



CLASSICAL VIOLIN

SYLLABUS SPECIFICATION

2021 Edition



RSL CLASSICAL

Welcome to the RSL Awards 2021 syllabus for Classical Violin

This syllabus guide is designed to give teachers, learners and candidates practical information on the graded qualifications run by RSL Awards.

This syllabus guide covers the following qualifications

- Graded Examinations: Debut to Grade 8
- Graded Certificates: Debut to Grade 8
- Performance Certificates: Debut to Grade 8

Period of operation

This syllabus specification covers graded qualifications in Classical Violin from 2021.



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SYLLABUS

Head of Graded Music & Publishing: Jono Harrison

Syllabus designed and written by Jono Harrison

Syllabus created in association with London String Group (londonstringgroup.com)

Syllabus Director (2025 Update): Dr Fern-Chantele Carter

Syllabus consultants: Ruth Elder, Enyuan Khong, Daniel Rankin, Ashley Hards

Syllabus advisors: Tim Bennett-Hart, Dr. Andrew McBirnie, Daniel Francis,

David Duncan, Simon Troup, Philip Aird, Steve Bingham, Kieran Lynch, Dominic Wright,

Samantha Stimpson, Omar Puente

Supporting tests written by Ruth Elder and Daniel Rankin

PUBLISHING

Compiled and edited by Jono Harrison and Ruth Elder

Music engraving by David Duncan and John Rogers (Top Score)

Book layout by Simon Troup and Jennie Troup (Digital Music Art)

Fact files written by Abbie Thomas and Oliver Goss

Performance notes written by Emma Blanco and Emily White

Proofreading by Oliver Goss

Cover design by Phillip Millard (Rather Nice Design)

Cover updates by Simon Troup and Neil Hart

Repertoire arrangements by Ruth Elder, Jono Harrison, Kit Massey and Hal Leonard LLC

AUDIO

Produced by Tina Jacobs-Lim, Ross Stanley, Jono Harrison Tim Bennett-Hart,

Calum Harrison and Callum Agnew

Supporting tests by Jono Harrison and Daniel Rankin

MUSICIANS

Violin: Tina Jacobs-Lim, Ronald Long and Ruth Elder

Piano: Ross Stanley, Jono Harrison and Dr Rob Upton

Programming, keys, guitar, bass, backing track mixes: Daniel Rankin, Jono Harrison and

Tim Bennett-Hart

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

Norton York, Suzanne Harlow & Tim Bennett-Hart

DISTRIBUTION

Exclusive distributors: Hal Leonard

CONTACTING RSL AWARDS

rslawards.com

Telephone: +44 (0)345 460 4747

Email: info@rslawards.com

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PREFACE

QUALIFICATIONS AT A GLANCE

Qualification titles and sizes

GRADED EXAMINATIONS

Qualification title	QAN	Total number of units	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Credit	Total qualification time (TQT)
RSL Entry Level Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance (Entry 3)	501/0370/2	1	8	4	40
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 1	501/0391/X	1	12	6	60
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 2	501/0646/6	1	18	9	90
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 3	501/0647/8	1	18	12	120
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 4	501/0389/1	1	24	15	150
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 5	501/0643/0	1	24	18	180
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 6	501/0390/8	1	36	22	220
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 7	501/0645/4	1	48	27	270
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Examination in Music Performance - Grade 8	501/0648/X	1	54	32	320

GRADED CERTIFICATES

Qualification title	QAN	Total number of units	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Credit	Total qualification time (TQT)
RSL Entry Level Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance (Entry 3)	610/4760/0	1	8	4	40
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 1	610/4761/2	1	12	6	60
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 2	610/4762/4	1	18	9	90
RSL Level 1 Award in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 3	610/4763/6	1	18	12	120
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 4	610/4764/8	1	24	15	150
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 5	610/4765/X	1	24	18	180
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 6	610/4766/1	1	36	22	220
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 7	610/4767/3	1	48	27	270
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Graded Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 8	610/4768/5	1	54	32	320

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

Qualification title	QAN	Total number of units	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Credit	Total qualification time (TQT)
RSL Entry level Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance (Entry 3)	610/4770/3	1	8	4	40
RSL Level 1 Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 1	610/4771/5	1	12	6	60
RSL Level 1 Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 2	610/4772/7	1	18	9	90
RSL Level 1 Award in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 3	610/4773/9	1	18	12	120
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 4	610/4774/0	1	24	15	150
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 5	610/4775/2	1	24	18	180
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 6	610/4776/4	1	36	22	220
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 7	610/4777/6	1	48	27	270
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Performance Certificate in Music Performance - Grade 8	610/4778/8	1	54	32	320

Assessment overview

Assessment	
Form of assessment	All assessments are carried out by external examiners. Candidates are required to carry out a combination of practical tasks and underpinning theoretical assessment.
Assessment bands	There are four bands of assessment (Distinction, Merit, Pass and Unclassified) for the qualification as a whole.
Quality assurance	Quality assurance ensures that all assessments are carried out to the same standard by objective sampling and reassessment of candidates' work. A team of external examiners is appointed, trained and standardised by RSL.

THE VALUE OF RSL QUALIFICATIONS

RSL qualifications

We are committed to maintaining and improving our reputation for excellence by providing high quality education and training through our syllabuses, examinations, music and resources. We advocate an open access approach to qualifications, providing a range of syllabuses, designed to accommodate a wide variety of candidates of different ages, experience and levels of achievement. RSL qualifications are listed on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) in England and Northern Ireland by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

Progression routes

RSL's graded qualifications provide a flexible progression route for candidates. They are a positive means of determining progress and enable candidates to learn the necessary techniques to gain entry to industry, and to further education (FE) and higher education (HE) courses. Graded qualifications operate according to a well-established methodology of 'progressive mastery'. They allow candidates to be tested in discrete stages in the development of a wide range of skills. They tend to be more rigorous than other types of exams and for that reason employers are confident that candidates with graded qualifications will have the necessary skills to work in a variety of different areas.

UCAS points

For students applying for work or university, many potential employers and institutions see graded exams in a very positive way. Recognised qualifications demonstrate an ability to dedicate commitment to extracurricular activities, providing evidence of versatility, which many students find beneficial within UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) applications and for university entrance interviews. Our qualifications at Level 3 (Grades 6 to 8) carry allocated points on the UCAS tariff. For full details relating to the allocation of UCAS points please see [rslawards.com/about-us/ucas-points](https://www.rslawards.com/about-us/ucas-points).

QUALIFICATION SUMMARY

Aims and broad objectives

The aim of graded music performance qualifications is to provide a flexible, progressive mastery approach to the knowledge, skills and understanding required for popular music performance. RSL's graded qualifications motivate and encourage candidates of all ages and levels through a system of progressive mastery, enabling candidates to develop and enhance skills, knowledge and understanding in a safe and consistent way. The qualifications are beneficial for candidates wishing to progress at their own pace through smaller steps of achievement.

Expectations of knowledge, skills and understanding

The graded examination system is one based on the principle of 'progressive mastery' – each step in the exam chain demonstrates learning, progression and skills in incremental steps. Successful learning is characterised by a mastery of the fundamentals of the skills demanded in each grade.

Qualification structure

A graded qualification consists of a range of both practical and knowledge based elements, which are based on detailed requirements outlined in the relevant syllabus. Therefore, requirements for each grade will be set out in detail in the unit specifications (page 22 onwards). The learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit will require knowledge, skills and understanding of these syllabus requirements to be demonstrated at the grade entered.

Quality assurance

All RSL examinations and graded qualifications are standardised according to the processes and procedures laid down by RSL.

CANDIDATE ACCESS AND REGISTRATION

Access and registration

The qualifications will:

- Be available to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standards
- Be free from any barriers that restrict access and progression
- Offer equal opportunities for all wishing to access the qualifications

Entry requirements

These qualifications are open to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standard; there are no entry requirements. However, candidates should be aware that the content at the higher grades will require a level of knowledge and understanding covered in previous qualifications. At the point of application, RSL will ensure that all candidates are fully informed about the requirements and demands of the qualification.

Age groups

These qualifications are suitable for candidates in the Under 16, 16+, 16–18 and 19+ age groups.

Recommended prior learning (RPL)

Learners are not required to have any prior learning for these qualifications. However, learners should ensure that they are aware of the requirements and expectations of each grade prior to entering for an assessment.

Exam entry

Candidates may enter online for any of the qualifications at various points in the calendar year in territories throughout the world. For further details on exam dates and fees, and to enter for a graded Classical Violin qualification, visit the RSL website at: [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com).

FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT

Information and support

The RSL website [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com) has detailed information on all aspects of RSL examinations, including examination regulations, detailed marking schemes and assessment criteria as well as examples to help you prepare for our qualifications.

Complaints and appeals

All procedural complaints and appeals, including malpractice and requests for reasonable adjustments / special considerations, can be made through the website: [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com).

Equal opportunities

RSL's Equal Opportunities policy can be found on the website: [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com).

Contacts for help and support

All correspondence should be directed to info@rslawards.com: or to:

RSL

Harlequin House
7 High Street
Teddington
Middlesex
TW11 8EE

EXAM GUIDELINES

GENERAL GUIDELINES

RSL grade books

RSL publishes individual grade books for each grade. Each book contains a diverse selection of ten pieces, selected to give students a fun, engaging and rewarding learning experience, all of the required technical work for the grade, and examples and guidance of the other exam elements. Audio recordings of the pieces, backing tracks, technical exercises and supporting tests (where applicable) are available from rslawards.com/downloads using the download code included in the grade book.

Candidate notes

It is permitted to use grade books that contain handwritten notes made during the course of a candidate's study. However, for General Musicianship Questions that ask about a specific piece from the grade book, if the candidate's copy of the score contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the piece as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Photocopying pages

Candidates are allowed to photocopy relevant pages of sheet music as necessary to alleviate page turns but all copied materials must be handed to the examiner at the end of the examination. The examiner will not facilitate page turning for the candidate during their performance.

PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

Repertoire

Candidates taking a Grade Examination or Graded Certificate must perform at least one piece from the relevant grade book. Candidates taking a Performance Certificate must perform at least two pieces from the relevant grade book. Candidates are allowed to perform a number of 'free choice' pieces – guidelines on the selection and performance of these is given in the next section of this syllabus.

Please Note: Candidates may not perform pieces in their exam that they have previously performed for an RSL Assessment. This includes re-sits of their exams.

Performing from memory

Candidates are permitted to perform any or all of their pieces from their sheet music or from memory. Performing from memory is not compulsory and no additional marks will be awarded for doing so.

Adaptation and personalisation

Candidates should perform pieces as notated, except where they choose to embellish or rework any sections. In these instances, as well as where there are performance indications to improvise and/or develop, candidates will be marked on their ability to present the personalised material in a stylistically appropriate way, commensurate with the grade level.

Fingering and bowing indications are given as guidance only – only the resulting musical outcome is assessed. Unless stated, ornamentation is given as a guide and is open to stylistic interpretation. A small degree of adaptation is allowed where, for example, hand stretches do not facilitate the required notated parts.

Marks may be deducted if adaptation results in oversimplification of the notation. If in doubt you can submit any adaptation enquiries to info@rslawards.com. Note that Technical Exercises and unseen tests must be performed exactly as written.

Accompaniment

All grade book pieces must be performed to a backing track or with live accompaniment unless written for solo performance. Candidates should inform RSL in advance if they are using a piano accompanist, and check with the examination centre for the availability of a piano ahead of their scheduled exam.

FREE CHOICE PIECES

Overview

Candidates taking a Grade Examination or Graded Certificate are allowed to perform up to two 'free choice' pieces (pieces which aren't included in the relevant RSL grade book). Candidates taking a Performance Certificate are allowed to perform up to three free choice pieces. Free choice pieces must be available in fully notated sheet music and candidates must bring a copy of the sheet music for the examiner to refer to during the examination. This material will be retained by the examiner at the end of the examination.

Selection of free choice pieces

Free choice pieces can be from any genre. Own compositions are acceptable. Free choice pieces must demonstrate a comparable level of technical and musical demand to the pieces given in the set selections in the grade books, which can be referred to as an indication of appropriate level. Pieces should be selected carefully to ensure that they provide suitable opportunity for candidates to demonstrate the relevant assessment criteria. If a chosen free choice piece does not meet these requirements this may impact on the level of achievement possible within the examination.

Performance of free choice pieces

Free choice pieces can be performed to a backing track (without the examined part on the track), with live accompaniment or unaccompanied. If performing to a backing track the candidate must provide a device containing the audio. This can be any device with a 3.5mm jack output (e.g. mp3 player, portable CD player, phone or tablet). We recommend that where possible two different sources are brought, so there is a backup. Note that audio cannot be streamed as we cannot guarantee that good internet connectivity will be available in all venues.

Further guidance

A list of wider repertoire for Classical Violin is available at rslawards.com/free-choice-pieces. This page also contains grade-specific free choice criteria and wider requirements which need to be observed in full to be eligible for use in the exam. Prior approval is not required, but any deviation/simplification/omissions from any aspect of the criteria or requirements may be reflected in the marks awarded. If there is doubt about the appropriateness of the chosen piece, advice on its suitability is available by emailing freechoicepieces@rslawards.com.

GRADE EXAMINATIONS

EXAM ELEMENTS

Grade Examinations consist of the following elements:

Grade	Prepared work	Unprepared work
Debut to Grade 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Performance Pieces (x3) ▪ Technical Exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation ▪ Ear Tests ▪ General Musicianship Questions

EXAM DURATIONS

Exam	Debut	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Duration (minutes)	15	20	20	25	25	25	30	30	30

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Assessment methodology

Grade Examinations are assessed via an examination. All assessment of these is external and is undertaken by RSL Examiners. The assessment is divided into the following sections, the first two of which are prepared in advance, the following three are unseen until the exam. Candidates can choose to perform the Technical Exercises first if they wish – at the beginning of the exam, the examiner will ask the candidate if they want to begin with Performance Pieces or Technical Exercises.

- **1. Performance Pieces (60%)**

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be 'free choice'.

- **2. Technical Exercises (15%)**

Candidates will perform prepared technical tests covering knowledge of scales, arpeggios and technical studies.

- **3. Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation (10%)**

Candidates have a choice of performing a piece of sight reading or taking a test of improvisation and interpretation.

- **4. Ear Tests (10%)**

Candidates will be given one ear test, assessing differences between pitches at Debut and Grade 1, and playback of a melody at Grades 2 to 8.

- **5. General Musicianship Questions (5%)**

Candidates will be asked five general musicianship questions.

MARKING SCHEME

Grade Examinations are marked out of 100. The marks available are as follows:

Exam element and total marks available	Attainment band and mark range		
	Distinction	Merit	Pass
Performance Piece 1 (20 marks)	18–20	15–17	12–14
Performance Piece 2 (20 marks)	18–20	15–17	12–14
Performance Piece 3 (20 marks)	18–20	15–17	12–14
Technical Exercises (15 marks)	18–20	11–12	9–10
Sight Reading OR Improvisation & Interpretation (10 marks)	9–10	7–8	6
Ear Tests (10 marks)	9–10	7–8	6
General Musicianship Questions (5 marks)	5 correct responses	4 correct responses	3 correct responses

ATTAINMENT BANDS

The attainment bands for Grade Examinations are as follows:

Attainment band	Distinction	Merit	Pass
Mark range	90–100	74–89	60–73
Percentage	90–100%	74–89%	60–73%

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATES

EXAM ELEMENTS

Performance Certificates are available from Debut to Grade 8. They consist of five performance pieces, performed in any order. There are no unseen tests or technical exercises.

EXAM DURATIONS

Exam	Debut	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
Duration (minutes)	12	15	15	18	22	22	25	25	28

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Assessment methodology

Performance Certificates are assessed via an examination. All assessment of these is external and is undertaken by RSL Examiners. Candidates perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be 'free choice'.

MARKING SCHEME

Performance Certificates are marked out of 100. The marks available are as follows:

Exam element and total marks available	Attainment band and mark range		
	Distinction	Merit	Pass
Performance Piece 1 (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
Performance Piece 2 (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
Performance Piece 3 (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
Performance Piece 4 (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14
Performance Piece 5 (20 marks)	18-20	15-17	12-14

ATTAINMENT BANDS

The attainment bands for Performance Certificates are as follows:

Attainment band	Distinction	Merit	Pass
Mark range	90-100	75-89	60-74
Percentage	90-100%	75-89%	60-74%

GRADED CERTIFICATES

EXAM ELEMENTS

Graded Certificates are available from Debut to Grade 8. They consist of three performance pieces and all of the technical exercises in the relevant grade book.

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Assessment methodology

Graded Certificates are assessed via an examination. All assessment of these is external and is undertaken by RSL Examiners. Candidates perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be 'free choice', and technical exercises.

MARKING SCHEME

Graded Certificates are marked out of 80. The marks available are as follows:

GRADED CERTIFICATES DEBUT TO GRADE 8			
Element	Pass	Merit	Distinction
Performance Piece 1	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 2	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Performance Piece 3	12–14 out of 20	15–17 out of 20	18+ out of 20
Technical Exercises	9–10 out of 15	11–12 out of 15	13+ out of 15
Total Marks	60%	74%	90%

ATTAINMENT BANDS

The attainment bands for Performance Certificates are as follows:

Attainment band	Distinction	Merit	Pass
Mark range	72–80	60–71	48–59
Percentage	90–100%	75–89%	60–74%

ASSESSMENT AND GRADING CRITERIA

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes describe the skills and knowledge that candidates will be able to demonstrate during the exam.

Performance Certificate

Learners will be able to:

- Perform music in a range of musical styles

Graded Certificate

Learners will be able to:

- Perform music in a range of musical styles
- Demonstrate technical ability on an instrument/voice through responding to set technical demands

Graded Exam

Learners will be able to:

- Perform music in a range of musical styles
- Demonstrate technical ability on an instrument/voice through responding to an unseen selection of set technical demands
- Demonstrate musical understanding through a range of an unseen selection of set tests

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following assessment criteria are used to assess the learning outcomes:

Assessment criteria	Definition
Command of Instrument	The quality of the sound produced from the instrument, including the consistency of sound/tone and control of sound/tone commensurate with grade.
Sync or Pulse	Alignment of the performance to backing track, metronome or applied to a solo performance, observing notation markings. For unaccompanied pieces candidates should maintain a secure internal pulse and adjust the pulse where instructed within the music.
Accuracy and Understanding	Representing the written notation accurately, except by instruction through performance notes, or interpreting the written part with equivalent skills demonstrated. Secure understanding of musical structure evidenced through transitions of phrases, bars and sections.
Style and Expression	An expressive and commanding performance of the notated material dictated by the demands of the performance piece.

The assessment criteria that apply to each element of the exam are shown in the following tables. Assessment criteria within each element are equally weighted: for example, in the Performance Pieces each assessment criteria makes up 25% of the total marks, whereas in the Ear Tests the Accuracy and Understanding criteria makes up 100% of the marks.

GRADING CRITERIA

Performance Pieces

Assessment criteria	Grading criteria and mark range				
	Distinction (18–20)	Merit (15–17)	Pass (12–14)	Below Pass 1 (6–11)	Below Pass 2 (0–5)
Command of Instrument	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Sync or Pulse	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Accuracy and Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced	
Style and Expression	Consistently convincing projection of the music.	Mostly convincing projection of the music.	Some convincing projection of the music.	Music not projected convincingly	No attempt and/or incomplete performance

Technical Exercises

Assessment criteria	Grading criteria and mark range				
	Distinction (13–15)	Merit (11–12)	Pass (9–10)	Below Pass 1 (4–8)	Below Pass 2 (0–3)
Command of Instrument	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Sync or Pulse	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Accuracy and Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced	

Sight Reading / Improvisation & Interpretation

Assessment criteria	Grading criteria and mark range				
	Distinction (9–10)	Merit (7–8)	Pass (6)	Below Pass 1 (3–5)	Below Pass 2 (0–2)
Command of Instrument	Consistently clear production of sound and even tone quality throughout	Mostly clear production of sound and even tone quality overall	Some clear production of sound and generally even tone quality	Sound produced is unclear with uneven quality of tone produced	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Sync or Pulse	Performance consistently synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance mostly synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance sometimes synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse maintained	Performance not synchronised to the music, or an internal pulse not maintained	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
Accuracy and Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced	

Ear Tests

Assessment criteria	Grading criteria and mark range				
	Distinction (9–10)	Merit (7–8)	Pass (6)	Below Pass 1 (3–5)	Below Pass 2 (0–2)
Accuracy and Understanding	All of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated throughout	Most of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills demonstrated overall	Some of the written music accurately performed or equivalent skills generally demonstrated	Written music not accurately performed or equivalent skills not demonstrated	No attempt and/or incomplete performance
	Understanding of musical structure shown all of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown most of the time	Understanding of musical structure shown some of the time	Understanding of musical structure not evidenced	

General Musicianship Questions

Assessment criteria	Grading criteria and mark range				
	Distinction (5)	Merit (4)	Pass (3)	Below Pass 1 (2)	Below Pass 2 (0-1)
Responses to questions	5 correct responses	4 correct responses	3 correct responses	2 correct responses	0-1 correct responses

DEBUT

The Debut Classical Violin exam is for candidates who have been learning a short time and have developed elementary skills, techniques, coordination and musical understanding.

GRADE EXAMINATION

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are two groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempo given for the scales is the recommended minimum tempo for this grade.

Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates can choose to perform the scales in 'even notes' (quavers) or with 'long tonic' rhythms.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major scales			
G, D, A major	1 octave	♩ = 50	▪ Separate bows

Group B: Technical Studies

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Kristen Anderson-Lopez and Robert Lopez	All is Found (from Frozen 2)
Kathy and David Blackwell	City Lights
Caroline Lumsden and Ben Attwood	Trick, Treat or Tango
Thomas Gregory	Footprints in the Snow
Bill Withers	Lean on Me
Thomas Gregory	Flapping Around
Beyoncé	If I Were a Boy
Chinese folk song	Jasmine Flower Song
Mihailo Trandafilovski	Plucking Squares
Kathy and David Blackwell	Off to Paris

See page 7 for further information on free choice pieces.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

SIGHT READING**Requirements**

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be 4 bars long, based on the open strings. The tempo will be ♩ = 84.

Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION**Requirements**

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression, over which they will improvise rhythms using open strings, to complement the backing track. The chord progression will be 5 bars long, in the key of G or D major. The tempo will be ♩ = 60.

Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given a test of melodic recall.

Requirements

The examiner will play two notes. Candidates will be asked to identify whether the second note is higher or lower than the first. The notes will both be minims (half notes) at ♩ = 95.

Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a 4-beat vocal count in. After the second playthrough candidates will give their answer. Candidates should use the words 'higher' or 'lower' in their answer.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to identify:

- The stave
- The treble clef
- The pitch of one note
- The rhythmic value of one note from the following:
 - Minim (half note)
 - Crotchet (quarter note)

Part 2: Knowledge of the Instrument

There will be one question about the candidate's knowledge of their instrument, chosen by the examiner from the list below.

Candidates will be asked to point to one of the following:

- Parts of the violin
 - Neck
 - Fingerboard
 - Tuning pegs
 - Bridge
- Parts of the bow:
 - Heel
 - Tip
 - Stick
 - Hair

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces and all of the technical exercises as outlined below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Debut there are two groups of technical work as detailed in the information for the Graded Exams. Candidates must perform both of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

GRADE 1

The Grade 1 Classical Violin exam is for candidates who have mastered the key Debut level skills and have since acquired greater use of technique, rhythms, coordination and musical understanding. There is also an opportunity to build on basic improvisation.




GRADE EXAMINATION

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.




Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates can choose to perform the scales in 'even notes' (quavers) or with 'long tonic' rhythms.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major scales			
G major	2 octaves	 = 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow
D, A major	1 octave	 = 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow
Minor scales			
E natural minor	1 octave	 = 50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow

Group B: Arpeggios

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major arpeggios			
G major	2 octaves	 = 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow
D, A major	1 octave	 = 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow
Minor arpeggios			
E minor	1 octave	 = 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow

Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / artists	Piece
Black Violin	Stereotypes
Lorne Balfe	Assassin's Creed III Main Title
Kathy Blackwell and David Blackwell	Calypso Time
Thomas Gregory	Cool Drift
Adrian Ross and Franz Lehár	The Merry Widow Waltz
Béla Bartók	Round Dance
Emile Waldteufel	The Skaters' Waltz
Ignatius Sancho	The Sword Knott
Neil Mackay	Tango
Rihanna feat. Calvin Harris	We Found Love

See page 7 for further information on free choice pieces.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

SIGHT READING

Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be 4 bars long, in the key of G or D major. The tempo will be ♩ = 84.

Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION**Requirements**

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise a melodic line over, to complement the backing track. The chord progression will be 5 bars long, in the key of G or D major. The tempo will be ♩ = 70.

Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given a test of melodic recall.

Requirements

The examiner will play three notes. Candidates will be asked to identify whether the last two notes are higher or lower in sequence (i.e. whether the second note is higher or lower than the first, and whether the third note is higher or lower than the second). The notes will be in the key of D major, starting on the root note. The notes will all be minims (half notes) at ♩ = 95.

Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by a 4-beat vocal count in. After the second playthrough candidates will give their answer. Candidates should use the words 'higher', 'lower', 'up' or 'down' in their answer.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to:

- Identify the time signature or treble clef
- Identify the pitch of a note
- Identify the rhythmic value of one note from the following:
 - Semibreve (whole note)
 - Minim (half note)
 - Crotchet (quarter note)
 - Quaver (eighth note)
- Explain the difference between a major and minor chord

Part 2: Knowledge of the Instrument

There will be one question about the candidate's knowledge of their instrument, chosen by the examiner from the list below.

Candidates will be asked to identify one of the following:

- Parts of the violin
 - Neck
 - Fingerboard
 - Body
 - Tuning pegs
 - Nut
 - Chin rest
 - Bridge
 - Shoulder rest
 - F-hole (sound hole)
- Parts of the bow:
 - Frog
 - Tension screw
 - Tip
 - Stick
 - Hair

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces and all of the technical exercises as outlined below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 1 there are three groups of technical work as detailed in the information for the Graded Exams. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

GRADE 2

The Grade 2 Classical Violin exam is for candidates who have mastered the key skills up to Grade 1 and since acquired greater use of technique, rhythms, coordination and musical understanding. There is also the continuing opportunity to develop improvisation skills.

GRADE EXAMINATION

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates can choose to perform the scales in 'even notes' (quavers) or with 'long tonic' rhythms.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major scales			
A, B \flat major	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 60$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow
C, F major	1 octave	$\text{♩} = 60$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow
Minor scales			
G, D minor <i>Natural, harmonic or melodic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	1 octave	$\text{♩} = 60$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow

Group B: Arpeggios

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major arpeggios			
A, B \flat major	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 100$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow
C, F major	1 octave	$\text{♩} = 100$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow
Minor arpeggios			
G, D minor	2 octave	$\text{♩} = 100$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow

Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Imagine Dragons	Demons
Alan Menken and Howard Ashman	Beauty and the Beast (from Beauty and the Beast)
Ros Stephen	Dublin Time
Lady Gaga	Just Dance
Ignatius Sancho	Le Douze Décembre
Johann Sebastian Bach	Minuet in G, from The Anna Magdalena Notebook
Béla Bartók	Quasi Adagio, from For Children, Sz. 42, Volume 1
Thomas Gregory	Rumba Cucumba
Pyotr Il'yich Tchaikovsky	Theme from Swan Lake
Thomas Wiggins	The Boy with the Axles in His Hands

See page 7 for further information on free choice pieces.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

SIGHT READING

Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be 4 bars long, in the key of G, D or A major, or E minor.

Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION**Requirements**

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise a melodic line over, to complement the backing track. The chord progression will be 6 bars long, in the key of G major or E minor. The tempo will be ♩ = 90.

Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given a test of melodic recall.

Requirements

The examiner will play a melody. Candidates will then play back the melody to a drum backing. The melody will be a 2-bar diatonic melody in the key of A major, starting on the root note, with a range of up to a fourth above. The melody will be based on minims (half notes) only. The tempo will be ♩ = 95.

Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by 4 clicks. Following the second playthrough candidates will be given a further 1-bar count in, after which they should play the melody back to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to:

- Explain the meaning of the time signature
- State two consecutive pitches up to a third apart (including any accidentals)
- State two rhythmic values (which will include one note value and one rest value) from the following:
 - Semibreve (whole note)
 - Minim (half note)
 - Crotchet (quarter note)
 - Quaver (eighth note)
 - Semiquaver (sixteenth note)
- Identify one dynamic marking
- Identify and explain the meaning of the following:
 - Any repeat marks
 - Any 1st or 2nd time endings
 - Staccato or tenuto markings
 - Slurs

Part 2: Knowledge of the Instrument

There will be one question about the candidate's knowledge of their instrument, chosen by the examiner from the list below.

Candidates may be asked to explain:

- Staccato technique
- Slur technique

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces and all of the technical exercises as outlined below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 2 there are three groups of technical work as detailed in the information for the Graded Exams. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

GRADE 3

The Grade 3 Classical Violin exam is for candidates who are ready to consolidate their final stage as a beginner player. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 2 and have since acquired greater use of technique, rhythms, coordination and musical understanding. Candidates have started to develop the beginnings of stylistic awareness and there is also the opportunity to improvise, with improvisation growing in confidence and articulation.

GRADE EXAMINATION

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates can choose to perform the scales in 'even notes' (quavers) or with 'long tonic' rhythms unless specified otherwise.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major scales			
C, D major	2 octaves	♩ = 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow
A ^b , E ^b , E major	1 octave	♩ = 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow
Minor scales			
G, A minor <i>Natural, harmonic or melodic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	2 octaves	♩ = 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow
Chromatic scales			
Starting on D	1 octave	♩ = 65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slurred: four quavers to a bow, 'even notes'

Group B: Arpeggios

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers.

Arpeggio	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major arpeggios			
D, C major	2 octaves	♩ = 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow
A ^b , E ^b , E major	1 octave	♩ = 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow
Minor arpeggios			
A, G minor	2 octaves	♩ = 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow

Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Scott Joplin	The Entertainer
Léo Delibes	Flower Duet from Lakmé
John Williams	Theme from Jurassic Park
Franz Schubert	Ave Maria
Will Marion Cook	Mandy Lou
Ros Stephen	Tango in San Telmo
Felipe Gutiérrez	La Despedida
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Minuet in G, No. 2 from 12 Duos, K 496a/K 487
Jessie J	Domino
Coldplay	Paradise

See page 7 for further information on free choice pieces.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

SIGHT READING

Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be 4 bars long, in the key of D, B \flat or C major, or A minor.

Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Requirements

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise a melodic line over, to complement the backing track. The chord progression will be 8 bars long, in the key of C major or A minor. The tempo will be ♩ = 95.

Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given a test of melodic recall.

Requirements

The examiner will play a melody. Candidates will then play back the melody to a drum backing. The melody will be a 2-bar diatonic melody in the key of C major, starting on the root note, with a range of up to a fifth above. The melody may contain minims and crotchets (half notes and quarter notes). The tempo will be ♩ = 95.

Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by 4 clicks. Following the second playthrough candidates will be given a further 1-bar count in, after which they should play the melody back to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to:

- Explain the location and meaning of the key signature
- State two consecutive pitches up to a fourth apart (including any accidentals)
- State one note value and one rest value from the following:
 - Crotchet (quarter note)
 - Quaver (eighth note)
 - Semiquaver (sixteenth note)
 - Quaver triplet (eighth note triplet)
- Identify and explain two dynamic markings
- Identify and explain two of the following:
 - Any dynamic marking found (*p*, *mf* etc)
 - Any articulation marking (slurs, staccato, legato, tenuto etc)
 - Any navigational markings (repeat bars, first/second time endings etc)
 - Any ornaments (grace notes, turns etc)

Part 2: Knowledge of the Instrument

There will be one question about the candidate's knowledge of their instrument, chosen by the examiner from the list below.

Candidates may be asked to explain:

- A double stop technique
- The meaning of detached bowing

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces and all of the technical exercises as outlined below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 3 there are three groups of technical work as detailed in the information for the Graded Exams. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

GRADE 4

The Grade 4 Classical Violin exam is for candidates who are ready for intermediate level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 3 and have since acquired greater use of technique, more complex rhythms, coordination and musical understanding. Candidates will be developing a sense of expression and continuing to broaden their stylistic awareness, and there is also the opportunity to improvise, which will be growing in assurance and articulation.

GRADE EXAMINATION

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates can choose to perform the scales in 'even notes' (quavers) or with 'long tonic' rhythms unless specified otherwise.

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major scales			
A ^b , B, E major	2 octaves	♩ = 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow ▪ Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow
Minor scales			
B, C, E minor <i>Natural, harmonic or melodic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	2 octaves	♩ = 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: one crotchet beat to a bow ▪ Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow
Chromatic scales			
Starting on A, E	1 octave	♩ = 70	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slurred: four quavers to a bow, 'even notes'

Group B: Arpeggios

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers.

Arpeggio	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major arpeggios			
A ^b , B, E major	2 octaves	♩ = 120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow
Minor arpeggios			
B, C, E minor	2 octaves	♩ = 120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow
Dominant 7 arpeggios			
G, A dominant 7	1 octave	♩ = 120	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: two quavers to a bow

Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Antonio Vivaldi	Prelude and Gavotte, from Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 5, RV 30
Florence Price	The Deserted Garden
Edvard Grieg	Solveig's Song
Amy Marcy Beach	La Captive
Rebecca Clarke	Chinese Puzzle
Nikki Iles	Harvest Calypso
Stephen Montague	A Dragon Flies
Naoko Ikeda	Moonlight Rose
The Weeknd	Blinding Lights
Taylor Swift	Willow

See page 7 for further information on free choice pieces.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

SIGHT READING

Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be between 8 and 10 bars long, in the key of A, E or E^b major, or E minor.

Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Requirements

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise a melodic line over, to complement the backing track. The chord progression will be 12 bars long, in the key of C major or A minor. Progressions in C major may contain the non-diatonic chords C7, F7, D7 and Fm; progressions in A minor may feature an E7 chord. All progressions may contain occasional slash chords and inversions. The tempo will be ♩ = 90.

Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given a test of melodic recall.

Requirements

The examiner will play a melody. Candidates will then play back the melody to a drum backing. The melody will be a 2-bar diatonic melody in the key of B major, starting on the root note, with a range of up to a sixth above. The melody may contain minims, crotchets and quavers (half notes, quarter notes and eighth notes). The tempo will be ♩ = 95.

Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by 4 clicks. Following the second playthrough candidates will be given a further 1-bar count in, after which they should play the melody back to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to:

- Explain the meaning of the key signature and state the pitches of its accidentals
- State two consecutive pitches up to a fifth apart (including any accidentals and ledger lines)
- State up to three rhythmic values (which will include at least one note value and one rest value)
- Identify and explain two of the following:
 - Any dynamic marking found (*p*, *mf* etc)
 - Any articulation marking (slurs, staccato, legato, tenuto etc)
 - Any navigational markings (repeat bars, first/second time endings etc)
 - Any ornaments (grace notes, turns etc)
- Explain the meaning of the tempo marking

Part 2: Knowledge of the Instrument

There will be one question about the candidate's knowledge of their instrument.

Candidates will be asked to explain:

- How to execute vibrato technique

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces and all of the technical exercises as outlined below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 4 there are three groups of technical work as detailed in the information for the Graded Exams. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

GRADE 5

The Grade 5 Classical Violin exam is for candidates who have fully consolidated their intermediate level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 4 and have since acquired a greater use of appropriate technique, more complex rhythms, coordination and musical understanding. Candidates will have developed a good sense of expression, have a strong grasp of stylistic awareness, and there is also the opportunity to improvise, which is now individual, assured, accurate and expressive.

GRADE EXAMINATION

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.








Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. **Candidates can choose to perform the scales in 'even notes' (quavers) or with 'long tonic' rhythms unless specified otherwise.**

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major scales			
G, A major	3 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow ('even notes') Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow ('long tonic')
D ^b , E ^b , F major	2 octaves	♩ = 80	Both 'even note' and 'long tonic' scales must be played with one of the following, at the choice of the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow
Minor scales			
G, A minor <i>Natural, harmonic or melodic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	3 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow ('even notes') Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow ('long tonic')
B, C [#] , E minor <i>Natural, harmonic or melodic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow (for both 'even notes' and 'long tonic' rhythms)
Chromatic scales			
Starting on G, A, E ^b , E	2 octaves	♩ = 80	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slurred: four quavers to a bow ('even notes' only)

Group B: Arpeggios

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers.

Arpeggio	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major arpeggios			
G, A major	3 octaves	 = 130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow
D ^b , E ^b , F major	2 octaves	 = 130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow
Minor arpeggios			
G, A minor	3 octaves	 = 130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow
B, C [#] , E minor	2 octaves	 = 130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow
Dominant 7 arpeggios			
G, A dominant 7	2 octaves	 = 130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: two quavers to a bow ▪ Slurred: four quavers to a bow
F dominant 7	1 octave	 = 130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: two quavers to a bow ▪ Slurred: four quavers to a bow
Diminished 7 arpeggios			
G, D diminished 7	1 octave	 = 130	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: two quavers to a bow ▪ Slurred: four quavers to a bow

Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Germaine Tailleferre	Moderato, from Sonatine for Violin and Piano
Norman Luboff Choir	Yellow Bird
José White	La Bella Cubana
Nikki Iles	Hay Barn Blues
Camille Saint-Saëns	Danse Macabre
John Williams	Theme from E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial
Gabriel Fauré	Berceuse, Op. 16
Nikki Iles	Autumn Leaves
Ed Sheeran	I See Fire (from The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug)
Dua Lipa	Don't Start Now

See page 7 for further information on free choice pieces.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

SIGHT READING

Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be between 8 and 12 bars long, in the key of G major, A major, E \flat major or B minor.

Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION**Requirements**

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise a melodic line over, to complement the backing track. The chord progression will be 16 bars long, in the key of A major or F# minor. The progression may contain occasional non-diatonic chords. The tempo will be ♩ = 120.

Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given a test of melodic recall.

Requirements

The examiner will play a melody. Candidates will then play back the melody to a drum backing. The melody will be a 2-bar diatonic melody in the key of F major with a range of up to an octave, starting on the root or fifth. The melody may minims, crotchets and quavers (half notes, quarter notes and eighth notes) and rests. The tempo will be ♩ = 95.

Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by 4 clicks. Following the second playthrough candidates will be given a further 1-bar count in, after which they should play the melody back to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about knowledge of the candidate's own instrument. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to:

- Explain the lower number of the time signature and to show an example of this value anywhere in the music
- Identify two pitches
- State up to four rhythmic values (which can include note values and rest values)
- Identify and explain any two markings from the following:
 - Repeat markings
 - First and second time bars
 - D.C. al Coda, D.S. al Coda or al Fine
 - Any dynamics markings, tempo or performance markings
 - State the period or genre of the piece

Part 2: Knowledge of the Instrument

There will be one question about the candidate's knowledge of their instrument.

Candidates will be asked to explain:

- How to execute a glissando

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces and all of the technical exercises as outlined below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 5 there are three groups of technical work as detailed in the information for the Graded Exams. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

GRADE 6

The Grade 6 Classical Violin exam is for candidates who have reached the first stage of advanced level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 5 and have since developed appropriate technique, expressive devices, rhythmic complexity, coordination and musical understanding. Candidates will have an increased extent of individuality, enhanced stylistic awareness and there is an option to demonstrate assured and articulate improvisation. Candidates will demonstrate a good understanding of form and structure with clear musical communication.

GRADE EXAMINATION

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. **Candidates can choose to perform the scales in 'even notes' (quavers) or with 'long tonic' rhythms unless specified otherwise.**

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major scales			
B \flat major	3 octaves	$\text{♩} = 90$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow ('even notes') Slurred: one octave (seven quavers) to a bow ('long tonic')
C, E \flat , F \sharp major	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 90$	Both 'even note' and 'long tonic' scales must be played with one of the following, at the choice of the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow
Minor scales			
B \flat minor <i>Natural, harmonic or melodic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	3 octaves	$\text{♩} = 90$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow ('even notes') Slurred: one octave (seven quavers) to a bow ('long tonic')
C, E \flat , F \sharp minor <i>Natural, harmonic or melodic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 90$	Both 'even note' and 'long tonic' scales must be played with one of the following, at the choice of the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow
Chromatic scales			
Starting on B \flat , C	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 90$	Slurred: four quavers to a bow or slurred: six quavers to a bow (examiner choice), <u>'even notes'</u> only.
Double stopped scales			
In thirds			
B \flat major	1 octave	$\text{♩} = 90$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pattern as written in the grade book
In sixths			
G major	1 octave	$\text{♩} = 90$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pattern as written in the grade book

Group B: Arpeggios

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers.

Arpeggio	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major arpeggios			
B \flat major	3 octaves	$\text{♩} = 150$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow
C, E \flat , F \sharp major	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 150$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow Slurred: six quavers to a bow
Minor arpeggios			
B \flat minor	3 octaves	$\text{♩} = 150$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow
C, E \flat , F \sharp minor	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 150$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: three quavers to a bow Slurred: six quavers to a bow
Dominant 7 arpeggios			
B \flat , C dominant 7	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 150$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: four quavers to a bow
Diminished 7 arpeggios			
G, B \flat , C diminished 7	2 octaves	$\text{♩} = 150$	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate bows Slurred: four quavers to a bow

Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Damien Escobar	Awaken
Lili Boulanger	Nocturne
Florence Price	Ticklin' Toes
George Frideric Handel	Allegro, from Sonata in D Major, HWV 371
Aaron Minsky	Laughing Raindrops
Klaus Badelt	He's a Pirate (from Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl)
Max Richter	On the Nature of Daylight
Destiny's Child	Survivor
Edward W. Hardy	The Lover's Dance
Le Chevalier de Saint-Georges	Allegro moderato, from Sonata No. 2 in A Major, Op. 1a

See page 7 for further information on free choice pieces.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

SIGHT READING

Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be between 12 and 16 bars long, in the key of C major, B \flat major, C minor or F \sharp minor

Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Requirements

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise a melodic line over, to complement the backing track. The chord progression will be 16 bars long, in the key of A or E^b major. The progression will be based predominantly on the mixolydian mode (so will contain chords relating to A mixolydian or E^b mixolydian), and may occasionally contain non-diatonic chords. The tempo will be ♩ = 60–140.

Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given a test of melodic recall.

Requirements

The examiner will play a melody. Candidates will then play back the melody to a drum backing. The melody will be a 2-bar diatonic melody in the key of E^b major with a range of up to an octave, starting on the root or fifth. The melody may contain minims, crotchets, quavers and semiquavers (half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes and sixteenth notes) and rests. The tempo will be ♩ = 95.

Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by 4 clicks. Following the second playthrough candidates will be given a further 1-bar count in, after which they should play the melody back to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about general music and instrument knowledge. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to:

- explain the meaning of any tempo marking on the page
- Identify the key signature and give the relative major or minor key
- Identify any three pitches
- State up to five rhythmic values (including at least two note values and two rest values)
- Identify and explain any two expressive markings found on your score
- Give a brief explanation and demonstration of either the stylistic or technical considerations in preparation of your chosen piece

Part 2: General Music and Instrument Knowledge

There will be one question about the candidate's general music and instrument knowledge, chosen by the examiner from the list below.

Candidates may be asked to:

- State the chord progression of a perfect cadence in the key of C major or F major
- State the chord progression of an imperfect cadence in the key of C or F major
- Explain how to execute artificial harmonics on their violin

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces and all of the technical exercises as outlined below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 6 there are three groups of technical work as detailed in the information for the Graded Exams. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

GRADE 7

The Grade 7 Classical Violin exam is for candidates who have extended their advanced level playing. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 6 and developed notable security of appropriate technique, use of expressive devices, rhythmic complexity, fluency and musical understanding. There will be mature and authentic stylistic awareness, with developing individuality and communication. Candidates will have a strong understanding of musical form and structure and there is an option to improvise, demonstrating conviction and personality.

GRADE EXAMINATION

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.




Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. **Candidates can choose to perform the scales in 'even notes' (quavers) or with 'long tonic' rhythms unless specified otherwise.**

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major scales			
A, B, D major	3 octaves	♩ = 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Separate bows▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow ('even notes')▪ Slurred: one octave (seven quavers) to a bow ('long tonic')
F, F# major	2 octaves	♩ = 100	Both 'even note' and 'long tonic' scales must be played with one of the following, at the choice of the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Separate bows▪ Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow
Minor scales			
A, B, D minor <i>Natural, harmonic or melodic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	3 octaves	♩ = 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Separate bows▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow ('even notes')▪ Slurred: one octave (seven quavers) to a bow ('long tonic')
F, F# minor <i>Natural, harmonic or melodic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	2 octaves	♩ = 100	Both 'even note' and 'long tonic' scales must be played with one of the following, at the choice of the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Separate bows▪ Slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow
Chromatic scales			
Starting on A, B	3 octaves	♩ = 100	'Even notes' only, with one of the following, at the choice of the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Slurred: six quavers▪ Slurred: one octave (twelve quavers) to a bow
Starting on D, F	2 octaves	♩ = 100	
Double stopped scales			
In thirds			
G, B \flat major	1 octave	♩ = 100	Pattern as written in the grade book
In sixths			
G, B \flat major	1 octave	♩ = 100	Pattern as written in the grade book
In octaves			
D major	1 octave	♩ = 100	Pattern as written in the grade book
Parallel double stopped scales			
In sixths			
B \flat major	1 octave	♩ = 72	Separate bows

Group B: Arpeggios

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers.

Arpeggio	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major arpeggios			
A, B, D major	3 octaves	 = 160	▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow
F, F# major	2 octaves	 = 160	▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow ▪ Slurred: six quavers to a bow
Minor arpeggios			
A, B, D minor	3 octaves	 = 160	▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow
F, F# minor	2 octaves	 = 160	▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow ▪ Slurred: six quavers to a bow
Dominant 7 arpeggios			
A, B dominant 7	3 octaves	 = 160	▪ Slurred: four quavers to a bow
D, F dominant 7	2 octaves		
Diminished 7 arpeggios			
G#, A diminished 7	3 octaves	 = 160	▪ Slurred: four quavers to a bow
D, F diminished 7	2 octaves		

Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform their choice of *one* of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Jamiroquai	Cosmic Girl
John Legend	All of Me (as performed by Damien Escobar)
Mihailo Trandafilovski	Playing with Light
Stuff Smith	It's Wonderful
Lili Boulanger	Cortège
Grażyna Bacewicz	Melodia
Aaron Minsky	October Waltz
Jean Sibelius	Romance, Op. 78 No. 2
Daniel Bernard Roumain	The Need to Be
Robert Schumann	Vogel als Prophet, from Waldszenen

See page 7 for further information on free choice pieces.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

SIGHT READING

Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be between 16 and 20 bars long, in the following keys:

- Major keys: D, A
- Minor keys: F#, B

Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Requirements

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise a melodic line over, to complement the backing track. The chord progression will be 16 bars long, in the key of D or F major. The progression will be based predominantly on the lydian mode (so will contain chords relating to D lydian or F lydian), and may occasionally contain temporary modulations and/or non-diatonic chords. The tempo will be ♩ = 60–140.

Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given a test of melodic recall.

Requirements

The examiner will play a melody. Candidates will then play back the melody to a drum backing. The melody will be a 2-bar diatonic melody in the key of F# major with a range of up to an octave, starting on the root or fifth. The melody may contain minims, crotchets, quavers and semiquavers (half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes and sixteenth notes) and rests. The tempo will be ♩ = 95.

Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by 4 clicks. Following the second playthrough candidates will be given a further 1-bar count in, after which they should play the melody back to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about general music and instrument knowledge. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to:

- Explain the meaning of any tempo marking
- Identify the key signature and give the relative major or minor key
- Identify any four pitches
- State up to six rhythmic values (including at least two note values and two rest values)
- Identify and explain any three expressive markings
- Briefly explain and demonstrate stylistic considerations in preparation of the piece
- Briefly explain and demonstrate technical considerations in preparation of the piece

Part 2: General Music and Instrument Knowledge

There will be one question about the candidate's general music and instrument knowledge, chosen by the examiner from the list below.

Candidates may be asked to:

- State the chord progressions of any of the following cadences in the keys of G or D major:
 - Perfect
 - Imperfect
 - Plagal
 - Deceptive
- Explain how to execute *spiccato* technique

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces and all of the technical exercises as outlined below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 7 there are three groups of technical work as detailed in the information for the Graded Exams. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

GRADE 8

The Grade 8 Classical Violin exam is for candidates who have now consolidated their playing to a high level. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 7 and have since developed heightened technique, use of expressive devices, rhythmic complexity, fluency, coordination and musical understanding. Candidates will demonstrate seamless musical form and structure. There will be an innate stylistic conviction and distinctive musicality with strong individuality. Communication will be commanding. There is an option to improvise to an advanced level, demonstrating effortless assurance and personality.

GRADE EXAMINATION

TECHNICAL EXERCISES

There are three groups of technical exercises at this grade: Scales, Arpeggios and Technical Studies. All are to be played unaccompanied. The tempos given for the scales and arpeggios are the recommended minimum tempos for this grade.

Group A: Scales

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. **Candidates are to perform all scales in 'even notes' unless specified otherwise.**

Scale	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major scales			
A ^b , D ^b , E ^b major	3 octaves	♩ = 120	Played with 'even note' rhythms, with any of the following bowings, as specified by the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Separate bows▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow▪ Slurred: three octaves to a bow, changing bow on the top note
Minor scales			
G [#] , C [#] , E ^b minor <i>Natural, harmonic or melodic minor (candidate's choice)</i>	3 octaves	♩ = 120	Played with 'even note' rhythms, with any of the following bowings, as specified by the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Separate bows▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow▪ Slurred: three octaves to a bow, changing bow on the top note
Chromatic scales			
Starting on A ^b	3 octaves	♩ = 120	Played with 'even note' rhythms, with any of the following bowings, as specified by the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Slurred: six quavers to a bow▪ Slurred: twelve quavers to a bow
Starting on C, E ^b , E	2 octaves		
Double stopped scales			
In thirds			
C major	1 octave	♩ = 120	Pattern as written in the grade book
In octaves			
D natural minor	1 octave	♩ = 120	Pattern as written in the grade book

Table continued on next page

Parallel double stopped scales

<i>In thirds</i>			
B ^b major	2 octaves	♩ = 72	Played with 'even note' rhythms, with any of the following bowings, as specified by the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: two crotchets to a bow
G major	1 octave	♩ = 72	Played with 'even note' rhythms, with any of the following bowings, as specified by the examiner: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: two crotchets to a bow
<i>In sixths</i>			
G major	1 octave	♩ = 72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: two crotchets to a bow
<i>In octaves</i>			
G, D major	1 octave	♩ = 72	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Separate bows ▪ Slurred: two crotchets to a bow

Group B: Arpeggios

Candidates are to prepare all of the following. In the exam, the examiner will request a selection to be performed, stating how they are to be performed, from the requirements listed in the table. Candidates are to perform the arpeggios in even quavers.

Arpeggio	Range	Tempo	Bowing requirements
Major arpeggios			
A ^b , D ^b , E ^b major	3 octaves	♩ = 170	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow ▪ Slurred: nine quavers to a bow
Minor arpeggios			
G [#] , C [#] , E ^b minor	3 octaves	♩ = 170	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slurred: three quavers to a bow ▪ Slurred: nine quavers to a bow
Dominant 7 arpeggios			
A ^b , C, E ^b , E dominant 7	3 octaves	♩ = 170	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slurred: four quavers to a bow
Diminished 7 arpeggios			
G [#] diminished 7	3 octaves	♩ = 170	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slurred: four quavers to a bow
C, D [#] , E diminished 7	2 octaves	♩ = 170	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Slurred: four quavers to a bow

Group C: Technical Study

Candidates are to perform one of the three technical studies given in the grade book. The examiner will ask which study the candidate has prepared.

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform three prepared pieces, one of which must be from the relevant grade book, two of which can be free choice pieces. The grade book contains the following pieces:

Composer / Artist	Piece
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	Allegro di molto, from Violin Sonata No. 22 in A major, K 305
Antonio Vivaldi	Allegro, from Concerto No. 1 in E Major, Op. 8, RV 269 (<i>Spring</i>)
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor	Deep River
Lili Boulanger	D'un matin de printemps
Clara Schumann	Romance, Op. 22 No. 1
Fats Waller	Honeysuckle Rose
Black Violin	Virtuoso
Clean Bandit	Rather Be
Johann Sebastian Bach	Allemanda, from Partita No. 2 in D Minor, BWV 1004
Ludwig van Beethoven	Allegro vivace, from Violin Sonata No. 8 in G Major, Op. 30 No. 3

See page 7 for further information on free choice pieces.

SIGHT READING / IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Before seeing the tests, the examiner will ask whether the candidate wishes to perform a piece of sight reading or take a test of improvisation and interpretation. Once the candidate has decided, they cannot change their mind.

SIGHT READING

Requirements

Candidates will be given a short piece of previously unseen music to play, unaccompanied. The piece will be between 16 and 24 bars long, in the following keys:

- Major keys: B \flat , D \flat
- Minor keys: D, C

Process

Candidates will be given 90 seconds to practise, after which they will perform the test. Before the practice time begins, candidates can ask if they would like to hear the tempo on a metronome at the start of, or throughout their practice time. Additionally, candidates may ask to hear the tempo before the assessed part of the test begins.

IMPROVISATION & INTERPRETATION

Requirements

Candidates will be given a previously unseen chord progression to improvise a melodic line over, to complement the backing track. The chord progression will be 16 bars long, in the key of G minor or A minor. The progression will be based predominantly on the dorian mode (so will contain chords relating to G dorian or A dorian), and may contain temporary modulations and/or non-diatonic chords. The tempo will be $\text{♩} = 60-140$.

Process

Candidates will first be given 90 seconds to practise. Before the practice time begins, candidates will be given the choice of a metronome click throughout the practice time or a 1-bar count in at the beginning. After the practice time, the backing track will be played twice. Candidates can rehearse during the first playthrough, before performing their improvisation over the second playthrough. Only the improvisation over the second playthrough will be assessed. Each playthrough will begin with a 1-bar count in. The backing track is continuous throughout, so once the first playthrough has finished, the count in to the second playthrough will start immediately.

EAR TESTS

Candidates will be given a test of melodic recall.

Requirements

The examiner will play a melody. Candidates will then play back the melody to a drum backing. The melody will be a 2-bar diatonic melody in the key of D^b major with a range of up to an octave, starting on the root, third or fifth. The melody may contain minims, crotchets, quavers and semiquavers (half notes, quarter notes, eighth notes and sixteenth notes) and rests. The tempo will be ♩ = 95.

Process

The test will be played twice, each time preceded by 4 clicks. Following the second playthrough candidates will be given a further 1-bar count in, after which they should play the melody back to the drum backing.

GENERAL MUSICIANSHIP QUESTIONS

Candidates will be asked five questions. Four of these will be music knowledge questions, based on any one of the pieces performed in the exam, the fifth will be about general music and instrument knowledge. Candidates can use brief demonstrations to support their verbal explanations.

Part 1: Music Knowledge (relating to a piece performed in the exam)

There will be four music knowledge questions in relation to one of the pieces performed in the exam. Candidates will be asked which piece they would like to be asked about. If the candidate's copy of the chosen piece contains extensive handwritten notes the examiner may either use their own version of the score as the basis for the questions or they may request that candidates select a different piece.

Candidates may be asked to:

- Explain the meaning of any tempo markings
- Identify a key signature and give the relative major or minor key
- Identify any five pitches in a melodic sequence
- State up to seven rhythmic values (including notes and rests)
- Identify and explain any expressive markings
- Briefly explain and demonstrate one stylistic and one technical consideration in preparation and performance of the piece

Part 2: General Music and Instrument Knowledge

There will be one question about the candidate's general music and instrument knowledge, chosen by the examiner from the list below.

Candidates may be asked to:

- State the chord progressions of any of the following cadences in the keys of C, D, F or G major:
 - Perfect
 - Imperfect
 - Plagal
 - Deceptive
- Explain the difference between *col legno battuto* and *col legno tratto* technique

PERFORMANCE CERTIFICATE

PERFORMANCE PIECES

Candidates will perform five prepared pieces, two of which must be from the relevant grade book, three of which can be free choice pieces. There is no unprepared work.

GRADED CERTIFICATE

Please note: Graded Certificates can only be taken as Recorded Digital Exams.

EXAM STRUCTURE

Candidates choose to play three pieces and all of the technical exercises as outlined below.

TECHNICAL WORK

At Grade 8 there are three groups of technical work as detailed in the information for the Graded Exams. Candidates must perform all of them, as detailed in the guidance that you can download at [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

REVISION HISTORY

21 Mar 2022

All Grades

For clarity, the term “slurred: four quavers to a bow” has been updated to “slurred: two crotchet beats to a bow” when discussing ‘long tonic’ bowing choices.

Grade 6

Dominant 7 arpeggio requirements updated in accordance with grade book: candidates must prepare separate bows as well as slurred: four quavers to a bow.

Grade 7

Minimum tempo requirement for parallel double stopped B \flat major scale updated to 72bpm.

Grades 6, 7 and 8

Sight reading key centres have been updated, and Improvisation modal requirements clarified.

25 Apr 2023

Performance certificates

(p.11) Attainment bands updated

Grade 2

Technical Exercise: Arpeggios – G minor and D minor arpeggio range corrected to 2 octaves.

Grade 5

Technical Exercise: Arpeggios – F dominant 7 arpeggio added (D dominant 7 arpeggio removed).

Grade 8

Technical Exercise: Diminished 7th Arpeggios requirements updated to state Cdim7 (not C \sharp dim7).

31 Mar 2025

All Grades

Added information about Graded Certificate exam type, including exam information and updated Qualification codes.

Learning Outcomes added to Syllabus

(p. 7) Added guidance on selection of performance pieces stipulating that candidates may not be assessed on the same performance pieces more than once