

London College of Music Examinations

Acoustic Guitar Recorded Exams

Qualification specifications for:
Steps, Grades and Recital Grades

Valid from:
2026 until further notice

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Acoustic Guitar Recorded Exam Requirements

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London College of Music Examinations
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Contents

1. Information and general guidelines	2
1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Validity	3
1.3 Exam entry	3
1.4 Exam options	4
1.5 Assessment and results	4
1.6 Performance guidelines	5
1.7 Recording requirements	5
1.8 Publications	5
2. Recorded Exam requirements	6
2.1 Recorded Grade Exams	7
2.2 Recorded Recital Grades	8
2.3. Step 1	10
2.4 Step 2	11
2.5 Grade 1	12
2.6 Grade 2	13
2.7 Grade 3	14
2.8 Grade 4	15
2.9 Grade 5	16
2.10 Grade 6	17
2.11 Grade 7	18
2.12 Grade 8	19

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Acoustic Guitar Recorded Requirements

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1. Information and general guidelines

1.1 Introduction

This document outlines the requirements for Recorded Grades and Recital Grades in Acoustic Guitar from Step 1 to Grade 8, including technical work, set repertoire, and discussion questions. For information about in-person exams, the full performance guidelines and assessment criteria, please refer to the current [Acoustic Guitar Syllabus](#).

Recorded Exams

Recorded exams provide the opportunity for the assessment of musical performance through the submission of a video recording, rather than attendance at an examination venue. Performances are assessed by trained LCME examiners using the same standards and criteria as for in-person examinations.

1.2 Validity

These specifications apply to Recorded Acoustic Guitar exams (Steps, Grades, and Recital Grades) from 1 September 2026 until further notice.

1.3 Exam entry

Submission guidelines

Details of fees and how to book a digital exam are available on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk

Recording requirements

Details of what to include and how to film and upload recorded exams are available on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk

Age groups and requirements for prior learning

LCME graded exams are open to all and there are no minimum age restrictions. No prerequisite qualifications are required for entering any exam; candidates can enter at any level provided they have the required knowledge, skills and understanding.

Equity, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration

Information on assessment, examination and entry requirements for candidates with specific needs is published in the Equity, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration policy available on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk

1.4 Exam options

	Grades	Recital Grades
Performance	✓	✓
Technical Work, Accompaniment or Performance	✓	✗
Discussion	✓	✗
Structure	Grades 1 to 8	Grades 1 to 8
Prerequisites	✗	✗
Assessment	Digital Recorded	Digital Recorded
Grading	Distinction: 85–100% Merit: 75–84% Pass: 65–74%	Distinction: 85–100% Merit: 75–84% Pass: 65–74%
Regulation	✓	✓
UCAS points	Grades 6 to 8	Grades 6 to 8

Introductory examinations

LCME also offers two levels of introductory examinations in Acoustic Guitar: Step 1 and Step 2. The pass bands are the same as for the graded examinations (Distinction (85–100% of the total marks available), Merit (75–84%) and Pass (65–74%). These exams are not regulated by Ofqual.

1.5 Assessment and results

Assessment

Exams are assessed according to the same standards and criteria as for LCME's in-person exams. Refer to the details listed in the assessment and regulations sections in the current [Acoustic Guitar Syllabus](#).

Marking

Qualifications are awarded by the University of West London (UWL). Exams are conducted by trained examiners. Candidates will be assessed on their technical accomplishment, musical knowledge, musicality and communication. In awarding marks, examiners will take into account the extent to which each of these assessment objectives is demonstrated within each exam component.

Issue of results

Candidates will be informed of the results of examinations as soon as possible. Results are available soon after the examination and certificates for successful candidates are normally dispatched within eight weeks of the date of the examination.

Enquiries, complaints and appeals

Information on how to make an enquiry, complaint or appeal is available on our website:

lcme.uwl.ac.uk

Exam regulations

Full details of all general exam regulations are published in the Regulations and Information document available on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk

1.6 Performance guidelines

Refer to the relevant details listed in the current **Acoustic Guitar Syllabus**.

1.7 Recording requirements

Please refer to the relevant guidance on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk. This covers essential information on how to film your exam, as well as advice on preparation, equipment, and recording quality.

1.8 Publications

The following materials are available to purchase or download:

Physical publications

• LCME repertoire handbooks

Hard-copy handbooks containing the repertoire needed for each level are available from all major retailers: [click here to purchase](#)

Digital publications

• LCME repertoire handbooks

Repertoire handbooks are also available as PDF downloads to purchase from digital retailers:

[click here to download](#) 

• Digital resources

Audio files and other supporting material can be downloaded for free from our website:

[click here to download](#) 

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Acoustic Guitar Recorded Requirements

2. Recorded Exam requirements

2.1 Recorded Grade Exams

This overview outlines the components that candidates will encounter in the exam. For detailed information, please refer to the requirements on the following pages.

Recorded Steps 1 and 2

- **Component 1: Technical Work**

Performance of the technical work as per the requirements of the grade.

- **Component 2: Rhythm Study**

Candidates perform one rhythm study, chosen from the studies in the LCME handbook.

- **Component 3: Melodies**

Candidates perform two melodies. At least one must be chosen from the melodies contained in the LCME handbook.

Component weightings

Technical Work	Rhythm Study	Melodies
25%	25%	50%

Recorded Grades 1–8

- **Component 1: Performance**

Performance of rhythm studies, melodies, fingerstyle studies or solo pieces as per the requirements of the grade.

- **Component 2: Technical Work, Accompaniment or Performance**

A performance of one of two options: technical work, a prepared accompaniment or an additional melody, study or solo piece, as required for the grade.

- **Component 3: Discussion**

The candidate responds to a given set of topics about the music performed including instrument specific knowledge and techniques applied in the performance, as appropriate to the grade.

Component weightings

Performance 1	Performance 2	Technical Work/ Accompaniment/ Performance 3	Technical Work/ Accompaniment/ Performance 3	Discussion
25%	25%	20%	20%	10%

2.2 Recorded Recital Grades

Steps 1 and 2

• Component 1: Performance

Candidates perform one rhythm study and two melodies from the relevant exam handbook. If preferred, one of the melodies can be an own-choice melody of similar standard and length to those contained in the handbook.

Grades 1 and 2

• Component 1: Performance

Candidates perform one rhythm study, one fingerstyle study and either one melody or one solo piece from the relevant exam handbook. If preferred, the melody can be an own-choice melody of similar standard and length to those contained in the handbook.

Grades 3 to 5

• Component 1: Performance

Candidates perform one rhythm study and two solo pieces from the relevant exam handbook. If preferred, one of the solo pieces can be an own-choice piece of similar standard and length to those contained in the handbook.

Grades 6 to 8

• Component 1: Performance

Candidates perform four solo pieces. At least two of these must be selected from the relevant exam handbook. If preferred, up to two of the solo pieces can be own-choice pieces of similar standard and length to those contained in the handbook.

Component weightings

	Performance (Rhythm Study)	Performance (Fingerstyle Study)	Performance (Melody/Solo Piece)
Step 1 and 2	40%	–	60%
Grades 1 and 2	40%	30%	30%
Grades 3 to 5	40%	–	60%
Grades 6 to 8	–	–	100%

Regulation

LCME's recorded exams are regulated in England by Ofqual, and by the corresponding authorities in Wales (Qualifications Wales) and Northern Ireland (CCEA). They have been placed on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) at Levels 1 to 7 and attract UCAS points accordingly.

Step 1

A handbook containing all the required materials for this level is available to purchase in both physical and digital formats: [Acoustic Guitar Handbook 2020: Step 1 \(LCME\)](#) | [digital download](#)

Component 1: Technical Work

25 marks

Candidates perform the listed chords and scales.

Requirements	Range/tempo	Details
Chords		
C, G Am		single slow strum, lowest note first
Scales		
C, G major	1 octave, 84bpm (one note per beat)	ascending only

Component 2: Rhythm Study

25 marks

Candidates perform one rhythm study, chosen from the LCME handbook.

Component 3: Melodies

50 marks

Candidates perform two melodies. At least one must be selected from the melodies published in the LCME handbook. The second melody may be an own-choice selection, provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration to those included in the handbook.

Step 2

A handbook containing all the required materials for this level is available to purchase in both physical and digital formats: [Acoustic Guitar Handbook 2020: Step 2 \(LCME\)](#) | [digital download](#)

Component 1: Technical Work

25 marks

Candidates perform the listed chords and scales.

Requirements	Range/tempo	Details
Chords		
D, C Em, Am		single slow strum, lowest note first
Scales		
C, G major	1 octave, 100bpm (one note per beat)	ascending and descending

Component 2: Rhythm Study

25 marks

Candidates perform one rhythm study, chosen from the LCME handbook.

Component 3: Melodies

50 marks

Candidates perform two melodies. At least one must be selected from the melodies published in the LCME handbook. The second melody may be an own-choice selection, provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration to those included in the handbook..

Grade 1

Component 1: Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform one rhythm study and either a melody or a fingerstyle study chosen from the relevant LCME handbook. The melody may be own-choice, provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration.

Component 2: Technical Work, Accompaniment or Performance

40 marks

Candidates choose two of the following options:

Option 1: Technical Work

Candidates perform the listed chords and scales from memory.

Requirements	Range/tempo	Details
Chords		
A, E, C Dm, Am B7, D7		single slow strum, lowest note first
Scales		
C, D major A natural minor	1 octave, 108bpm (one note per beat)	ascending and descending

Option 2: Prepared Accompaniment

Candidates choose one of the accompaniment examples from the relevant handbook and play their chord accompaniment along to the audio recording of the melody. Melodies, chord charts and audio recordings of the melodies can be downloaded on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk.

Option 3: Additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece

Performance of one additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece from the relevant handbook. The Melody and Solo Piece may be a free choice provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration to those included in the handbook.

Component 3: Discussion

10 marks

All questions should be answered after the performance section:

- Play and identify the note at the 3rd fret on the B string
- Play and identify the note at the 2nd fret on the G string
- Point to the bridge and the machine heads on the guitar

Grade 2

Component 1: Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform one rhythm study and either a melody or a fingerstyle study chosen from the relevant LCME handbook. The melody may be own-choice, provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration.

Component 2: Technical Work, Accompaniment or Performance

40 marks

Candidates choose two of the following options:

Option 1: Technical Work

Candidates perform the listed chords and scales from memory.

Requirements	Range/tempo	Details
Chords		
F, E Dm7, Em7, Amaj7, Cmaj7 G7		single slow strum, lowest note first
Scales		
A major A dorian	2 octaves, 120bpm (one note per beat)	ascending and descending
D major	1 octave, 120bpm (one note per beat)	ascending and descending

Option 2: Prepared Accompaniment

Candidates choose one of the accompaniment examples from the relevant handbook and play their chord accompaniment along to the audio recording of the melody. Melodies, chord charts and audio recordings of the melodies can be downloaded on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk.

Option 3: Additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece

Performance of one additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece from the relevant handbook. The Melody and Solo Piece may be a free choice provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration to those included in the handbook.

Component 3: Discussion

10 marks

All questions should be answered after the performance section:

- Play and identify the note at the 4th fret on the A string
- Play and identify the note at the 2nd fret on the B string
- Point to the nut and the saddle on the guitar

Grade 3

Component 1: Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform one rhythm study and one solo piece chosen from the relevant LCME handbook.

Component 2: Technical Work, Accompaniment or Performance

40 marks

Candidates choose two of the following options:

Option 1: Technical Work

Candidates perform the listed chords and scales from memory.

Requirements	Range/tempo	Details
Chords		
F Asus2, Dsus2, Esus4, Csus4 Gmaj7, Dmaj7 C7		single slow strum, lowest note first
Scales		
G major A natural minor A mixolydian	2 octaves, , 160bpm (one note per beat)	ascending and descending

Option 2: Prepared Accompaniment

Candidates choose one of the accompaniment examples from the relevant handbook and play their chord accompaniment along to the audio recording of the melody. Melodies, chord charts and audio recordings of the melodies can be downloaded on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk.

Option 3: Additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece

Performance of one additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece from the relevant handbook. The Melody and Solo Piece may be a free choice provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration to those included in the handbook.

Component 3: Discussion

10 marks

All questions should be answered after the performance section:

- Name the key signature of one of your pieces
- Name the time signature of one of your pieces
- Name and demonstrate one of the techniques used in your chosen piece

Grade 4

Component 1: Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform one rhythm study and one solo piece chosen from the relevant LCME handbook.

Component 2: Technical Work, Accompaniment or Performance

40 marks

Candidates choose two of the following options:

Option 1: Technical Work

Candidates perform the listed chords and scales from memory.

Requirements	Range/tempo	Details
Chords		
A6, D6, E6 Cadd9, Gadd9, Fadd9 Any 2 of the following: Esus4, Fsus4, Gsus4, Csus4		single slow strum, lowest note first
Scales		
Either G, A, C or D major E blues E natural minor	2 octaves, 100bpm (two notes per beat)	ascending and descending

Option 2: Prepared Accompaniment

Candidates choose one of the accompaniment examples from the relevant handbook and play their chord accompaniment along to the audio recording of the melody. Melodies, chord charts and audio recordings of the melodies can be downloaded on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk.

Option 3: Additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece

Performance of one additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece from the relevant handbook. The Melody and Solo Piece may be a free choice provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration to those included in the handbook.

Component 3: Discussion

10 marks

All questions should be answered after the performance section:

- Choose one piece and describe which time and key signatures it uses
- What does the dynamic marking at the beginning mean?
- Explain the dynamic markings in the rhythm study

Grade 5

Component 1: Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform one rhythm study and one solo piece chosen from the relevant LCME handbook.

Component 2: Technical Work, Accompaniment or Performance

40 marks

Candidates choose two of the following options:

Option 1: Technical Work

Candidates perform the listed chords, scales and arpeggios from memory. A selection of different keys should be performed.

Requirements	Range/tempo	Details
Chords		
Two major barre chords with different root notes Two minor barre chords with different root notes	one on the 5th string, one on the 6th string for both sets	single slow strum, lowest note first
Scales		
Two major scales One natural minor scale One blues scale	2 octaves, 116bpm (two notes per beat)	ascending and descending
Arpeggios		
Two major arpeggios Two minor arpeggios	2 octaves, 88bpm (two notes per beat)	ascending and descending

Option 2: Prepared Accompaniment

Candidates choose one of the accompaniment examples from the relevant handbook and play their chord accompaniment along to the audio recording of the melody. Melodies, chord charts and audio recordings of the melodies can be downloaded on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk.

Option 3: Additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece

Performance of one additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece from the relevant handbook. The Melody and Solo Piece may be a free choice provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration to those included in the handbook.

Component 3: Discussion

10 marks

All questions should be answered after the performance section:

- Choose one piece and describe which time and key signatures it uses. What does the dynamic marking at the beginning mean?
- Name and demonstrate two different playing techniques used in your chosen piece

Grade 6

Component 1: Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform two solo pieces, with at least one selected from the relevant handbook. The second piece may be either from the handbook or an own-choice selection of similar standard.

Component 2: Technical Work, Accompaniment or Performance

40 marks

Candidates choose two of the following options:

Option 1: Technical Work

Candidates perform the listed chords, scales and arpeggios from memory. A selection of different keys should be performed.

Requirements	Range/tempo	Details
Chords		
One dominant 7th barre chord		
Two major 7th barre chords with different root notes	one on the 5th string, one on the 6th string for both sets	single slow strum, lowest note first
Two minor 7th barre chords with different root notes		
Scales		
Two pentatonic minor scales	2 octaves, 132bpm (two notes per beat)	ascending and descending
Two pentatonic major scales		
One major scale in three different fingerboard positions	1 octave, 132bpm (two notes per beat)	
Arpeggios		
Three major arpeggios	2 octaves, 100bpm (two notes per beat)	ascending and descending

Option 2: Prepared Accompaniment

Candidates choose one of the accompaniment examples from the relevant handbook and play their chord accompaniment along to the audio recording of the melody. Melodies, chord charts and audio recordings of the melodies can be downloaded on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk.

Option 3: Additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece

Performance of one additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece from the relevant handbook. The Melody and Solo Piece may be a free choice provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration to those included in the handbook.

Component 3: Discussion

10 marks

All questions should be answered after the performance section:

- Choose one piece and describe which time and key signatures it uses. Talk through the dynamics of one of your pieces
- Talk about your approach to learning these pieces, identifying any particular technical or musical challenges you faced and how you overcame them

Grade 7

Component 1: Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform two solo pieces, with at least one selected from the relevant handbook. The second piece may be either from the handbook or an own-choice selection of similar standard.

Component 2: Technical Work, Accompaniment or Performance

40 marks

Candidates choose two of the following options:

Option 1: Technical Work

Candidates perform the listed chords, scales and arpeggios from memory. A selection of different keys should be performed.

Requirements	Range/tempo	Details
Chords		
One major chord in three different positions C, G, D, A or E in 1st inversion C, G, D, A or E in 2nd inversion One diminished 7th chord		single slow strum, lowest note first
Scales		
One dorian scale One mixolydian scale One harmonic minor scale	2 octaves, 144bpm (two notes per beat)	ascending and descending
One natural minor scale in three different positions	1 octave, 144bpm (two notes per beat)	
Arpeggios		
Three minor arpeggios	2 octaves, 112bpm (two notes per beat)	ascending and descending

Option 2: Prepared Accompaniment

Candidates choose one of the accompaniment examples from the relevant handbook and play their chord accompaniment along to the audio recording of the melody. Melodies, chord charts and audio recordings of the melodies can be downloaded on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk.

Option 3: Additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece

Performance of one additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece from the relevant handbook. The Melody and Solo Piece may be a free choice provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration to those included in the handbook.

Component 3: Discussion

10 marks

All questions should be answered after the performance section:

- Explain your reasons for choosing to perform these pieces and how they contrast in style
- Talk about your approach to learning these pieces, identifying any particular technical or musical challenges you faced and how you overcame these
- With reference to one piece, name the composer and provide some historical context

Grade 8

Component 1: Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform two solo pieces, with at least one selected from the relevant handbook. The second piece may be either from the handbook or an own-choice selection of similar standard.

Component 2: Technical Work, Accompaniment or Performance

40 marks

Candidates choose two of the following options:

Option 1: Technical Work

Candidates perform the listed chords, scales and arpeggios from memory. A selection of different keys should be performed.

Requirements	Range/tempo	Details
Chords		
One major chord in four different positions One minor chord in three different positions Am, Dm or Em in 1st and 2nd inversion		single slow strum, lowest note first
Scales		
One major scale in five different fingerboard positions	1 octave, 166bpm (two notes per beat)	
G major harmonised in 10ths C major harmonised in 6ths C major harmonised in 3rds	1 octave, 66bpm (two notes per beat)	ascending and descending
Arpeggios		
Two dominant 7th arpeggios	2 octaves, 112bpm (two notes per beat)	ascending and descending

Option 2: Prepared Accompaniment

Candidates choose one of the accompaniment examples from the relevant handbook and play their chord accompaniment along to the audio recording of the melody. Melodies, chord charts and audio recordings of the melodies can be downloaded on our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk.

Option 3: Additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece

Performance of one additional Melody, Fingerstyle Study or Solo Piece from the relevant handbook. The Melody and Solo Piece may be a free choice provided it is of a comparable technical standard and duration to those included in the handbook.

Component 3: Discussion

10 marks

All questions should be answered after the performance section:

- Which of the pieces you played is your favourite and why? Do you find it challenging or rewarding to play? If so, why?
- Talk about your approach to learning this piece such as use of certain techniques and aspects of interpretation
- Describe one melodic and harmonic feature of the music (such as, sequence, melodic inversion, circle of 5ths or pedal points)



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