

Examination Content

Section 1 – Scales and arpeggios

The examiner will request a selection from the lists below. **All should be played ascending and descending and from memory.**

Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives full details of all required scales and arpeggios and includes helpful advice on the techniques involved in scale and arpeggio playing.

Preliminary Grade

- a). One octave scales:
G Major; A Natural Minor; E Natural minor.
- b). One octave arpeggios:
A Major; E Major; G Major; A Minor; E Minor.

Grade 1

- a). One octave scales:
Major and Natural Minor – in the keys of G A B C D E
- b). One octave arpeggios:
Major and Minor: G A B C D E

Grade 2

- a). One octave scales:
Major; Natural Minor; Pentatonic Minor – in the keys of G A B C D E
- b). One octave arpeggios:
G A B C D E : Major 7th; Minor 7th; Dominant 7th.
In ALL keys: Minor; Major.

Grade 3

- a). One octave scales:
Major; Natural Minor; Pentatonic Minor; Blues – in the keys of G A B C D E
- b). One octave arpeggios:
Major; Minor; Major 7th; Minor 7th; Dominant 7th – in ALL keys.

Grade 4

- a). ALL scales and arpeggios listed in previous grades.
- b). One octave scales in TWO different fingerboard positions:
Major; Natural Minor; Pentatonic Minor; Blues – in the keys of A to F# inclusive.
- c). One octave arpeggios in TWO different fingerboard positions:
Major; Minor; Major 7th; Minor 7th; Dominant 7th – with root notes of A to F# inclusive.

Grade 5

- a). ALL scales and arpeggios listed in previous grades.
- b). One octave scales in THREE different fingerboard positions:
Major; Natural Minor; Pentatonic Minor; Blues – in the keys of B to F# inclusive.
- c). One octave arpeggios in TWO different fingerboard positions:
Sus 4th; Major 6th; Minor 6th; Major 7th; Minor 7th; Dominant 7th – with root notes of A to F# inclusive.

Grade 6

- a). ALL scales and arpeggios listed in previous grades.
- b). One octave scales: Harmonic Minor; Dorian Modal Scale; Mixolydian Modal Scale; Chromatic Scale – in ALL keys.
- c). Two octave Major and Natural Minor scales in the keys of F# to D inclusive.
- d). One octave Major Scale in 8ths – in the keys of F to D inclusive.
- e). One octave arpeggios in TWO different fingerboard positions: Augmented 5th; Diminished 7th; Major 9th; Minor 9th; Dominant 9th – with root notes of A to F# inclusive.
- f). One octave arpeggios in Root, 1st and 2nd inversion: Major; Minor – in ALL keys.

Grade 7

- a). ALL scales and arpeggios listed in previous grades.
- b). One octave scales: Lydian Modal Scale; Whole-tone Scale – in ALL keys.
- c). One octave Major Scale in 10ths – in the keys of F to A inclusive.
- d). One octave arpeggios in THREE different fingerboard positions:
Major; Minor; Sus 4th; Major 6th; Minor 6th; Major 7th; Minor 7th; Dominant 7th – with root notes of B to F# inclusive.
- e). One octave Minor 7th and Dominant 7th arpeggios including # or b5ths and/or # or b9ths – with root notes of A to F# inclusive.
- f). Two octave Major and Minor arpeggios with root notes of F# to D inclusive.

Grade 8

- a). ALL scales and arpeggios listed in previous grades.
- b). Two octave scales:
Blues; Pentatonic Major; Pentatonic Minor – in the keys of F# to D inclusive.
- c). One octave Natural Minor Scale in 8ths – in the keys of F to D inclusive.
- d). One octave Dominant 11th and Dominant 13th arpeggios – with root notes of F# to D inclusive.
- e). One octave arpeggios in root, 1st, 2nd and 3rd inversions:
Major 7th; Minor 7th; Dominant 7th – in ALL keys.
- f). One octave arpeggios in TWO different fingerboard positions:
Minor 7th and Dominant 7th arpeggios including # or b5ths and/or # or b9ths, – with root notes of A to F# inclusive.

Section 2 – Bass Patterns

ALL Grades

- a). The candidate should select a bass pattern from the range shown in Section 2 of the relevant grade Examination Handbook. The candidate will then be shown a chord chart (NOT one taken from the handbook) and will be asked to play through the chord progression using the selected bass pattern. During the first playing, the bass pattern should be played exactly as written. During further playings, whilst still following the chord progression and keeping within the musical style, the candidate should add variations to the bass pattern. The range and complexity of such variations will be expected to increase as the grades progress.
- b). At the examiner's discretion, a further performance but with an alternative pattern and chord chart may be required.

A very helpful series of audio recordings featuring all the bass patterns required for each grade, at both performance and practice speeds, is available from the RGT. Further details can be found at the back of this booklet.

Section 3 – Performance

All Grades

- a). The examiner will play a chord progression on guitar (or on a recording) containing some of the chords listed below for each grade. The candidate will be shown the chord progression and allowed to hear it played once. The candidate will then be asked to improvise an appropriate bass line over further playings of the progression.
- b). At the examiner's discretion, candidates may be given an additional chord progression to play over.

The chords that may appear in the chord progression for each grade are listed below:

Preliminary Grade.

Major or minor chords – G ; A ; B; C; D; E.

The candidate is not expected to play more than the root, and possibly the fifth, of each chord. The chord progression will be played a total of three times.

Grade One.

Major or minor chords – G ; A ; B; C; D; E

The candidate is expected to be fluent in playing the root and fifth of each chord and should demonstrate some ability in incorporating minor or major thirds *when musically appropriate*. The chord progression will be played a total of three times.

Grade Two.

Major 7th, Minor 7th and Dominant 7th chords – G A B C D E. Minor and Major chords with any root note.

The candidate is expected to be able to incorporate minor, major and dominant sevenths *when musically appropriate*. The chord progression will be played a total of three times.

Grade Three.

Major, Minor, Major 7th, Minor 7th and Dominant 7th chords with any root note.

The candidate should demonstrate ability in incorporating minor, major and dominant sevenths *when musically appropriate*. The chord progression will be played a total of four times.

Grade Four.

The chords of all arpeggios listed in Section 1 for this grade.

The candidate is expected to be fluent in playing the root, third, fifth and seventh of each chord *when musically appropriate*. The chord progression will be played a total of four times.

Grade Five.

The chords of all arpeggios listed in Section 1 for this grade.

The candidate is expected to be fluent in playing the root, third, fifth and seventh of each chord *when musically appropriate*. The chord progression will be played a total of four times.

Grade Six.

The chords of all arpeggios listed in Section 1 for this grade.

The candidate is expected to demonstrate some ability in incorporating chromaticism when musically appropriate. The chord progression will be played a total of five times.

Grade Seven.

The chords of all arpeggios listed in Section 1 for this grade.

The candidate is expected to demonstrate ability in incorporating chromaticism when musically appropriate. The chord progression will be played a total of five times.

Grade Eight.

The chords of all arpeggios listed in Section 1 for this grade.

The candidate is expected to be fluent in incorporating chromaticism when musically appropriate. The chord progression will be played a total of five times.

The RGT's book/CD series 'Improvising Bass Guitar' has been especially produced to help candidates develop the improvisation skills needed for this section of the examination. Further details can be found at the back of this booklet.

Section 4 – Musicianship

All Grades

Candidates will be asked questions relating to any of the topics listed below.

- a). Musical knowledge;
- b). Playing the bass guitar;
- c). Knowledge of the instrument.

Knowledge of notes on the fingerboard (taken from the scales and arpeggios listed in the relevant grade of Section 1) is a core requirement – particularly at earlier grades.

The range and complexity of questions will increase as the grades progress.

Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives full details and examples of this section of the examination.

Section 5 – Aural Assessment

All Grades

Candidates aural abilities will be assessed via tests appropriate to the grade which will include some of the following:

- a). Repetition of rhythms.
- b). Repetition of phrases.
- c). Beating of time and (from grade 4 onwards) recognition of time signatures.
- d). Harmony tests, including (from grade 7 onwards) recognition of cadences.
- e). Pitch tests, including (from grade 1 onwards) recognition of intervals.

Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives full details and examples of this section of the examination.

Section 6 – Specialism (only for Grades 6 to 8)

Candidates should select and demonstrate skill in one of the following topics.

- a). Sight-reading from standard bass clef notation.
- b). Solo bass style of either: Fretless bass; Slap bass; Plectrum or fingerstyle.

Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives more information regarding this section of the examination.