

BASS GUITAR PLAYING

INTERMEDIATE GRADES

Grade Three to Grade Five

Compiled by

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on behalf of



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INTRODUCTION

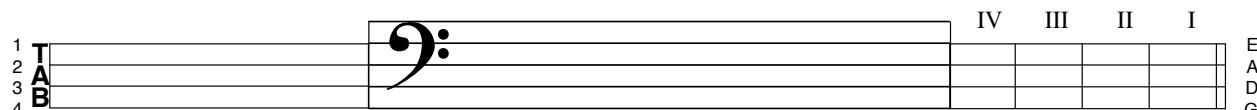
This handbook is primarily intended to give advice and information to candidates taking the Grades 3, 4 and 5 examinations in Bass Guitar Playing. However, the information will undoubtedly be helpful to all bass guitarists, whether they intend to take the examination or not.

The handbook aims to aid the establishment of good musical and technical foundations. Although it can be used for independent study, it is best used as a supplement to individual or group tuition, and is not designed to

replace the need for guidance from an experienced teacher.

To use this handbook to best effect it is essential that the general introductions to each chapter are carefully studied, in addition to the relevant sections for each grade.

In order to illustrate the information about scales, arpeggios and other bass patterns as clearly as possible to all players, regardless of experience, the book uses the Registry of Guitar Tutors' unique *Guitarograph* system.

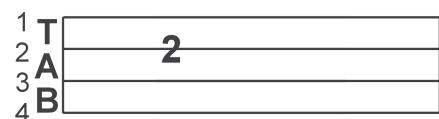


The *Guitarograph* uses a combination of tablature, traditional notation and

fingerboard diagram. These are explained individually below:

(1) Tablature

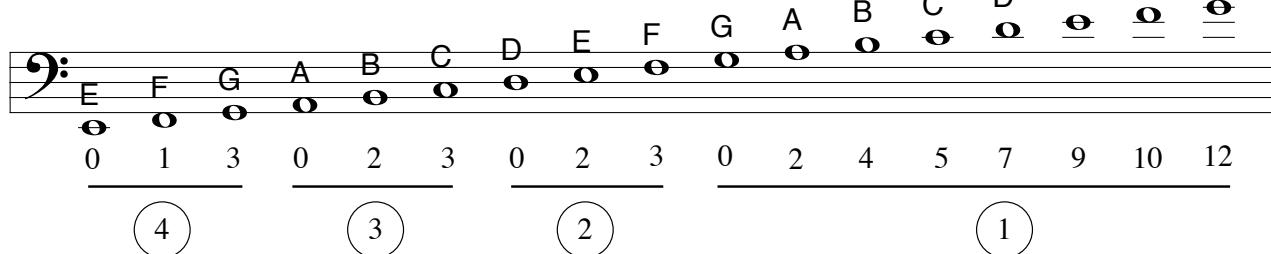
The horizontal lines represent the strings in descending order, as indicated. The numbers on the string lines refer to the frets at which the left-hand



fingers should press. This example means: play on string 2 at fret 2.

(2) Bass clef notation

The lines and spaces of the bass clef indicate notes as follows:



A sharp (#) before a note *raises* its pitch by a semitone, i.e. the note is played one fret higher.

A flat (b) before a note *lowers* its pitch by a semitone, i.e. the note is played one fret lower.

In the example, the circled numbers at the bottom refer to a string on which each note could be played. The other numbers refer to the fret on that string at which the note is to be found. The same note could be played on another string – so it is important to always refer to either the tablature or fingerboard diagram.

(3) Fingerboard diagram

Each horizontal line represents a string. The vertical lines represent the frets. Each fret is given a number in Roman numerals. Numbers on the horizontal lines indicate the left-hand finger to be used.



Play at the 3rd fret of the D string using the 3rd finger.

Guitarograph

All three previous methods are ways of illustrating the same information. In this Handbook all are used in combination, using the *guitarograph*. This leaves no doubt as to what is required.



Above each *guitarograph* is a scale or arpeggio spelling. This lists the letter names of the notes to be played, together with their *interval numbers*.

This example therefore means:

play the note C (notation),
play string 3 at fret 3 (tablature),
use finger 3 (fingerboard diagram).

The interval numbers refer to the position of the notes in comparison to the major scale with the same starting note. For example:

C Major Scale

note names:	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
interval number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Alternative positions and fingerings

When using the *guitarograph*, please remember that the *note names* given are definitive, that is, they cannot be changed. However, on the bass guitar, it is possible to play a note at more than one position on the fingerboard. For example, the note C given in the previous examples can also be played at the same pitch on string 4 at fret 8. This is called an *alternative position*. Nevertheless, you should normally play notes at the points indicated by the tablature and fingerboard diagrams, unless you are advised otherwise by your teacher. The reason can be shown by an example: in earlier grades, open string notes are often recommended to facilitate ease of playing; at higher grades, fretted notes are used more often to facilitate transpositional fingering of scales and patterns.

It is also possible to play the scales and patterns with fingers other than those indicated. There are various reasons why other fingers might be chosen. For example, on the bass guitar a major consideration is the size of a players hands, and the ability to stretch over several frets. The fingering given in this handbook, although carefully chosen as being generally suitable, are only one possible recommended suggestion.

Please note that in the examinations you are allowed to use any alternative systematic fingering, *provided that this produces a good musical result*.

This handbook has been designed with the standard 4 string bass guitar in mind, however the use of 5 or 6 string basses in the examination is perfectly acceptable.

Tuning

The use of an electronic tuner or other tuning aid, prior to or at the start of the examination, is permitted; candidates should be able to make any further adjustments, if required during the examination, unaided. The examiner will provide an open string note to tune to when requested.

For examination purposes the bass guitar should be tuned to Standard Concert Pitch, that is A=440Hz. Candidates who normally adopt any other tuning should alter their tuning to Standard Pitch for the examination.

SECTION 1

Scales & Arpeggios

A maximum of 15 marks may be awarded in this section of the examination, with the emphasis on accurate, clear and even playing.

The scales and arpeggios required for each grade are listed on the following pages. The examiner will choose a selection of these and ask you to play them from memory. They should be played ascending and descending without a pause and without repeating the top note.

Choose a tempo at which you feel confident and maintain this evenly throughout – evenness and clarity are more important than speed for its own sake.

The choice of scales for Grade Three is based on the *marker dot system*. The majority of bass guitars have marker dots on frets 3, 5 and 7, therefore scales have been chosen to start on these frets on either the E string or the A string. This avoids open strings and gives a good grounding in easily located scale patterns which can later be moved around the fingerboard giving access to all keys. For Grade Four and above, scale and arpeggio positions have been chosen to avoid open strings, so making the patterns readily transpositional.

Left-hand technique

Press the tips of the left-hand fingers as close to the frets as possible. This minimises both buzzes and the amount

of pressure required, enabling you to play with a lighter, clearer, and hence more fluent, touch.

Try to keep all the left-hand fingers close to the fingerboard and have them hovering, ready to press, as this reduces the amount of movement required. Always have the left-hand fingers correctly spaced and ready in position before you begin to play.

Right-hand technique

You are free to use either your fingers or a plectrum for these examinations.

If you use a plectrum, alternate downstrokes with upstrokes. Grip the plectrum between the index finger and thumb, but be careful not to grip it too tightly as excessive gripping pressure can lead to muscular tension in the right hand and arm. Position the pick so that its point is about a half a centimetre beyond the fingertip. If too much of the plectrum extends beyond the finger a lack of control will result as it will flap around when striking the strings – this would consequently reduce fluency and accuracy.

If you choose to use your fingers, alternate between the index finger and middle finger, ensuring that each finger

produces the same quality of sound. Keep your fingers close to the strings. The thumb may be rested on the E string whilst playing higher strings.

The *rest stroke* should be used for the majority of the time. To achieve the best results, rest your finger (either index or middle) on the string you wish to play. Pull towards the next lower string and when you have sufficient tension release the string, allowing the finger to fall onto the next lower

string. The more tension you put on the string (i.e. the harder you pull before you release) the louder the note produced. Try to avoid pressing the string into the guitar body or pulling it away. The best results are achieved by creating a *walking* effect – alternating the index and middle fingers.

For the purposes of the exam, volume should be of a medium strength. Loud enough to be clear and firm, but comfortable to play.

GRADE THREE

Scales

The following one octave scales should be played ascending and descending from memory:

Major, Natural Minor, Pentatonic Minor and Blues in the keys of G, A, B, C, D, E.

Examples are given starting on G and C – showing the patterns for scales starting on the E string and the A string respectively. For the other scales required refer to the chart below detailing the starting string and fret for each key.

key	G	A	B	C	D	E
starting string	E	E	E	A	A	A
starting fret	3	5	7	3	5	7

G Major

G A B C D E F# G
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

C Major

C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Diagram showing the C Major scale on a bass guitar and staff. The fretboard shows notes 1, 2, 3, 5, 2, 4, 5. The staff shows notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. Chord boxes: V (E), IV (A), III (D), II (G).

G Natural Minor

G A B_♭ C D E_♭ F G
1 2 _♭3 4 5 _♭6 _♭7 8

Diagram showing the G Natural Minor scale on a bass guitar and staff. The fretboard shows notes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 3, 5. The staff shows notes G, A, B_♭, C, D, E_♭, F, G. Chord boxes: VI (E), V (A), IV (D), III (G).

C Natural Minor

C D E_♭ F G A_♭ B_♭ C
1 2 _♭3 4 5 _♭6 _♭7 8

Diagram showing the C Natural Minor scale on a bass guitar and staff. The fretboard shows notes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 3, 5. The staff shows notes C, D, E_♭, F, G, A_♭, B_♭, C. Chord boxes: VI (E), V (A), IV (D), III (G).

G Pentatonic Minor

G B_♭ C D F G
1 _♭3 4 5 _♭7 8

Diagram showing the G Pentatonic Minor scale on a bass guitar and staff. The fretboard shows notes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 3, 5. The staff shows notes G, B_♭, C, D, F, G. Chord boxes: VI (E), V (A), IV (D), III (G).

C Pentatonic Minor

C E_♭ F G B_♭ C
1 _♭3 4 5 _♭7 8

Diagram showing the C Pentatonic Minor scale on a bass guitar and staff. The fretboard shows notes 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 3, 5. The staff shows notes C, E_♭, F, G, B_♭, C. Chord boxes: VI (E), V (A), IV (D), III (G).

G Blues

G	B _b	C	D _b	D	F	G
1	3	4	5	5	7	8

C Blues

C	E _b	F	G _b	G	B _b	C
1	3	4	5	5	7	8

Arpeggios

The following one octave arpeggios should be played ascending and descending from memory:

Major, Minor, Major 7th, Minor 7th and Dominant 7th in all keys.

Examples are given starting on G and C – showing the patterns for arpeggios starting on the E string and the A string respectively. For the other arpeggios required refer to the chart below detailing the starting string and fret for each arpeggio.

arpeggio	F#/G _b	G	G#/A _b	A	A#/B _b	B	C	C#/D _b	D	D#/E _b	E	F
starting string	E	E	E	E	E	A	A	A	A	A	A	A
starting fret	2	3	4	5	6	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

G Major

G	B	D	G
R	3	5	R

C Major

C E G C
R 3 5 R

Diagram for C Major scale and arpeggio. The scale is C, E, G, C, E, G, C. The arpeggio is C, E, G, C, E, G, C. The diagram shows a bass clef staff with note heads and a guitar neck with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and string names (E, A, D, G).

G Minor

G B_b D G
R 3 5 R

Diagram for G Minor scale and arpeggio. The scale is G, B_b, D, G, B_b, D, G. The arpeggio is G, B_b, D, G, B_b, D, G. The diagram shows a bass clef staff with note heads and a guitar neck with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and string names (E, A, D, G).

C Minor

C E_b G C
R 3 5 R

Diagram for C Minor scale and arpeggio. The scale is C, E_b, G, C, E_b, G, C. The arpeggio is C, E_b, G, C, E_b, G, C. The diagram shows a bass clef staff with note heads and a guitar neck with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and string names (E, A, D, G).

G Major 7

G B D F[#] G
R 3 5 7 R

Diagram for G Major 7 scale and arpeggio. The scale is G, B, D, F[#], G, B, D, F[#]. The arpeggio is G, B, D, F[#], G, B, D, F[#]. The diagram shows a bass clef staff with note heads and a guitar neck with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and string names (E, A, D, G).

C Major 7

C E G B C
R 3 5 7 R

Diagram for C Major 7 scale and arpeggio. The scale is C, E, G, B, C, E, G, B. The arpeggio is C, E, G, B, C, E, G, B. The diagram shows a bass clef staff with note heads and a guitar neck with fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and string names (E, A, D, G).

G Minor 7

G B_{flat} D F G
R b3 5 b7 R

C Minor 7

C E_{flat} G B_{flat} C
R b3 5 b7 R

G Dominant 7

G B D F G
R 3 5 b7 R

C Dominant 7

C E G B_{flat} C
R 3 5 b7 R

GRADE FOUR

Scales

Candidates should be able to play all scales listed in previous grades. In addition, the following one octave scales should be played ascending and descending in TWO different fingerboard positions, from memory:

Major, Natural Minor, Pentatonic Minor and Blues in the keys of A to F# inclusive.

Examples are given starting on C – showing the patterns for scales starting on the E string in the two positions. For the other scales required refer to the chart below which details the starting string and fret for each key.

key	A	A#/B _b	B	C	C#/D _b	D	D#/E _b	E	F	F#/G _b
starting string	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
starting fret	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

C Major

C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

C Natural Minor

C D E_b F G A_b B_b C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 T 5 6 8 5 | **E** **A** **D** **G**

2 A 5 6 8 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

3 B 8 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

4 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

VIII VII VI V

C Pentatonic Minor

C E♭ F G B♭ C
1 3 4 5 7 8

1 T 8 10 | **E** **A** **D** **G**

2 A 8 10 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 |

3 B 8 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 |

4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 |

XI X IX VIII

1 T 5 8 5 | **E** **A** **D** **G**

2 A 6 8 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

3 B 8 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

4 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

VIII VII VI V

C Blues

C E♭ F G B♭ C
1 3 4 5 7 8

1 T 8 10 | **E** **A** **D** **G**

2 A 8 10 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

3 B 8 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

XI X IX VIII

1 T 5 8 5 | **E** **A** **D** **G**

2 A 6 8 9 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |

3 B 8 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |

4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |

IX VIII VII VI V

Arpeggios

Candidates should be able to play all arpeggios listed in previous grades. In addition, the following one octave arpeggios should be played ascending and descending in TWO different fingerboard positions, from memory:

Major, Minor, Major 7th, Minor 7th and Dominant 7th with root notes of A to F# inclusive.

Examples are given starting on C – showing the patterns for arpeggios starting on the E string. For the other arpeggios required refer to the chart in the scales section which details the starting string and fret for each arpeggio.

C Major

C E G C
R 3 5 R

C Minor

C E♭ G C
R 3 5 R

C Major 7

C E G B C
R 3 5 7 R

C Minor 7

C E♭ G B♭ C
R ♫3 5 ♫7 R

C Dominant 7

C E G B♭ C
R 3 5 ♫7 R

GRADE FIVE

Scales

Candidates should be able to play all scales listed in previous grades. In addition, the following one octave scales should be played ascending and descending in THREE different fingerboard positions, from memory:

Major, Natural Minor, Pentatonic Minor and Blues in the keys of B to F# inclusive.

Examples are given starting on C – showing the patterns for the three positions. The first two positions begin on the E string, the third begins on the A string. For the other keys required refer to the chart below which details the starting string and fret for each key.

key	B	C	C#/D♭	D	D#/E♭	E	F	F#/G♭
<i>E string (shapes 1 and 2) starting fret</i>	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
<i>A string (shape 3) starting fret</i>	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

C Major

C D E F G A B C
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

C Natural Minor

C D E \flat F G A \flat B \flat C
 1 2 \flat 3 4 5 \flat 6 \flat 7 8

Diagram showing the C Natural Minor scale on a bass guitar. The scale is: C, D, E \flat , F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C. Fingerings: 1, 2, \flat 3, 4, 5, \flat 6, \flat 7, 8. String names: E, A, D, G. Fret positions: 8, 10, 11. Scale degrees: XI, X, IX, VIII.

Diagram showing the C Natural Minor scale on a bass guitar. The scale is: C, D, E \flat , F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C. Fingerings: 4, 4, 3, 3, 3, 1. String names: E, A, D, G. Fret positions: 8, 5, 6, 8. Scale degrees: VIII, VII, VI, V.

Diagram showing the C Natural Minor scale on a bass guitar. The scale is: C, D, E \flat , F, G, A \flat , B \flat , C. Fingerings: 4, 4, 3, 3, 3, 1. String names: E, A, D, G. Fret positions: 3, 5, 6. Scale degrees: VI, V, IV, III.

C Pentatonic Minor

C E \flat F G B \flat C
 1 \flat 3 4 5 \flat 7 8

Diagram showing the C Pentatonic Minor scale on a bass guitar. The scale is: C, E \flat , F, G, B \flat , C. Fingerings: 4, 4, 3, 3, 3, 1. String names: E, A, D, G. Fret positions: 8, 11. Scale degrees: XI, X, IX, VIII.

Diagram showing the C Pentatonic Minor scale on a bass guitar. The scale is: C, E \flat , F, G, B \flat , C. Fingerings: 4, 4, 3, 3, 3, 1. String names: E, A, D, G. Fret positions: 8, 6, 8. Scale degrees: VIII, VII, VI, V.

Diagram showing the C Pentatonic Minor scale on a bass guitar. The scale is: C, E \flat , F, G, B \flat , C. Fingerings: 4, 4, 3, 3, 3, 1. String names: E, A, D, G. Fret positions: 4, 3, 5. Scale degrees: VI, V, IV, III.

C Blues

C	E _b	F	G _b	G	B _b	C
1	3	4	5	5	7	8

Arpeggios

Candidates should be able to play all arpeggios listed in previous grades. In addition, the following one octave arpeggios should be played ascending and descending in TWO different fingerboard positions, from memory:

Sus 4th, Major 6th, Minor 6th, Major 7th, Minor 7th and Dominant 7th with root notes of A to F# inclusive.

Examples are given starting on C – showing the patterns for arpeggios starting on the E string. For the other arpeggios required refer to the chart below which details the starting string and fret for each arpeggio.

arpeggio	A	A [#] /B _b	B	C	C [#] /D _b	D	D [#] /E _b	E	F	F [#] /G _b
starting string	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
starting fret	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14

C Sus 4

C F G C
R 4 5 R

A musical staff for bass clef (F clef) is shown. The staff has four ledger lines below the bottom line. The notes are open circles. Above the staff, Roman numerals X, IX, VIII, and VII are aligned with the notes. To the left of the staff, a bass clef is shown, and below it are the letters T, A, B, and 8, corresponding to the notes on the first, second, third, and fourth ledger lines respectively. The staff is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The first measure has a duration of 10. The second measure has a duration of 8. The third measure has a duration of 4. The fourth measure has a duration of 3. The fifth measure has a duration of 1.

C Major 6

C E G A C
R 3 5 6 R

C Minor 6

C E_b G A C
R _b3 5 6 R

C Major 7

C E G B C
R 3 5 7 R

C Minor 7

C E♭ G B♭ C
R 3 5 7 R

C Dominant 7

C E G B♭ C
R 3 5 7 R

SECTION 2

Bass Patterns

A maximum of 24 marks may be awarded in this section of the examination.

The candidate should select two bass patterns from the four examples of the relevant grade given on the following pages. The candidate will then be shown a chord progression for one of the choices. The chosen bass pattern should be played over this sequence, transposing it for each chord. The chord progression should be played through three times. The second and third time the candidate may vary the pattern rhythmically and/or melodically, but should still follow the chord sequence and keep within the musical style. A broad indication of the general style and suggested speed is given with each bass pattern. Normally only one performance is required but, at the examiner's discretion, the candidate may be requested to play the second bass pattern over another chord sequence.

Marks will be awarded in this section for accuracy of pitch, security of timing and creativity.

The bass patterns and chords used in each sequence will be based on the requirements for Sections 1 and 3 of the relevant grade. The following pages show the bass patterns in the key of C major or C minor, followed by examples of the type of progression to be expected in a variety of keys. Above the chord progression is the

riff as it should be played for each chord. This is shown in both standard notation and tablature.

Please note that in the examination candidates will be shown only a chord sequence. The bass pattern that is notated over each chord in this handbook is shown only to ensure clarity and to facilitate the learning process. Such notation will NOT appear on the examination chord chart. Above each bass pattern is given a broad indication of style together with a suggested metronome marking. These are a general guide to playing and some flexibility in interpretation is allowed.

A page of practice charts will be found for each grade. Candidates should practice playing the bass pattern over all the chords to be expected, in a variety of chord progressions, rather than merely practicing the examples provided in this handbook.

An audio recording featuring all the required bass patterns for each grade at practice and performance speeds is produced by RGT. See inside rear cover for more information.



GRADE THREE

The chord sequence may contain chords in any key, but will be limited to the following types:

Major, Minor, Major 7th , Minor 7th and Dominant 7th.

1) Melodic Rock $\text{♩} = 108$

Dm7 Dm7 Dm7 Dm7

Gm7 Gm7 Dm7 Dm7

Gm7 Gm7 Am7 Am7

2) Slow Funk $\text{♩} = 80$

Bass pattern 2) Slow Funk example 1. The pattern consists of a bass line on a staff and a corresponding fingerings chart below it. The bass line starts with a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, then a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The fingerings are: 1 (up), 2 (down), 3 (up), 3 (up), 5 (up), 5 (up), 3 (up), 5 (up). The bass line then continues with a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, then a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note.

Bass pattern 2) Slow Funk example 2. The pattern consists of a bass line on a staff and a corresponding fingerings chart below it. The bass line starts with a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, then a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The fingerings are: 1 (up), 2 (down), 3 (up), 3 (up), 7 (up), 7 (up), 9 (up), 9 (up), 7 (up), 9 (up). The bass line then continues with a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, then a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The chords are labeled below the staff: B7, B7, A7, E7.

Bass pattern 2) Slow Funk example 3. The pattern consists of a bass line on a staff and a corresponding fingerings chart below it. The bass line starts with a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, then a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The fingerings are: 1 (up), 2 (down), 3 (up), 3 (up), 7 (up), 7 (up), 9 (up), 9 (up), 7 (up), 9 (up). The bass line then continues with a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note, then a eighth note followed by a sixteenth note. The chords are labeled below the staff: B7, B7, A7, F#7.

3) R&B

$\text{♩} = 120$

4) Ballad $\text{♩} = 92$

AMaj7 **AMaj7** **GMaj7** **GMaj7**

AMaj7 **AMaj7** **GMaj7** **GMaj7**

DMaj7 **DMaj7**

The chord charts below are similar to those presented to the candidate in the examination (i.e. without notation and tablature). They are given here as an aid to practice, with one progression

for each bass pattern. Candidates are encouraged to practice each bass pattern over as many different chord progressions as possible.

1) Melodic Rock

Em7 | Em7 | Em7 | Em7 | Am7 | Am7 |

Em7 | Em7 | Am7 | Am7 | Bm7 | Bm7 |

2) Slow Funk

E7 | E7 | D7 | A7 |

E7 | E7 | D7 | B7 |

3) R & B

D7 | D7 | D7 | D7 | G7 | G7 |

D7 | D7 | Bb7 | C7 | D7 | D7 |

4) Ballad

B Maj7 | B Maj7 | A Maj7 | A Maj7 | B Maj7 |

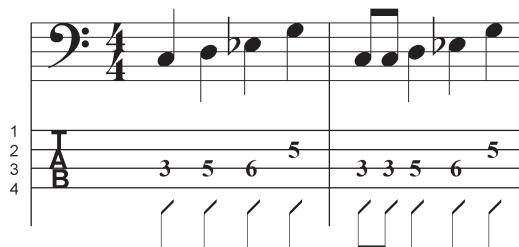
B Maj7 | A Maj7 | A Maj7 | E Maj7 | E Maj7 |

GRADE FOUR

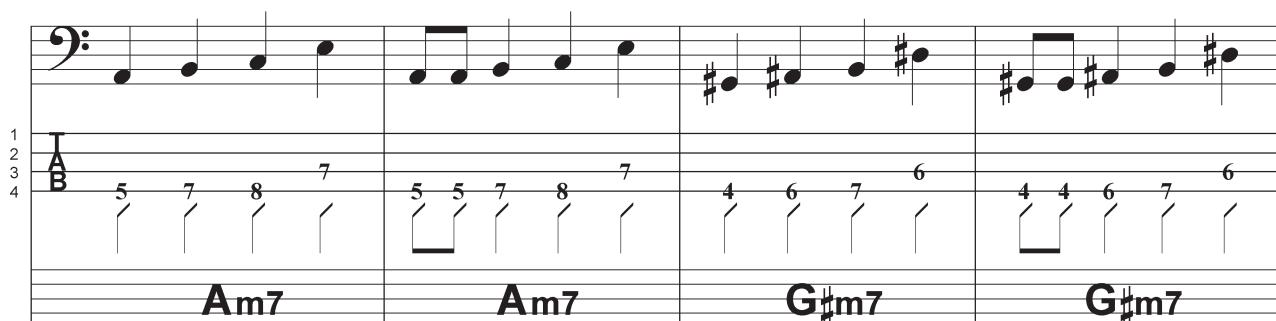
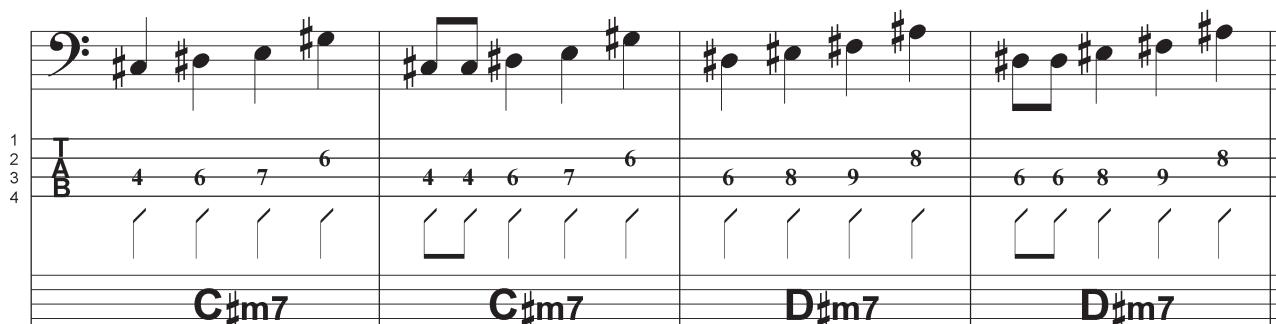
The chord sequence may contain chords in any key, but will be limited to the following types:

Major, Minor, Major 7th, Minor 7th and Dominant 7th.

1) Minor Jazz $\text{♩} = 176$   



Although written in $\frac{4}{4}$ for ease of reading, this piece should be played with a $\frac{12}{8}$ feel in order to achieve an authentic jazz style.

2) Rhythm & Blues $\text{♩} = 120$

3) Light Rock $\text{♩} = 66$

1 2 3 4

A B

5 5 3 5 3 4 5 3 6 3

1 2 3 4

A B

5 5 3 5 3 4 5 3 6 3

Gm **Gm** **Cm**

1 2 3 4

A B

5 5 3 5 3 4 5 7 7 5 7 5 6 7 5 8 5 3 4 5 3 6 3

Gm **Dm** **Gm**

4) Rock Blues $\text{♩} = 100$

12/8 time signature, bass and treble lines. The guitar tab shows a 12/8 pattern with specific fingerings: B, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 8, 7, 8, 10. Measures C and E♭ are indicated.

1 2 3 4

T B A G

E♭ F F

The chord charts below are similar to those presented to the candidate in the examination (i.e. without notation and tablature). They are given here as an aid to practice, with one progression

for each bass pattern. Candidates are encouraged to practice each bass pattern over as many different chord progressions as possible.

1) Minor Jazz

A six-measure bass line on a five-line staff. The notes are: F#m7, F#m7, F#m7, F#m7, Gm7, Gm7.

A six-measure bass line on a five-line staff. The notes are: F#m7, F#m7, Bm7, Bm7, C#m7, C#m7.

2) Rhythm & Blues

A four-measure bass line on a five-line staff. The notes are: A♭7, D♭7, A♭7, A♭7.

A four-measure bass line on a five-line staff. The notes are: E♭7, D♭7, A♭7, A♭7.

3) Light Rock

A three-measure bass line on a five-line staff. The notes are: Fm, Fm, B♭m.

A three-measure bass line on a five-line staff. The notes are: Fm, Cm, Fm.

4) Rock Blues

A four-measure bass line on a five-line staff. The notes are: B♭, B♭, D♭, D♭.

A four-measure bass line on a five-line staff. The notes are: E♭, E♭, B♭, B♭.

GRADE FIVE

The chord sequence may contain the following chord types:

Major, Minor, Major 7th, Minor 7th and Dominant 7th in any key.

Sus 4th, Major 6th and Minor 6th with root notes of A to F# inclusive.

From Grade Five candidates should be able to play *slurs*, often referred to

as the *hammer on* and the *pull off*. Details concerning this technique will be found in the Grade Five part of the Musicianship section in this Handbook.

Where a bass pattern consists of two bars, and the chord changes after only one bar of the pattern, then only the first bar of the pattern should be played.

1) Soul Pop $\text{♩} = 96$

Where a bass pattern consists of two bars, and the chord changes after only one bar of the pattern, then only the first bar of the pattern should be played.

2) R & B ♩ = 152

3) Minor Rock ♩ = 132

1 2 3 4

A B 3 3 5 3 6 3 3-5 3 3 5 3 3-5 3 3-5

1 2 3 4

H.O. **H.O.** **H.O.** **H.O.** **H.O.** **H.O.**

A 4 4 6 4 7 4 4-6 4 4 6 4 4-6 4 4 6 4 4-6 4 4 6 4 4-6

B 4 4 6 4 7 4 4-6 4 4 6 4 4-6 4 4 6 4 4-6 4 4 6 4 4-6

C[#]m7 **C[#]m7** **C[#]m7** **C[#]m7**

1 2 3 4

H.O. **H.O.** **H.O.** **H.O.** **H.O.** **H.O.**

A 6 6 8 6 9 6 6-8 6 6 8 6 6-8 7 7 9 7 10 7 7-9 7 7 9 7 7-9

B

D[#]m7 **D[#]m7** **Em7** **Em7**

1 2 3 4

H.O. H.O. H.O.

B 9 9 11 9 12 9 9-11 9 9 11 9 9-11 9-11

F#m7 F#m7

4) Indie-pop $\text{♩}=112$

1
2
3
4

B 8 8 8 8 7 8 7

1
2
3
4

B 5 5 5 5 4 5 4

8 8 8 8 7 8 7

A A C C

1
2
3
4

B 5 5 5 5 4 5 4

5 5 5 5 4 5 7

5 5 5 5 4 5 4

5 5 5 5 4 5 7

A A D D

1
2
3
4

B 5 5 5 5 4 5 4

5 5 5 5 4 5 7

8 8 8 8 7 8 7

10 10 10 10 9 10 9

A A F G

The chord charts below are similar to those presented to the candidate in the examination (i.e. without notation and tablature). They are given here as an aid to practice, with one progression

for each bass pattern. Candidates are encouraged to practice each bass pattern over as many different chord progressions as possible.

1) Soul Pop

A horizontal staff with five lines and four spaces. The first measure contains a 'Cm' bass note. The second measure also contains a 'Cm' bass note. The third measure contains an 'A♭' bass note. The fourth measure contains a 'B♭' bass note.

A horizontal staff with five lines and four spaces. The first measure contains a 'Cm' bass note. The second measure also contains a 'Cm' bass note. The third measure contains an 'A♭' bass note. The fourth measure contains a 'G' bass note.

2) R & B

A horizontal staff with five lines and four spaces. The first measure contains an 'F' bass note. The second measure also contains an 'F' bass note. The third measure contains an 'F' bass note. The fourth measure also contains an 'F' bass note. The fifth measure contains a 'B♭' bass note. The sixth measure also contains a 'B♭' bass note.

A horizontal staff with five lines and four spaces. The first measure contains an 'F' bass note. The second measure also contains an 'F' bass note. The third measure contains a 'C' bass note. The fourth measure also contains a 'C' bass note. The fifth measure contains an 'F' bass note. The sixth measure also contains an 'F' bass note.

3) Minor Rock

A horizontal staff with five lines and four spaces. The first measure contains a 'Bm7' bass note. The second measure also contains a 'Bm7' bass note. The third measure contains a 'Bm7' bass note. The fourth measure also contains a 'Bm7' bass note. The fifth measure contains a 'C♯m7' bass note.

A horizontal staff with five lines and four spaces. The first measure contains a 'C♯m7' bass note. The second measure also contains a 'Dm7' bass note. The third measure contains a 'Dm7' bass note. The fourth measure contains an 'Em7' bass note. The fifth measure also contains an 'Em7' bass note.

4) Indie Pop

A horizontal staff with five lines and four spaces. The first measure contains a 'G' bass note. The second measure also contains a 'G' bass note. The third measure contains a 'B♭' bass note. The fourth measure also contains a 'B♭' bass note. The fifth measure contains a 'G' bass note. The sixth measure also contains a 'G' bass note.

A horizontal staff with five lines and four spaces. The first measure contains a 'C' bass note. The second measure also contains a 'C' bass note. The third measure contains a 'G' bass note. The fourth measure also contains a 'G' bass note. The fifth measure contains an 'E♭' bass note. The sixth measure also contains an 'F' bass note.

SECTION 3

Performance

A maximum of 36 marks may be awarded in this section of the examination.

The candidate will be shown a chord sequence containing chords detailed for each grade on the following pages. The examiner will play through the sequence once on guitar (live or recorded) for the candidate to hear. The examiner will then play the sequence a further three times and the candidate should improvise an appropriate bass line over the chords.

At the examiner's discretion, a second sequence may be given in a different style over which the candidate should

again improvise an appropriate bass line after having heard the sequence once.

Marks will be awarded in this section for accuracy of pitch, security of timing, rhythmic inventiveness and creativity, and at higher grades, also for fluency, melodic shaping and stylistic interpretation. Some examples of the type of sequence to be expected are shown for each grade on the following pages.

Chord Symbols

In the chord progressions, a lone upper case letter refers to a major chord and a letter followed by a lower case 'm' refers to a minor chord. An upper case letter followed by a '7' refers to a dominant seventh chord, whilst 'm7' and 'Maj7' refer to minor seventh and

major seventh respectively. 'm6' after a chord letter indicates a minor 6th, whilst a lone '6' refers to a major 6th. A suspended 4th chord is abbreviated to 'sus4'

For example:

D = D Major	D7 = D Dominant 7th	Dm = D Minor	Dm7 = D Minor 7th	D Maj7 = D Major 7th
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Dm6 = D Minor 6th	D6 = D Major 6th	Dsus4 = D Suspended 4th
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Split Bars

When two (or more) chords appear in a single bar this is known as a split bar. Dots (or diagonal lines) after chords can be used to indicate the division of the bar: the chord symbol representing

one beat and each dot representing another beat. However, if no dots are present it can be assumed that the bar is divided evenly between the chords.

GRADE THREE

The chord sequence may contain some of the following chords:

Major, Minor, Major 7th, Minor 7th and Dominant 7th in any key.

At this grade the candidate is expected to be fluent in playing the root, third and fifth of each chord and should demonstrate ability in incorporating major, minor and dominant sevenths *when musically appropriate*. However, candidates should be careful not to 'overplay': the use of too many arpeggio notes could lead to a bass line which sounds too busy; candidates

should not neglect the importance of demonstrating an understanding of musical 'feel' and style.

Some examples of the type of chart that may be presented at this grade are given below. Note that at this grade the time signature is limited to $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ time and there will be only one chord per bar.

During the first playing of the sequence by the examiner, candidates should listen carefully to the way the chords are played in order to choose an appropriate style of bass line.

(i) Soulful and not too fast



(ii) In a ballad style



(iii) Fairly slow with a bluesy feel



(iv) With movement



GRADE FOUR

The chord sequence may contain some of the following chords:

Major, Minor, Major 7th, Minor 7th and Dominant 7th in any key.

At this grade the candidate is expected to be fluent in playing the root, third, fifth and seventh of each chord *when musically appropriate*. However, candidates should be careful not to 'overplay': the use of too many arpeggio notes could lead to a bass line which sounds too busy; candidates should not neglect the importance of demonstrating an understanding of musical 'feel' and style.

Some examples of the type of chart that may be presented at this grade are given below.

Note that at this grade the time signature is limited to $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ time and there will be up to two chords per bar.

During the first playing of the sequence by the examiner, the candidate should listen carefully to the way the chords are played in order to choose an appropriate style of bass line.

(i) Light and fairly up-tempo

$\left| \frac{3}{4} \text{ B}_b \text{ | B}_b\text{Maj7} \text{ | E}_b\text{Maj7} \text{ | E}_b\text{Maj7} \text{ | Dm7} \text{ | Dm7} \text{ | Gm7} \text{ | F7} \right|$

(ii) Moderately slow with feeling

$\left| \frac{6}{8} \text{ B} \text{ | G}_\sharp\text{m7} \text{ | G}_\sharp\text{m7} \text{ | F}_\sharp \text{ | B} \text{ | D}_\sharp\text{m7} \text{ | D}_\sharp\text{m7} \text{ | E}\text{Maj7} \right|$

(iii) Bright and lively

$\left| \frac{4}{4} \text{ A}_b7 \text{ D}_b7 \text{ | A}_b7 \text{ E}_b7 \text{ | D}_b7 \text{ | A}_b7 \text{ | D}_b7 \text{ | E}_b7 \right|$

(iv) Slow and tenderly

$\left| \frac{3}{4} \text{ Em} \text{ | Am7} \text{ | C}\text{Maj7} \text{ | D} \text{ | Em} \text{ | Bm7} \text{ | C}\text{Maj7} \text{ | C}\text{Maj7} \right|$

GRADE FIVE

The chord sequence may contain some of the following chords:

Major, Minor, Major 7th, Minor 7th and Dominant 7th in any key; Sus 4th, Major 6th and Minor 6th with root notes of A to F#, inclusive.

At this grade the candidate is expected to be fluent in playing the root, third, fifth and seventh of each chord *when musically appropriate*. However, candidates should be careful not to 'overplay': the use of too many arpeggio notes could lead to a bass line which sounds too busy; candidates should not neglect the importance of demonstrating an understanding of musical 'feel' and style.

Some examples of the type of chart that may be presented at this grade are given below.

Note that at this grade the time signature is limited to $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ time and there will be up to two chords per bar.

During the first playing of the sequence by the examiner, candidates should listen carefully to the way the chords are played in order to choose an appropriate style of bass line.

(i) Bright and rhythmically

$\frac{3}{4}$ **G Maj7** | **A m6** | **C 6** | **D sus4** | **B m** | **E m7** | **D sus4** | **D** ||

(ii) Slow ballad

$\frac{6}{8}$ **F m7** | **D b** | **E b** | **C 7** | **F m7** | **B b m7** | **C 7** | **C 7** ||

(iii) Moderate swing

$\frac{4}{4}$ **C 6** | **A m7** | **C 6** | **A m7** | **D m6** | **D m6** | **E m7. A 7.** | **D m7. G 7.** ||

(iv) Medium blues

$\frac{6}{8}$ **E 7** | **A 7** | **E 7** | **B 7** | **D 6** | **E 6** | **B sus4** | **B 7** ||

SECTION 4

Musicianship

A maximum of 10 marks may be awarded in this section of the examination.

This section of the examination tests the candidate's knowledge of the notes being played, general music theory and conventions, the mechanism of the instrument and the technical aspects of playing it.

a) Musical knowledge

The candidate should be familiar with the notes in the scales and arpeggios required for the relevant grade (see Section 1 of this handbook). The examiner may ask the candidate to play any note on a particular string (which will be taken from the required scales). In order to establish a solid musical foundation it is important that candidates are aware of the notes they are playing rather than duplicating finger patterns.

This section also tests the candidate's knowledge of general music theory. The ability to follow musical instructions such as repeat markings, dynamics, etc. is important when performing music and the candidate may be asked to demonstrate a

particular term in addition to giving its definition. Specific requirements are given for each grade on the following pages.

b) Playing the bass guitar

This section covers the optimum methods of achieving clarity and fluency, with questions relating to both left and right hand technique. Candidates should have a basic knowledge of both plectrum and finger styles irrespective of which they use. Specific requirements are given for each grade on the following pages.

c) Knowledge of the instrument

Candidates should have a good general knowledge of the mechanism of the instrument. This covers the anatomy of the bass guitar, including knowledge of the position and function of various items and familiarity with common terms used. Specific requirements are given for each grade on the following pages.

GRADE THREE

a) Notes on the fingerboard

The candidate should be able to name any note on any string up to, and including, the twelfth fret. This includes all the notes from the scales and arpeggios listed for Grade Three in Section 1 of this handbook. The examiner may ask the candidate to play a particular note on a particular string (such as "Play the note *F* on the *G* string").

At this grade the candidate should be able to explain the repeat and dynamic markings detailed below. The candidate may also be asked to demonstrate dynamics with a question such as "Play the note *C* first *f* then *p*", or "Play four *C*s in the manner of this sign" (pointing to one of the dynamic markings).

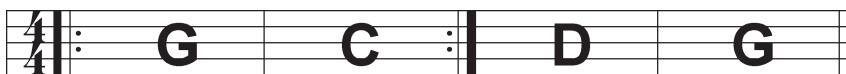
The following chart shows all the notes on all four strings for the first twelve frets:

fret												
12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
E	D#/E _b	D	C#/D _b	C	B	A#/B _b	A	G#/A _b	G	F#/G _b	F	<i>E string</i>
A	G#/A _b	G	F#/G _b	F	E	D#/E _b	D	C#/D _b	C	B	A#/B _b	<i>A string</i>
D	C#/D _b	C	B	A#/B _b	A	G#/A _b	G	F#/G _b	F	E	D#/E _b	<i>D string</i>
G	F#/G _b	F	E	D#/E _b	D	C#/D _b	C	B	A#/B _b	A	G#/A _b	<i>G string</i>

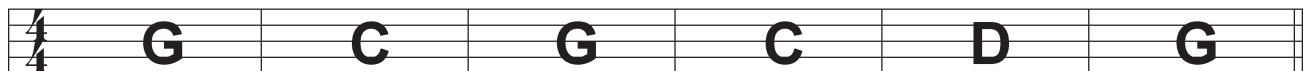
Repeat marks

Passages to be repeated are indicated by two dots and a double bar line at the start and end of the particular section. (When the repeat is from the beginning of a piece the first set of dots is not always shown.)

For example:



should be played as:



1st and 2nd time endings

Bars marked with a **1.** are included in the first playing but omitted on the

repeat playing and replaced with the bars marked **2.**

For example:

4||: **G C D D₇** :|| **B₇ E_m** should be played as:

G C D D₇ G C B₇ E_m

Dynamic Markings

These indicate the changes in volume to be made.

p – play softly

f – play strongly

 – become louder

 – become softer

Candidates may be given a chord sequence consisting of up to four bars with one chord per bar. The chart will contain dynamic and repeat markings. The chord sequence should be played using four root notes per bar and incorporating the performance indications. An example of the type of chart to be expected is given below.

4||: **G** | **G**

1. **C** :|| 2. **D**

b) Playing the bass guitar

Candidates may be asked questions relating to the optimum positioning of the left-hand fingers, in particular how to obtain clear notes and avoid fret buzz. Section 1 of this handbook has details of left-hand technique, the most important aspect being keeping the left hand spread out and placing the tips of the fingers, rather than the pads, at the very edge of the frets.

Take care not to over-grip with the left-hand thumb on the back of the neck as this will cause muscle fatigue and tend to limit the freedom of the thumb to move. It is essential that the left hand thumb is allowed to move freely when changing positions. If the thumb remains static this restricts the optimum positioning of the fingers which may result in unnecessary left hand

stretching and consequent loss of fluency. Also be aware that for the left-hand thumb to move freely the wrist, elbow and shoulder must be flexible and relaxed. Try to ensure that this is not inhibited by your standing or sitting position.

With regard to the right hand: plectrum strokes should alternate between down and up strokes and, in fingerstyle, index and middle fingers should alternate to facilitate fluency and speed. Section 1 of this handbook has details of right-hand technique, covering both plectrum and finger style.

In addition to answering questions, the candidate should be able to demonstrate any of the above.

c) Knowledge of the instrument

Candidates should have a good general knowledge of the bass. In particular:

- i) Variations in tone achieved by changing the right hand position. For instance a brighter clearer attack will be produced when playing close to the bridge, whereas a warmer, more mellow tone is produced as you move towards the fingerboard.
- ii) A practical understanding of the use of tone controls and pick-up

selectors (where appropriate), to produce various tone qualities.

iii) The function of the machine heads. These are normally positioned by the headstock of the guitar. Each string has its own machine head (or turning head) which, when rotated, increases or reduces the tension exerted on that string, thereby raising or lowering its pitch. By carefully adjusting all of these the bass guitar can be brought into tune.

iv) The meaning of terms such as:

Action – the distance between the strings and the frets. This determines the ease of fretting notes.

Marker dots – the dots or blocks inlaid into the face and/or side of the fingerboard to aid in the location of certain frets. These normally include frets 3, 5, 7, 9 & 12.

The nut – a slotted piece of material (normally plastic or brass) situated at the head end of the fingerboard. The strings lie in the grooves of the nut.

The saddle – the seat upon which the string rests at the body end of the bass guitar. It is from this point that the vibrating section of the string starts.

GRADE FOUR

a) Notes on the fingerboard

Candidates should have a thorough knowledge of the requirements for Grade Three, detailed on the previous pages. Below are detailed the additional requirements for this grade.

For Grade Four, candidates should be able to name any note on any string up to, and including, the fifteenth fret. This includes all the notes from the scales and arpeggios listed for Grade

Four in Section 1 of this handbook. The examiner may either name a particular string and fret and the candidate should identify this note, or ask the candidate to play a particular note on a particular string (such as "Play the note F# on the G string").

The following chart shows all the notes on all four strings for the first fifteen frets:

15	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	fret
G	F#/G _b	F	E	D#/E _b	D	C#/D _b	C	B	A#/B _b	A	G#/A _b	G	F#/G _b	F	E
C	B	A#/B _b	A	G#/A _b	G	F#/G _b	F	E	D#/E _b	D	C#/D _b	C	B	A#/B _b	A
F	E	D#/E _b	D	C#/D _b	C	B	A#/B _b	A	G#/A _b	G	F#/G _b	F	E	D#/E _b	D
A#/B _b	A	G#/A _b	G	F#/G _b	F	E	D#/E _b	D	C#/D _b	C	B	A#/B _b	A	G#/A _b	G

Repeat and dynamic markings

In addition to the repeat and dynamic markings listed in Grade Three,

candidates are expected to know the following:

ppp ↓ play as softly as possible	pp ↓ play softly	p ↓ moderately loud	mp	mf ↓ play as strongly as possible	f	ff	fff ↓ play as strongly as possible
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b) Playing the bass guitar

Candidates should have a good understanding of the techniques described in the Grade Three section. The questions asked at Grade Four

will be to a greater depth. Candidates should also be able to demonstrate their answers confidently and accurately.

c) Knowledge of the instrument

Candidates should have a good knowledge of the requirements described in the Grade Three section and should be able to demonstrate a practical understanding of these topics.

In addition, candidates are expected to be able to describe the following:

Changing a string – Candidates should be aware of how to replace a string on their own instrument.

Tuning the bass guitar – Candidates should be able to explain the method they use to tune a bass guitar.

GRADE FIVE

a) Musical Knowledge

Candidates should have a thorough knowledge of the requirements for Grade Three and Grade Four, detailed on the previous pages. Below are detailed the additional requirements for this grade.

The candidate should be able to name any note on the fingerboard. The examiner may either name a particular string and fret and the candidate should identify this note, or ask the candidate to play a particular note on a particular string (such as "Play the note *C* on the *D* string").

Candidates should have a thorough knowledge of all the repeat and dynamic markings presented in the Grade Three and Grade Four sections on the previous pages.

At this grade the candidate should be able to demonstrate and name the diatonic intervals of *any* major scale

The following example shows the intervals from the C Major scale. The fingerings given are transposable to other keys.

C major scale intervals:

- C to D: Major 2nd
- C to E: Major 3rd
- C to F: Perfect 4th
- C to G: Perfect 5th
- C to A: Major 6th
- C to B: Major 7th
- C to C: Octave

Fingerings:

- 1 3 5
- 3 2
- 3 3
- 3 5
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 3

b) Playing the bass guitar

Candidates should have a thorough understanding of the information given in the Grade Three and Grade Four sections. The questions asked at Grade Five will go into greater detail. In addition, candidates should be familiar with the use of slurs.

A slur is the sounding of two or more notes from the single pick of a string. Slurs can be used to add speed to one's playing, but equally importantly to add smoothness, flow and subtlety. Candidates should be able to demonstrate ability in two type of slurs :

(a) *The Hammer-on*: A note is played, then a higher note on the same string is sounded without being picked by the right hand, rather by a hammering action with a left hand finger. For the hammered note to be clear it is important to use a certain amount of force and attack in bringing down the hammering finger. Hammer with the tip of the finger and hammer to the edge of the fret.

(b) *The Pull-off*: A note is fretted, then a lower note is sounded without being picked by the right hand, but rather by being plucked downwards by the left hand finger which was fretting the original note. For the pull-off to be clear it is important that the pressure is concentrated on the lower finger which is anchoring the string (otherwise the note may be pulled out of tune when the higher finger pulls off). The plucking action should come from the tip of the finger with a downward pulling action and not simply the lifting off of the finger into the air.

c) Knowledge of the instrument

Candidates should have a thorough understanding of the information given in the Grade Three and Grade Four sections. In addition to knowing the variations in tone achievable with the use of tone controls, candidates should be able to describe and demonstrate the difference in tone and volume produced by varying the pace and strength with which the right hand fingers pluck (or the plectrum strikes) the string.

Tuning the bass guitar

Candidates should be able to explain and demonstrate at least two methods of achieving standard relative tuning. Of the various methods, the two most common are:

a) Tuning with harmonics: Play the 5th fret harmonic on the 4th string, then play the 7th fret harmonic on the 3rd string; adjust the 3rd string until the two harmonics sound the same. Repeat for the 3rd to 2nd string and for the 2nd to 1st string.

b) The fifth fret method: Play the 5th fret of the 4th string, tune the open 3rd string to this. The 5th fret of the 3rd string is now used to tune the open 2nd string, and the 5th fret of the 2nd string is used to tune the open 1st string.

Both these methods assume you have been given an E in order to first tune your 4th string. For example, from a keyboard, guitar or tuning fork.

SECTION 5

Aural Assessment

A maximum of 15 marks may be awarded in this section of the examination.

This section of the examination tests the aural abilities of the candidate. It consists of five sections as detailed below. Three or more sections may be tested in the examination at the discretion of the examiner, but the candidate is expected to be competent in all five.

a) Repetition of rhythms

The examiner will twice play on a single note a rhythmic pattern (examples of which are given for each grade on the following pages). The candidate should then attempt to reproduce this rhythm by either clapping or playing on any note.

b) Repetition of phrases

The candidate will be asked to look away whilst the examiner plays a four beat phrase. The phrase will be taken from one of the required scales from the appropriate grade (see Section 1 of this handbook). The candidate will be told which scale is being used, and the tonic note will be played. The examiner will play the phrase twice before the candidate makes a first attempt to reproduce the phrase. If required, the examiner will play the phrase one further time prior to the candidate's second attempt. In order to simulate circumstances which commonly occur for bass players in a band situation, the

examiner will play the phrase on the guitar or keyboard and the candidate is expected to reproduce it at any octave on the bass guitar. Examples of the type of phrase which will occur at each grade are given on the following pages.

c) Beating of time

The examiner will play a four bar phrase twice on guitar or keyboard. During the second playing the candidate should tap or clap the main pulse, accenting the first beat of the bar. An example is given for each grade on the following pages.

d) Harmony test

This section tests recognition of scale, arpeggio or chord types. The examiner will play the test on guitar or keyboard whilst the candidate looks away. Details of the requirements for each grade are given on the following pages.

e) Pitch test

This test will be played by the examiner on the candidate's bass guitar or on keyboard. In contrast to *d*) above, which tests a general awareness of scales, arpeggios and chords, this test is related to individual notes in the range actually being played on the bass guitar. The requirements for each grade are given on the following pages.

GRADE THREE

a) Repetition of rhythms

The examiner will twice tap or play on a single note, a four bar rhythm in either $\frac{3}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ time. The note range will be limited to eighth notes (quavers), quarter notes (crotchets), dotted quarter notes (dotted crotchets) and half notes (minims) except for the last

bar – which will contain only one long note. The candidate should then attempt to reproduce this rhythm by either clapping or playing. Some examples of the *type* of rhythm are given below. Note that the third bar is always a repeat of the first bar.

b) Repetition of phrases

The phrase given at this grade will consist of notes within a range of one octave taken from a scale listed for Grade Three in Section 1 of this handbook – the candidate will be told which scale is to be used, and the tonic

note will be played. The phrase will consist of 3 quarter notes (crotchets) and 2 eighth notes (quavers). Some examples of the type of phrases are shown below.

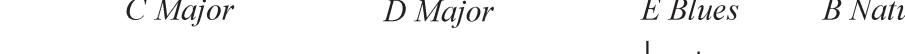
Examiner plays:



Phrases taken from these scales:

C Major *D Major* *E Blues* *B Natural Minor*

Candidate plays:



1 T 5 2 4 5 2 || 5 4 7 4 7 7 7 8 9 10 9 7 9 10 7

2 A

3 B

4

c) Beating of time

The examiner will twice play a four bar phrase in $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ time, that may include dotted quarter notes (dotted crotchets) and 16th notes (semiquavers). During

the second playing the candidate should tap or clap the main pulse, accenting the first beat of the bar. An example is given below.

Examiner plays:

Candidate taps:

d) Harmony tests

Whilst the candidate looks away, the examiner will play ascending and descending one of the arpeggios listed for Grade Three in Section 1 of this handbook. The candidate will then be asked to identify the nature of the arpeggio, i.e. whether it was major or minor.

e) Pitch tests

The candidate will be asked to identify any note of any one octave major scale. The examiner will first state the key and then play the tonic note, followed by any other note of the scale. The candidate should identify the second note either by interval number or by letter name. An example in the key of C major is given below.

It may be easier to remember the sound of these intervals if at first each one is related to the start of a familiar tune or riff. For example, the following

traditional tunes start with a perfect fourth – Amazing Grace, Auld Lang Syne, Away in a Manger.

GRADE FOUR

a) Repetition of rhythms

The examiner will twice tap or play on a single note, a four bar rhythm in either $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ time. The note range will be limited to 16th notes (semiquavers), eighth notes (quavers), quarter notes (crotchets), dotted quarter notes (dotted crotchets) and half notes (minims) except

for the last bar – which will contain only one long note. The candidate should then attempt to reproduce this rhythm by either clapping or playing. Some examples of the type of rhythm are given below. Note that the third bar is always a repeat of the first bar.

(i)  //

(ii)  //

(iii)  //

b) Repetition of phrases

The phrase given at this grade will consist of notes within a range of one octave taken from a scale listed for Grade Four in Section 1 of this handbook – the candidate will be told which scale is to be

used, and the tonic note will be played. The phrase will consist of 2 quarter notes (crotchets) and 4 eighth notes (quavers). Some examples of the type of phrases are shown below.

Examiner plays: 

Phrases taken from these scales:

A Major C Pentatonic Minor B♭ Blues A Natural Minor

Candidate plays: 

1 T
2 A
3 B
4

c) Beating of time

The examiner will twice play a four bar phrase in either $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ time, that may include 16th notes (semiquavers) and dotted quarter notes (dotted crotchets). After the first playing the candidate should identify the time signature.

Examiner plays:

Candidate taps:

During the second playing the candidate should tap or clap the main pulse, accenting the first beat of each bar. An example is given below.

d) Harmony tests

Whilst the candidate looks away, the examiner will twice play either a Major 7th, Minor 7th or Dominant 7th chord.

The candidate will be asked to identify the type of chord played.

e) Pitch tests

The examiner will play an interval of a 3rd or a 7th in any key, sounding the notes separately. The candidate should

identify whether the interval was major or minor. For example:

C to E \flat (minor 3rd) C to E (major 3rd) C to B \flat (minor 7th) C to B (major 7th)

1 T 3 6 || 3 2 || 3 3 || 4

GRADE FIVE

a) *Repetition of rhythms*

The examiner will twice tap or play on a single note a four bar rhythm in $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ time. This will contain no note value shorter than a 16th note (semiquaver).

The candidate should then attempt to reproduce this rhythm by either clapping or playing. Some examples of the type of rhythm are given below.

(i) 

(ii) 

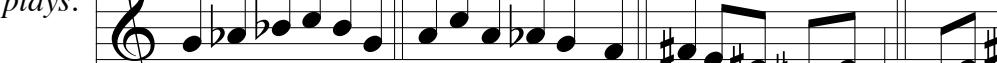
(iii) 

b) Repetition of phrases

The phrase given at this grade will consist of notes within a range of one octave taken from a scale listed for Grade Five in Section 1 of this handbook – the candidate will be told which scale is to be used, and the tonic

note will be played. The phrase will start either on the tonic or 5th note and will consist of 2 quarter notes (crotchets) and 4 eighth notes (quavers). Some examples of the type of phrases are shown below.

Examiner plays:



Phrases taken from these scales:

C Natural Minor D Blues B Major B Pentatonic Minor

Candidate plays:



1 T
2 A
3 B
4

10 11 8 10 8 10 | 7 5 7 6 5 8 | 9 7 6 9 6 7 7 10 9 7 7 10

c) Beating of time

The examiner will twice play a four bar phrase in $\frac{3}{4}$ or $\frac{6}{8}$ time. The phrase will *not* begin on the first beat of the bar. After the first playing the candidate should identify the time signature.

During the second playing the candidate should tap or clap the main pulse, accenting the first beat of the bar. An example is given below.

Examiner plays:

Candidate taps:

d) Harmony tests

The examiner will play two chords of the same nature and the candidate will be asked to identify the type of chord played. The chord types will be selected from the following list:

Minor 6th
Minor 7th
Sus 4th
Major 6th
Major 7th
Dominant 7th

e) Pitch tests

The examiner will play the tonic note of a major scale together with another note from the scale simultaneously. The key note will be stated. The candidate should identify the interval between the tonic note and the higher note. An example in the key of G is given below:

Although the two notes will be played together, the candidate may find it easier to identify the interval by trying to separate the two notes, singing from the lower to the higher note.

Conclusion

Examination tips

1. Many of the musical examples given in this handbook may be presented in different keys during the examination. Practising in a range of keys should be considered as essential examination preparation.
2. In the final weeks leading up to the examination practice should focus on weak areas, but do not neglect the main 'Bass Patterns' and 'Performance' sections as these carry the majority of the marks.
3. During the examination, the examiner's numerous questions and tests may seem daunting at first, but these are never designed to 'catch you out'. The breadth of the questions and tests are purely aimed at allowing you the opportunity to display the range and depth of the musical abilities and knowledge that you have developed. Although, as well as complimenting your achievements, the examiner will offer written advice on any areas in which you need to devote more study.
4. During the examination, the examiner will need to make written notes about your performance. This enables the examiner to compile a helpful examination report, which will be forwarded to you after the examination. So do not be put off if you see the examiner 'reach for a pen' – it does not necessarily mean that an error has been noted, it is just as likely that the examiner is noting a positive comment about some aspect of the performance.
5. Try to dispel any nerves by viewing the examination not as a daunting test, but rather as a positive opportunity to demonstrate your musical skills and talents, and to have these formally recognised and rewarded.