

London College of Music Examinations

Composition & Music Thesis Diplomas Syllabus

Qualification specifications for:

Composition Grades, Composition Diplomas and Music Thesis Diplomas

Valid from:

2025 until further notice

updated 19.05.2025

This syllabus was released on May 19, 2025

Composition Syllabus 2025

Catalogue no: LL523

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London College of Music Examinations

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1. Information and general guidelines

1.1 Introduction

London College of Music Examinations (LCME)

Since 1887, LCME has been empowering people through performance, providing a framework that helps candidates showcase their talent, build confidence and achieve their creative goals. As the only British exam board that is part of a university, LCME's qualifications are uniquely backed by the University of West London, combining academic rigour with real-world relevance.

Our exams, conducted throughout the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, and over 50 countries worldwide, are designed to nurture growth and excellence. Most of our graded and diploma exams are regulated by Ofqual and other UK regulators, opening doors to higher education and creative industry opportunities.

What makes LCME distinctive

LCME's inclusive, flexible and forward-thinking approach to graded and diploma qualifications makes a distinctive contribution to performing arts and communication education, emphasising:

- creative thinking and self-expression
- critical engagement with performed repertoire, encouraging performers to showcase their skills with confidence
- a comprehensive, diverse, and culturally relevant range of tasks and repertoire
- assessment in innovative areas, preparing candidates for a rapidly changing world
- flexible exam formats that adapt to individual learning journeys

Syllabus objectives

This syllabus will guide candidates on their journey to unlock their potential, overcome challenges, and showcase their skills with confidence. Candidates progressing through the levels will acquire comprehensive knowledge and experience across various styles and performance types. A course of study based on this syllabus provides:

- an empowering assessment system that adds value to career pathways and educational opportunities
- creatively challenging learning opportunities that nurture growth and excellence
- structured mastery learning
- a foundation for candidates to develop in-demand industry skills and technical concepts

1.2 Syllabus Validity

This syllabus is valid for Composition Grades, Composition Diplomas and Music Thesis Diplomas from 19 May 2025 until further notice. The 2016 syllabus will remain valid until 31 December 2025.

1.3 Exam entry

Booking your exam

Examinations in Composition and Music Thesis Diplomas may be submitted at any time via our website: lcme.uwl.ac.uk

Prerequisite qualifications

There are no prerequisite qualifications required for entering any exam; candidates can enter at any level provided they have the required knowledge, skills and understanding.

Age groups

LCME exams are open to all and there are no minimum age restrictions. Recommended minimum ages are as follows for diplomas: DipLCM — 16, ALCM — 17, LLCM — 18 and FLCM — 19.

Reasonable adjustments and special considerations

Information on assessment, examination and entry requirements for candidates with specific needs is published in the Equality of Opportunity, Reasonable Adjustment and Special Consideration policy available on our website.

1.4 Exam options

	Grades	Composition Diplomas	Music Thesis Diplomas
Components	Portfolio	Portfolio	Dissertation
Structure	Grades 2, 4, 6 and 8	ALCM, LLCM and FLCM	ALCM, LLCM and FLCM
Prerequisites	x	x	x
Assessment	Digital Submission	Digital Submission	Digital Submission
Grading	Distinction: 85–100% Merit: 75–84% Pass: 65–74%	Approved or not approved	Approved or not approved
Regulation	x	x	x
UCAS points	x	x	x

1.5 Assessment and results

Marking

• How marks are awarded

Qualifications are awarded by University of West London (UWL). Exams are conducted by trained examiners. Candidates will be assessed on their technical accomplishment, musicality, communication and score presentation. In awarding marks, examiners will take into account

the extent to which each of these assessment domains is demonstrated within the individual exam components.

Issue of results

A written report will be compiled for each examination. Candidates will be informed of the result of examinations as soon as possible. Results are available digitally within days and will be sent by post no later than four weeks after the examination date. 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 published in the Enquiries and Appeals policy and the Complaints procedure documents 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 General guidelines

Submission guidelines

All examinations in Composition and Music Thesis Diplomas require the candidate to submit a declaration indicating that the portfolio or dissertation enclosed is solely the unaided work of the candidate, signed and dated by the candidate and by two witnesses.

• Composition Grades 2–8

Candidates must submit digital copies of each score (and recording(s), if included) upon application.

• Composition Diplomas and Music Thesis Diplomas

Candidates must submit digital copies of the scores and recordings, or dissertation upon application.

Programme notes

Composition Diploma candidates must submit 50–150 word programme notes for each portfolio item. These must briefly explain the composition process, the aims behind each piece, and provide insight into their creative approach, techniques used, and how the work achieves their artistic or technical goals. Programme notes are welcome but not required for grade exams.

Composition guidelines

• Style

Candidates are encouraged to experiment with any compositional style. This may include tonal, atonal, minimalist, avant-garde, progressive, experimental or popular styles of various kinds. At early grades, work may be mostly pastiche. Up to Grade 6, some pastiche is acceptable, but from Grade 8 onward, originality is expected. At diploma level, all work must be original

and show engagement with contemporary techniques. At FLCM, the portfolio must reflect a consistent, unique, and original voice.

• **Composition for visual media or live performance**

At diploma levels, candidates may submit original works composed for and synchronized to a video, film, commercial advertisement, or other visual media, as well as music intended for live dance or drama performances.

• **Multiple composers**

Works created by multiple composers will not be accepted for examination; only the candidate's own composition will be assessed. If any of the pieces feature a collaborator, their contributions must be clearly outlined in the programme notes.

• **Lyrics**

Candidates must provide a translation of lyrics when they are not in English.

Presentation of scores

All scores must be legibly presented. At all levels, presentation of scores will be taken in consideration as part of the assessment. At diploma level, scores must include a title page, with a list of instrumentation and duration. Any unconventional notation or layout adopted must be fully explained in the programme notes. Scores may be written in concert pitch or with transpositions maintained; a note indicating which convention has been followed must be included at the front of the score.

Recordings

Video and audio files must be submitted upon registration. Submitting recordings for all items in the portfolio is strongly encouraged at every level. The quality of performance on recordings will not be taken into account in the marking, and MIDI realisations are welcomed.

- Grades 2-8: there is no requirement to submit recordings.
- ALCM: At least one composition must be accompanied by a recording.
- LLCM: At least two compositions must be accompanied by recordings.
- FLCM: at least three compositions must be accompanied by recordings.

For film/media-synced compositions, candidates must provide a conductor's score along with a video file (MP4 or MOV) containing the synchronised music cues. For dance or drama performances, candidates may submit a video recording alongside the score, but a separate audio recording is always required.

2. Graded exam requirements

2.1 Summary of exam requirements

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

Grade 2

Candidates to compile a portfolio of three items.

Grade 4, 6 and 8

Candidates to compile a portfolio consisting of three items, adhering to the specific requirements outlined for either Option A or Option B.

Grade 2

Candidates to compile a portfolio of three items as detailed below:

1. An original composition for solo instrument of the candidate's choice, of approximately 1–2 minutes in duration. The instrument chosen may be monophonic (eg. an orchestral instrument) or polyphonic (eg. piano), but must not be voice.
2. A setting of 1–2 minutes' duration for voice and piano, with words included in the score, of either
 - a. a folksong, hymn tune, popular song or similar; or
 - b. an original melody
3. An arrangement of any one piece from the current LCME Piano Handbook Grade 1, for any three instruments of the candidate's choice.

Grade 4

Candidates to compile a portfolio of three items as detailed below, following the requirements for either Option A or Option B.

Option A

1. An original composition for any two instruments of the candidate's choice, of approximately 3–4 minutes in duration. The composition must not include a vocal part.
2. A setting of 2–3 minutes' duration for voice and any two instruments of the candidate's choice, with words included in the score, of either
 - a. a setting of a folksong, hymn tune, popular song, or similar; or
 - b. an original composition
3. An arrangement of any one piece from the current LCME Piano Handbook Grade 3, for any four instruments of the candidate's choice.

Option B

1. An original composition for voice and any one other instrument of the candidate's choice, of approximately 3–4 minutes in duration. Words must be included on the score.
2. An arrangement of 2–3 minutes' duration for any three instruments of the candidate's choice, not including a vocal part, of either
 - a. a setting of a folksong, hymn tune, popular song, or similar; or
 - b. an original composition
3. An arrangement of any one piece from the current LCME Piano Handbook Grade 3, for any four instruments of the candidate's choice.

Grade 6

Candidates to compile a portfolio of three items as detailed below, following the requirements for either Option A or Option B.

Option A

1. An original composition for any three instruments of the candidate's choice, of approximately 4–5 minutes in duration. The composition may be divided into movements, and must not include a vocal part.
2. A setting of 3–4 minutes' duration for any four independent parts, of which at least one must be vocal, with words included in the score, of either
 - a. a setting of a folksong, hymn tune, popular song, or similar; or
 - b. an original composition
3. An arrangement of any one piece from the current LCME Piano Handbook Grade 5, for any five instruments of the candidate's choice.

Option B

1. An original composition for voice and any two other instruments of the candidate's choice, of approximately 4–5 minutes in duration. The composition may be divided into movements, or may comprise two or more songs, etc.
2. An arrangement of 3–4 minutes' duration for any four instruments, not including a vocal part, of either
 - a. a setting of a folksong, hymn tune, popular song, or similar; or
 - b. an original composition
3. An arrangement of any one piece from the current LCME Piano Handbook Grade 5, for any five instruments of the candidate's choice.

Grade 8

Candidates to compile a portfolio of three items as detailed below, following the requirements for either Option A or Option B.

Option A

1. An original composition for any four instruments of the candidate's choice, of approximately 5-6 minutes in duration. The composition may be divided into movements, and must not include a vocal part.
2. A setting of 4-5 minutes' duration of which at least one must be vocal, and at least one must be a polyphonic instrument (eg. piano, organ, harp, etc.), with words included in the score, of either
 - a. a setting of a folksong, hymn tune, popular song, or similar; or
 - b. an original composition for any five independent parts,
3. An arrangement of any one piece from the current LCME Piano Handbook Grade 7 or Grade 8, for any six instruments of the candidate's choice.

Option B

1. An original composition for voice and any three other instruments of the candidate's choice, of approximately 5-6 minutes in duration. The composition may be divided into movements, or may comprise two or more songs, etc.
2. An arrangement of 4-5 minutes' duration for any five instruments, of which at least one must be a polyphonic instrument (eg. piano, organ, harp, etc.), not including a vocal part, of either
 - a. a setting of a folksong, hymn tune, popular song, or similar; or
 - b. an original composition
3. An arrangement of any one piece from the current LCME Piano Handbook Grade 7 or Grade 8, for any six instruments of the candidate's choice.

3. Diploma requirements

3.1 Summary of diploma requirements

This overview outlines the diploma requirements. For detailed information, please refer to the following pages.

Composition Diplomas: ALCM, LLCM and FLCM

Candidates submit a portfolio of compositions of any style adhering to the requirements of the level.

Music Thesis Diplomas: ALCM, LLCM and FLCM

Candidates submit a dissertation on a musical topic of their choosing. Acceptable subject areas might include analysis, historical musicology, performance or teaching practice, biography of eminent musicians or composers, ethnomusicology, contemporary or social issues, music education, or aesthetics.

ALCM in Composition

Prerequisite qualifications

There are no prerequisites for entry to this examination.

Assessment

Marks are not awarded for individual compositions but for the portfolio as a whole. The exam must be approved to qualify for an award.

Recordings

At least one composition must be accompanied by an audio recording. Submitting recordings for every item in the portfolio is strongly encouraged.

Requirements

Candidates compile a portfolio of compositions or movements of not less than 20 minutes' total duration. The following considerations must be observed:

Instrumentation

- At least one of the compositions must be for eight or more independent parts.
- At least one of the compositions must be for two or fewer independent parts.
- At least one of the compositions must include a vocal part.
- At least one of the compositions must include one or more parts for strings.
- At least one of the compositions must include one or more parts for woodwind or brass instruments.
- At least one of the compositions must include one or more parts for a polyphonic instrument (eg. piano, organ, harp, etc.)

Other requirements

- A maximum of one arrangement may be included. The arrangement should not be more than 5 minutes in duration. The original piece must be provided in score format.
- At least one of the compositions must comprise at least five minutes of continuous music.
- The portfolio may comprise a single work; but in this case, it must exhibit all of the characteristics outlined above.
- The portfolio may not comprise more than six individual works.
- Any of the above may be a work for visual media (film, advertisement, etc.) or live performance (dance, drama).

Programme notes

Candidates must submit 50–150 word programme notes for each portfolio item. These must briefly explain the composition process, the aims behind each piece, and provide insight into their creative approach, techniques used, and how the work achieves their artistic or technical goals.

LLCM in Composition

Prerequisite qualifications

There are no prerequisites for entry to this examination.

Assessment

Marks are not awarded for individual compositions but for the portfolio as a whole. The exam must be approved to qualify for an award.

Recordings

At least two compositions must be accompanied by an audio recording. Submitting recordings for every item in the portfolio is strongly encouraged.

Requirements

Candidates compile a portfolio of compositions or movements of approximately 30–40 minutes' total duration.

The following considerations must be observed:

Instrumentation

- At least one of the compositions must be for ten or more independent parts.
- At least one of the compositions must be for four or fewer independent parts.
- At least one of the compositions must include a vocal part.
- At least one of the compositions must include one or more parts for strings.
- At least one of the compositions must include one or more parts for woodwind instruments.
- At least one of the compositions must include one or more parts for brass instruments.
- At least one of the compositions must include one or more parts for percussion instruments.
- At least one of the compositions must include one or more parts for a polyphonic instrument (eg. piano, organ, harp, etc.)

Other requirements

- A maximum of one arrangement may be included. The arrangement should not be more than 7 minutes in duration. The original piece must be provided in score format.
- At least one of the compositions must comprise at least 7 minutes of continuous music.
- The portfolio may comprise a single work; but in this case, it must exhibit all of the characteristics outlined above.
- The portfolio may not comprise more than six individual works.
- Any of the above may be an original work for visual media (film, advertisement, etc.) or live performance (dance, drama).

Programme notes

Candidates must submit 50–150 word programme notes for each portfolio item. These must briefly explain the composition process, the aims behind each piece, and provide insight into their creative approach, techniques used, and how the work achieves their artistic or technical goals.

FLCM in Composition

Prerequisite qualifications

There are no prerequisites for entry to this examination.

Assessment

Marks are not awarded for individual compositions but for the portfolio as a whole. The exam must be approved to qualify for an award.

Recordings

At least three compositions must be accompanied by an audio recording. Submitting recordings for every item in the portfolio is strongly encouraged.

Requirements

- Candidates compile a portfolio of compositions or movements of approximately 50–70 minutes' total duration.
- The portfolio may comprise a single large-scale work, or a selection of smaller works.
- There are no restrictions on instrumentation or genre, but it is essential that the portfolio enables the candidate to demonstrate originality, creativity and technique at the highest levels, and to sustain a convincing musical argument over an appropriate timespan.
- Any of the compositions may be original works for visual media (film, advertisement, etc.) or live performance (dance, drama).

Programme notes

Candidates must submit 50–150 word programme notes for each portfolio item. These must briefly explain the composition process, the aims behind each piece, and provide insight into their creative approach, techniques used, and how the work achieves their artistic or technical goals.

Music Thesis Diplomas: ALCM, LLCM and FLCM

Prerequisite qualifications

There are no prerequisites for entry to this examination.

Assessment

The exam must be approved to qualify for an award.

Requirements

Candidates submit a dissertation on a musical topic of their choosing. Acceptable subject areas might include analysis, historical musicology, performance or teaching practice, biography of eminent musicians or composers, ethnomusicology, contemporary or social issues, music education, or aesthetics. Theses may be empirical, theoretical, or practice-based.

Thesis guidelines

• Content

At all three levels, submissions should demonstrate academic rigour and a well-developed literary style. The chosen subject must be broad enough to allow for meaningful exploration and analysis, while remaining focused enough to ensure depth of scholarship appropriate to the level.

- ALCM: the candidate is expected to have researched a wide selection of relevant primary and/or secondary source material.
- LLCM: the candidate is expected to have researched the relevant primary and/or secondary source material with depth.
- FLCM: the candidate is expected to have researched relevant primary and/or secondary source material with depth and to demonstrate an authoritative command of the subject matter, including awareness of recent developments in scholarship. However, candidates are not required to make a significant original contribution to research in the subject area, as this is more appropriately the focus of a PhD thesis.

• Presentation and layout

Submissions must include an abstract of approximately 200–300 words, setting out the purpose and remit of study. The main body of the text must be subdivided into chapters, and a bibliography and/or list of resources must be appended.

The entire work must be prefaced by a title page and a contents page. The title page must include the title of the thesis, the name of the candidate, the month and year of submission, and the words *Thesis submitted for Associateship/Licentiate/Fellowship* (as appropriate) *Diploma at the London College of Music, University of West London*.

Candidates may adopt any recognised academic system (e.g. APA, Chicago or Harvard) of footnotes or endnotes, and of labelling for figures, musical examples, graphs, illustrations, appendices, etc. The dissertation must be typed; handwritten work is not permitted. Double or one-and-a-half spacing must be used for the main text, and single spacing for extended quotations and any footnotes.

Thesis may be submitted digitally as a PDF, and hard copies are not required. Dissertations

which are suitably presented, and are successful in passing, may be placed in the UWL library. Where a hard copy is submitted for this purpose, it must be covered front and back and securely bound with boards and cloth, or spiral bound.

- **Reference to sources**

It is essential that all references to sources, whether direct quotations or otherwise, are acknowledged, either in the text, or by means of footnotes or endnotes. Failure to do so may constitute plagiarism, on which grounds the thesis may be rejected and returned unmarked.

- **Length**

A short, tight and well-written dissertation will receive more credit than a long, diffuse one. However, as a general guide, the following word-counts are suggested:

ALCM: 8,000–10,000 words

LLCM: 12,000–15,000 words

FLCM: 25,000–30,000 words

4. Assessment and regulations

4.1 Assessment domains

Composition Grades and Diplomas

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to demonstrate mastery of the following:

- **Technique:** ability to handle melody, harmony, rhythm, dynamics, articulation, texture, form, etc. effectively; idiomatic writing, evidencing knowledge and understanding of instruments and their ranges, etc.
- **Musicality:** the ability to conceive interesting musical material and handle it effectively; to balance unity and integrity with variety and contrast; to sustain a musical argument over a given period of time.
- **Communication:** the ability to communicate a convincing and confident musical statement.
- **Presentation:** quality of production, layout, accuracy and legibility of scores.

Approximate weighting of the assessment domains

The following tables show the approximate weighting of the relevant assessment domains within each component of the exam.

	Technique	Musicality	Communication	Presentation
Grades 2, 4, 6 and 8	40%	30%	20%	10%
Diplomas	30%	40%	20%	10%

Music Thesis Diplomas

Candidates will be assessed on their ability to demonstrate mastery of the following:

Assessment Domains	Approximate weighting
Understanding and knowledge of the issues raised by the question.	22.5%
Evidence of appropriate research and scholarship.	22.5%
The ability to construct, communicate, sustain, and organize a clear and well-structured argument.	22.5%
Clarity and style of language and vocabulary.	22.5%
Quality of production, presentation, layout and legibility of dissertation.	10%

4.2 Composition Grades

Distinction (85–100%)

A candidate who achieves a mark in this band will have offered a highly original and creative response in all or most of the components. They will have demonstrated the ability to explore the creative possibilities of their chosen genre, whether through stylistic pastiche or an original compositional approach. Harmonic content will demonstrate a solid understanding of traditional practices, along with the capacity to extend or develop these approaches in a creative and contextually appropriate manner. Melodic and vocal writing will demonstrate a confident understanding of phrasing, contour, and effective placement within the harmonic context. Articulation and dynamics will be applied thoughtfully and with creativity, enhancing musical expression and technique. Arrangements will reflect a strong command of instrumental blending, demonstrating both a sensitivity to ensemble texture and the ability to reference existing works with originality and flair.

Merit (75–84%)

A candidate achieving a mark in this band will have produced a creative and well-developed response across most components, demonstrating a clear understanding of compositional techniques. There will be evidence of originality and imagination, though this may be more confidently realised in some areas than others. They will show an ability to explore the potential of their chosen genre, either through stylistic pastiche or a personal compositional approach, though some ideas may lack full development. Harmonic content will reflect a sound grasp of traditional practices, with occasional attempts to go beyond these in a musically appropriate way. Melodic and vocal writing will show a good understanding of phrasing, contour, and harmonic placement, though consistency may vary. Articulation and dynamics will be used with purpose and control, contributing positively to musical expression. Arrangements will demonstrate a solid sense of instrumental blending and some ability to reference existing works with originality.

Pass (65–74%)

A candidate achieving a mark in this band will have presented a competent and musically coherent response, showing a generally sound understanding of compositional techniques. While originality may be limited, the work will demonstrate a clear attempt to engage with the chosen genre, often through stylistic imitation or straightforward personal expression. Harmonic content will show some fluency in traditional practices, though use may be formulaic or lack nuance. Melodic and vocal writing will reflect an awareness of phrasing and contour, with some effective harmonic placement, though inconsistencies may be evident. Articulation and dynamics will be applied with a degree of control, contributing intermittently to expressive intent. Arrangements will indicate some grasp of instrumental blending, with occasional successful moments of texture or ensemble awareness, though references to existing works may be limited in imagination or execution.

Below pass, upper level (55–64%)

A candidate working within this band will have presented a portfolio that demonstrates some

understanding of compositional concepts, though the application is uneven or lacking in depth. Creative ideas may be evident, but are likely to be underdeveloped or inconsistently realised across components. There may be an attempt to engage with the chosen genre, either through pastiche or original material, but exploration is often limited or lacks clarity. Harmonic content will show basic familiarity with conventional approaches, though there may be issues with progression, coherence, or stylistic suitability. Melodic and vocal writing may reveal a developing awareness of phrasing and harmonic alignment, but control over shape and structure is likely to be inconsistent. Articulation and dynamics may be present but used in a limited or superficial way. Arrangements will show some awareness of instrumental roles and blending, but may show limitations with balance, texture, or originality.

Below pass, lower level (0–54%)

A candidate working within this band will have submitted a portfolio that shows a limited understanding of compositional principles, with significant weaknesses in the application of key musical elements. The work may lack coherence, consistency, and clarity across components. Engagement with the chosen genre is minimal or unclear, and responses may not reflect a clear stylistic approach. Harmonic content is likely to be underdeveloped, inaccurate, or inconsistent, showing limited grasp of traditional techniques or their application. Melodic and vocal writing may demonstrate limited control over phrasing, contour, or harmonic placement. Use of articulation and dynamics is likely to be minimal, inappropriate, or lacking in expressive intent. Arrangements may reveal little understanding of instrumental roles or blending, with frequent issues in balance and texture.

4.3 Composition Diplomas

Approved

A candidate will have presented a diverse and varied portfolio of compositions. They will have demonstrated creativity and originality in their work, composing confidently within their chosen genre(s) while beginning to push boundaries where appropriate. Their portfolio will reflect a strong command of writing idiomatically for their selected instruments and voices, showing an in-depth understanding of the technical capabilities and expressive potential of each, with an exploration of extended techniques where possible. The candidate will make sophisticated and purposeful use of musical elements such as dynamics, texture, articulation, and timbre as compositional tools, with a well-developed sense of structure. They will show a clear understanding of harmonic progression—using it effectively as pastiche when required or developing it into a distinctive and extended harmonic language.

Visual media and live performance candidates will have made effective use of musical elements to support and enhance the visual narrative. They will have demonstrated confident handling of synchronization, structure, and mood, presented with a clear and accurate score and accompanying media. The programme notes offer clear and thoughtful insight into the portfolio's concepts and effectively communicate the creative process behind the work.

Not approved

A candidate working at this level will have presented a portfolio that shows some variety, though it may lack the breadth or depth expected at the approved standard. Their work may show glimpses of creativity and originality but will often remain within predictable or conventional boundaries of their chosen genre(s). The ability to write idiomatically for selected instruments and voices may be inconsistently demonstrated, with limited exploration of instrumental range and capabilities. There may be some use of dynamics, texture, articulation, and timbre, but these elements are likely to be applied unevenly or without clear compositional intent. Structural understanding may be present but could lack clarity or coherence. The candidate may demonstrate a limited grasp of harmonic progression, but its use may be overly simple, repetitive, or derivative without developing a distinctive harmonic voice. While there may be emerging signs of individuality, the work may struggle to maintain a clear musical narrative or fully engage the listener.

Visual media and live performance candidates will not yet have demonstrated consistent or effective use of musical elements to support and enhance the visual narrative. The handling of synchronization, structure, and mood will require further development, and the score and/or accompanying media may lack the clarity or accuracy expected at this level. Programme notes lack sufficient detail to clearly support the portfolio content and compositional process. Further elaboration is needed to strengthen the contextual framework.

4.4 Music Thesis Diplomas

Approved

The thesis, whether empirical, theoretical, or practice-based, will have presented a clear research question or objective and demonstrate a deep understanding of the relevant literature. It will be well-structured, with a logical flow of ideas, clear writing, and proper citations. For an empirical thesis, original data collection and thorough analysis using appropriate methods is essential, with attention to ethical considerations. A theoretical thesis will critically engage with existing theories and develop new ideas or models, contributing to the field's knowledge. For a practice-based thesis, the creative work will be of high quality and accompanied by a reflective analysis that connects the practice to the research question.

The thesis will have demonstrated originality, critical thinking, and the ability to apply appropriate methodologies or creative processes. The conclusion will have summarized key findings, acknowledge limitations, and suggest areas for future research. Overall, the thesis will have adhered to academic standards and reflected a rigorous, scholarly approach to the topic.

Not approved

The thesis, whether empirical, theoretical, or practice-based, will have included a research question or objective but will have failed to develop it clearly or engage with it in a meaningful way. It will have demonstrated only a limited or superficial understanding of the relevant literature. The structure may have been disorganised, with poor flow of ideas, unclear writing, and inconsistent or incorrect use of citations. In the case of an empirical thesis, data collection

may have been incomplete or poorly executed, with minimal or flawed analysis and insufficient attention to ethical considerations. A theoretical thesis may have shown weak engagement with existing theories and lacked any meaningful development of new ideas. For a practice-based thesis, the creative work may have lacked coherence or relevance, and the accompanying reflection may not have clearly connected the practice to the research aims.

The thesis is unlikely to have demonstrated originality or sustained critical thinking, and its use of methodology or creative process may have been inappropriate or inconsistently applied. The conclusion may have been vague, failed to summarise key findings effectively, overlooked limitations, and offered little direction for future research. Overall, the work will not have met the academic standards required at this level and will have lacked the necessary rigour and scholarly engagement expected.

4.4 Regulated qualification information

LCME Composition Grades, Composition Diplomas and Music Thesis Diplomas exams are not regulated by Ofqual and do not carry UCAS points.



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