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BASS

SYLLABUS SPECIFICATION 2018

PREMIERE – GRADE 8



Awarding the
Contemporary Arts



Graded Examinations in Popular Music Performance

BASS

Syllabus Specification

SEPTEMBER 2018

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PREFACE

FOREWORD

Rockschool's Bass Syllabus 2018 has been designed to build upon the ever-popular 2012 qualification, expanding upon the original compositions with arrangements of six new 'hit tunes' at each grade. This has resulted in an even broader scope for learners at all levels to engage with repertoire which has been rigorously benchmarked against academic and industry standards. Furthermore, students can gauge their progress via commensurate levels of technical exercises, prepared and unseen skills tests and questions relating to their studies at each grade.

This specification guide serves three purposes:

- To provide regulatory information surrounding the qualification
- To provide an overview of examination structure and content
- To provide content and assessment specification relevant to each graded examination

Rockschool's graded exams continue to provide a progressive mastery approach to music and an enjoyable experience for all learners.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Rockschoo! 2018–2024 syllabus for Bass. This syllabus guide is designed to give teachers, learners and candidates practical information on the graded examinations run by Rockschoo!.

The Rockschoo! website www.rslawards.com has detailed information on all aspects of our examinations, including examination regulations, detailed marking schemes and assessment criteria as well as notated and audio examples to help you prepare for the examination.

This Syllabus Guide covers the following examinations:

- Graded Examinations Debut – Grade 8
- Graded Certificates Debut – Grade 8
- Performance Certificates Debut – Grade 8

The Value Of RSL Qualifications

RSL advocates an open access approach to qualifications, providing a range of syllabi, designed to accommodate a wide variety of candidates of different ages, experience and levels of achievement. RSL qualifications are regulated in England and Northern Ireland by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), in Wales by Qualifications Wales and accredited in Scotland by Qualifications Scotland. RSL is committed to maintaining and improving its reputation for excellence by providing high quality education and training through its syllabi, examinations, music and resources.

RSL & UCAS

For students applying for work or University, many potential employers see graded music exams in a very positive way. Recognised qualifications demonstrate an ability to dedicate commitment to extra-curricular activities, providing evidence of versatility which many students find beneficial within UCAS (Universities & Colleges Admissions Service) applications and for University entrance interviews.

Our qualifications at Level 3 (Grades 6–8) carry allocated points on the UCAS tariff.

For full details relating to the allocation of UCAS points please see: www.rslawards.com/about-us/ucas-points

Period Of Operation

This syllabus specification covers Bass Grade Examinations and Performance Certificates from September 2018.

Examinations

Rockschoo! offers **three types of graded music examination: Graded Examination, Graded Certificate & Performance Certificate.**

Please note: Premiere exams are only available as a performance certificate.

GRADE EXAMINATIONS

Grade Examinations are available from Debut – Grade 8 and consist of the following elements:

PREPARED WORK	UNPREPARED WORK
3 Performance Pieces: Debut – Grade 8 Technical Exercises: Debut – Grade 8	Sight Reading: Debut – Grade 5 or Improvisation & Interpretation: Grades 1–5 Quick Study Piece: Grades 6–8 Ear Tests: Debut – Grade 8 General Musicianship Questions: Debut – Grade 8

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

Performance Certificates are available from Premiere – Grade 8 and consist of the following:

PREPARED WORK
5 Performance Pieces: Premiere – Grade 8

GRADED CERTIFICATES

Graded Certificates are available from Debut – Grade 8 and consist of the following:

PREPARED WORK

3 Performance Pieces: Debut – Grade 8
Technical Exercises: Debut – Grade 8

OVERVIEW

Unit Overview – Graded Examinations in Popular Music Performance

QUALIFICATION TITLE	QAN	TOTAL NO. OF UNITS	GUIDED LEARNING HOURS	CREDIT	TOTAL QUALIFICATION TIME
RSL Entry level Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Entry 3)	501/0370/2	1	8	4	40
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance – Grade 1	501/0391/X	1	12	6	60
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance – Grade 2	501/0646/6	1	18	9	90
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance – Grade 3	501/0647/8	1	18	12	120
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance – Grade 4	501/0389/1	1	24	15	150
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance – Grade 5	501/0643/0	1	24	18	180
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance – Grade 6	501/0390/8	1	36	22	220
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance – Grade 7	501/0645/4	1	48	27	270
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance – Grade 8	501/0648/X	1	54	32	320

Unit Overview – Graded Certificates in Popular Music Performance

QUALIFICATION TITLE	QAN	TOTAL NO. OF UNITS	GUIDED LEARNING HOURS	CREDIT	TOTAL QUALIFICATION TIME
RSL Entry Level Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance (Entry 3)	610/4760/0	1	8	4	40
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance – Grade 1	610/4761/2	1	12	6	60
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance – Grade 2	610/4762/4	1	18	9	90
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance – Grade 3	610/4763/6	1	18	12	120
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance – Grade 4	610/4764/8	1	24	15	150
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance – Grade 5	610/4765/X	1	24	18	180
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance – Grade 6	610/4766/1	1	36	22	220
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance – Grade 7	610/4767/3	1	48	27	270
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance – Grade 8	610/4768/5	1	54	32	320

Unit Overview – Performance Certificates in Popular Music Performance

QUALIFICATION TITLE	QAN	TOTAL NO. OF UNITS	GUIDED LEARNING HOURS	CREDIT	TOTAL QUALIFICATION TIME
RSL Entry Level Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance (Entry 2)	610/4769/7	1	4	0	20
RSL Entry Level Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance (Entry 3)	610/4770/3	1	8	4	40
RSL Level 1 Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 1	610/4771/5	1	12	6	60
RSL Level 1 Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 2	610/4772/7	1	18	9	90
RSL Level 1 Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 3	610/4773/9	1	18	12	120
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 4	610/4774/0	1	24	15	150
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 5	610/4775/2	1	24	18	180
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 6	610/4776/4	1	36	22	220
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 7	610/4777/6	1	48	27	270
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 8	610/4778/8	1	54	32	320

Assessment Overview

ASSESSMENT	
Form of Assessment	All assessments are carried out by external examiners. Candidates are required to carry out a combination of practical tasks and underpinning theoretical assessment.
Unit Format	Unit specifications contain the title, unit code, credit level, credit value, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, grade descriptor, and types of evidence required for the unit.
Bands of Attainment	There are four bands of attainment (distinction, merit, pass and unclassified) for the qualification as a whole.
Quality Assurance	Quality Assurance ensures that all assessments are carried out to the same standard by objective sampling and re-assessment of candidates' work. A team of external examiners is appointed, trained and standardised by RSL.

Learning Outcomes

Performance Certificate

Learners will be able to:

- Perform music in a range of musical styles

Graded Certificate

Learners will be able to:

- Perform music in a range of musical styles
- Demonstrate technical ability on an instrument/voice through responding to set technical demands

Graded Exam

Learners will be able to:

- Perform music in a range of musical styles
- Demonstrate technical ability on an instrument/voice through responding to an unseen selection of set technical demands
- Demonstrate musical understanding through a range of an unseen selection of set tests

QUALIFICATION SUMMARY

Aims & Broad Objectives

The aim of popular music performance qualifications is to provide a flexible, progressive mastery approach to the knowledge, skills and understanding required for popular music performance.

RSL's graded qualifications motivate and encourage candidates of all ages and levels through a system of progressive mastery, enabling candidates to develop and enhance skills, knowledge and understanding in a safe and consistent way. The qualifications are beneficial for candidates wishing to progress at their own pace through smaller steps of achievement.

These qualifications are suitable for candidates in the Under 16, 16+, 16–18, 19+ age groups.

Progression

Graded qualifications provide a flexible progression route for candidates. They are a positive means of determining progress and enable candidates to learn the necessary techniques to gain entry to FE and HE courses. Graded qualifications operate according to a well-established methodology of 'progressive mastery'. They allow candidates to be tested in discrete stages in the development of a wide range of skills. They tend to be more rigorous than other types of exams and for that reason industry is confident that achievement at the highest level gained by candidates of graded qualifications will have the skills necessary to work in other areas of the business.

Qualification Structure

A graded qualification consists of a range of both practical and knowledge-based elements which are based on detailed requirements outlined in the relevant syllabus. Therefore, requirements for each grade will be set out in detail in the Unit Specifications below (page 27 and onwards) and the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit will require knowledge, skills and understanding of these syllabus requirements to be demonstrated at the grade entered.

Entry Requirements

There are no entry requirements for these qualifications. However, candidates should be aware that the content at the higher grades will require a level of knowledge and understanding covered in previous qualifications.

For further details on exam dates and fees and to apply for your music performance grades please visit the RSL website at www.rslawards.com

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Assessment Methodology

The graded examinations in Popular Music Performance are assessed via an examination. The examination is divided into the following sections:

Technical tests covering knowledge of:

- Scales
- Arpeggios
- Chords
- Stylistic Studies (Level 3 only)

Performance Pieces

- Three Performance pieces (two pieces can be 'Free Choice Pieces')

Unseen Tests

- Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation
- Quick Study Piece (Level 3 only)
- General Musicianship Questions

Assessment Timings

Examination timings for the graded examinations in Popular Music Performance are as follows:

GRADE EXAMS

- **Debut:** 15 minutes
- **Grade 1:** 20 minutes
- **Grade 2:** 20 minutes
- **Grade 3:** 23 minutes
- **Grade 4:** 25 minutes
- **Grade 5:** 25 minutes
- **Grade 6:** 30 minutes
- **Grade 7:** 30 minutes
- **Grade 8:** 30 minutes

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

- **Premiere:** 10 minutes
- **Debut:** 12 minutes
- **Grade 1:** 15 minutes
- **Grade 2:** 15 minutes
- **Grade 3:** 18 minutes
- **Grade 4:** 20 minutes
- **Grade 5:** 20 minutes
- **Grade 6:** 23 minutes
- **Grade 7:** 23 minutes
- **Grade 8:** 26 minutes

Graded Certificates are taken remotely and have no specific assessment timings.

All assessment of these qualifications is external and is undertaken by RSL Examiners.

Marking Schemes

GRADE EXAMS: DEBUT – GRADE 5			
ELEMENT	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Performance Piece 1	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 2	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 3	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Technical Exercises	9–10 out of 15	11–12 out of 15	13+ out of 15
Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation	6 out of 10	7–8 out of 10	9+ out of 10
Ear Tests	6 out of 10	7–8 out of 10	9+ out of 10
General Musicianship Questions	3 out of 5	4 out of 5	5 out of 5
Total Marks	60%+	74%+	90%+

GRADE EXAMS: GRADES 6–8			
ELEMENT	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Performance Piece 1	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 2	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 3	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Technical Exercises	9–10 out of 15	11–12 out of 15	13+ out of 15
Quick Study Piece	6 out of 10	7–8 out of 10	9+ out of 10
Ear Tests	6 out of 10	7–8 out of 10	9+ out of 10
General Musicianship Questions	3 out of 5	4 out of 5	5 out of 5
Total Marks	60%+	74%+	90%+

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES: PREMIERE TO GRADE 8			
ELEMENT	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Performance Piece 1	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 2	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 3	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 4	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 5	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Total Marks	60%+	75%+	90%+

GRADED CERTIFICATES: DEBUT TO GRADE 8			
ELEMENT	PASS	MERIT	DISTINCTION
Performance Piece 1	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 2	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 3	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Technical Exercises	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Total Marks	60%+	75%+	90%+

Examination Structure

The examination structure for the grade examinations is shown below:

1. Pieces or technical exercises
2. Technical exercises or pieces
3. Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation (Debut – Grade 5); Quick Study Piece (Grades 6–8)
4. Ear Tests
5. General Musicianship Questions

General Notes

At the beginning of a Grade Examination, the Examiner will ask the candidate if they wish to begin with Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises. In a Performance Certificate, candidates may present their Performance Pieces in any order of their choice.

Prior to the start of the Performance Pieces, the Examiner will conduct a sound check by asking the candidate to play the first few bars of the first chosen piece. This will set the levels for the exam and will take place alongside the backing track. Once the level has been established, the Examiner will then commence with the first piece in full. Note: the sound check is undertaken for the first Performance Piece only.

Candidates may perform any or all of their pieces from memory. This is not compulsory at any level and no additional marks are given for this. With the exception of certain Technical Exercises where memory requirements apply, it is permitted to use grade books which contain notes made during the course of a candidate's study.

Note: It is not permitted to make any notes at any time during the exam.

For General Musicianship Questions, the Examiner may use his or her version of the selected piece as the basis to ask the questions if such notes contained on the candidate's version are deemed sufficiently extensive or might assist the candidate when answering the questions.

The Examiner will not facilitate page turning for candidates. Candidates are allowed to photocopy relevant sheet music as necessary to alleviate page turns but all copied materials must be handed into the Examiner at the end of the examination. All tempo markings are to be observed unless otherwise stated. Each piece is designed carefully to achieve a number of outcomes appropriate for the grade.

Expectations of Knowledge, Skills and Understanding

The graded examination system is one based on the principle of 'progressive mastery': each step in the exam chain demonstrates learning, progression and skills in incremental steps. Successful learning is characterised by a mastery of the fundamentals of the skills demanded in each grade.

Learners will be able to complete a set of practical tasks and be tested on their underpinning knowledge (the complexity and variety of tasks are determined by which qualification is being attempted), which allows them to demonstrate popular music performance knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to the grade. These technical skills set a firm platform for further technical and creative development by the learner.

Quality Assurance

All RSL examinations and graded qualifications are standardised according to the processes and procedures laid down by RSL.

CANDIDATE ACCESS AND REGISTRATION

Access and Registration

The qualifications will:

- be available to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standards
- be free from any barriers that restrict access and progression
- offer equal opportunities for all wishing to access the qualifications

At the point of application, RSL will ensure that all candidates are fully informed about the requirements and demands of the qualification.

Candidates may enter online for any of the qualifications at various points in the calendar year in territories throughout the world. Dates will be published on the website at www.rslawards.com

Please Note: Candidates may not perform pieces in their exam that they have previously performed for an RSL Assessment. This includes re-sits of their exams.

Recommended Prior Learning

Learners are not required to have any prior learning for these qualifications. However, learners should ensure that they are aware of the requirements and expectations of each grade prior to entering for an assessment.

FURTHER INFORMATION & CONTACT

Guidance on Free Choice Pieces

For all examinations, candidates are able to play a number of free choice pieces:

- **Grade Examinations: Two free choice pieces** (a minimum of one piece must be from the Bass grade book)
 - **Graded Certificates: Two free choice pieces** (a minimum of one piece must be from the Bass grade book)
 - **Performance Certificates: Three free choice pieces** (a minimum of two pieces must be from the Bass grade book).
- Please note:** free choice pieces are not available for the Premiere exam.

Free choice pieces must demonstrate a comparable level of technical and musical demand to the pieces given in the set selections in the grade books which can be referred to as an indication of appropriate level.

Free choice pieces must be in a modern popular genre such as:

- | | | | |
|--------|-----------|---------|----------------------------|
| ■ Pop | ■ Jazz | ■ Blues | ■ Reggae |
| ■ Rock | ■ Country | ■ Soul | ■ Film and Musical Theatre |

Own compositions are also acceptable. Pieces should be selected carefully to ensure that they provide suitable opportunity for candidates to demonstrate the relevant assessment criteria. Candidates are reminded that if a chosen Free Choice Piece does not meet these requirements this may impact on the level of achievement possible within the examination.

All pieces must be performed to a backing track (without the examined part on the track) except in cases where a piece has been selected from previous Rockschooll syllabi and does not have a backing track or has been specifically arranged by Rockschooll as a solo piece.

Adaptation and Personalisation of Pieces

Candidates should perform pieces as notated, except where they choose to embellish or rework any sections (NB. this does not apply to technical exercises or unseen tests which must be performed exactly as written). In these instances, as well as where there are performance indications to *ad lib.*, *improvise*, *develop*, etc., candidates will be marked on their ability to present the personalised material in a stylistically appropriate way, commensurate with the grade level. All performances will be expected to have a clear basis in the notated material.

Complaints & Appeals

All procedural complaints and appeals, including malpractice and requests for reasonable adjustments/special considerations, can be found on the RSL website www.rslawards.com

Equal Opportunities

RSL's Equal Opportunities policy can be found on the RSL website www.rslawards.com

Contacts for Help & Support

All correspondence should be directed to:

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Harlequin House
Ground Floor
7 High Street
Teddington
Middlesex
TW11 8EE

Or info@rslawards.com

GRADING CRITERIA & DEFINITIONS

Graded Examinations

PERFORMANCE PIECES					
BANDS OF ATTAINMENT / MARK RANGE					
Attainment Band	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Below Pass 1	Below Pass 2
Mark Range	18–20	15–17	12–14	6–11	0–5
Command of Instrument	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Sync or Pulse	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Accuracy & Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout.	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall.	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated.	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated.	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time.	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time.	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time.	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced.	
Style & Expression	Consistently convincing projection of the music.	Mostly convincing projection of the music.	Some convincing projection of the music.	Music not projected convincingly	No attempt and/or incomplete performance

TECHNICAL EXERCISES					
BANDS OF ATTAINMENT / MARK RANGE					
Attainment Band	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Below Pass 1	Below Pass 2
Mark Range	13–15	11–12	9–10	4–8	0–3
Command of Instrument	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Sync or Pulse	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Accuracy & Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout.	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall.	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated.	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated.	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time.	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time.	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time.	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced.	

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION / QUICK STUDY PIECE					
BANDS OF ATTAINMENT / MARK RANGE					
Attainment Band	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Below Pass 1	Below Pass 2
Mark Range	9–10	7–8	6	3–5	0–2
Command of Instrument	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Sync or Pulse	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Accuracy & Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout. Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time.	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall. Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time.	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated. Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time.	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated. Understanding of musical structure not evidenced.	No attempt and/or incomplete performance

EAR TESTS					
BANDS OF ATTAINMENT / MARK RANGE					
Attainment Band	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Below Pass 1	Below Pass 2
Mark Range	9–10	7–8	6	3–5	0–2
Accuracy & Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout. Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time.	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall. Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time.	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated. Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time.	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated. Understanding of musical structure not evidenced.	No attempt and/or incomplete performance

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS (GMQS)					
BANDS OF ATTAINMENT / MARK RANGE					
Attainment Band	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Below Pass 1	Below Pass 2
Mark Range	5 correct responses	4 correct responses	3 correct responses	2 correct responses	0–1 correct responses

Graded Certificates

PERFORMANCE PIECES					
BANDS OF ATTAINMENT / MARK RANGE					
Attainment Band	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Below Pass 1	Below Pass 2
Mark Range	18–20	15–17	12–14	6–11	0–5
Command of Instrument	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Sync or Pulse	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Accuracy & Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout.	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall.	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated.	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated.	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time.	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time.	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time.	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced.	
Style & Expression	Consistently convincing projection of the music.	Mostly convincing projection of the music.	Some convincing projection of the music.	Music not projected convincingly	No attempt and/or incomplete performance

TECHNICAL EXERCISES					
BANDS OF ATTAINMENT / MARK RANGE					
Attainment Band	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Below Pass 1	Below Pass 2
Mark Range	13–15	11–12	9–10	4–8	0–3
Command of Instrument	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Sync or Pulse	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Accuracy & Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout.	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall.	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated.	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated.	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time.	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time.	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time.	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced.	

Performance Certificates

PERFORMANCE PIECES					
BANDS OF ATTAINMENT / MARK RANGE					
Attainment Band	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Below Pass 1	Below Pass 2
Mark Range	18–20	15–17	12–14	6–11	0–5
Command of Instrument	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Sync or Pulse	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Accuracy & Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout.	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall.	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated.	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated.	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time.	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time.	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time.	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced.	
Style & Expression	Consistently convincing projection of the music.	Mostly convincing projection of the music.	Some convincing projection of the music.	Music not projected convincingly	No attempt and/or incomplete performance

Definitions

DEFINITIONS	
Command of Instrument	The quality of the sound produced from the instrument, including the consistency of sound/tone, control of sound/tone commensurate with grade.
Sync or Pulse	Alignment of the performance to backing track, metronome or applied to a solo performance, observing notation markings. For unaccompanied pieces candidates should maintain a secure internal pulse and adjust the pulse where instructed within the music.
Accuracy & Understanding	Representing the written notation accurately, except by instruction through performance notes, or interpreting the written part with equivalent skills demonstrated. Secure understanding of musical structure evidenced through transitions of phrases, bars and sections.
Style & Expression	An expressive and commanding performance of the notated material dictated by the demands of the performance piece.

UNIT SPECIFICATIONS

PREMIERE

The Premiere Bass exam is available as a Performance Certificate only. Premiere exams are assessed in the same way as other Rockschoool Performance Certificates. Please refer to the marking schemes within the preface section, and the Grading Criteria & Definitions section of this guide for further details.

PREMIERE (PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE)

PERFORMANCE PIECES

There is a choice of six pieces in the Bass method book, with an additional three ensemble pieces. Candidates should choose five out of these nine pieces to play in the examination.

Candidates are NOT permitted to submit Free Choice Pieces for the Entry Level 2 (Premiere) exam.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct by asking the candidate to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed the examiner will begin again and conduct all five pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

DEBUT

The Debut Bass exam is for candidates who have been learning a short time and have learnt the basic skills.

GRADE EXAM

PREPARED WORK

Candidates play 3 pieces that last a maximum of 1 minute and Technical Exercises covering the preliminary areas.

UNPREPARED WORK

Candidates are required to use their bass for a simple sight-reading test, which is rhythmic reading and two ear tests that begin to develop melodic recall and rhythmic sense. The final part of the exam is a set of 5 simple questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore simple theory and instrument knowledge

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Debut exam lasts 15 minutes and will be taken in the following structure:

1. **Pieces or Technical Exercises:** The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first.
2. **Technical Exercises or Pieces:** The candidate will perform the element not chosen above
3. **Sight Reading:** The candidate is given a simple and previously unseen test to practice and play
4. **Ear Tests:** The candidate responds to two simple tests. One is melodic and one is rhythmic
5. **General Musicianship Questions:** The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice

PIECES

At Debut the pieces last up to a maximum of 1 minute. This is so the candidate can remain focused and concentrate on the basic requirements of notation, values, sound, control and sync. The pieces contain simple position work. Work across strings is simple and paced.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Debut there are three groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 70 bpm

- Major: E, A
- Minor pentatonic: E, A

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Open position chords. Individual chords will be strummed once as directed by the examiner

- Major: E, A
- Minor: E, A

GROUP C: RIFF

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade Debut book to a backing track. The riff shown in bar 1 should be played in the same shape in bars 2–4. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent three bars

UNSEEN TESTS

SIGHT READING

Tempo: 70 bpm

At Debut you will be offered a previously unseen sight reading test that is in the form of a four bar rhythm played on the bottom E string. An example is shown in the Debut grade book.

The test is four bars long and made up of half and quarter notes, will be in 4/4 and at 70 bpm. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests:

- Melodic Recall
- Rhythmic Recall.

Melodic Recall

Tempo: 85bpm

The examiner will play you two half notes one after the other. You will tell the examiner whether the second note is higher or lower in pitch than the first note. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar vocal count-in. Answers can be 'higher/lower' or 'up/down'.

Rhythmic Recall

Tempo: 80 bpm

Key: Low E string

The examiner will play you a two-bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the E string. You will hear the test twice. You will be asked to play the rhythm back. You will then be asked to identify the rhythm from two printed examples shown to you.

Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the rhythm to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about your instrument. For this section of the exam the candidate chooses the piece on which to be tested.

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE:

In Debut you will be asked to identify:

- The music stave and the TAB
- The bass clef
- Half and quarter note values

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE:

In Debut you will be asked to identify:

- One of the following parts of your bass: neck, body, tuning-pegs or bridge

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

EXAM STRUCTURE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 1 minute each. There are no other elements in the Performance Certificate examination.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces lasting a maximum of 1 minute each and perform all of the technical exercises listed below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Debut there are three groups of technical work. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at rslawards.com

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 70 bpm

- Major: E, A
- Minor pentatonic: E, A

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

Open position chords. Individual chords will be strummed once as directed by the examiner

- Major: E, A
- Minor: E, A

GROUP C: RIFF

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade Debut book to a backing track. The riff shown in bar 1 should be played in the same shape in bars 2–4. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent three bars

FREE CHOICE PIECES

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- **Grade Exam:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Graded Certificate:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Performance Certificate:** 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website:
www.rslawards.com

If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rslawards.com and a member of the Rockschoo! team will advise you.

GRADE 1

The Grade 1 Bass exam is for candidates who have been learning between six months – one year and have mastered the key basic skills.

GRADE EXAM

PREPARED WORK

Candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 1 minute 15 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises

UNPREPARED WORK:

Candidates are required to play either a 4-bar sight reading test, or a 4-bar Improvisation and Interpretation test. There are also two ear tests that continue to develop melodic recall and rhythmic sense and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 simple questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 1 exam lasts 20 minutes and will be taken in the following structure:

- 1. Pieces or Technical Exercises:** The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first
- 2. Technical Exercises or Pieces:** The candidate will perform the element not chosen above
- 3. Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation:** The candidate is given a simple and previously unseen test to practice and play
- 4. Ear Tests:** The candidate responds to two simple tests. One is melodic and one is rhythmic
- 5. General Musicianship Questions:** The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice

PIECES

At Grade 1 the pieces last up to a maximum of 1 minute 15 seconds. The length of piece is designed so the candidate can remain focused and concentrate on the requirements of notation, values, evenness of sound, technical control and sync.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 1 there are three groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 70 bpm

- Major: E, A, G
- Natural minor: E, A, G
- Minor pentatonic: E, A, G
- Major pentatonic: E, A, G

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

- Major: E, A, G
- Minor: E, A, G

GROUP C: RIFF

Tempo: 70 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade 1 book to a backing track. The riff shown in bar 1 should be played in the same shape in bars 2–4. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent three bars.

UNSEEN TESTS

SIGHT READING OR IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 1 you will be offered the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation. This is a previously unseen test. An example is shown in the Grade 1 book.

SIGHT READING

Key: A minor

Tempo: 70 bpm

At Grade 1 the sight reading test is in the form of a melody consisting of half and quarter notes in 4/4. The test is 4 bars long.

The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome.

The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Key: C major or A minor

Tempo: 70–80 bpm

At Grade 1 the test is 4 bars long and the candidate will have 30 seconds preparation time. The examiner will offer the metronome as a guide throughout this time. The candidate will then have a complete practice run through with the backing track and then on the repeat, the test will be examined.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests: Melodic Recall and Rhythmic Recall.

Melodic Recall

Tempo: 85 bpm

The examiner will play you three notes in sequence. You will tell the examiner whether the second note is higher or lower in pitch than the first note and whether the third note is higher or lower than the second. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar vocal count-in. Answers can be 'higher then lower' or 'up then down' (as appropriate).

Rhythmic Recall

Key: Low E string

Tempo: 90 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the E string. You will hear the test twice. You will be asked to play the rhythm back. You will then be asked to identify the rhythm from two printed examples shown to you. The test is made up of quarter and eighth notes and quarter note rests. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the rhythm to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about your instrument. For this section of the exam the candidate chooses the piece to answer 5 questions on. The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions and one instrument knowledge question.

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 1 you will be asked to identify:

- The bass clef
- The time signature
- Whole, half, quarter and eighth note values
- The difference between a major and minor chord

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 1 you will be asked to identify:

- One of the following parts of your bass: neck, fretboard, body, tuning-pegs, pickups or bridge
- One make of instrument other than that you are playing
- Names of the open strings

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

EXAM STRUCTURE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 1 minute 15 seconds each. There are no other elements in the Performance Certificate examination.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces lasting a maximum of 1 minute 15 seconds each and perform all of the technical exercises listed below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 1 there are three groups of technical work. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at rslawards.com

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 70 bpm

- Major: E, A, G
- Natural minor: E, A, G
- Minor pentatonic: E, A, G
- Major pentatonic: E, A, G

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

- Major: E, A, G
- Minor: E, A, G

GROUP C: RIFF

Tempo: 70 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade 1 book to a backing track. The riff shown in bar 1 should be played in the same shape in bars 2–4. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent three bars.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- **Grade Exam:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Graded Certificate:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Performance Certificate:** 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website:
www.rslawards.com

If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rslawards.com and a member of the Rockschoool team will advise you.

GRADE 2

The Grade 2 Bass exam is for candidates who have been learning approximately one year to eighteen months and have established the key basic skills along with solid basic techniques.

GRADE EXAM

PREPARED WORK:

Candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 1 minute 30 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

UNPREPARED WORK:

Candidates are required to play either a 4-bar sight reading test or a 4 bar Improvisation and Interpretation test. There are also two ear tests that develop melodic recall and rhythmic sense. The final part of the exam is a set of 5 simple questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 2 exam lasts 20 minutes and will be taken in the following structure:

- 1. Pieces or Technical Exercises:** The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first
- 2. Technical Exercises or Pieces:** The candidate will perform the element not chosen above
- 3. Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation:** The candidate is given a simple and previously unseen test to practice and play
- 4. Ear Tests:** The candidate responds to two simple tests. One is melodic and one is rhythmic
- 5. General Musicianship Questions:** The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice

PIECES

At Grade 2 the pieces last up to a maximum of 1 minute 30 seconds. The length of piece is designed so the candidate can remain focused and concentrate on the requirements of notation accuracy, basic technical control, articulation, sound and sync.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 2 there are three groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 80 bpm

- Major: C, G, A
- Natural minor: C, G, A
- Minor pentatonic: C, G, A
- Major pentatonic: C, G, A

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

- Major: C, G, A
- Minor: C, G, A

GROUP C: RIFF

Tempo: 80 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade 2 book to a backing track. The riff shown in bars 1 and 2 should be played in the same shape in bars 3–8. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent bars.

UNSEEN TESTS

SIGHT READING OR IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 2 you will be offered the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation. This is a previously unseen test. An example is shown in the Grade 2 book.

SIGHT READING

Key: C or G major

Tempo: 70 bpm

At Grade 2 the sight reading test is in the form of a melody consisting of half, quarter eighth notes and quarter note rests in 4/4. The test is 4 bars long. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Key: G major or E minor

Tempo: 80–90 bpm

At Grade 2 the test is 4 bars long and the candidate will have 30 seconds preparation time. The examiner will offer the metronome as a guide throughout this time. The candidate will then have a complete practice run through with the backing track and then on the repeat, the test will be examined.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are, Melodic Recall and Rhythmic Recall.

Melodic Recall

Key: A Minor pentatonic

Tempo: 85 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar melody with a drum backing. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be ascending. You will play the melody back on your instrument. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the rhythm to the drum backing.

Rhythmic Recall

Key: E string

Tempo: 90 bpm

The examiner will play you a two bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the lowest-sounding E string. You will hear the test twice. You will be asked to play the rhythm back. You will then be asked to identify the rhythm from two printed examples shown to you. The test is made up of quarter and eighth notes and quarter note rests. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the rhythm to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about your instrument.

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 2 you will be asked to identify:

- The pitch name of notes
- The meaning of the time signature marking
- Whole, half, quarter, eighth and 16th note values
- Rest values
- The construction of a major or minor chord

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 2 you will be asked to identify:

- One of the following parts of your bass: neck, fretboard, body, tuning-pegs, scratch plate, nut, pickups, jack socket or bridge
- The location of the volume and tone controls on your bass
- Names of all open strings

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

EXAM STRUCTURE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 1 minute 30 seconds each. There are no other elements in the Performance Certificate examination.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces lasting a maximum of 1 minute 30 seconds each and perform all of the technical exercises listed below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 2 there are three groups of technical work. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at rslawards.com

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 80 bpm

- **Major:** C, G, A
- **Natural minor:** C, G, A
- **Minor pentatonic:** C, G, A
- **Major pentatonic:** C, G, A

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

- **Major:** C, G, A
- **Minor:** C, G, A

GROUP C: RIFF

Tempo: 80 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade 2 book to a backing track. The riff shown in bars 1 and 2 should be played in the same shape in bars 3–8. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent bars.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination

- **Grade Exam:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Graded Certificate:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Performance Certificate:** 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website:

www.rslawards.com

If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rslawards.com and a member of the Rockschooll team will advise you.

GRADE 3

The Grade 3 Bass exam is for candidates who have been learning approximately eighteen months to two years and have established the basic skills, preliminary techniques and the beginnings of stylistic awareness through articulation and the introduction of solo and improvisation work.

GRADE EXAM

PREPARED WORK:

Candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 2 minutes and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

UNPREPARED WORK:

Candidates are required to play either a 4 bar sight reading test or a 4 bar Improvisation and Interpretation test. There are also two ear tests that develop melodic recall and rhythmic sense and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 3 exam lasts 25 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

- 1. Pieces or Technical Exercises:** The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first
- 2. Technical Exercises or Pieces:** The candidate will perform the element not chosen above
- 3. Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation:** The candidate is given a simple and previously unseen test to practice and play
- 4. Ear Tests:** The candidate responds to two simple tests. One is melodic and one is rhythmic
- 5. General Musicianship Questions:** The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice

PIECES

At Grade 3 the pieces last up to a maximum of 2 minutes. The length of piece is designed so the candidate can remain focused and concentrate on the requirements of notation accuracy, basic technical control, articulation, sound and sync.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 3 there are three groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 90 bpm

- Major: G, A, B
- Natural minor: G, A, B
- Minor pentatonic: G, A, B
- Major pentatonic: G, A, B
- Blues: G, A, B

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

- Major: G, A, B
- Minor: G, A, B
- Dominant 7: G, A B

GROUP C: RIFF

Tempo: 90 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade 3 book to a backing track. The riff shown in bars 1 and 2 should be played in the same shape in bars 3–8. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent bars.

UNSEEN TESTS

SIGHT READING OR IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 3 you will be offered a choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation. This is a previously unseen test. An example is shown in the Grade 3 book.

SIGHT READING

Key: G major or A minor

Tempo: 80 bpm

At Grade 3 the sight reading test is in the form of a melody consisting of half, quarter eighth notes and quarter note rests in 4/4. The test is 4 bars long. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Key: G major or A minor

Tempo: 80–90 bpm

At Grade 3 the test is 4 bars long. The candidate will have 30 seconds preparation time and the examiner will offer the metronome as a guide throughout this time. The candidate will then have a complete practice run through with the backing track and then on the repeat, the test will be examined.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are Melodic Recall and Rhythmic Recall.

Melodic Recall

Key: G Minor pentatonic

Tempo: 85 bpm

The examiner will play you a two-bar melody with a drum backing. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be ascending. You will play the melody back on your instrument. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the melody to the drum backing.

Rhythmic Recall

Key: E string

Tempo: 90 bpm

The examiner will play you a two-bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the E string. You will hear the test twice. You will be asked to play the rhythm back. You will then be asked to identify the rhythm from two printed examples shown to you. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the rhythm to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about your instrument.

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 3 you will be asked to identify:

- The pitch name of notes
- The meaning of the time signature marking
- Whole, half, quarter, eighth and 16th note values
- Rest values
- The construction of a major or minor chord

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 3 you will be asked to identify:

- One of the following parts of your bass: neck, fretboard, body, tuning-pegs, scratch plate, nut, pickups, jack socket or bridge
- The location of the volume and tone controls on your bass
- The location of the volume/gain controls on the amp

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

EXAM STRUCTURE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes each. There are no other elements in the Performance Certificate examination.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes each and perform all of the technical exercises listed below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 3 there are three groups of technical work. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at rslawards.com

GROUP A: SCALES

Tempo: 90 bpm

- **Major:** G, A, B
- **Natural minor:** G, A, B
- **Minor pentatonic:** G, A, B
- **Major pentatonic:** G, A, B
- **Blues:** G, A, B

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

- **Major:** G, A, B
- **Minor:** G, A, B
- **Dominant 7:** G, A B

GROUP C: RIFF

Tempo: 90 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade 3 book to a backing track. The riff shown in bars 1 and 2 should be played in the same shape in bars 3–8. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent bars.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- **Grade Exam:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Graded Certificate:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Performance Certificate:** 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website:
www.rslawards.com

If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rslawards.com and a member of the Rockschoool team will advise you.

GRADE 4

The Grade 4 Bass exam is for candidates who have been learning approximately two – two and half years and have mastered the basic skills, preliminary techniques and have acquired the beginnings of stylistic awareness. Grade 4 develops further stylistic conviction and understanding through developed solo and improvisation work and use of varied sounds.

GRADE EXAM

PREPARED WORK:

Candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 2 minutes 15 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

UNPREPARED WORK:

Candidates are required to play either an 8-bar sight reading test or an 8 bar Improvisation and Interpretation test. There are also two ear tests that develop descending melodic recall and rhythmic sense and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These are designed to explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 4 exam lasts 25 minutes and will be taken in the following structure:

1. **Pieces or Technical Exercises:** The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first
2. **Technical Exercises or Pieces:** The candidate will perform the element not chosen above
3. **Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation:** The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play
4. **Ear Tests:** The candidate responds to two tests. One is melodic and one is rhythmic
5. **General Musicianship Questions:** The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice

PIECES

At Grade 4 the pieces last up to a maximum of 2 minutes 15 seconds. The pieces are over two pages and are designed so the candidate can retain focus and concentration. Emphasis is on notation accuracy, stylistic sound and articulation, technical control including execution of instrumental techniques, developing solo and improvisation elements and sync.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking the candidate to play along to the backing track for the first few bars.

Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 4 level there are three groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SCALES

(one octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 80 bpm

- Major: F, B $\flat$
- Natural minor: A, B, C, D
- Minor pentatonic: A, B, C, D
- Major pentatonic: F, B $\flat$
- Blues: A, B, C, D

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

(one octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 80 bpm

- Major: A, B, C, D
- Minor: A, B, C, D
- Dominant 7th: A, B, C, D

GROUP C: RIFF

Tempo: 100 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade 4 book to a backing track. The riff shown in bars 1 and 2 should be played in the same shape in bars 3–8. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent bars.

UNSEEN TESTS

SIGHT READING OR IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 4 you will be offered a choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation. This is a previously unseen test and an example is shown in the Grade 4 book.

SIGHT READING

Tempo: 80–90 bpm

Key: D and G major, D and A minor

At Grade 4 there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two bar development. The piece will be composed in the style of rock, funk or blues and will have chord symbols throughout. At Grade 4 the notation consists of half, quarter and eighth notes, and quarter and eighth note rests in 4/4. The test is 8 bars long. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Tempo: 90–100 bpm

Key: D or G major, D or A minor

In Grade 4, the Improvisation & Interpretation test contains a small amount of sight reading. This consists of two-bars of notation at the beginning of the test. You will be asked to notation as indicated and complete the test using an improvised bass line. This is played to a backing track of eight bars.

The candidate will have 30 seconds preparation time and the examiner will offer the metronome as a guide throughout this time. The candidate will then have a complete practice run through with the backing track and then on the repeat, the test will be examined.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests

- Melodic Recall
- Harmonic Recall.

Melodic Recall

Tempo: 90 bpm

Key: D major pentatonic or B minor pentatonic

The examiner will play you a two bar melody with a drum backing. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be descending. You will play the melody back on your instrument. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the melody to the drum backing.

Harmonic Recall

Tempo: 90 bpm

Key: C major

The examiner will play you a tonic chord followed by a two-bar chord sequence in the key of C major played to a guitar and drum backing. The sequence will be drawn from I, IV and V chords and may occur in any combination. You will be asked to play the root notes of the chord sequence to the guitar and drum backing in the rhythm shown in the Grade 4 book. This rhythm will be used in all examples of this test given in the exam. You will then be asked to identify the chord sequence you have played to the examiner. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played the sequence is: count-in, tonic, count-in, chords. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will hear the count-in and tonic for the third time followed by a vocal count-in then you will play the root notes to the backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

For this section of the exam the candidate chooses the piece to answer 5 questions on. The examiner will ask you four music knowledge questions and one instrument knowledge question.

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 4 you will be asked to identify:

- The pitch name of notes
- The meaning of the time signature and key signature marking
- Repeat marks, first and second time bars, D.C., D.S., al Coda and al Fine markings
- Whole, half, quarter, eighth note, triplet eighth notes and 16th note values
- Whole, half, quarter, eighth note and 16th note rests and rest combinations
- The construction of major, minor or dominant 7 chords
- One type of scale that can be used appropriately in the solo section of the piece you have played

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 4 you will be asked to identify:

- Any part or control on your bass
- The function of the volume and tone controls on your bass
- The tone settings for the piece you have played on the amp and why you have chosen these settings

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 15 seconds each. There are no other elements in the Performance Certificate examination.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 15 seconds each and perform all of the technical exercises listed below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 4 there are three groups of technical work. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at rslawards.com

GROUP A: SCALES

(one octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 80 bpm

- **Major:** F, B $\flat$
- **Natural minor:** A, B, C, D
- **Minor pentatonic:** A, B, C, D
- **Major pentatonic:** F, B $\flat$
- **Blues:** A, B, C, D

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

(one octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 80 bpm

- **Major:** A, B, C, D
- **Minor:** A, B, C, D
- **Dominant 7th:** A, B, C, D

GROUP C: RIFF

Tempo: 100 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade 4 book to a backing track. The riff shown in bars 1 and 2 should be played in the same shape in bars 3–8. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent bars.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- **Grade Exam:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Graded Certificate:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Performance Certificate:** 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website:

www.rslawards.com

If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rslawards.com and a member of the Rockschooll team will advise you.

GRADE 5

The Grade 5 Bass exam is for candidates who have acquired the intermediate skills and techniques and have developed an increasing sense of stylistic conviction. This is demonstrated through instrumental techniques, increasing rhythmic complexity and convincing solo and improvisation work.

GRADE EXAM

PREPARED WORK:

Candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 2 minutes 30 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

UNPREPARED WORK:

Candidates are required to play either an eight-bar sight reading test or an 8 bar Improvisation and Interpretation test. There are also two ear tests that continue to develop melodic recall and rhythmic sense and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These explore theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 5 exam lasts 25 minutes and will be taken in the following structure.

1. **Pieces or Technical Exercises:** The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first
2. **Technical Exercises or Pieces:** The candidate will perform the element not chosen above
3. **Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation:** The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play
4. **Ear Tests:** The candidate responds to two tests. One is melodic and one is rhythmic
5. **General Musicianship Questions:** The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice

PIECES

At Grade 5 the pieces last up to a maximum of 2 minutes 30 seconds. The pieces are over four pages. Emphasis is on notation accuracy, execution of stylistic techniques, technical control, developing solo and improvisation elements and communication of the music.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 5 level there are three groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SCALES

(one octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 80 bpm

To be prepared on the starting notes below and in the specified fingerings contained within the book..

- **Major:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Natural minor:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Minor pentatonic:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Major pentatonic:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Blues:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Harmonic Minor:** G, B $\flat$, C, D

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

(one octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 80 bpm

- **Major:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Minor:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Dominant 7th:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Major 7th:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Minor 7th:** G, B $\flat$, C, D

GROUP C: RIFF

Tempo: 100 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade 5 book to a backing track. The riff shown in bars 1 and 2 should be played in the same shape in bars 3–8. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent bars.

UNSEEN TESTS

SIGHT READING OR IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

At Grade 5 you will be offered the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation. This is a previously unseen test. An example is shown in the Grade 5 book.

SIGHT READING

Key: F and G major, E and G minor

Tempo: 85–95 bpm

At Grade 5 there is an element of improvisation. This is in the form of a two-bar development. The piece will be composed in the style of rock, funk or blues and will have chord symbols throughout. At Grade 5 the notation consists of half, quarter notes, eighth notes and quarter note and eighth note rests in 4/4. The test is 8 bars long. The examiner will allow 90 seconds preparation and practice time and will offer the option of practising with or without a metronome. The candidate will then perform the test for the examination.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Key: A or G major, E or G minor

Tempo: 90–100 bpm

In Grade 5, the improvisation and interpretation test contains a small amount of sight reading. This consists of two bars of notation at the beginning of the test. You will be asked to play the notation as indicated and complete the test using an improvised line. This is played to a backing track of eight bars. The candidate will have 30 seconds preparation time and the examiner will offer the metronome as a guide throughout this time. The candidate will then have a complete practice run through with the backing track and then on the repeat, the test will be examined.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests which are, Melodic Recall and Harmonic Recall.

MELODIC RECALL

Tempo: 90 bpm

Key: F major pentatonic or D minor pentatonic

The examiner will play you a two-bar melody with a drum backing. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be descending. You will play the melody back on your instrument. You will hear the test twice.

Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. Next you will hear a vocal count-in and you will then play the melody to the drum backing.

HARMONIC RECALL

Tempo: 80 bpm

Key: G major

The examiner will play you a tonic chord followed by a four-bar chord sequence in the key of G major played to a guitar and drum backing. The sequence will be drawn from the I, IV, V, and VI^m and may occur in any combination. You will be asked to play the chord sequence to the guitar and drum backing in the rhythm shown in the example below. This rhythm will be used in all examples of this test given in the exam. You will then be asked to identify the chord sequence you have played to the examiner. You will hear the test twice.

Each time the test is played the sequence is: count-in, tonic, count-in, chords. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will hear the count-in and tonic for the third time followed by a vocal count-in then you will play the chords to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about your instrument.

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 5 you will be asked to identify:

- The names of pitches
- The meaning of accidentals: # (sharp), b (flat) and (natural) signs
- The meaning of the time signature, key signature and swing time markings
- Repeat marks, first and second time bars, D.C., D.S., al Coda and al Fine markings
- Hammer-ons, pull-offs, accents and *vibrato* markings
- The construction of minor 7, major 7 or dominant 7 chords
- One type of scale that can be used appropriately in the solo section of the piece you have played

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 5 you will be asked to identify:

- Any part or control on your bass
- The function of the volume and tone controls on your bass
- The tone settings for the piece you have played on the amp and why you have chosen these settings

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

EXAM STRUCTURE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 30 seconds each. There are no other elements in the Performance Certificate examination.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 30 seconds each and perform all of the technical exercises listed below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 5 there are three groups of technical work. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at rslawards.com

GROUP A: SCALES

(one octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 80 bpm

To be prepared on the starting notes below and in the specified fingerings contained within the book..

- **Major:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Natural minor:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Minor pentatonic:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Major pentatonic:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Blues:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Harmonic Minor:** G, B $\flat$, C, D

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

(one octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 80 bpm

- **Major:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Minor:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Dominant 7th:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Major 7th:** G, B $\flat$, C, D
- **Minor 7th:** G, B $\flat$, C, D

GROUP C: RIFF

Tempo: 100 bpm

In the exam you will be asked to play the riff from the Grade 5 book to a backing track. The riff shown in bars 1 and 2 should be played in the same shape in bars 3–8. The root note of the pattern to be played is shown in the music in each of the subsequent bars.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- **Grade Exam:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Graded Certificate:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Performance Certificate:** 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website:

www.rslawards.com

If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rslawards.com and a member of the Rockschooll team will advise you.

GRADE 6

The Grade 6 Bass exam is for candidates who have begun to develop advanced technical control and a competent grasp of stylistic techniques. At Grade 6 this is shown through mature stylistic conviction, execution of rhythmic complexity, creative and stylistic solo and improvisation work as well as a secure sense of communication and performance.

GRADE EXAM

PREPARED WORK:

Candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

UNPREPARED WORK:

Candidates are required to play a 12 bar Quick Study Piece. There are also two ear tests that develop more complex melodic recall and rhythmic sense and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These explore and demonstrate theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 6 exam lasts 30 minutes and will be taken in the following structure

1. **Pieces or Technical Exercises:** The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first
2. **Technical Exercises or Pieces:** The candidate will perform the element not chosen above
3. **Quick Study Piece:** The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play
4. **Ear Tests:** The candidate responds to two tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic
5. **General Musicianship Question:** The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice

PIECES

At Grade 6 the pieces last up to a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds. Emphasis is on notation accuracy, confident execution of stylistic techniques, secure technical control, maturing solo and improvisation elements and a clear sense of ownership and communication of the music.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 6 level there are four groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SCALES/MODES

(one octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 100 bpm

Minor pentatonic:

- G, B. All 5 positions to be prepared and played.

Modes:

- **Dorian:** E, F, G, A (to be prepared in two positions)
- **Mixolydian:** E, F, G, A (to be prepared in two positions)

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

(one octave in eighth notes)

- **Major 7^b5:** E, F, G, A
- **Diminished:** E, F, G, A

GROUP C: CHORDS

- **Dominant 7th:** F, G
- **Minor 7th:** F, G

GROUP D: STYLISTIC STUDY

You will prepare a technical study from one group of styles from the list below. Your choice of style will determine the style of the Quick Study Piece. Each study concentrates on two stylistic techniques.

- **Rock/Metal:** Sixteenth note fingerstyle grooves and legato
- **Funk:** Slap and pop playing and percussive 16th note fingerstyle
- **Jazz/Latin/Blues:** Chords and Upper Register playing

UNSEEN TESTS

QUICK STUDY PIECE

At Grade 6 you will be asked to prepare and play a short Quick Study Piece. The style of your QSP is determined by the stylistic study you selected in the technical exercise section. You will be shown the test and played the track with the notated parts played. Any bars that require improvisation will not be demonstrated. You will then have three minutes to study the test. The backing track will be played twice more. You are allowed to practise during the first run through of the backing track, with the notated parts now absent, before playing it to the examiner on the second playing of the backing track. The QSP is in the form of a lead sheet and it is up to you to create your own interpretation of the music in the parts marked for improvisation.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests:

- Melodic Recall
- Harmonic Recall.

Melodic Recall

Tempo: 90 bpm

Key: E major pentatonic or G minor pentatonic or G natural minor

The first note of the melody will be either the root note or fifth and the first interval will be either ascending or descending. You will play the melody back on your instrument. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played the sequence is: count-in, root note, count-in, melody. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will hear the count-in and root note for the third time followed by a vocal count-in and you will then play the melody to the bass and drum backing.

Harmonic Recall

Tempo: 90 bpm

Key: D major

The examiner will play you a tonic chord followed by a four bar chord sequence in the key of D major played to a guitar and drum backing. The sequence will be drawn from the I, II^m, III^m, IV, V and VI^m chords and may occur in any combination. The test will also contain V7. You will be asked to play the root notes of the chord sequence to the drum backing in the rhythm shown in the Grade 6 book. This rhythm will be used in all examples of this test given in the exam. You will then be asked to identify the chord sequence you have played to the examiner. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played the sequence is: count-in, tonic, count-in, chords. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about your instrument.

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 6 you will be asked to identify:

- The names of pitches
- Any expressive musical marking found in the piece such as palm muting, accents, *staccato*, *legato*, slap (T) and pull (P) markings, and natural harmonics
- Any dynamic marking found in the piece
- One type of scale that can be used appropriately in the solo section of the piece you have played

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument.

In Grade 6 you will be asked to explain and demonstrate:

- Where to find the same pitch on two different strings
- The function of the volume and tone controls on your bass
- The set up for the tone required for the piece you have played on the amp
- How to achieve changes in tone in a song

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds each. There are no other elements in the Performance Certificate examination.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds each and perform all of the technical exercises listed below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 6 there are four groups of technical work. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at rslawards.com

GROUP A: SCALES/MODES

(one octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 100 bpm

Minor pentatonic:

- G, B. All 5 positions to be prepared and played.

Modes:

- **Dorian:** E, F, G, A (to be prepared in two positions)
- **Mixolydian:** E, F, G, A (to be prepared in two positions)

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

(one octave in eighth notes)

- **Major 7^b5:** E, F, G, A
- **Diminished:** E, F, G, A

GROUP C: CHORDS

- **Dominant 7th:** F, G
- **Minor 7th:** F, G

GROUP D: STYLISTIC STUDY

You will prepare a technical study from one group of styles from the list below. Each study concentrates on two stylistic techniques.

- **Rock/Metal:** Sixteenth note fingerstyle grooves and legato
- **Funk:** Slap and pop playing and percussive 16th note fingerstyle
- **Jazz/Latin/Blues:** Chords and Upper Register playing

FREE CHOICE PIECES

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- **Grade Exam:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Graded Certificate:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Performance Certificate:** 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website:

www.rslawards.com

If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rslawards.com and a member of the Rockschooll team will advise you.

GRADE 7

The Grade 7 Bass exam is for candidates who have a developed and advanced technical control and a thorough grasp of extended stylistic techniques. At Grade 7 this is shown through mature stylistic conviction, execution of rhythmic complexity, mature and creative stylistic solo and improvisation work as well as a commanding sense of communication and performance.

GRADE EXAM

PREPARED WORK:

Candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 3 minutes 10 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

UNPREPARED WORK:

Candidates are required to play a 12 bar Quick Study Piece. There are also two ear tests that develop complex melodic recall and rhythmic sense and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These explore and demonstrate theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 7 exam lasts 30 minutes and will be taken in the following structure:

1. **Pieces or Technical Exercises:** The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first
2. **Technical Exercises or Pieces:** The candidate will perform the element not chosen above
3. **Quick Study Piece:** The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play
4. **Ear Tests:** The candidate responds to two tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic
5. **General Musicianship Question:** The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice

PIECES

At Grade 7 the pieces last up to a maximum of 3 minutes 10 seconds. Emphasis is on notation accuracy, commanding execution of stylistic techniques and technical control, mature and creative solo and improvisation elements and a clear sense of ownership and communication of the music through performance.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 7 level there are four groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SCALES/MODES

Tempo: 100BPM

- Major (two octaves in eighth notes): G
- Lydian (one octave in eighth notes): F, B^b, D, E^b
- Phrygian (one octave in eighth notes): F, B^b, D, E^b
- Jazz Melodic Minor (one octave in eighth notes): F, B^b, D, E^b

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

(one octave in eighth notes)

- Major 9th: F, B^b, D, E^b
- Minor 9th: F, B^b, D, E^b
- Dominant 9th: F, B^b, D, E^b

GROUP C: CHORDS

High register chords

- Dominant 7th: E, A
- Major 7th: E, A
- Minor 7th: E, A

GROUP D: STYLISTIC STUDY

You will prepare a technical study from one group of styles from the list below. Your choice of style will determine the style of the Quick Study Piece. Each study concentrates on two stylistic techniques.

- Rock/Metal: pedal tones and legato phrasing
- Funk: 16th note slap grooves and string crossing
- Jazz/Latin/Blues: natural harmonics and arpeggios

UNSEEN TESTS

QUICK STUDY PIECE

At Grade 7 you will be asked to prepare and play a Quick Study Piece. The style of your QSP is determined by the stylistic study you selected in the technical exercise section. You will be shown the test and played the track with the notated parts played. Any bars that require improvisation will not be demonstrated. You will then have three minutes to study the test. The backing track will be played twice more. You are allowed to practise during the first run through of the backing track, with the notated parts now absent, before playing it to the examiner on the second playing of the backing track. The QSP is in the form of a lead sheet and it is up to you to create your own interpretation of the music in the parts marked for improvisation.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests

- Melodic Recall
- Harmonic Recall.

Melodic Recall

Tempo: 90 bpm

Key: B^b major pentatonic or D minor pentatonic or F natural minor

The first note of the melody will be either the root note or fifth and the first interval will be either ascending or descending. You will play the melody back on your instrument. You will hear the test twice.

Each time the test is played the sequence is: count-in, root note, count-in, melody. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will hear the count-in and root note for the third time followed by a vocal count-in and you will then play the melody to the backing.

Harmonic Recall

Tempo: 90 bpm

Key: A major

The examiner will play you a tonic chord followed by a four bar chord sequence in the key of A major played to a guitar and drum backing. The sequence will be drawn from the I, II^m, III^m, IV, V and VI^m chords and may occur in any combination. The test may also contain ii^m7, iii^m7 and vi^m7. You will be asked to play the chord sequence to the drum backing in the rhythm shown in the Grade 7 book. This rhythm will be used in all examples of this test given in the exam. You will then be asked to identify the chord sequence you have played to the examiner. You will hear the test twice.

Each time the test is played the sequence is: count-in, tonic, count-in, chords. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will hear the count-in and tonic for the third time followed by a vocal count-in then you will play the chords to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about your instrument.

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 7 you will be asked to identify:

- The names of pitches
- Any expressive musical marking found in the piece such as palm muting, accents, *staccato*, *legato*, slap (T) and pull (P) markings, and natural harmonics
- Any dynamic marking found in the piece
- One type of scale that can be used appropriately in the solo section of the piece you have played and its relation to the underlying harmony of the piece

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument. In Grade 7 you will be asked to explain and demonstrate:

- Where to find the same pitch on two different strings
- The function of the volume and tone controls on your bass
- The set up for the tone required for the piece you have played on the amp
- How to achieve changes in tone in a song

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds each. There are no other elements in the Performance Certificate examination.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds each and perform all of the technical exercises listed below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 7 there are four groups of technical work. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at rslawards.com

GROUP A: SCALES/MODES

Tempo: 100BPM

- Major (two octaves in eighth notes): G
- Lydian (one octave in eighth notes): F, B $\flat$, D, E $\flat$
- Phrygian (one octave in eighth notes): F, B $\flat$, D, E $\flat$
- Jazz Melodic Minor (one octave in eighth notes): F, B $\flat$, D, E $\flat$

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

(one octave in eighth notes)

- Major 9th: F, B $\flat$, D, E $\flat$
- Minor 9th: F, B $\flat$, D, E $\flat$
- Dominant 9th: F, B $\flat$, D, E $\flat$

GROUP C: CHORDS

High register chords

- Dominant 7th: E, A
- Major 7th: E, A
- Minor 7th: E, A

GROUP D: STYLISTIC STUDY

You will prepare a technical study from one group of styles from the list below. Each study concentrates on two stylistic techniques.

- Rock/Metal: pedal tones and legato phrasing
- Funk: 16th note slap grooves and string crossing
- Jazz/Latin/Blues: natural harmonics and arpeggios

FREE CHOICE PIECES

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- Grade Exam: 2 free choice pieces
- Graded Certificate: 2 free choice pieces
- Performance Certificate: 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website:

www.rslawards.com

If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rslawards.com and a member of the Rockschooll team will advise you.

GRADE 8

The Grade 8 Bass exam is for candidates who have mastered advanced technical control and have a thorough grasp of extended stylistic techniques. At Grade 8 this is shown through mature stylistic conviction, consummate execution of rhythmic complexity, mature and creative stylistic solo and improvisation work as well as a commanding sense of communication and performance.

GRADE EXAM

PREPARED WORK:

Candidates perform 3 pieces that last a maximum of 3 minutes 45 seconds and demonstrate a selection of Technical Exercises.

UNPREPARED WORK:

Candidates are required to play a 12 bar Quick Study Piece. There are also two ear tests that develop advanced melodic recall and rhythmic sense and the final part of the exam is a set of 5 questions based on the candidate's choice of piece. These explore and demonstrate theory and instrument knowledge.

EXAM STRUCTURE

The Grade 8 exam lasts 30 minutes and will be taken in the following structure:

PIECES OR TECHNICAL EXERCISES:

The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first

1. **Pieces or Technical Exercises:** The candidate chooses to play either their pieces or their technical exercises first
2. **Technical Exercises or Pieces:** The candidate will perform the element not chosen above
3. **Quick Study Piece:** The candidate is given a previously unseen test to practice and play
4. **Ear Tests:** The candidate responds to two tests. One is melodic and one is harmonic
5. **General Musicianship Question:** The candidate answers 5 questions related to a piece of their choice

PIECES

At Grade 8 the pieces last up to a maximum of 3 minutes 45 seconds. Emphasis is on complex notation accuracy, commanding execution of stylistic techniques and technical control, mature and creative solo and improvisation elements and a clear sense of ownership and communication of the music through performance.

SETTING THE LEVEL OF THE BACKING TRACK

Before playing the first piece all the way through, the examiner will make sure the volume of the backing track is correct for the candidate by asking them to play along to the backing track for the first few bars. Once the correct level has been agreed, the examiner will begin again and conduct all three pieces. Note that this is only done for the first piece.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 8 level there are four groups of technical work. The examiner will ask a selection from each group and before you start the section you will be asked whether you would like to play the exercises along with the click or hear a single bar of click before you commence the test.

GROUP A: SCALES/MODES

(One octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 100 bpm

- **Whole Tone:** F[#]/G^b, G, C[#]/D^b, G[#]/A^b
- **Diminished:** F[#]/G^b, G, C[#]/D^b, G[#]/A^b
- **Altered:** F[#]/G^b, G, C[#]/D^b, G[#]/A^b
- **Natural minor:** (two octaves in eighth notes): G

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

(One octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 100 bpm

- **Dominant 7[#]5:** D, G
- **Dominant 7^b5:** D, G
- **Dominant 7[#]9:** D, G
- **Dominant 7^b9:** D, G

GROUP C: CHORDS

- **Minor 7th:** F[#], G, D^b, A^b
- **Major 7th:** F[#], G, D^b, A^b
- **Dominant 7th:** F[#], G, D^b, A^b

GROUP D: STYLISTIC STUDY

You will prepare a technical study from one group of styles from the list below. Your choice of style will determine the style of the Quick Study Piece. Each study concentrates on two stylistic techniques.

- **Rock/Metal:** odd time grooves and powerchords
- **Funk:** syncopation and slap bass technique
- **Jazz/Latin/Blues:** up tempo fingerstyle technique and walking basslines

UNSEEN TESTS

QUICK STUDY PIECE

At Grade 8 you will be asked to prepare and play a Quick Study Piece. The style of your QSP is determined by the stylistic study you selected in the technical exercise section. You will be shown the test and played the track with the notated parts played. Any bars that require improvisation will not be demonstrated. You will then have three minutes to study the test. The backing track will be played twice more. You are allowed to practise during the first run through of the backing track, with the notated parts now absent, before playing it to the examiner on the second playing of the backing track. The QSP is in the form of a lead sheet and it is up to you to create your own interpretation of the music in the parts marked for improvisation.

EAR TESTS

There are two tests:

- Melodic Recall
- Harmonic Recall.

Melodic recall

Tempo: 90 bpm

Key: B major pentatonic or C minor pentatonic or B natural minor

The first note of the melody will be either the root, third or fifth note and the first interval will be either ascending or descending. You will play the melody back on your instrument. You will hear the test twice. Each time the test is played the sequence is: count-in, root note, count-in, melody. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will hear the count-in and root note for the third time followed by a vocal count-in and you will then play the melody to the bass and drum backing.

Harmonic recall

Tempo: 90 bpm

Key: A major

The examiner will play you a tonic chord followed by a four bar chord sequence in the key of A major played to a guitar and drum backing. The sequence will be drawn from the I, II^m, III^m, IV, V and VI^m chords and may occur in any combination. The test may also contain I^maj7 and IV^maj7. You will be asked to play the chord sequence to the drum backing in the rhythm shown in the Grade 8 book. This rhythm will be used in all examples of this test given in the exam. You will then be asked to identify the chord sequence you have played to the examiner. You will hear the test twice.

Each time the test is played the sequence is: count-in, tonic, count-in, chords. There will be a short gap for you to practise after you have heard the test for the second time. You will hear the count-in and tonic for the third time followed by a vocal count-in then you will play the chords to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

In this part of the exam you will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question will be asked about your instrument.

MUSIC KNOWLEDGE

In Grade 8 you will be asked to identify:

- The names of pitches
- Any expressive musical marking found in the piece such as palm muting, accents, *staccato*, *legato*, slap (T) and pull (P) markings, and natural harmonics
- Any dynamic marking found in the piece
- One type of scale that can be used appropriately in the solo section of the piece you have played and its relation to the underlying harmony of the piece

INSTRUMENT KNOWLEDGE

The examiner will also ask you one question regarding your instrument. In Grade 8 you will be asked to explain and demonstrate:

- Where to find the same pitch on two different strings
- The function of the volume and tone controls on your bass
- The set up for the tone required for the piece you have played on the amp
- How to achieve changes in tone in a song

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

The candidate chooses to play 5 pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds each. There are no other elements in the Performance Certificate examination.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces lasting a maximum of 2 minutes 45 seconds each and perform all of the technical exercises listed below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 8 there are four groups of technical work. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at rslawards.com

GROUP A: SCALES/MODES

(One octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 100 bpm

- **Whole Tone:** F[♯]/G^b, G, C[♯]/D^b, G[♯]/A^b
- **Diminished:** F[♯]/G^b, G, C[♯]/D^b, G[♯]/A^b
- **Altered:** F[♯]/G^b, G, C[♯]/D^b, G[♯]/A^b
- **Natural minor:** (two octaves in eighth notes): G

GROUP B: ARPEGGIOS

(One octave in eighth notes)

Tempo: 100 bpm

- **Dominant 7[♯]5:** D, G
- **Dominant 7^b5:** D, G
- **Dominant 7[♯]9:** D, G
- **Dominant 7^b9:** D, G

GROUP C: CHORDS

- **Minor 7th:** F[♯], G, D^b, A^b
- **Major 7th:** F[♯], G, D^b, A^b
- **Dominant 7th:** F[♯], G, D^b, A^b

GROUP D: STYLISTIC STUDY

You will prepare a technical study from one group of styles from the list below. Each study concentrates on two stylistic techniques.

- **Rock/Metal:** odd time grooves and powerchords
- **Funk:** syncopation and slap bass technique
- **Jazz/Latin/Blues:** up tempo fingerstyle technique and walking basslines

FREE CHOICE PIECES

There is an option of playing free choice pieces in the examination.

- **Grade Exam:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Graded Certificate:** 2 free choice pieces
- **Performance Certificate:** 3 free choice pieces

Criteria for own free choice pieces can be found by visiting the website:

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If there is any doubt or questions about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, you can email it to info@rslawards.com and a member of the Rockschooll team will advise you.

REVISION HISTORY

29 May 2019

- Revision provides clarification to wording in the technical requirements and general musicianship questions to reflect the grade book content.
- Examination timings clarified for Performance Certificates in Assessment Overview

27 April 2020

- The grading criteria tables for each unit have been removed, and replaced with one unified table within the preface section. The replacement tables include streamlined criteria each of which comprises clarified wording in a unified format, along with definitions of terms used. This is to facilitate digital mark sheet assessment whilst maintaining the recognition of knowledge skills and understanding attained at each grade level.

5 May 2020

- Grading criteria tables updated to include clarification of descriptors at 'Below Pass 1' band of attainment.

7th July 2020

- Premiere Grade (Entry Level 2) assessment information added to the Preface and Unit Specifications.

13th November 2020

- Qualification titles updated.

31 March 2022

- Page 10: QUAN codes have been updated.
- Page 17: Guidance around adaptation and personalisation of repertoire pieces has been updated.

20 February 2023

- Page 51: Grade 5 > Technical Work > Group B Arpeggios – the range has been updated to "(one octave in eighth notes)".

9 August 2023

- Page 25: Reference to 'Let's Rock' book replaced with updated book title 'Method Book'

31 March 2025

- Added information about Graded Certificate exam type, including exam information and Qualification codes.
- Page 9: Updated 'Scottish Qualifications Authority' to 'Qualifications Scotland'
- Learning Outcomes added to Syllabus
- Page 19: Added guidance on selection of performance pieces stipulating that candidates may not be assessed on the same performance pieces more than once

7 May 2025

- Syllabus cover updated