

London College of Music Examinations

Rock Guitar Recorded Exams

Qualification specifications for:
Steps, Grades and Recital Grades

Valid from:
2026 until further notice

updated 22.09.2026

This document was released on September 1, 2026.

Below is a record of updates made since release:

05.10.2026

Candidates may now select appropriate own-choice repertoire, subject to the requirements specified for each component and grade.

Rock Guitar Recorded Exam Requirements

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Rock 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 Rock Guitar from Step 1 to Grade 8, including technical work, set repertoire, and spoken test questions. For information about in-person exams, the full performance guidelines and assessment criteria, please refer to the current [Rock 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 Rock 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
Technical Work	✓	✗
Rhythm Playing	✓	✓
Lead Playing	✓	✓
Spoken Tests	✓	✗
Specialism	✓	✗
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 Rock 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 [Rock 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 **Rock 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

The Graded Guitar Songs handbooks containing the required repertoire for Grades 1 to 5 published by Hal Leonard are available from all major retailers: [click here to purchase](#)

Digital publications

• LCME handbooks

Exam handbooks for all levels are available for free as PDF downloads from our website: [click here to download](#) 

• Audio files

Audio files and other supporting material can be downloaded for free from our website: [click here to download](#) 

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Rock 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 Step 1 and 2

- **Component 1: Prepared Performance**

Performance of a number of pieces from the list of the relevant grade.

Component weightings

Prepared Performance
100%

Recorded Grades 1–8

- **Component 1: Prepared Performance**

Performance of a number of pieces from either list of the relevant grade or own choice.

- **Component 2: Prepared Improvisation**

Candidates prepare one improvisation from the relevant Rock Guitar handbook.

- **Component 3: Additional Performance or Improvisation**

Candidates perform an additional free choice piece of a similar standard or an additional prepared improvisation.

Component weightings

Prepared Performance	Prepared Improvisation	Additional Performance or Improvisation
50%	25%	25%

Regulation

LCME's Recorded Grades 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.

2.2 Recorded Recital Grades

Recital grades are performance-focused graded exams, using the same repertoire and supplementary test requirements, with the format set out below.

Recorded Recital Grades 1–8

• Component 1: Prepared Performances

Steps 1 and 2, Grades 1 to 5: Candidates perform three pieces. The choice of pieces is free. Candidates may perform pieces of a similar standard to those suggested in the grade, which may include pieces set for the same grade by another Ofqual-regulated awarding organisation. Own choice pieces should not exceed 5 minutes each.

Grades 6 to 8: Candidates perform four pieces. The choice of pieces is free. Candidates may perform pieces of a similar standard to those suggested in the grade, which may include pieces set for the same grade by another Ofqual-regulated awarding organisation.

Component weightings

	Prepared Performance 1	Prepared Performance 2	Prepared Performance 3	Prepared Performance 4
Grades 1 to 5	30%	30%	40%	–
Grades 6 to 8	25%	25%	25%	25%

Regulation

LCME's Rock Guitar Recorded Recital Grades are not regulated and do not attract UCAS points.

Step 1

Component 1: Prepared Performances

100 marks

Candidates perform two of the pieces listed below: one from Group A and one from Group B. These are provided in the Rock Guitar Handbook: Step 1 (LCME) in standard notation and tablature. Performances are to be over the backing tracks supplied with the handbook.

Group A (based on the A natural minor scale)

- Quiet as a Bulldog
- Firecracker
- The Jaguar

Group B (based on the E pentatonic minor scale)

- Jump the Barrier
- Armour Plated
- Missing in Action

Step 2

Component 1: Prepared Performances

100 marks

Candidates perform three of the pieces listed below: one from each Group, A, B and C. These are provided in the Rock Guitar Handbook: Step 2 (LCME) in standard notation and tablature. Performances are to be over the backing tracks supplied with the handbook.

Group A (based on the A pentatonic minor scale)

- Taken by Surprise
- Boom at Noon

Group B (based on the E blues scale)

- Look Out!
- Fight to the End

Group C (based on the G major scale)

- Living Legend
- Let Me Tell You This

Grade 1

Component 1: Prepared Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform two pieces. The choice of pieces is free. A list of suggested pieces is provided below for guidance only. Candidates may perform pieces of a similar standard and duration, including pieces set for the same grade by another Ofqual-regulated awarding organisation.

- Sunshine of Your Love: Cream
- Smoke on the Water: Deep Purple
- Smells Like Teen Spirit: Nirvana

The listed pieces can be found in Graded Guitar Songs: 9 Rock Classics Carefully Arranged for Beginning-Level Guitarists (Hal Leonard). The backing tracks provided with the books must be used for the selected pieces. The Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 1 (from 2019) contains performance advice for each of these pieces and it's available for free on the LCME website

Component 2: Prepared Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates perform one improvisation from the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 1 (LCME). This will be played through five times. The first verse is used to listen to the chord progression. During the second and third verse, candidates will improvise a lead guitar solo. During the fourth and fifth verse candidates will improvise a rhythm guitar part.

The range of chords that will appear at this level, and the recommended scales which candidates will need to base their improvisation on, can be found in the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 1 (LCME).

Backing tracks for the improvisations can be downloaded for free from our website: [click here to download](#) .

Component 3: Additional Performance or Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates can choose to perform an additional free choice piece of a similar standard or an additional prepared improvisation (as for component 2).

Grade 2

Component 1: Prepared Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform two pieces. The choice of pieces is free. A list of suggested pieces is provided below for guidance only. Candidates may perform pieces of a similar standard and duration, including pieces set for the same grade by another Ofqual-regulated awarding organisation.

- Day Tripper: The Beatles
- Wonderful Tonight: Eric Clapton
- Should I Stay or Should I Go: The Clash

The listed pieces can be found in Graded Guitar Songs: 9 Rock Classics Carefully Arranged for Beginning-Level Guitarists (Hal Leonard). The backing tracks provided with the books must be used for the selected pieces. The Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 2 (from 2019) contains performance advice for each of these pieces and it's available for free on the LCME website.

Component 2: Prepared Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates perform one improvisation from the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 2 (LCME). This will be played through five times. The first verse is used to listen to the chord progression. During the second and third verse, candidates will improvise a lead guitar solo. During the fourth and fifth verse candidates will improvise a rhythm guitar part.

The range of chords that will appear at this level, and the recommended scales which candidates will need to base their improvisation on, can be found in the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 2 (LCME).

Backing tracks for the improvisations can be downloaded for free from our website: [click here to download](#) .

Component 3: Additional Performance or Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates can choose to perform an additional free choice piece of a similar standard or an additional prepared improvisation (as for component 2).

Grade 3

Component 1: Prepared Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform two pieces. The choice of pieces is free. A list of suggested pieces is provided below for guidance only. Candidates may perform pieces of a similar standard and duration, including pieces set for the same grade by another Ofqual-regulated awarding organisation.

- All Right Now: Free
- Paranoid: Black Sabbath
- Pinball Wizard: The Who

The listed pieces can be found in *Graded Guitar Songs: 9 Rock Classics Carefully Arranged for Beginning-Level Guitarists* (Hal Leonard). The backing tracks provided with the books must be used for the selected pieces. The *Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 3* (from 2019) contains performance advice for each of these pieces and it's available for free on the LCME website.

Component 2: Prepared Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates perform one improvisation from the *Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 3 (LCME)*. This will be played through five times. The first verse is used to listen to the chord progression. During the second and third verse, candidates will improvise a lead guitar solo. During the fourth and fifth verse candidates will improvise a rhythm guitar part.

The range of chords that will appear at this level, and the recommended scales which candidates will need to base their improvisation on, can be found in the *Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 3 (LCME)*.

Backing tracks for the improvisations can be downloaded for free from our website: [click here to download](#) .

Component 3: Additional Performance or Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates can choose to perform an additional free choice piece of a similar standard or an additional prepared improvisation (as for component 2).

Grade 4

Component 1: Prepared Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform two pieces. The choice of pieces is free. A list of suggested pieces is provided below for guidance only. Candidates may perform pieces of a similar standard and duration, including pieces set for the same grade by another Ofqual-regulated awarding organisation.

- Layla: Derek and the Dominos
- All Along the Watchtower: The Jimi Hendrix Experience
- Sweet Home Alabama: Lynyrd Skynyrd
- Walk This Way: Aerosmith

The listed pieces can be found in Graded Rock Guitar Songs: 8 Rock Classics for Intermediate Guitarists (Hal Leonard). The backing tracks provided with the books must be used for the selected pieces. The Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 4 (from 2019) contains performance advice for each of these pieces and it's available for free on the LCME website.

Component 2: Prepared Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates perform one improvisation from the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 4 (LCME). This will be played through five times. The first verse is used to listen to the chord progression. During the second and third verse, candidates will improvise a lead guitar solo. During the fourth and fifth verse candidates will improvise a rhythm guitar part.

The range of chords that will appear at this level, and the recommended scales which candidates will need to base their improvisation on, can be found in the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 4 (LCME).

Backing tracks for the improvisations can be downloaded for free from our website: [click here to download](#) .

Component 3: Additional Performance or Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates can choose to perform an additional free choice piece of a similar standard or an additional prepared improvisation (as for component 2).

Grade 5

Component 1: Prepared Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform two pieces. The choice of pieces is free. A list of suggested pieces is provided below for guidance only. Candidates may perform pieces of a similar standard and duration, including pieces set for the same grade by another Ofqual-regulated awarding organisation.

- The Boys Are Back in Town: Thin Lizzy
- Sweet Child O' Mine: Guns N' Roses
- Under the Bridge: Red Hot Chili Peppers
- Always With Me, Always With You: Joe Satriani

The listed pieces can be found in *Graded Rock Guitar Songs: 8 Rock Classics for Intermediate Guitarists* (Hal Leonard). The backing tracks provided with the books must be used for the selected pieces. The *Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 5* (from 2019) contains performance advice for each of these pieces and it's available for free on the LCME website.

Component 2: Prepared Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates perform one improvisation from the *Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 5* (LCME). This will be played through five times. The first verse is used to listen to the chord progression. During the second and third verse, candidates will improvise a lead guitar solo. During the fourth and fifth verse candidates will improvise a rhythm guitar part.

The range of chords that will appear at this level, and the recommended scales which candidates will need to base their improvisation on, can be found in the *Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 5* (LCME).

Backing tracks for the improvisations can be downloaded for free from our website: [click here to download](#) .

Component 3: Additional Performance or Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates can choose to perform an additional free choice piece of a similar standard or an additional prepared improvisation (as for component 2).

Grade 6

Component 1: Prepared Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform a short set of three rock pieces. The total performance duration should be between 10 and 18 minutes. A variety of rock styles and techniques should be included. The choice of pieces is free; a list of suggested pieces is given below for guidance only. Own choice pieces should be of a similar standard to these. In selecting suitable pieces, candidates should refer to the main guitar parts (excluding any guitar solos) of the songs listed in order to assess the standard expected. Candidates can substitute their own lead solos in place of those of the original artists if they wish to.

- Albatross: Fleetwood Mac
- Parisienne Walkways: Gary Moore
- Crazy Train: Ozzy Osbourne
- You Really Got Me: Van Halen
- Justin: Korn

Component 2: Prepared Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates perform one improvisation from the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 6 (LCME). This will be played through five times. The first verse is used to listen to the chord progression. During the second and third verse, candidates will improvise a lead guitar solo. During the fourth and fifth verse candidates will improvise a rhythm guitar part.

The range of chords that will appear at this level, and the recommended scales which candidates will need to base their improvisation on, can be found in the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 6 (LCME).

Backing tracks for the improvisations can be downloaded for free from our website: [click here to download](#) .

Component 3: Additional Performance or Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates can choose to perform an additional free choice piece of a similar standard or an additional prepared improvisation (as for component 2).

Grade 7

Component 1: Prepared Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform a short set of three rock pieces. The total performance duration should be between 12 and 20 minutes. A variety of rock styles and techniques should be included. The choice of pieces is free; a list of suggested pieces is given below for guidance only. Own choice pieces should be of a similar standard to these. In selecting suitable pieces, candidates should refer to the main guitar parts (excluding any guitar solos) of the songs listed in order to assess the standard expected. Candidates can substitute their own lead solos in place of those of the original artists if they wish to.

- Stairway to Heaven: Led Zeppelin
- Samba Pa Ti: Santana
- The Trooper: Iron Maiden
- Private Investigations: Dire Straits
- Seek and Destroy: Metallica

Component 2: Prepared Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates perform one improvisation from the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 7 (LCME). This will be played through seven times. The first verse is used to listen to the chord progression. During the second, third and fourth verses, candidates will improvise a lead guitar solo. During the fifth, sixth and seventh verses candidates will improvise a rhythm guitar part.

The range of chords that will appear at this level, and the recommended scales which candidates will need to base their improvisation on, can be found in the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 7 (LCME).

Backing tracks for the improvisations can be downloaded for free from our website: [click here to download](#) .

Component 3: Additional Performance or Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates can choose to perform an additional free choice piece of a similar standard or an additional prepared improvisation (as for component 2).

Grade 8

Component 1: Prepared Performance

50 marks

Candidates perform a short set of three rock pieces. The total performance duration should be between 12 and 22 minutes. A variety of rock styles and techniques should be included. The choice of pieces is free; a list of suggested pieces is given below for guidance only. Own choice pieces should be of a similar standard to these. In selecting suitable pieces, candidates should refer to the main guitar parts (excluding any guitar solos) of the songs listed in order to assess the standard expected. Candidates can substitute their own lead solos in place of those of the original artists if they wish to.

- Savoy: Jeff Beck
- Satch Boogie: Joe Satriani
- The Spirit of Radio: Rush
- Bat Country: Avenged Sevenfold

Component 2: Prepared Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates perform one improvisation from the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 8 (LCME). This will be played through seven times. The first verse is used to listen to the chord progression. During the second, third and fourth verses, candidates will improvise a lead guitar solo. During the fifth, sixth and seventh verses candidates will improvise a rhythm guitar part.

The range of chords that will appear at this level, and the recommended scales which candidates will need to base their improvisation on, can be found in the Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 8 (LCME).

Backing tracks for the improvisations can be downloaded for free from our website: [click here to download](#) .

Component 3: Additional Performance or Improvisation

25 marks

Candidates can choose to perform an additional free choice piece of a similar standard or an additional prepared improvisation (as for component 2).



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