



UNIVERSITY OF  
**WEST LONDON**  
London College of Music Examinations

# **Pop and Rock Band Syllabus**

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# **LCM Examinations**

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# London College of Music

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The London College of Music (LCM) is one of the largest specialist Music and Performing Arts institutes in the UK. It has a long history of music education dating back to 1887, when it was situated in Great Marlborough Street, London, where the college began as an examination body. In 1991 LCM became part of Thames Valley University, which was renamed the University of West London in 2011.

The London College of Music offers an impressive range of innovative courses, respected worldwide and delivered with creativity and passion by practising industry experts. Courses include Performance and Composition, Popular Music Performance and Recording, Performing Arts, Music Management, Music Technology and Theatre Production.

Further information about full-time programmes for undergraduate and postgraduate students, in addition to the Junior College, is available from:

- the UWL Learning Advice Centre - tel: 020 8579 5000; email: [learning.advice@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:learning.advice@uwl.ac.uk)
- the London College of Music office - tel: 020 8231 2304; email: [music@uwl.ac.uk](mailto:music@uwl.ac.uk)
- [uwl.ac.uk/music](http://uwl.ac.uk/music)

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## London College of Music Examinations

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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, and are unique in the graded examinations world in being awarded by a university.

LCM's graded and diploma examinations in most subjects are regulated by Ofqual, which serves as a UK governmental stamp of approval and quality assurance, confirming parity of standards with other similar examination boards. Furthermore, the resulting mapping of LCM Examinations onto the RQF (Regulated Qualifications Framework) means that candidates applying to UK universities through the UCAS system can increase their points tariff if they have been awarded a Pass or higher at Grades 6–8 in a regulated subject.

LCM Examinations are distinctive, both in the qualifications offered and in the administration and running of the exams. We have retained the well-known traditional atmosphere and qualities of the London College of Music: informality, friendliness and approachability, although set in a fully professional and modern context. We are small enough that enquiries to the head office can be dealt with speedily and efficiently, and we are able to get to know many of our representatives and teachers personally by name. Examiners pride themselves on being friendly and approachable, ensuring candidates are put at their ease and are thus able to perform to their full potential; yet they are professional, applying thorough and objective assessment criteria in forming their judgements.

We offer a number of pre-Grade 1 Step exams. Graded exams include a discussion element, which encourages candidates to think, both technically and critically, about the music they perform in the exam. Syllabuses contain a wide range of repertoire options, sometimes including an own choice element. We offer the very popular Leisure Play option, where candidates perform three pieces plus a fourth own choice, but do not attempt any of the additional components of the exam. Recent additions to our range of exam formats include Recital Grades (a performance-only alternative to standard graded exams) and Performance Awards (assessed via video submission).

Graded and diploma syllabuses are available free of charge from LCM Examinations and from local representatives.

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# 1. Syllabus introduction

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## 1.1 Pop and rock band exams

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Pop and rock band exams are available for groups playing any popular music style. The music performed can be drawn from a diverse range of influences and popular music styles such as rock, pop, blues, country, soul, funk, RnB, reggae etc.

These exams provide developing musicians, who are performing popular music in a group, with the opportunity to have their playing professionally assessed and to receive independent feedback on their playing from an experienced examiner. These exams are accredited by London College of Music Examinations and successful bands will receive a certificate from the University of West London.

These exams require band members to attend an exam venue and perform their pieces. Alternatively, it may be possible for an examiner to attend a specific venue of the band's choice and assess the performance. This option enables the exams to be conducted as part of a gig, end of term concert, battle of the bands competition etc.

## 1.2 Availability of examinations and entry details

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Practical examinations take place throughout the year according to location. In the UK and Ireland, practical examinations are held three times a year at public centres: Spring (March/April), Summer (June/July) and Winter (November/December). The dates when each year's sessions begin and end are published in the preceding Autumn. See the website for details on how to enter. Teachers are invited to telephone LCM Examinations on 020 8231 2364 to discuss the arrangements in advance.

## 1.3 Exam levels, durations and target groups

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There are six levels of exam available and their equivalent grade standard is indicated below.

The exam durations in the table below are for the performances only and do not include set-ups and clearing away times. Bands may enter at any level – there are no pre-requisite examination requirements.

LCM Examinations are open to all. There are no minimum age restrictions. However, the following table gives a broad indication of the ages for which the various levels might typically prove suitable:

Level	Grade equivalent	Duration (mins)	Age
1	1–2	10–12	Up to 12
2	3–4	12–15	10–14
3	5	20–25	12–16
4	6–7	20–25	14–18
5	8	20–25	16 and above
Professional Diploma	DipLCM	30–40	16 and above

## 1.4 Candidates with particular needs

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Information on assessment, examination and entry requirements for candidates with particular needs is published in the document *Equality of Opportunity, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration* available free of charge via our website.

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## **2. Syllabus content**

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### **2.1 Syllabus overview**

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This London College of Music Examinations syllabus is designed to prepare students for Pop and Rock Band Examinations in Music Performance awarded by University of West London Qualifications. It provides a structured approach which enables students to master progressively the understanding, knowledge and skills necessary to perform as part of an ensemble and to develop capability both as a performer and as an informed listener. Information and advice is given on the selection of suitable repertoire for each of the levels of examination. The syllabus clearly describes what is expected and how the achievements of the candidate are to be assessed, so that students can be taught to master the requirements and to perform these in a practical examination. Examinations are conducted by trained external examiners and are held at approved centres in the UK and overseas.

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## 3. Examination requirements

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### 3.1 Performance structure

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Bands are given a free choice of pieces to perform and guidance on the relevant musical and technical challenges for each level is given later in this document. There are no minimum or maximum number of pieces, although the music performed should display variety and feature contrasting sections or pieces as appropriate to the level of exam being taken. The music performed may be drawn from a selection of different music styles if preferred. Where a band is focusing on one style of music, care should be taken to ensure that musically contrasting sections or pieces are included to demonstrate an appropriate range of techniques and skills. At all levels credit will be given for an effective repertoire selection which suits the band's abilities and demonstrates versatility.

The music performed can be covers of other artists' material and/or original compositions. Cover versions can be exact renditions of the original piece or an interpretation and arrangement if preferred. At the lower levels in particular it is expected that bands will perform simplified arrangements of songs to limit the technical challenges involved.

The incorporation of improvised elements into the performance is perfectly acceptable at any level if musically appropriate, however there is no requirement for improvisation to be included.

The pieces should be presented as a continuous 'set' performance, and all pieces should be performed entirely from memory.

### 3.2 Band members

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The minimum number of performers in the band is two and there is no upper limit to the number of performers. The band may be comprised solely of instrumentalists or may include vocalists. There are no set requirements regarding the composition of the instruments within the band and this can include acoustic instruments, electronic and amplified instruments, rappers and DJs. However, please note that each band must feature at least one instrumentalist – vocal ensembles are not covered by this syllabus.

The use of digital samplers, sequencers, backing tracks and drum machines should be kept to a minimum, and where musically appropriate, as it is expected that all performances should be essentially 'live'.

### 3.3 Guidance on selecting material

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A list of sample songs and their appropriate level is available below. These are provided as a guide and there is no requirement to perform any of the songs listed below. Guidance on the suitability of repertoire can be obtained from LCME.

The following guidelines should be taken into consideration when assessing the technical content and level of a song. The assessment process is focused on the overall musical performance of the band rather than solely on the technical demands of each song. Therefore, it is perfectly acceptable for a band to perform a highly effective rendition of a technically simple song as part of their performance.

A list of sample songs is provided at each level. The suitability of these songs for each level has been assessed on the technical aspects of the more obviously composed elements of the pieces, rather than the improvised sections.

#### Level 1

The music selected for Level 1 should be of an essentially elementary nature and featuring the most commonly used time signatures and keys. The melodic, harmonic and rhythmic content can be predominantly simple and some limited dynamic contrast in the performance will be expected. Technical accomplishment is a more important element at this level than musicality.

### Sample songs

Artist	Song Title
The White Stripes	Seven Nation Army
Oasis	Don't Look Back in Anger
Ed Sheeran	Thinking Out Loud
U2	I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For
Johnny Cash	Folsom Prison Blues
Tina Turner	Simply the Best
The Waterboys	Fisherman's Blues
Bob Marley	Three Little Birds
Cream	Sunshine of Your Love
Alanis Morissette	Ironic
Kings Of Leon	Use Somebody
Adele	Rolling in the Deep
Nirvana	Smells Like Teen Spirit

### Level 2

The music selected at this level should be slightly more demanding and may draw on a broader range of time signatures and keys. The pieces should contain a wider range of chords, and the melodic and rhythmic elements should be a little more complex. Dynamic contrasts should be used more regularly and with a wider variety utilised. Musicality now becomes an increasingly important element of assessment in relation to technical accomplishment.

### Sample songs

Artist	Song Title
Thin Lizzy	Whiskey in the Jar
Bryan Adams	Summer of 69
Abba	Does Your Mother Know
Dire Straits	Sultans of Swing
The Black Keys	Lonely Boy
The Cranberries	Zombie
Green Day	Basket Case
Franz Ferdinand	Take Me Out
Bob Marley	No Woman No Cry
The Killers	Somebody Told Me

### Level 3

The material performed at this level should be of a significantly more demanding nature than Levels 1 and 2 – this is the first level at which some of the material could be performed at a professional gig or concert. The material is expected to demonstrate some variety in the range of keys and time signatures used. Melodic and rhythmic elements may include a moderate degree of complexity and variety and the chord content should continue to develop. It is expected that dynamic contrast will be a relatively significant aspect of the performance and musicality will be an important element of assessment.

### Sample songs

Artist	Song Title
The Eurythmics	Sweet Dreams (Are Made of This)
The Animals	House of the Rising Sun
Abba	Knowing Me, Knowing You
Royal Blood	Figure it Out
Pink Floyd	Money
Muse	Time is Running Out
Guns n' Roses	Sweet Child o' Mine
The Police	Every Breath You Take



## Level 4

The material selected and performed at this level should be increasingly considered as part of a professional gig or concert. Variety in the use of time signatures and keys is expected, including within individual pieces where appropriate. A significant degree of complexity in the melodic and rhythmic content is expected with the chords also contributing to this. The dynamic contrasts in the performance should demand considerable control and dexterity, and musicality will be assessed as a significant element of the performance. Candidates are expected to communicate with an emerging musical personality.

### Sample songs

Artist	Song Title
The Police	Message in a Bottle
Metallica	For Whom the Bell Tolls
Stevie Wonder	Higher Ground
The Smiths	Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now

## Level 5

Most of the material selected and performed at this level should now be considered as part of a professional gig or concert. Pieces may include changes and variations in key, time signature and tempo as well as providing significant contrast across the whole performance. The melodic and rhythmic content will feature a significant degree of complexity and the harmonic structure and content should be varied as appropriate to the music being performed. Dynamics should place consistent demands on the performers throughout. Musicality will be assessed as a highly significant element of the performance. Candidates are expected to communicate with a defined sense of musical personality.

### Sample songs

Artist	Song Title
Lynyrd Skynyrd	Sweet Home Alabama
Thin Lizzy	The Boys are Back in Town
Radiohead	Paranoid Android
Gary Moore	Parisienne Walkways

## Professional Diploma Level

The material selected and performed at this level should be of an advanced standard throughout and should present technical and musical challenges appropriate to diploma level. The melodic, rhythmic and harmonic content should be significantly complex and varied throughout the performance. A sound technical basis is assumed here and musicality will be assessed as a highly significant element. Candidates are expected to communicate with a clear and mature sense of musical personality.

## 4. Assessment

The marking scheme is comprised of a balanced structure of examination components and assessment categories. Taken together they form a matrix which enables the performance of each ensemble to be systematically assessed and marked.

### 4.1 Assessment objectives

During an examination candidates will be assessed on their ability to demonstrate mastery of:

<p><b>Domain 1: Technical Accomplishment</b></p> <p>The extent to which the instruments or voices are effectively controlled.</p>	<p><b>Domain 2: Musicality</b></p> <p>The ability to make sensitive and musical performance decisions.</p>
<p><b>Domain 3: Musical Knowledge</b></p> <p>The synthesis of theoretical, notational and contextual knowledge.</p>	<p><b>Domain 4: Communication</b></p> <p>The degree to which the performers communicate with and engage the listener through musical performance on their instruments and/or voices.</p>

### 4.2 How marks are awarded during the examination

The examiner will consider the pieces performed, and will award a mark out of 100. This mark will be subdivided at the examiner's discretion to indicate separate marks for individual pieces performed. In awarding marks, the examiner will take into account the following:

Assessment Domains	Approximate weightings		
	Levels 1–2	Levels 3–4	Level 5/ Professional Diplomas
<b>Technical Accomplishment:</b> the ability to manipulate the instrument or voice, as appropriate to the repertoire, with respect to accuracy, fluency, articulation, intonation, breath control, fingering, tonal variety and/or consistency, dexterity, tempo, dynamics, etc.	65 %	55 %	40 %
<b>Musicality:</b> the ability to make sensitive and musical performance decisions, resulting in a sense of individual interpretative skill, so that the music is performed in a manner reflecting a degree of sensitivity and empathy, musical personality and ensemble awareness; the ability to adapt to a variety of styles as may be required by the choice of repertoire.	15 %	20 %	30 %
<b>Musical Knowledge:</b> an understanding of all aspects of the notation/musical content occurring in the repertoire; an understanding of the stylistic context of, and performance practice relating to, the repertoire.	10 %	12.5 %	15 %
<b>Communication:</b> evidence of a perceptive understanding of how to engage the listener and communicate the musical substance of the repertoire, through the use of elements outlined above.	10 %	12.5 %	15 %

# 5. Awarding and reporting

## 5.1 Awards of Pass, Pass with Merit or Pass with Distinction

The pass awards are differentiated by outcome. Depending on the level of mastery demonstrated during the examination performance an ensemble may be awarded either a Pass, or a Pass with Merit or a Pass with Distinction. Each award broadly corresponds with the following descriptions of achievement and requires that the candidate obtains or exceeds the minimum number of marks set as the boundary for the award.

### **Distinction (85-100%)**

Candidates who achieve a Pass with Distinction will have offered a highly accurate, fluent and musical response. They will have demonstrated secure technical accomplishment and will have shown evidence of excellent musicality, ensemble awareness, and presentation skills. Candidates will have communicated, through performance, a sense of real engagement with, an understanding of, and at Levels 4 and above, a sense of individual personality in relation to, the repertoire.

### **Merit (75-84%)**

Candidates who achieve a Pass with Merit will have offered an accurate, fluent and musical response. They will have demonstrated a good standard of technical accomplishment and will have shown significant evidence of musicality, ensemble awareness, and presentation skills. Candidates will have communicated, through performance, some sense of engagement with, some understanding of, and at Levels 4 and above, an emerging sense of musical personality in relation to, the repertoire.

### **Pass (65-74%)**

Candidates who achieve a Pass will have offered a mostly accurate, fluent and musical response. They will have demonstrated an acceptable standard of technical accomplishment and will have shown some evidence of musicality, ensemble awareness, and presentation skills. Candidates will have communicated, through performance, a basic understanding of the repertoire, and ability to engage the listener.

### **Below pass, upper level (55-64%)**

Candidates who achieve a mark in this band will have demonstrated some inaccuracy, lack of fluency, and lack of musicality. They will not have demonstrated an acceptable standard of technical accomplishment and evidence of ensemble awareness and presentation skills will be minimal. Candidates will have failed to communicate, through performance, a sufficient degree of understanding of the repertoire, or ability to engage the listener.

### **Below pass, lower level (0-54%)**

Candidates who achieve a mark in this band will have demonstrated significant inaccuracy, lack of fluency, and little or no musicality. Their standard of technical accomplishment will have been judged as significantly below that required for the level of examination, and evidence of ensemble awareness and presentation skills will be low or non-existent. Candidates will have failed to communicate, through performance, any discernible understanding of the repertoire, and they will not have succeeded in engaging the listener.

## 5.2 Attainment band descriptions

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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:

### All levels

<b>Full marks (100%)</b> A fully confident and assured rendition of the pieces that displays a clear awareness and understanding of the requirements for an effective and cohesive band performance. Across a balanced and varied repertoire, accuracy and timing will be both secure throughout, with the band displaying mastery of the technical demands of all the pieces. At the higher levels, there should be both a clear awareness and control of dynamic and tonal contrasts.	<b>Distinction (85–100%)</b> A highly confident and assured rendition of a varied and effective repertoire, with a high level of accuracy and security of timing. Small and very occasional lapses in any of these detracted slightly from what was otherwise an effective and cohesive band performance. At the higher levels, some awareness of dynamic and tonal contrast should be clearly displayed.	<b>Merit (75–84%)</b> Accuracy, timing and control of the technical demands of the pieces should be generally secure, although there may be some lapses in these compared with Distinction. There was some loss of cohesive ensemble playing at times, and some lack of appropriate variety in the repertoire was evident. At the higher levels the performances should display some confidence and awareness of dynamic and tonal contrast.
<b>Pass (65–74%)</b> Accuracy and timing should be mostly secure throughout the performance but, compared to Merit, there may be some lapses in technical control, clarity and band cohesion. The choice of repertoire lacked sufficient variety and contrast. At the higher levels there should be some basic awareness of the control of dynamics and tone.	<b>Below Pass, upper (55–64%)</b> Some serious or numerous smaller lapses in accuracy, timing and overall band cohesion. Frequent lapses in technical control and clarity of tone. Nevertheless, showing some potential of attaining a Pass at this level.	<b>Below Pass, lower (0–54%)</b> Inaccuracies proportionately greater than correct playing. Overall the performance demonstrated a fundamental lack of musical awareness, cohesion, technical control and fluency.

## 5.3 Issue of results

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A written report will be compiled for each examination. This will focus on the ensemble as a whole rather than on individual players, although where an individual contribution is particularly noteworthy, this may be commented on.

Candidates will be informed of the result of examinations as soon as possible, and not later than four weeks after the examination date, by post. Representatives are not allowed to issue results over the telephone.

Certificates for successful ensembles (achieving a Pass or higher) 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. (*See Regulation 27.*)

## 5.4 Repeats of examinations

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Where an ensemble is not able to reach the minimum standard for a pass in an examination, application for re-examination at that Level is permitted, upon payment of the current entry fee. All examination components must be completed on re-examination. Marks from examination components may not be carried forward or credited.

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## 6. Regulations and information

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1. It is the candidate's responsibility to obtain, and comply with, the current syllabus. LCME has a policy of consistent improvement and development and may, without notice, update regulations, syllabuses and other publications. Where alterations, additions and/or deletions to syllabuses takes place, LCME cannot accept responsibility for informing candidates and teachers of such changes except through the LCME website, LCME publications, and the normal reprinting process.
2. Exam periods and entry deadlines are provided on the exam entry forms, available from [lcme.uwl.ac.uk](http://lcme.uwl.ac.uk) or by calling the LCME office (020 8231 2751).
3. The right to refuse, postpone or cancel the entry of any candidate is reserved. Entries are accepted subject to the regulations stated in this syllabus. Entry for exams constitutes an agreement on the part of the candidate to abide by the regulations.
4. A table of exam fees is provided on the entry forms and on the LCME website [lcme.uwl.ac.uk](http://lcme.uwl.ac.uk). Once an exam has been entered, fees cannot be refunded nor entries postponed to a later examination session.
5. Only candidates officially entered will be examined – substitution of a candidate in place of a candidate originally entered will not be allowed.
6. Exam appointments: An attendance notice detailing the date, time and venue of the examination will be issued to each band via email (where this is provided on the entry form), or via the teacher or the correspondence address on the entry form, not later than ten days before the date of the examination. This should be retained by the candidate, and handed to the examiner on the day of the exam. LCME should be informed immediately if there are any errors on the attendance notice. An incorrect exam level or subject cannot be changed on the day of the exam, and spelling corrections will incur a fee if notified after the issue of the certificate. Examiners will do their best to start exams at the stated appointment times, but may need to start an exam slightly earlier or later than the stated time. Candidates should ensure that they arrive at the venue no later than 10 minutes before the scheduled time of the exam.
7. Pop and rock band exams are conducted in closed conditions. No one, apart from the candidates and the examiner, are allowed into the exam room with the following exception: an approved person, such as a parent or teacher, or a language interpreter, where this concession has been granted prior to the exam as the result of a request for reasonable adjustment for a candidate with particular needs.
8. Fingering: Specified fingerings in RGT or LCME publications or other recommended publications should be taken as suggested guidelines only. Alternative systematic and effective fingerings will be accepted by examiners, unless they adversely affect the musical result.
9. Tuning: Candidates should tune their own instruments – the use of electronic tuners is permitted.
10. Stopping candidates: Examiners may, at their discretion, stop a candidate at any part of a practical exam if the candidate has exceeded the time allowed for the exam.
11. Special consideration (including absence through illness): Candidates who are unable to attend an exam at the scheduled time, for medical reasons, are invited to submit a signed doctor's letter indicating the reason, and accompanied by the attendance notice, to the LCME office. The letter must be submitted within two weeks of the exam date, and must make clear that the candidate was incapacitated on the day of the scheduled exam. The candidate will then be permitted to re-enter for the same exam on payment of half the current fee. Candidates who are unwell on the day of the exam, but elect to take the exam nonetheless, will not be granted any special consideration in terms of assessment, and will not be eligible for a half-fee re-entry. Candidates who are unable to attend an exam for compassionate reasons (e.g. death of a relative) are also covered under this policy.
12. Exam results and certificates: A written report will be compiled for each exam. Candidates will be informed of the result of the exam as soon as possible, and normally not later than four weeks after the examination date, by post. Results cannot be issued over the telephone. Certificates for successful candidates are normally dispatched within eight weeks of the date of the exam.