

ORGAN REQUIREMENTS AND INFORMATION

Subject Code: 02

This syllabus is valid from 2011 until further notice.

This section provides a summary of the most important points that teachers and candidates need to know when taking ABRSM Organ exams. Further details, as well as administrative information relating to the exams, are given in ABRSM's Information & Regulations (available at www.abrsm.org/regulations) which should be read before an exam booking is made.

Entering for an exam

Eligibility: There are eight grades for Organ and candidates may be entered in any grade irrespective of age and without previously having taken any other grade in Organ. Candidates for a Grade 6, 7 or 8 exam must already have passed ABRSM Grade 5 (or above) in Music Theory, Practical Musicianship or a solo Jazz subject; for full details, including a list of accepted alternatives, see Regulation 1d at www.abrsm.org/regulations.

Access: ABRSM endeavours to make its exams as accessible as possible to all candidates, regardless of sensory impairments, learning difficulties or particular physical needs. There is a range of alternative tests and formats as well as sets of guidelines for candidates with particular access needs (see www.abrsm.org/specificneeds). Where a candidate's needs are not covered by the guidelines, each case is considered on an individual basis. Further information is available from the Access Co-ordinator (accesscoordinator@abrsm.ac.uk).

Venues: Organ exams are held at Visits (i.e. premises provided by the Applicant and visited by the examiner). They may be held independently of other exams or as part of a larger Visit that includes other subjects/grades. For full details about Visits, see Regulation 7 at www.abrsm.org/regulations, in particular the requirement to provide a suitable piano for the Aural tests.

Exam booking: Details of exam dates, venues, fees and how to book an exam are available online at www.abrsm.org/exambooking.

Instruments

Aside from the Grades 1–3 exceptions described below, the instrument used for the exam should be a pipe (or electronic) organ with:

- an orthodox console having at least two manuals covering a minimum range of $C-f'''$
- a pedal-board covering a minimum range of $C-f'$
- a swell pedal (if essential for the pieces chosen)
- the usual couplers

C two octaves below middle C

f' / f''' a fourth/two octaves and a fourth above middle C (*pieces with a range extending above f''' are indicated in the syllabus by the symbol §*)

In Grades 1–3, the scale and sight-reading requirements as well as the majority of the pieces are for manuals only (although pedalling is introduced, as an option, in the Grade 3 scale

requirements). Therefore, in Grades 1–3, the exam may be taken on an instrument without pedals (*pieces in these grades requiring pedals, or where pedalling is optional, are indicated in the syllabus by the symbols † and ‡, respectively*). In addition, in Grades 1 and 2, the exam may be taken on an instrument with only one manual. Consequently, in Grades 1–3, some notes may be transposed or omitted, provided the result is musically satisfactory.

Elements of the exam

All ABRSM graded Organ exams comprise the following elements: three Pieces; Scales, arpeggios and exercises; Sight-reading (with an additional Transposition exercise in Grades 6–8); and Aural tests. Marks are allocated as follows:

	Grades 1–5	6–8	
Pieces: 1	30	30	
2	30	30	
3	30	30	
Scales, arpeggios and exercises	21	21	
Sight-reading	21	12	} <i>one combined mark will be recorded</i>
Transposition	–	9	
Aural tests	18	18	
Total	150	150	

Marking scheme: 100 marks are required for a Pass, 120 for a Merit and 130 for a Distinction. A Pass in each individual section is not required to pass overall. See pp. 114–115 for the marking criteria used by examiners.

Pieces

Programme planning: Candidates must choose one piece from each of the three lists (A, B and C) in each grade, ensuring that the instrument is equal to the demands of the chosen programme. In the exam, candidates should inform the examiner which pieces they are performing, and they are welcome to use the form on p. 117 for this purpose.

Exam music & editions: Wherever the syllabus includes an arrangement or transcription, the edition listed in the syllabus must be used in the exam; in all such cases the abbreviation ‘arr.’ or ‘trans.’ appears in the syllabus entry. For all other pieces, the editions quoted in the syllabus are given for guidance only and candidates may use any edition of their choice (in- or out-of-print or downloadable). A small number of editions for keyboard instruments other than organ are listed in the lower grades; candidates are free to adapt or disregard any indications such as dynamics or articulation in these editions which are not suitable for organ. Information on obtaining exam music is given on p. 62.

Interpreting the score: Printed editorial suggestions such as fingering, metronome marks, realization of ornaments etc. need not be strictly observed. Whether the piece contains musical indications or not, candidates are always encouraged to interpret the score in a stylistically appropriate manner. Ultimately, examiners’ marking will be determined by consideration of pitch, time, tone, shape and performance, and how control of these contributes to the overall musical outcome.

Repeats: All da capo and dal segno indications should be observed but all other repeats (including first-time bars) should be omitted unless they are very brief (i.e. of a few bars) or unless the syllabus specifies otherwise.

Ornaments: Only essential ornaments, such as cadential trills, in the pieces set for Grades 1–4 should be regarded as obligatory; all other ornaments in these grades may be regarded as optional.

Registration: Registration is left to the candidate's discretion. Candidates at any grade may bring a registrant, who may also act as page-turner.

Page-turns: Candidates at any grade may bring a page-turner (prior permission is not required); the page-turner may also act as registrant. For candidates making their own page-turns, examiners will be understanding if a page-turn causes a lack of continuity during a piece, and this will not affect the marking.

Performing from memory: Candidates are free to perform any of their pieces from memory; in such cases they must ensure that a copy of the music is available for the examiner to refer to if necessary. No additional marks are awarded for playing from memory.

Photocopies: Performing from unauthorized photocopies (or other kinds of copies) of copyright editions is not allowed. ABRSM may withhold the exam result where it has evidence of an illegal copy (or copies) being used. In the UK, copies may be used in certain limited circumstances – for full details, see the MPA's *Code of Fair Practice* at www.mpaonline.org.uk. In all other cases, application should be made to the copyright holder before any copy is made, and evidence of permission received should be brought to the exam.

Scales, arpeggios and exercises

At Grades 1 and 2 the requirements are for manuals only. At Grade 3 candidates have the choice of playing on manuals only *or* manuals and pedals (examiners will ask which option has been chosen). From Grade 4, the requirements are for manuals *and* pedals.

Examiners will usually ask for at least one of each type of scale/arpeggio/exercise etc. required at each grade. When asking for requirements, examiners will specify only:

- the key (including minor form – harmonic *or* melodic – in the Grade 6–8 scales) or the starting note
- manuals *or* pedals *or* left hand & pedals (from Grade 4)
- left hand *or* right hand, *or* hands together

All scales, arpeggios and broken chords should:

- be played from memory
- ascend and descend according to the specified range (and pattern)
- be prepared legato (or, if preferred, détaché: a singing, nearly-legato touch)
- be played without breaks in the flow and at a pace that is consistent with accuracy and distinctness

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 are required in root position only. Scales a third or a tenth apart should begin with the tonic as the lower note, while scales a sixth apart should begin with the tonic as the upper note.

A book of the requirements is published for Organ by ABRSM. For the pedal solos and left-hand-and-pedal studies, candidates may play from the printed music (if choosing to play them from memory, candidates must bring a copy to the exam in case the examiner wishes to refer to it).

Candidates are free to use any fingering/footing that produces a successful musical outcome.

The speeds below are given as a general guide:

		Grade / Speed								
		pattern	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
MANUALS	Scales*		♩ = 60	♩ = 66	♩ = 80	♩ = 52	♩ = 63	♩ = 76	♩ = 80	
	Scales a 3rd apart / a 6th apart								♩ = 60	♩ = 63
	Lateral-movement exercises		♩ = 46	♩ = 50	♩ = 60					
	Broken chords / Arpeggios		♩ = 46	♩ = 63	♩ = 69					
PEDALS	Scales †				♩ = 60	♩ = 66	♩ = 80	♩ = 92		
	Scale a 3rd apart									♩ = 100
	Broken chords					♩ = 66	♩ = 60	♩ = 92	♩ = 60	♩ = 72
LEFT HAND & PEDALS ‡						♩ = 60	♩ = 84	♩ = 76	♩ = 84	♩ = 92

* Includes chromatic scales (Grades 2–4)

† Includes scales in broken thirds and the chromatic exercise (Grade 3) and chromatic scales (Grades 4 & 5)

‡ Contrary-motion scales (Grade 4), broken-chord exercise (Grade 5), scales a 10th apart (Grades 6–8)

NB speeds for Pedal Solos (Grades 4–8) and Left Hand & Pedals Studies (Grades 6–8) are available at www.abrsm.org/scalespeeds.

Sight-reading and transposition

Sight-reading: At all grades, candidates will be asked to play a short piece of music which they have not previously seen. They will be given up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out all or any part of the test before they are required to play it for assessment. A little extra time will be allowed for registration choice (a suggested registration is printed for all tests but candidates are free to choose their own if they prefer). The main technical parameters for each grade are outlined on pp. 63–77; once introduced, these parameters apply for all subsequent grades (albeit with a logical progression of difficulty). Pedals are featured from Grade 4, and no more than two manuals are required. Use of the swell

pedal is not included at any grade. For practice purposes, a book of specimen sight-reading tests is published for Organ by ABRSM.

Transposition: At Grades 6–8, candidates will be asked to transpose a simple passage of music which they have not previously seen. They will be given up to half a minute in which to look through and, if they wish, try out all or any part of the test before they are required to play it for assessment. The main technical parameters are outlined on pp. 73, 75 and 77. Registration is left to the candidate's discretion. Specimen tests are included in the book of sight-reading tests published for Organ by ABRSM.

Aural tests

The requirements are the same for all subjects. Full details of the Aural tests are given on pp. 94–99.

In the exam

Examiners: Generally, there will be one examiner; however, for training and quality assurance purposes, a second examiner may sometimes be present. Examiners may ask to look at the music before or after the performance of a piece. They may also decide to stop the performance of a piece when they have heard enough to form a judgment. Examiners will not issue, or comment on, a candidate's result; instead, the mark form (and certificate for successful candidates) will be issued by ABRSM after the exam.

Order of the exam: The individual sections of the exam may be undertaken in any order, at the candidate's choice.

Assessment

The tables on pp. 114–115 show the marking criteria used by examiners. These criteria (newly revised and amended) have been in use in exams from January 2014. In each element of the exam, ABRSM operates the principle of marking from the required pass mark positively or negatively, rather than awarding marks by deduction from the maximum or addition from zero. In awarding marks, examiners balance the extent to which the qualities and skills listed on pp. 114–115 (broadly categorized by pitch, time, tone, shape and performance) are demonstrated and contribute towards the overall musical outcome.

Obtaining exam music

Exam music is available from music retailers as well as online, including at the ABRSM music shop: www.abrsm.org/shop. Every effort has been made to ensure that all the publications listed will remain available for the duration of the syllabus. Candidates are advised to obtain their music well in advance of the exam in case of any delays with items not kept in stock by retailers. Apart from queries relating to exams, all enquiries about the music (e.g. editorial, availability) should be addressed to the relevant publisher: contact details are listed at www.abrsm.org/publishers.