exam, with feedback provided on your answers so you can see what you need to work on.

Practise Papers

Download free sample papers and model answers to help you with your exam preparation.

[Grade 1 Sample Paper](#)

[Grade 1 Model Answers](#)

[Grade 2 Sample Paper](#)

[Grade 2 Model Answers](#)

[Grade 3 Sample Paper](#)

[Grade 3 Model Answers](#)

[Grade 4 Sample Paper](#)

[Grade 4 Model Answers](#)

[Grade 5 Sample Paper](#)

[Grade 5 Model Answers](#)

Other Resources

Question types

Have a look at some examples of online exam questions.

[Examples of question types \(PDF\)](#)

Grade 5 cadence question examples

Have a look at some example cadence questions for Grade 5.

[Grade 5 cadence question examples \(PDF\)](#)

Online Practise Exams

These online practice exams are based on the exam platform you will use to take the exam. They provide an opportunity to prepare for your exam and find out what it will be like to take your exam on the day.

- Select your grade.
- On the next page you will see two places to select your language – at the top and the bottom of the page. Make sure these are both in the language you need. Then select ‘continue’.

[Grade 1](#)

[Grade 2](#)

[Grade 3](#)

[Grade 4](#)

[Grade 5](#)

Thank you for exploring the ABRSM Music Theory exams for Grades 1 to 5. We are dedicated to supporting your musical journey with comprehensive resources and guidance.

For more detailed information, updates, and support, please visit our website. Your success in music theory is just a step away, and we are here to guide you through each note of the way.

Let's make music together!



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