

London College of Music Examinations

Rock Guitar Syllabus

Qualification specifications for:

Steps, Grades, Recital Grades, Performance Awards

Valid from:

2019 until further notice

updated 12.06.2024

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1.1 Introduction

London College of Music Examinations (LCME)

External examinations have been awarded by the London College of Music since the institution's founding in 1887. Today, examinations are held throughout the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland and at many overseas centres; they are unique in the graded examinations sector in being awarded by a university, ensuring the added quality assurance of the University of West London (UWL), who is the issuer of certificates. Graded and diploma exams in most subjects are regulated by Ofqual and other UK regulators. Candidates applying to UK universities through the UCAS system are eligible to claim UCAS points if they achieve a pass or higher at Grades 6 to 8 in a regulated subject.

What makes LCM Examinations distinctive

LCME's graded and diploma qualifications make a distinctive contribution to education in music, drama and communication, because of the emphasis placed upon:

- creative thinking
- an encouragement to think technically and critically about the repertoire performed, and the opportunity to communicate this in practical examinations
- a distinctively broad stylistic range of tasks and repertoire, with a strong emphasis towards the acquisition and demonstration of skills and understandings that are of contemporary relevance to the performing arts
- the provision of assessment in areas not traditionally included within the scope of graded examinations
- the provision of flexible examination formats and arrangements

Syllabus objectives

A course of study based on this syllabus is intended to provide:

- a balanced combination of performing skills, supported by knowledge and understanding
- an enduring love, enjoyment and understanding of the performing arts, from the perspective of both participants and audience
- the basis to develop relevant and usable skills and concepts
- skills in organisation, planning, problem solving and communication
- enhanced ability in acquiring the personal disciplines and motivation necessary for lifelong learning
- opportunities for mastery learning that are structured and directly related to the repertoire published for each grade
- opportunities for learning and assessment that are creatively challenging
- a progressive and unified assessment system, enabling candidates to plan and obtain an effective education in the arts, equipping candidates with added-value to enhance career routes, educational opportunities and decision-making

1.2 Syllabus validity

This syllabus is valid for Steps, Grades, Recital Grades and Performance Awards exams in Rock Guitar from Summer 2019 until further notice.

1.3 Changes to the syllabus

This syllabus replaces the Rock Guitar Syllabus (2011 until further notice), Rock Guitar Exam Information Booklet (2011 until further notice) and Rock Guitar Performance Awards Combined Syllabus and Information Booklet. These are now combined into one syllabus. Major changes to the syllabus are as follows:

- The levels Initial and Preliminary have been renamed Step 1 and Step 2.
- Live Performance Awards have been renamed Recital Grades.

There are redesigned handbooks available for all levels; the content is unchanged and candidates with copies of the existing handbooks can still use these for the exams.

1.4 Exam options

The following is an overview of the solo graded examinations and performance awards contained in this syllabus:

	Grades	Recital Grades	Performance Awards
Exam component			
Prepared Performances	2 pieces (Grades 1 to 5) 3 pieces (Grades 6 to 8)	3 pieces (Grades 1 to 5) 4 pieces (Grades 6 to 8)	3 pieces (Levels 1 to 5) 4 pieces (Levels 6 to 8)
Improvisation	✓	✗	✗
Aural Assessment	✓	✗	✗
Structure	Grades 1 to 8	Levels 1 to 8	Levels 1 to 8
Assessment	Examination	Examination	Video recording
Grading	Distinction: 85–100% Merit: 75–84% Pass: 65–74%	Distinction: 85–100% Merit: 75–84% Pass: 65–74%	Distinction: 85–100% Merit: 75–84% Pass: 65–74%
Ofqual regulation	✓	✗	✗

Introductory examinations

LCME also offer 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 Exam entry

Exam dates, locations and fees

Details of exam dates, locations, fees and how to book an exam are available on our website:

lcme.uwl.ac.uk/enter

Age groups and requirements for prior learning

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

Exam durations

Step 1	Step 2	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
10 mins	12 mins	13 mins	14 mins	16 mins	18 mins	20 mins	26 mins	30 mins	32 mins

Marking

Qualifications are awarded by University of West London Qualifications (UWLQ). Exams are conducted by trained external examiners and are held at approved centres in the UK and overseas. Candidates will be assessed on their technical accomplishment, musicality, musical knowledge and communication. In awarding marks, examiners will take into account the extent to which each of these assessment domains is demonstrated within the individual exam components; the assessment criteria used by the examiners for graded examinations is given in Section 5: Assessment. A Pass in each individual exam component is not required to pass overall.

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 online within days and will be sent by post not later than four weeks after the examination date. Certificates for successful candidates are normally dispatched within eight weeks of the date of the examination, but very often they will be received sooner than this. This time is necessary to ensure that all results are properly standardised and have been checked by LCM Examinations.

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.

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.

1.6 Exam regulations

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

1.7 Performance guidelines

Instruments

Candidates can use an electric or acoustic guitar, or both, during the exam, provided that the primary genre of the music performed is rock.

Use of music in the examination

Candidates must use published editions of all music performed in the examination, whether published by LCME or by other publishers — legal downloads are acceptable. Candidates should ensure that they have obtained all the necessary music before submitting an entry. Where a candidate wishes to perform from memory, published editions of the music must still be available for the examiner's reference.

Tuning

For exam purposes instruments should be tuned to standard concert pitch (A=440Hz). The use of an electronic tuner or other tuning aid is permitted. The examiner will offer an E or A note to tune to on request.

2. Summary of subject content

2.1 Introductory and graded examinations

Full information about each exam component is given in Section 4: Exam requirements.

Exam components

Component 1: Prepared Performances

Component 2: Improvisation (from Grade 1 onwards)

Component 3: Aural Assessment (from Step 2 onwards)

Component weightings

	Prepared Performances	Improvisation	Aural Assessment
Step 1	100%	—	—
Step 2	90%	—	10%
Grades 1 to 8	60%	30%	10%

2.2 Recital Grades

Exam components

The requirements for each exam component are the same as for the equivalent graded exam (see Section 4: Exam requirements) unless specified otherwise below.

Component 1: Prepared Performances (100%)

Steps 1 and 2, Grades 1 to 5: Candidates perform three prepared pieces, at least one of which must be chosen from those listed for the equivalent grades. Any own choice pieces must be of a similar standard to the listed pieces. Own choice pieces should not exceed 5 minutes each.

Grades 6 to 8: Candidates perform four prepared pieces. Any own choice pieces must be of a similar standard to the suggested arrangements for the grade.

Marking

	Performance 1	Performance 2	Performance 3	Performance 4
Steps, Grades 1 to 5	30%	30%	40%	—
Grades 6 to 8	25%	25%	25%	25%

Regulation

Recital Grades in Rock Guitar are not currently regulated by Ofqual.

2.3 Performance Awards

Summary

Candidates submit a video recording of their performance (a slightly higher standard of performance will be expected than for the equivalent live exam).

There are ten levels (Steps 1 and 2, Levels 1 to 8), each equivalent to the standard of the graded exams (Performance Award Level 3 is equivalent to Grade 3). Performances are assessed by trained LCM examiners, using the same standards and criteria as are used for graded exams (see Section 7: Assessment), offering candidates a reliable and independent assessment of their performance standard, while benefitting from the flexibility allowed by the submission process.

Entry details

Candidates may enter for performance awards at any time; the standard closing dates are not applicable. To enter, candidates should visit lcme.uwl.ac.uk and click on the *upload work* link. Here the entry form should be completed, the exam fee paid and then the file can be uploaded.

Exam components

Component 1: Performance

Steps 1 and 2: Candidates perform three pieces. At least two of these must be selected from the relevant exam handbook.

Grades 1 to 5: Candidates perform three pieces. At least two of these must be selected from the relevant exam handbook.

Grades 6 to 8: Candidates perform four pieces. At least two of these must be selected from the relevant exam handbook.

Component weightings

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

Requirements

Candidates must provide details of the pieces they are performing; this information should be provided on the online form. Candidates are not required to submit scores of any pieces performed.

Each piece must be recorded in a single, uninterrupted take.

Performances must be recorded using a static camera, which should be positioned in such a way as to show the performer clearly.

The microphone must be of sufficient quality to allow assessment of all aspects of the performance, including tone quality, dynamic range etc.

The microphone should be positioned in such a way as to ensure a good sound balance between candidate and accompanist (if applicable).

When uploading a file to the website, the file must be either avi, flv, wmv, mov or mp4 format and should not exceed 150MB. The file must be labelled clearly with the candidate's name.

The entry process includes a declaration indicating that the performances were given by the candidate. This must be signed and dated by the candidate and by an adult witness (who may be the candidate's teacher).

Regulation

Performance Awards in Rock Guitar are not currently regulated by Ofqual.

3. Grade descriptions

3.1 Introductory examinations

Steps 1 and 2

The musical material selected for these grades, and hence the standard of performance expected, is of an essentially elementary nature. Only the most basic, and hence most common, chords and structures are used. Melodic and rhythmic material will be relatively simple. Expectations of dynamics are limited to occasional use. The scales and chords required are limited to the least demanding examples. Technical accomplishment is a more important element of assessment than is musicality, and expectations of communication are limited.

3.2 Graded examinations

Grades 1 and 2

The musical material selected for these grades, and hence the standard of performance expected, is of an essentially elementary nature. Only the most basic, and hence most common, chords and structures are used. Melodic and rhythmic material will be relatively simple. Expectations of dynamics are limited to occasional use. The scales and chords required are limited to the least demanding examples. Technical accomplishment is a more important element of assessment than is musicality, and expectations of communication are limited.

Grades 3 and 4

The musical material selected for these grades, and hence the standard of performance expected, is of a more demanding nature. Melodic and rhythmic material will be more complex than earlier grades. Expectations of dynamics and phrasing will extend to a wider variety of type and degree of use. The range of scales and chords required is expanded in number and includes more taxing examples. Musicality is an increasingly important element of assessment in relation to technical accomplishment, and expectations of communication are higher.

Grade 5

The musical material selected for Grade 5 is of a more demanding nature than for previous grades and performance expectations are raised — so that it is the first grade where one might expect to encounter a standard of performance which might conceivably be suitable for small local rock gigs. Melodic and rhythmic material will include a moderate degree of complexity. It is expected that dynamics and phrasing will be varied and will often demonstrate a degree of subtlety. The range of scales and chords required is expanded in number to include more taxing examples. Musicality is judged to be an extremely important element of assessment, and expectations of communication are higher.

Grades 6 and 7

The musical material selected for these grades is technically demanding, and the standard of performance expected will be higher than that of preceding grades. Melodic and rhythmic material will include a

significant degree of complexity. It is expected that the performances will include passages that demonstrate considerable dexterity and fluency. The range of scales and chords required is expanded in type and fingerboard positions. Musicality is judged to be almost as important as technical accomplishment in the assessment, and the candidate is expected to communicate with an emerging sense of musical personality.

Grade 8

The musical material selected for this grade, and the standard of performance expected, may be described as being of a level that would enable creditable performance at a reasonably-sized local rock music venue. Performances may include a significant degree of melodic and rhythmic complexity. The range of scales and chords required is expanded to include different fingerboard positions to exploit the full range of the instrument. Musicality is judged to be almost as important as technical accomplishment in the assessment, and the candidate is expected to communicate with a clear sense of musical personality.

4. Exam requirements

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 (from 2019) 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

90 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 (from 2019) 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

Component 2: Aural Assessment

10 marks

Rhythm Test

A 1-bar riff will be played three times via a recording. During the third playing candidates will clap along with the exact rhythm of the riff. The test will then be repeated using a different riff.

Pitch Test

The examiner will play two notes consecutively either live or via a recording. Without using the guitar, candidates will be required to state whether the second note was higher or lower than the first note. The test will then be repeated using a different example.

Grade 1

Component 1: Prepared Performances

60 marks

Candidates perform two of the pieces listed below. These are provided in the publication Graded Guitar Songs: 9 Rock Classics Carefully Arranged for Beginning-Level Guitarists (Hal Leonard). The pieces have been specifically arranged to be suitable for performance at this grade. Performances are to be over the backing tracks supplied with this book. The Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 1 (from 2019) contains performance advice for each of these pieces.

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

Component 2: Improvisation

30 marks

Candidates will be shown a previously unseen 8-bar chord progression. 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, are given below.

Chords (open position except where marked *)

- Major chords: G, C, D
- Minor chords: Am, Em
- Dominant 7th chords: D7
- Fifth (power) chords: A5, B5*, C5*, D5, E5, F5*, G5*

Scales (2-octave scales are expected at this grade)

- G pentatonic major (open position)
- E blues (open position)
- A pentatonic minor (fretted)

Component 3: Aural Assessment

10 marks

Rhythm Test

A 2-bar riff will be played three times via a recording. During the third playing candidates will clap along with the exact rhythm of the riff.

Pitch Test

The same riff from the Rhythm Test will be played two further times, with a click track. Candidates will then be asked, after a 1-bar count-in, to play along with the click track, accurately reproducing the riff on the guitar.

Chord recognition test

The examiner will play a short chord progression once. Without using the guitar, candidates will be required to state whether it contained either all major chords or all minor chords.

Grade 2

Component 1: Prepared Performances

60 marks

Candidates perform two of the pieces listed below. These are provided in the publication Graded Guitar Songs: 9 Rock Classics Carefully Arranged for Beginning-Level Guitarists (Hal Leonard). The pieces have been specifically arranged to be suitable for performance at this grade. Performances are to be over the backing tracks supplied with this book. The Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 2 (from 2019) contains performance advice for each of these pieces.

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

Component 2: Improvisation

30 marks

Candidates will be shown a previously unseen 8-bar chord progression. 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, are given below.

Chords (open position except where marked *)

- Major chords: A, C, D, E, F*, G
- Minor chords: Am, Dm, Em, F#m*
- Dominant 7th chords: A7, D7, E7

Scales (2-octave fretted scales are expected at this grade)

- A pentatonic major
- A blues
- A natural minor

Component 3: Aural Assessment

10 marks

Rhythm Test

A 2-bar riff will be played three times via a recording. During the third playing candidates will clap along with the exact rhythm of the riff.

Pitch Test

The same riff from the Rhythm Test will be played two further times, with a click track. Candidates will then be asked, after a 1-bar count-in, to play along with the click track, accurately reproducing the riff on the guitar.

Chord recognition test

The examiner will play a short chord progression once. Without using the guitar, candidates will be required to state whether it contained either either all major chords, all minor chords or all dominant 7th chords.

Grade 3

Component 1: Prepared Performances

60 marks

Candidates perform two of the pieces listed below. These are provided in the publication *Graded Guitar Songs: 9 Rock Classics Carefully Arranged for Beginning-Level Guitarists* (Hal Leonard). The pieces have been specifically arranged to be suitable for performance at this grade. Performances are to be over the backing tracks supplied with this book. The *Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 3* (from 2019) contains performance advice for each of these pieces.

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

Component 2: Improvisation

30 marks

Candidates will be shown a previously unseen 8-bar chord progression. 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, are given below.

Chords

- Major and minor barre chords and fifth (power) chords with root notes of: G, A, B, C, D, E

Scales (2-octave fretted scales are expected at this grade)

- G major
- A blues
- B pentatonic minor
- C pentatonic major
- D natural minor

Component 3: Aural Assessment

10 marks

Rhythm Test

A 2-bar riff will be played three times via a recording. During the third playing candidates will clap along with the exact rhythm of the riff.

Pitch Test

The same riff from the Rhythm Test will be played two further times, with a click track. Candidates will then be asked, after a 1-bar count-in, to play along with the click track, accurately reproducing the riff on the guitar.

Chord recognition test

The examiner will state the key and then a very short chord progression will be played two times. Without using the guitar, candidates will be required to identify the penultimate chord within the chord progression.

Grade 4

Component 1: Prepared Performances

60 marks

Candidates perform two pieces, at least one of which is chosen from the list below. These are provided in the publication Graded Rock Guitar Songs: 8 Rock Classics for Intermediate Guitarists (Hal Leonard). The pieces have been specifically arranged to be suitable for performance at this grade. Performances are to be over the backing tracks supplied with this book. The Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 4 (from 2019) contains performance advice for each of these pieces.

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

If an own choice piece is performed in place of one of the pieces in the book, it must be of at least a similar standard and must not exceed five minutes in duration.

Component 2: Improvisation

30 marks

Candidates will be shown a previously unseen 8-bar chord progression. 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, are given below.

Chords

- Major and minor barre chords and fifth (power) chords at any pitch

Scales (2-octave fretted scales are expected at this grade)

- Pentatonic minor, natural minor, major, pentatonic major and blues scales in any key

Component 3: Aural Assessment

10 marks

Rhythm Test

A 2-bar riff will be played three times via a recording. During the third playing candidates will clap along with the exact rhythm of the riff.

Pitch Test

The same riff from the Rhythm Test will be played two further times, with a click track. Candidates will then be asked, after a 1-bar count-in, to play along with the click track, accurately reproducing the riff on the guitar.

Chord recognition test

A 4-bar chord progression will be played four times, using a simple strumming rhythm. During the fourth playing candidates will play along, accurately reproducing the chords.

Grade 5

Component 1: Prepared Performances

60 marks

Candidates perform two pieces, at least one of which is chosen from the list below. These are provided in the publication *Graded Rock Guitar Songs: 8 Rock Classics for Intermediate Guitarists* (Hal Leonard). The pieces have been specifically arranged to be suitable for performance at this grade. Performances are to be over the backing tracks supplied with this book. *The Rock Guitar Handbook: Grade 5* (from 2019) contains performance advice for each of these pieces.

- 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

If an own choice piece is performed in place of one of the pieces in the book, it must be of at least a similar standard and must not exceed five minutes in duration.

Component 2: Improvisation

30 marks

Candidates will be shown a previously unseen 8-bar chord progression. 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, are given below.

Chords (at any pitch)

- Major and minor barre chords and fifth (power) chords
- Dominant 7th chords
- Sus4 chords
- Flat fifth (power) chords, sharp fifth (power) chords

Scales (2-octave fretted scales are expected at this grade, and some movement across the fingerboard is expected — being able to improvise using the scales above in two different fingerboard positions is recommended)

- Pentatonic minor, natural minor, major, pentatonic major and blues scales in any key

Component 3: Aural Assessment

10 marks

Rhythm Test

A 2-bar riff will be played three times via a recording. During the third playing candidates will clap along with the exact rhythm of the riff.

Pitch Test

The same riff from the Rhythm Test will be played two further times, with a click track. Candidates will then be asked, after a 1-bar count-in, to play along with the click track, accurately reproducing the riff on the guitar.

Chord recognition test

A 4-bar chord progression will be played four times, using a simple strumming rhythm. During the fourth playing candidates will play along, accurately reproducing the chords.

Grade 6

Component 1: Prepared Performances

60 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, but these do not have to be performed in the exam. The pieces below have been selected as they are of the standard required at this grade — 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: Improvisation

30 marks

Candidates will be shown a previously unseen 8-bar chord progression. 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, are given below.

Chords (at any pitch)

- All chords listed for previous grades
- Minor 7th chords
- Major 7th chords
- Diminished 7th chords
- Dominant 7sus4 chords

Scales (candidates are expected to demonstrate fluent movement across the fretboard when improvising, equivalent to at least three different fretboard scale positions; in addition, some practical demonstration of the use of arpeggios (or 'chord tones') is expected)

- Pentatonic minor, natural minor, major, pentatonic major and blues scales in any key

Component 3: Aural Assessment

10 marks

Rhythm Test

A 2-bar riff will be played three times via a recording. During the third playing candidates will clap along with the exact rhythm of the riff.

Pitch Test

The same riff from the Rhythm Test will be played two further times, with a click track. Candidates will then be asked, after a 1-bar count-in, to play along with the click track, accurately reproducing the riff on the guitar.

Chord recognition test

A 4-bar chord progression will be played four times, using a simple strumming rhythm. During the fourth playing candidates will play along, accurately reproducing the chords.

Grade 7

Component 1: Prepared Performances

60 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, but these do not have to be performed in the exam. The pieces below have been selected as they are of the standard required at this grade — 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: Improvisation

30 marks

Candidates will be shown a previously unseen 8-bar chord progression. 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, are given below.

Chords (at any pitch)

- All chords listed for previous grades
- Commonly used 'slash' chords

Scales (candidates are expected to demonstrate fluent movement across the fretboard when improvising, equivalent to at least four different fretboard scale positions; in addition, practical demonstration of the use of arpeggios (or 'chord tones') is expected)

- Pentatonic minor, natural minor, major, pentatonic major and blues scales in any key
- Dorian and mixolydian modal scales, harmonic minor scale

Component 3: Aural Assessment

10 marks

Rhythm Test

A 4-bar riff will be played three times via a recording. During the third playing candidates will clap along with the exact rhythm of the riff.

Pitch Test

The same riff from the Rhythm Test will be played two further times, with a click track. Candidates will then be asked, after a 1-bar count-in, to play along with the click track, accurately reproducing the riff on the guitar.

Chord recognition test

A 4-bar chord progression will be played four times, using a simple strumming rhythm. During the fourth playing candidates will play along, accurately reproducing the chords.

Grade 8

Component 1: Prepared Performances

60 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, but these do not have to be performed in the exam. The pieces below have been selected as they are of the standard required at this grade — 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: Improvisation

30 marks

Candidates will be shown a previously unseen 8-bar chord progression. 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, are given below.

Chords (at any pitch)

- All chords listed for previous grades
- Minor 7^b5, dominant 9th, minor 9th and dominant 7[#]9 chords

Scales (candidates are expected to demonstrate fluent movement across the entire fretboard when improvising, equivalent to five different fretboard scale positions; in addition, fluent demonstration of the use of arpeggios (or 'chord tones') and, where musically appropriate, chromaticism is also expected)

- Pentatonic minor, natural minor, major, pentatonic major and blues scales in any key
- Dorian and mixolydian modal scales, harmonic minor scale

Component 3: Aural Assessment

10 marks

Rhythm Test

A 4-bar riff will be played three times via a recording. During the third playing candidates will clap along with the exact rhythm of the riff.

Pitch Test

The same riff from the Rhythm Test will be played two further times, with a click track. Candidates will then be asked, after a 1-bar count-in, to play along with the click track, accurately reproducing the riff on the guitar.

Chord recognition test

A 4-bar chord progression will be played four times, using a simple strumming rhythm. During the fourth playing candidates will play along, accurately reproducing the chords.

5. Assessment

5.1 Assessment domains

Assessment objectives

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

Technical accomplishment: The extent to which the instrument is effectively controlled, assessed via the candidate's performance.

Musicality: The ability to make sensitive and musical performance decisions.

Musical Knowledge: The synthesis of theoretical, notational and contextual knowledge.

Communication: The degree to which the performer communicates with and engages the listener through musical performance on their instrument.

Coverage of the assessment domains

The following table shows the assessment domains which apply within each exam component:

	Technical Accomplishment	Musicality	Musical Knowledge	Communication
Prepared Performances	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improvisation	✓	✓	✓	✓
Aural Assessment			✓	

Approximate weighting of the assessment domains

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

	Technical Accomplishment	Musicality	Musical Knowledge	Communication
Prepared Performances and Improvisation				
Steps 1 and 2, Grades 1 and 2	55%	10%	25%	10%
Grades 3 to 5	45%	15%	25%	15%
Grades 6 to 8	35%	20%	25%	20%
Aural Assessment			100%	

5.2 Attainment band descriptions

The guidelines below are not intended to be mutually exclusive, but should function interrelatedly. Thus for any particular attainment band, one or more criteria might exceed those specified, while one or more others might fail to meet the requirements. The specific criteria for each component of the examination are as follows.

	Distinction 85–100%	Merit 75–84%	Pass 65–74%	Below Pass 0–64%
Prepared Performances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly accurate and rhythmically secure performance. Fluent and assured performance with a high level of clarity and technical control, with only small and very occasional lapses in any of these. As the grades progress, expressive qualities and (at higher grades) versatility are clearly displayed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accuracy, timing, clarity, fluency and technical control are generally secure, with occasional lapses. As the grades progress, the performance displays some confidence and musical expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accuracy and timing mostly secure, with some lapses in fluency, technical control and clarity. Musical expression may be limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious or numerous lapses in accuracy. Frequent lapses in timing, fluency, technical control and clarity. Limited evidence of musical expression and style.
Improvisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly accurate and confident performance. Fluent and assured performance with a high level of clarity and technical control, appropriate to the grade. Stylistic interpretation, inventiveness and creativity should be clearly displayed as the grades progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accuracy, timing, clarity are generally secure, with occasional lapses in clarity and fluency. As the grades progress, the performance displays some confidence, stylistic interpretation and creativity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accuracy and timing mostly secure, with some lapses in clarity and fluency. Stylistic interpretation and creativity may be limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serious or numerous lapses in accuracy or timing. Clarity, fluency, stylistic interpretation and inventiveness are limited.
Aural Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses were accurate and presented with confidence and clarity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses were mostly accurate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sufficient degree of accuracy, containing some errors in places. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A variety of errors in the responses.

5.3 Awards of Pass, Pass with Merit or Pass with Distinction

Distinction (85–100%)

A candidate who achieves a Pass with Distinction will have offered a highly accurate, fluent and musical response in all or most of the components. They will have demonstrated secure technical accomplishment on their instrument, and will have shown evidence of excellent musicality. They will have demonstrated a thorough knowledge and understanding of topics as specified for the grade. At higher grades, they will have communicated, through performance, a sense of real engagement and understanding, and clear sense of individual personality.

Merit (75–84%)

A candidate who achieves a Pass with Merit will have offered an accurate, fluent and musical response in all or most of the components. They will have demonstrated a good standard of technical accomplishment on their instrument, and will have shown significant evidence of musicality. They will have demonstrated a largely assured knowledge and understanding of topics as specified for the grade. They will have

communicated, through performance, some sense of engagement and understanding and, at higher grades, an emerging sense of individual personality.

Pass (65–74%)

A candidate who achieves a Pass will have offered a mostly accurate, fluent and musical response in all or most of the components. They will have demonstrated an acceptable standard of technical accomplishment on their instrument, and will have shown some evidence of musicality. They will have demonstrated some knowledge and understanding of topics as specified for the grade. They will have communicated, through performance, a basic sense of understanding and ability to engage the listener.

Below pass, upper level (55–64%)

A candidate who achieves a mark in this band will have demonstrated some inaccuracy, lack of fluency, and lack of musicality in all or most of the components. They will not have demonstrated an acceptable standard of technical accomplishment on their instrument, nor will they have shown much evidence of musical instinct. Their knowledge and understanding of topics as specified for the grade will have been judged to be below the standard required to pass. They will have failed to communicate, through performance, any significant degree of understanding or ability to engage the listener.

Below pass, lower level (0–54%)

A candidate who achieves a mark in this band will have demonstrated significant inaccuracy, lack of fluency and lack of musicality in all or most of the components. Their standard of technical accomplishment on their instrument will have been judged as significantly below that required for the grade, and they will not have shown any significant evidence of sufficient musicality. Their knowledge and understanding of topics as specified for the grade will have been minimal in relation to the requirements of the grade. They will have failed to communicate, through performance, a sense of understanding or ability to engage the listener.

6. Regulated qualifications

6.1 Regulated qualification information

The table below shows the qualification number, title, Guided Learning Hours (GLH), Total Qualification Time (TQT) and credit value of each grade. The awarding organisation is University of West London Qualifications (UWLQ). Please contact us, or consult the Register of Regulated Qualifications: register.ofqual.gov.uk, for further details.

Graded examinations

Level	Qualification Number	Qualification Title	GLH	TQT	Credit
Grade 1	501/1985/0	UWLQ Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Grade 1)	12	60	6
Grade 2	501/2002/5	UWLQ Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Grade 2)	18	90	9
Grade 3	501/2004/9	UWLQ Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Grade 3)	18	120	12
Grade 4	501/2003/7	UWLQ Level 2 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Grade 4)	24	150	15
Grade 5	501/2006/2	UWLQ Level 2 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Grade 5)	24	180	18
Grade 6	501/2083/9	UWLQ Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Grade 6)	36	220	22
Grade 7	501/2082/7	UWLQ Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Grade 7)	48	270	27
Grade 8	501/2066/9	UWLQ Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Grade 8)	54	320	32

6.2 RQF levels

The Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) has eight levels plus entry level. The table below shows the broad equivalences between UWLQ qualifications and other qualifications within the RQF and higher education.

RQF Level	UWLQ Qualification	Equivalent Standard
1	Grades 1, 2 and 3	GCSE Grades 3 to 1
2	Grades 4 and 5	GCSE Grades 9 to 4
3	Grades 6, 7 and 8	A Level
4	DipLCM in Music Performance and Teaching	First year undergraduate degree module
5	ALCM in Music Performance and Teaching	Second year undergraduate degree module
6	LLCM in Music Performance and Teaching	Final year undergraduate degree module
7	FLCM in Music Performance	Masters degree module

6.3 UCAS tariff points

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) includes regulated graded music examinations at Grades 6 to 8 in its tariff as follows:

UCAS Points	LCM Practical Examinations			LCM Theory Examinations			A Levels	
	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	AS Level	A2 Level
56								A*
48								A
40								B
32								C
30			Distinction					
24			Merit					D
20							A	
18			Pass					
16		Distinction					B	E
14		Merit						
12	Distinction	Pass					C	
10	Merit					Distinction	D	
9						Merit		
8	Pass				Distinction	Pass		
7					Merit			
6				Distinction	Pass		E	
5				Merit				
4				Pass				

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