

Special COVID-19 arrangements for accompaniment in remotely-assessed Performance Grade and ARSM exams

Live accompaniment, as detailed in the relevant syllabuses, is normally required. However, while social distancing requirements are in place, we are offering flexibility to singers and instrumentalists who must usually have an accompanist (or duet partner) on the day of their exam. There are a number of options available, which we will accept for remotely-assessed exams until at least 31 July 2021. Arrangements beyond that are subject to review.

Option	Guidance
Live accompaniment	<p>This is the recommended option if there is someone available to provide accompaniment.</p> <p>Accompaniments may also be adapted for a different instrument (e.g. guitar instead of piano). Some pieces/songs may be published with accompaniments for alternative instruments.</p>
Unaccompanied performances	Short rests should be 'played' as written; several consecutive bars' rest should be shortened.
Live accompaniment using video conferencing software	<p>Accompaniment played by the teacher or an accompanist via a video-conferencing application, subject to a suitably reliable connection.</p> <p>Due to common latency issues, this approach is likely to be most successful if the accompaniment is treated like a backing track rather than attempting to achieve an interactive live performance between candidate and accompanist.</p>
Pre-recorded accompaniment	Prepared by the teacher or an accompanist.
Commercial backing track	<p>Selections of pieces/songs from a limited number of graded syllabuses are available from ABRSM, either packaged with <i>Exam Pieces</i> publications or available individually from www.abrsmdownloads.org.</p> <p>Many publications are available with backing tracks on accompanying CDs or as downloads.</p>
A mix of the above approaches	<p>Any other available option.</p> <p>Depending on the chosen pieces/songs and what is available.</p>

In the case of all accompanied options, please make sure that the candidate can hear the accompaniment clearly while performing.

A responsible adult who is present may operate any equipment needed to play recorded accompaniments.

Exceptionally, singers will also be allowed to accompany themselves. If choosing this option, singers will still be assessed against the usual criteria; marking allowances cannot be made for the fact that they are also undertaking the accompaniment role.

Examiners will be understanding of the impact of any current restrictions and will focus on candidates' performances. All candidates will be assessed equally according to how well they control and manage their performance, irrespective of the form of accompaniment (or none) used. There is no advantage to be gained by taking any one of the above options over another.

Updated 10 February 2021