

Bass Guitar Examination

Examination for Grades 3-5

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.

Grade 3:

A) One octave scales:

Major; Natural; Pentatonic Minor; Blues – G A B C D E

B) One octave arpeggios:

Major; Minor; Major 7th; Dominant 7th – in ALL keys.

Grade 4:

A) ALL scales and arpeggios listed in previous grades.

B) One octave scales in TWP different fingerboard positions:

Major; Natural Minor; Pentatonic Minor; Blues – in 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 – B to F# inclusive.

C) One octave arpeggios in TWO different fingerboard positions:

Sus 4th; Major 6th; Minor 6th; Major 7th; Dominant 7th – with root scales of A to F# inclusive.

Section 2: Bass Patterns

- 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, 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 selected.

Section 3: Performance

- A) The examiner will play a chord progression on guitar (or 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.

Grade 3:

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 4:

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 5:

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.

Section 4: Musicianship

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.

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

Section 5: Aural Assessment

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 recognition of time signatures.
- D) Harmony tests.
- E) Pitch tests, including recognition of intervals.