Our service to you

ABRSM is committed to offering a high standard of service at the exam centre and during the exam.

We monitor our exams closely to ensure consistency, fairness and efficiency. If you have any concerns about the conduct or conditions of an exam please contact us.

We offer support throughout the exam process and are pleased to help with any enquiry. Our offices are open on weekdays from 8.00am to 5.30pm. Information is also available from our website or from your Honorary Local Representative.

ABRSM
24 Portland Place
London W1B 1LU
United Kingdom

T +44 (0)20 7636 5400
E abrsm@abrsm.ac.uk
www.abrsm.org

Contact us

For enquires regarding exams, please contact the relevant office:

Northern England, Scotland and Wales
T +44 (0)20 7467 8261
E londonandnorth@abrsm.ac.uk

London
T +44 (0)20 7467 8261
E londonandnorth@abrsm.ac.uk

Southern England
T +44 (0)20 7467 8211
E midsandsouth@abrsm.ac.uk

Midlands
T +44 (0)20 7467 8211
E midsandsouth@abrsm.ac.uk

Ireland
T +44 (0)20 7467 8296
E ireland@abrsm.ac.uk

Special Visits
T +44 (0)20 7467 8221
E specialvisits@abrsm.ac.uk

Diplomas
T +44 (0)20 7467 8829
E diplomas@abrsm.ac.uk

Theory
T +44 (0)20 7467 8270
E theory@abrsm.ac.uk

Music Medals
T +44 (0)20 7467 8853
E musicmedals@abrsm.ac.uk

recycle

ABRSM

My turn next!

Hints and tips for the exam day

Hints and tips for the exam day

My turn next!

At ABRSM we understand that the last few moments before an exam are an important time for any candidate, whatever their instrument, grade or experience.

In this leaflet we offer information and guidance on what candidates can expect on the day of their exam and how to handle those final pre-exam moments.

Arriving at the exam centre

We have friendly stewards at every exam centre to welcome each candidate. We ask candidates to arrive ten minutes before their exam in order to prepare themselves and to ensure that the day runs as smoothly as possible for everyone involved.

Every exam centre has a waiting area

Candidates can use their time in the waiting area to:

- get their music ready
- assemble and prepare their instrument
- confirm their preferred running order for the exam
- write down their pieces/songs and chosen order for the examiner
- sit quietly and think calmly through the music

Warming up

We recommend that candidates have a thorough warm-up session before leaving home or school to attend the exam. Once at the exam centre, there is still much that a candidate can do to prepare in the few minutes before their exam, including:

- loosening and exercising fingers
- blowing silently through wind/brass instruments to bring them up to temperature
- warming up embouchure and mouthpiece
- quietly humming a few scales if a singer
- mentally running through the music

Where there is a warm-up room, candidates will have a brief chance to warm up aloud. Sometimes the room will have a piano and the steward will indicate the length of time available to each candidate. This time is best used as a brief chance to warm up aloud – not for last minute practice! We ask that candidates return to the waiting room in good time for the exam.

'The exam is a really big occasion for every candidate, and making it an enjoyable experience is a very important part of our job. We all try our best to put the candidates at their ease and to make the exam room itself as welcoming an environment as possible.'

Juliet Allen, ABRSM examiner

The exam

Before the exams begin each day, the examiner will have tried out the piano and so will be familiar with its tone quality and touch.

Many of our examiners have taken graded music exams themselves and therefore understand that candidates may feel nervous and take a few moments to settle.

At the start of each exam, the examiner will encourage each candidate to:

- take a few moments to get comfortable. The examiner or steward will be happy to help with adjusting the height of the piano stool or music stand, and candidates should not be afraid to ask for assistance.
- tune up (if an instrumentalist). Attending teachers, or accompanists, may assist candidates with tuning at Grades 1–5.
- play or sing a few notes before the exam begins. Pianists can try the piano, and instrumentalists and singers can warm up aloud for a few moments.
- do the exam in any order they choose. Candidates usually play their pieces first, but may prefer to begin with the other elements of the exam. Please let the steward know beforehand so that the accompanist can be shown in at the appropriate time.

And remember...

Our examiners want each candidate to do well and look forward to hearing them perform.