

Grade 2 Exam

The Grade 2 Acoustic exam is for candidates who have been typically learning for six months to one year. They have mastered the key basic debut level skills and have since acquired greater use of technique, rhythms, co-ordination and musical understanding. There is also an opportunity to build on basic improvisation. There are two types of exam available at Grade 1, either a Grade Exam or Performance Certificate. (Refer to the Introduction for an explanation of the differences).

Grade Exams

Prepared work:

Candidates are required to play three performance pieces and Technical exercises which cover scales, chords and acoustic riffs.

Unprepared:

Candidates are required to complete either a Sight Reading or an Improvisation & Interpretation test, and two Ear Tests that continue to develop melodic and rhythmic sense and the final part of the exam is a set of five 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 is taken in the following order:

- **Performance Pieces***
- **Technical exercises***
- **Sight reading or improvisation & Interpretation**
- **Ear Tests**
- **General Musicians Questions**

**these elements can be taken first or second at the candidate's request.*

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Technical work

GROUP A: Scale

Tempo: 80bpm

Rhythm: Quarter Notes

Range: One Octave

- C Major
- G major
- E natural minor
- A natural minor
- C minor Pentatonic
- C major Pentatonic
- G minor Pentatonic
- G major Pentatonic

GROUP B: CHORDS

Tempo: 80bpm

Rhythm: Quarter Notes

1. **Power chords:** Two-note chords to be played in a continuous sequence
 - E5, G5, A5 and C5
2. **Open position chords:** Individual chords will be strummed once as directed by the examiner.
 - **Major & Minor:** F, Bm
 - **Major 7:** Amaj7, Cmaj7, Dmaj7
 - **Minor 7:** Am7, Dm7, Em7

GROUP C: ACOUSTIC RIFF

The riff shown in bar 1-2 should be played 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.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Sight Reading or Improvisation & Interpretation

SIGHT READING

At Grade 1 candidates will be offered the choice between Sight Reading or Improvisation and Interpretation. Both are previously unseen and examples of each are given in the grade book

Duration: 4 bars

Rhythms: Quarter notes (crotchets) eighth notes (quavers) and rests

Key: G major or E natural minor

Pitches: D, E, F#- 4th (D) String

G, A = 3rd (G)String

B, C, D = 2nd (B) String

Instrumental Compass: Open/first/second position

Tempo: 70bpm

Candidates will have 90 seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning. The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Duration: 4-6 bars

Key: G major or E minor

Tempo: 80-90bpm

Improvisation Requirement: Rhythmic chords or melodic lead line (candidate choice)

Candidates will have 90 seconds to practise after which the examiner will play the backing track twice. The first time is to practise and the second time is to perform the final version for the exam. During the practice time, candidates will be given the option of a metronome click throughout or a one bar count-in at the beginning.

The backing track is continuous so once the first playthrough has finished the count-in of the second playing will start immediately.

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Ear test

TEST1: MELODIC RECALL

There are two Ear Tests in this grade. The examiner will play each test twice.

Candidates will hear a two-bar melody with a drum backing using the C minor pentatonic scale. The first note of the melody will be the root note and the first interval will be ascending. Candidates will need to then play back the melody on their instrument. The test will be played twice. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar vocal count-in

Tempo: 90bpm

TEST 2: RHYTHMIC RECALL

Candidates will hear a two-bar rhythm played to a drum backing on the lowest-sounding E string. The test will be played twice. Candidates will be asked to play the rhythm back, before identifying the rhythm from two printed examples shown to them by the examiner. Each time the test is played it is preceded by a one bar count-in. There will be a short gap for candidates to practise. Next candidates will hear a vocal count-in and will then need to play the rhythm to the drum backing.

Tempo: 90bpm

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

General Musicians Questions

TEST1: MELODIC RECALL

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these questions will be about general music knowledge and the fifth question asked will be about the candidate's instrument.

Music Knowledge:

The examiner will ask the candidate four music knowledge questions based on a piece of performed in the exam. Candidates will nominate the piece of music about which the questions will be asked.

In Debut candidates 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:

The examiner will also ask candidates one question regarding their instrument.

In Debut candidates will be asked to identify:

- Three of the following parts of the guitar: neck, body, tuning-pegs, bridge, nut and soundhole.
- Names of all open strings

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Grading Success Criteria

DEBUT		
PREPARED WORK		
BAND	MARK RANGE	GRADING CRITERIA
Distinction	Pieces 18–20 Technical exercises 13–15	Consistent and secure basic techniques Consistent rhythm / pulse Notation accuracy detailed throughout Consistent sync Highly confident and assured presentation
Merit	Pieces 15–17 Technical exercises 11–12	Secure basic techniques overall Secure rhythm / pulse overall Notation accuracy observed overall Mainly synchronised Confident presentation overall
Pass	Pieces 12–14 Technical exercises 9–10	Basic techniques evident Rhythm / pulse evident Notation accuracy evident Sync evident Some confidence in presentation
Below Pass 1	Pieces 6–11 Technical exercises 4–8	Basic techniques not shown Rhythm/pulse largely inaccurate Notation accuracy largely inaccurate Sync not achieved Unsure in presentation
Below pass 2	Pieces 0–5 Technical exercises 0–3	Incomplete performance No attempt

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Grading Success Criteria

DEBUT

UNPREPARED WORK

BAND	MARK RANGE	GRADING CRITERIA
Distinction	Sight/Improv QSP / Ear Tests 9–10 GMQ 5	Consistent and secure basic techniques Consistent rhythm / pulse Notation accuracy detailed throughout Consistent sync Highly confident and assured presentation
Merit	Sight/Improv QSP / Ear Tests 7-8 GMQ 4	Secure basic techniques overall Secure rhythm / pulse overall Notation accuracy observed overall Mainly synchronised Confident presentation overall
Pass	Sight/Improv QSP / Ear Tests 6 GMQ 3	Basic techniques evident Rhythm / pulse evident Notation accuracy evident Sync evident Some confidence in presentation
Below Pass 1	Sight/Improv QSP / Ear Tests 3-5 GMQ 2	Basic techniques not shown Rhythm/pulse largely inaccurate Notation accuracy largely inaccurate Sync not achieved Unsure in presentation
Below pass 2	Sight/Improv QSP / Ear Tests 1–2 GMQ 0-1	Incomplete performance No attempt

NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS