

# **Bass Guitar Examination**

## Examination for Grades 6-8

### **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.

#### **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 keys F to D inclusive.
- E) One octave arpeggios in TWO different fingerboard positions:  
Augmented 5<sup>th</sup>; Diminished 7<sup>th</sup>; Major 9<sup>th</sup>; Minor 9<sup>th</sup>; Dominant 9<sup>th</sup> – with root notes of A to F# inclusive.
- F) One octave arpeggios in Root, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 keys F to A inclusive.
- D) One octave arpeggios in THREE different fingerboard positions:

- Major; Minor; Sus 4<sup>th</sup>; Major 6<sup>th</sup>; Minor 6<sup>th</sup>; Major 7<sup>th</sup>; Minor 7<sup>th</sup>; Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> – with root notes of B to F# inclusive.
- E) One octave Minor 7<sup>th</sup> and Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> arpeggios including # or b5ths – 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 keys F# to D inclusive.
- C) One octave Natural Minor Scale in 8ths – in keys F to D inclusive.
- D) One octave Dominant 11<sup>th</sup> and Dominant 13<sup>th</sup> arpeggios – with root notes of F# to D inclusive.
- E) One octave arpeggios in root, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> inversions:  
Major 7<sup>th</sup>; Minor 7<sup>th</sup>; Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> – in ALL keys.
- F) One octave arpeggios in TWO different fingerboard positions:  
Minor 7<sup>th</sup> and Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> arpeggios including # or b5ths and/or # or b9ths – with root notes in A to F# inclusive.

## Section 2: Bass Patterns

- A) The candidates 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
- B) as the grades progress.
  - C) At the examiner's discretion, a further performance but with an alternative pattern and chord chart may be required.

### **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 progression to play over.

#### **Grade 6:**

The chords of all arpeggios listed in Section 1 of 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 7:**

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 8:**

The chords of all arpeggios listed in Section 1 of 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.

## **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.

## **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, including (from Grade 7 onwards) recognition of cadences.
- E) Pitch tests, including recognition of intervals.

## **Section 6: Specialism**

Candidate 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.