

Music Academy

Music Theory Curriculum

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Music Academy Curriculum

(Based on Trinity & ABRSM)

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AMEB/NZMEB Based Curriculum

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Beginner Grade

Designed for younger learners to introduce them to music theory slowly and clearly.

The Stave & Naming Notes

- ✓ Treble (G) and bass (F) clefs
- ✓ Naming the notes on the stave

Note Values

- ✓ Semibreve, minim, crotchet and their rests

Simple Time Signatures

- ✓ 4/4 and the grouping of notes within this time

Instruments of the Orchestra

- ✓ Be aware of the standard orchestral instruments
- ✓ Know which instruments belong to which families

Terms & Signs

- ✓ Dynamics

Junior Grade

Designed for younger learners to introduce them to music theory slowly and clearly.

Naming Notes

- ✓ Names of notes on the staff, including middle C in both clefs.

Note Values

- ✓ Semibreve, minim, crotchet, quaver and their rests
- ✓ Single dotted minim and crotchet

Simple Time Signatures

- ✓ 2/4 and 4/4 and the grouping of notes within these times

Scales

- ✓ An introduction to scales
- ✓ Recognise and write a C Major scale

Terms & Signs

- ✓ Slurs and Ties
- ✓ Articulation
- ✓ Dynamics
- ✓ Tempo

Preliminary Grade

Designed for younger learners to introduce them to music theory slowly and clearly.

Naming Notes

- ✓ Names of notes on the staff, including middle C in both clefs.
- ✓ Tones and semitones
- ✓ Sharp, flat and natural signs

Note Values

- ✓ Semibreve, minim, crotchet, quaver and their rests
- ✓ Single dotted minim and crotchet

Simple Time Signatures

- ✓ 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 and the grouping of notes within these times

Key Signatures & Scales

- ✓ An introduction to key signatures
- ✓ Identify C, F and G Major key signatures

Intervals

- ✓ An introduction to intervals
- ✓ Identify (*by number only*) and write intervals unison to octave

Tonic Triads

- ✓ An introduction to tonic triads
- ✓ Tonic Triads (*root position*) for the keys of the grade

Terms & Signs

- ✓ Tempo
- ✓ Common symbols (*pause, repeat*)

Grade 1

The Stave

- ✓ Treble (G) and bass (F) clefs
- ✓ Names of notes on the stave, including middle C in both clefs.
- ✓ Sharp, flat and natural signs, and their cancellation

Note Values

- ✓ Semibreve, minim, crotchet, quaver and their rests
- ✓ Single dotted notes and their rests

Simple Time Signatures

- ✓ 2/4, 3/4, 4/4 and the grouping of notes within these times
- ✓ Anacrusis

Scales and Key Signatures

- ✓ Major keys of C, G, D and F in both clefs
- ✓ Degrees of the scale (*number only*)

Tonic Triads & Chords

- ✓ Tonic triads (*root position*) for the keys of the grade
- ✓ Chords & arpeggios

Intervals

- ✓ Intervals above the tonic (*by number only*)

Terms & Signs

- ✓ Dynamics
- ✓ Ties and slurs
- ✓ Articulation and common symbols (*pause, repeat*)
- ✓ Performance directions

Grade 2

As in grade one with the addition of:

Note Values

- ✓ Semiquavers and its equivalent rest
- ✓ Single dotted notes review

The Stave

- ✓ Extension of the stave by 2 ledger lines above and below (*treble and bass*)
- ✓ Pitch and re-writing a melody between treble and bass clefs

Simple Time Signatures

- ✓ 2/2, 3/2, 4/2, 3/8 and the grouping of notes within these times
- ✓ Triplets
- ✓ Syncopation

Scales and Key Signatures

- ✓ Scales and key signatures of the major keys A, Bb and Eb
- ✓ Recognition of the minor scale (*harmonic, melodic, natural*)
- ✓ Scales and key signatures of the minor keys A, E and D
- ✓ Degrees of the scale (*number only*)

Tonic Triads & Chords

- ✓ Tonic triads (*root position*) for the keys of the grade
- ✓ First inversions
- ✓ Broken chords and arpeggios

Intervals

- ✓ Intervals above the tonic

Instruments

- ✓ Vocal ranges

Terms and Signs

- ✓ Dynamics & Articulation
- ✓ Performance directions

Grade 3

As in preceding grades, with the addition of:

Compound Time Signatures

- ✓ 6/8, 9/8, 12/8, 3/2, 2/2 and the grouping of notes within these times

Note Values

- ✓ The demisemiquaver (*32nd note*) and its equivalent rest

The Stave

- ✓ Extension of the stave beyond 2 ledger lines above and below (*treble and bass*)

Scales and Key Signatures

- ✓ Scales and key signatures of the major keys E and Ab
- ✓ Scales and key signatures of the minor keys B, F#, C#, G, C, F
- ✓ Degrees of the scale (*number only*)

Triads & Chords

- ✓ Tonic triads (*root position*) for the keys of the grade
- ✓ Dominant triads
- ✓ Second inversions
- ✓ Arpeggios and broken chords

Intervals

- ✓ Intervals above the tonic
- ✓ Interval qualities (*major, minor, perfect*)

Instruments of the Orchestra

- ✓ Identifying common instruments of the orchestra and their instrument family
- ✓ Instrument ranges of the violin, flute, cello, and bassoon.

Terms and Signs

- ✓ More performance directions

Grade 4

As in preceding grades, with the addition of:

Compound Time Signatures

- ✓ Simple or compound time signatures
- ✓ Duple, triple and quadruple time signatures
- ✓ 5/4, 4/8, 9/4, 6/4, 7/8 and the grouping of notes within these times

Note Values

- ✓ The breve and its equivalent rest
- ✓ Double-dotted notes and rests
- ✓ Duplets
- ✓ Enharmonic equivalents
- ✓ Double sharp and double flat signs and their cancellation

The Alto Clef

- ✓ Naming notes on the alto clef

Scales and Key Signatures

- ✓ Scales and key signatures of all major keys up to and including five sharps and flats
- ✓ Scales and key signatures of all minor keys up to and including five sharps and flats (*harmonic and melodic*)
- ✓ Degrees of the scale (*number only*)
- ✓ The chromatic Scale

Intervals

- ✓ Intervals above the tonic
- ✓ Interval qualities (*augmented, diminished*)
- ✓ Technical names for the notes of the diatonic scale

Triads & Chords

- ✓ Triads (*root position*) on the tonic, subdominant, and dominant notes in the keys for this grade
- ✓ Arpeggios & broken chords

- ✓ Root, first or second inversion
- ✓ Dominant 7th chords for the keys of the grade

Cadences

- ✓ Recognising perfect and plagal cadences

Instruments

- ✓ Instrument ranges of french horn, oboe, viola, double bass

Terms and Signs

- ✓ Italian and French performance directions
- ✓ Ornamentation - trill, turn, upper and lower mordent, acciaccatura and appoggiatura

Grade 5

As in preceding grades with the addition of:

Irregular Time Signatures

- ✓ Time signatures of 5/4, 7/4, 5/8, and 7/8 and the grouping of notes and rests within these times

The Tenor Clef

- ✓ Naming notes on the tenor clef

Scales and Key Signatures

- ✓ Scales and key signatures of all major keys up to and including six sharps and flats
- ✓ Scales and key signatures of all minor keys up to and including six sharps and flats
- ✓ C & G pentatonic major scales

Intervals

- ✓ Simple and compound intervals

Chords

- ✓ First and second inversions
- ✓ Figured bass
- ✓ Dominant 7th chords
- ✓ Arpeggios & broken chords
- ✓ Supertonic triads

Cadences

- ✓ Perfect, imperfect, plagal and interrupted

Instrument and Vocal Ranges

- ✓ Vocal, woodwind, brass, strings

Terms and Signs

- ✓ Italian and German performance directions

Grade 6

As in preceding grades with the addition of:

Note Values

- ✓ Demisemiquaver triplets
- ✓ Duplets
- ✓ Hemiola
- ✓ Swung quavers (writing quavers to be played swing)

Scales and Key Signatures

- ✓ Scales and key signatures of all major and minor keys
- ✓ Recognising and writing C, D, F or G pentatonic major scales, A, B, D or E pentatonic minor and A, B, D or E blues scales
- ✓ Understanding the concept of modes and identifying music written using the Aeolian mode (natural minor)

Intervals

- ✓ Recognition of all intervals including compound intervals

Chords

- ✓ Writing and labelling chords on every degree of the scale
- ✓ Diminished 7ths and dominant 7ths
- ✓ Root, first and second inversions
- ✓ Third inversions for dominant 7ths and diminished 7ths
- ✓ The supertonic seventh chord in root position and first inversion
- ✓ Recognising and writing augmented chords
- ✓ 4-part chords

Harmony

- ✓ Figured bass
- ✓ Recognising and writing perfect, plagal, imperfect and interrupted cadences
- ✓ Recognising and writing harmonic sequences
- ✓ Modulation

Instruments

- ✓ Ranges of clarinet in A, treble recorder and saxophones (tenor in Bb and baritone in Eb)
- ✓ Bowing directions
- ✓ Instrument names in other languages
- ✓ Reading an orchestral score

Composers & Period

- ✓ Features of the Baroque period (approximately 1600–1750)
- ✓ Key composers of this period and their works

Musical Terms

- ✓ Understand and identify textures (homophonic, polyphonic, imitative, thick or dense, thin or transparent)
- ✓ Binary and ternary form with reference to Baroque dance suites
- ✓ Pedal points

Terms and Signs

- ✓ Ornamentation
- ✓ Passing notes, auxiliary notes, appoggiaturas, changing notes and notes of anticipation
- ✓ Frequently used terms and signs

Grade 7

As in preceding grades with the addition of:

Note Values

- ✓ Irregular rhythmic groupings - quadruplet, quintuplet, sextuplet, septuplet

Time Signatures

- ✓ Unusual time signatures 9/4, 12/4, 2/8, 4/8, 6/16, 9/16, 12/16, 16/32

Scales

- ✓ Recognising all pentatonic major and minor scales
- ✓ Recognising all blues scales
- ✓ Recognising and writing whole tone scales
- ✓ Recognising and writing Dorian mode scales starting on C, D, F or G

Chords

- ✓ Secondary 7ths & inversions
- ✓ Broken chords of secondary 7ths
- ✓ Neapolitan 6th, and diminished 7th chords
- ✓ 4-part chords

Harmony

- ✓ The 12-bar blues
- ✓ Cadences - Tierce de Picardie, Phrygian cadences and inverted cadences
- ✓ Approaching cadence points
- ✓ Harmonic sequences and suspensions
- ✓ Modulation - identifying turning points through pivot notes, pivot chords and diminished 7th or dominant 7th chords

Instruments

- ✓ Instrument ranges of timpani, tenor horn in Eb, trombone (tenor and bass)

Composers & Period

- ✓ Features of the Classical period (approximately 1600–1830)
- ✓ Key composers of this period and their works (Beethoven, Mozart Haydn...)
- ✓ Close and open scores

- ✓ Layout of orchestral scores - Classical period
- ✓ Features of Classical period keyboard music (Alberti bass, inverted pedals)

Musical Form

- ✓ Forms popular in the Classical period (rondo and sonata rondo forms, scherzo and trio, sonata form)
- ✓ Movements commonly found in classical sonatas, string quartets, symphonies and concerto)

Terms and Signs

- ✓ Shorthand signs
- ✓ Frequently used terms and signs

AMEB/NZMEB Based Curriculum

Grade 1

The Staff

- ✓ Treble (G) and bass (F) clefs
- ✓ Names of notes on the staff, including middle C in both clefs, to two ledger lines above and below the staff
- ✓ Sharp, flat and natural signs, and their cancellation

Note Values

- ✓ Semibreve, minim, dotted minim, crotchet and quaver notes
- ✓ Minim and crotchet rest

Simple Time Signatures

- ✓ 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, Common time and the grouping of notes within these times
- ✓ Anacrusis

Scales and Key Signatures

- ✓ Major keys of C, G and F in both clefs and their one octave scales (*D was removed*)
- ✓ Degrees of the scale (*number only*)

Tonic Triads & Chords

- ✓ Tonic triads (*root position*) for the keys of the grade in the treble clef

Intervals

- ✓ Diatonic intervals above the tonic (*by number only*) in the treble clef

Terms & Signs

- ✓ Tempo (see list)
- ✓ Dynamics (see list)
- ✓ Articulation (legato, staccato)
- ✓ Signs (ties and slurs, bar lines, double bar lines)

Grade 2

As in grade one with the addition of:

Note Values

- ✓ Semibreve rest, quaver rest
- ✓ Dotted notes
- ✓ Semiquaver

Time and Rhythm

- ✓ Time signatures from grade 1 plus 6/8 time
- ✓ Note groupings in simple and compound time
- ✓ Understanding of simple duple, triple and quadruple time, and compound duple time
- ✓ Triplets

Scales and Key Signatures

- ✓ Scales and key signatures of the major keys A and D
- ✓ Scales and key signatures of the minor keys A, E and D
- ✓ Recognition of the harmonic minor scale

Tonic Triads & Chords

- ✓ Tonic triads (*root position*) for the keys of the grade in both treble and bass clefs

Intervals

- ✓ Diatonic intervals above the tonic (*number and quality*) on the treble clef

Form

- ✓ Recognise binary and ternary form and mark their main divisions using AB or ABA

Terms and Signs

- ✓ Tempo (see list)
- ✓ Dynamics (see list)
- ✓ Performance directions (see list)
- ✓ Articulation and common symbols (pause, repeat signs, accent)

Grade 3

As in preceding grades, with the addition of:

Note Values

- ✓ The demisemiquaver (*32nd note*) and its equivalent rest

Time Signatures and Rhythm

- ✓ 3/2, 2/2, 3/8, 9/8 and the grouping of notes within these times
- ✓ Compound triple time

Scales and Key Signatures

- ✓ Scales and key signatures of the major keys E, Bb, Eb and Ab
- ✓ Scales and key signatures of the minor keys G and C (*harmonic*)
- ✓ Technical names for the degrees of the scale

Triads & Chords

- ✓ Tonic triads, subdominant triads and dominant triads for the keys of the grade
- ✓ First inversions of these triads

Harmony

- ✓ Perfect and Plagal cadences

Intervals

- ✓ Diatonic intervals above the tonic on treble and bass clefs

Vocal ranges

- ✓ Vocal ranges of soprano, alto, tenor, bass

Form

- ✓ Recognise binary, ternary and rondo forms

Terms and Signs

- ✓ Tempo (see list)
- ✓ Dynamics (see list)
- ✓ Performance directions (see list)

Grade 4

As in preceding grades, with the addition of:

Time and Rhythm

- ✓ 6/4, 12/8 and the grouping of notes within these times
- ✓ Simple or compound time signatures
- ✓ Compound quadruple time
- ✓ Syncopation
- ✓ Beaming notes

Accidentals

- ✓ Double sharp and double flat signs and their cancellation

Scales and Key Signatures

- ✓ Scales and key signatures of major keys B, F#, Db, and Gb
- ✓ Scales and key signatures of B, F#, C#, F and Bb minor keys (*harmonic*)
- ✓ Technical names for the degrees of the scale
- ✓ Diatonic and chromatic scales

Intervals

- ✓ All diatonic intervals and their inversions in treble and bass clef

Chords

- ✓ Degrees of the scale in Roman numerals
- ✓ Recognition of the following chords: Major - I, ii, , IV, V, vi; Minor - I, iv, V, VI
- ✓ 4-part chords

Harmony

- ✓ Perfect, imperfect, plagal and interrupted cadences

Modulation

- ✓ Recognise modulation to the dominant or relative major or minor

Instruments Ranges

- ✓ Stringed instruments of the symphony orchestra

- ✓ Ranges of the violin, viola, violoncello and double bass.

Form

- ✓ Features of the Baroque period (approximately 1600–1750)
- ✓ Key composers of this period and their works
- ✓ Form of the following dances: Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gigue, Minuet and Gavotte

Terms and Signs

- ✓ Tempo (see list)
- ✓ Dynamics (see list)
- ✓ Performance Directions (see list)
- ✓ Ornamentation - trill, turn, upper and lower mordent, acciaccatura and appoggiatura

List of Terms

Grade 1

Tempo

Adagio - *slowly*

Andante - *at a walking speed*

Moderato - *at a moderate speed*

Allegro - *fast*

Presto - *very fast*

Accelerando (accel.) - *gradually getting faster*

Rallentando (rall.) - *gradually getting slower*

Ritardando (ritard.) (rit.) - *gradually getting slower*

Ritenuto (riten.) (rit.) - *immediately slower, or held back*

A tempo - *return to original speed*

Dynamics

Crescendo (cres.) (cresc.) - *getting louder*

Decrescendo (decre.) (decre.) - *getting softer*

Diminuendo (dim.) - *getting softer*

Forte (f)- *loudly*

Piano (p)- *softly*

Articulation

Legato - *smoothly*

Staccato - *detached*

Grade 2

Tempo

Lento - *slowly*

Largo - *rather slow*

Allegretto - *fairly quickly*

Vivace - *lively*

Vivo - *lively*

Allargando - *broadening*

Più mosso - *more movement/quicker*

Meno mosso - *less movement/slower*

Dynamics

Pianissimo (pp) - *very soft*

Fortissimo (ff) - *very loud*

Mezzo forte (F) - *moderately loud*

Mezzo piano (P) - *moderately soft*

Performance Directions

Maestoso - *majestically*

Sempre - *always*

Poco - *a little*

Molto - *very much*

Senza - *without*

Cantabile - *in a singing style*

Leggiero - *lightly*

Other terms

Sostenuto - *sustained*

Dal segno - *from the sign*

Da capo al fine - *from the beginning to the word fine*

Mezzo staccato - *moderately short and detached.*

Grade 3

Tempo

Largamente - *broadly*

Larghetto - *rather broadly/slowly*

Prestissimo - *extremely fast, or as fast as possible*

Con moto - *with movement*

Dynamics

Calando - *getting softer and slower*

Morendo - *dying away*

Forte-piano (fp) - *loud then immediately soft*

Sforzando (sf) (sfz) - *forced; accented*

Performance Directions

Ad libitum - *at choice; freely*

Agitato - *agitated*

Attacca - *go straight on to the next section*

Animato - *animated/lively*

Tranquillo - *calmly*

Con anima - *with feeling*

Con brio - *with spirit*

Con grazia - *with grace*

Con forza - *with force*

Dolce - *sweetly*

Risoluto - *resolution; strong/bold*

Ben marcato - *well marked*

Other Terms

Main droite (M.D.) - *right hand*

Main gauche (M.G.) - *left hand*

Una corda - *with the soft pedal*

Tre corde - *release the soft pedal*

Opus - *a work or group of works*

Loco - *at normal pitch (after an 8va sign)*

Grade 4

Tempo

Tempo comodo - *at a comfortable speed*

Tempo giusto - *at a consistent speed*

L'istesso tempo - *at the same speed*

Non troppo - *not too much*

Grave - *slow and solemn*

Rubato - *with some freedom in the time*

Stringendo - *pressing on faster*

Dynamics

Perdendosi - *fading away*

Smorzando (smorz.)- *dying away*

Rinforzando, (rfz),(rf) - *reinforcing the tone*

Pesante - *heavily*

Performance Directions

Cantando - *in a singing style*

Tenuto, (ten.) - *held*

Piacevole - *pleasant, agreeable*

Portamento - *a smooth gliding from one note to another (as in singing or string playing)*

Dolente - *sadly, plaintively*

Doloroso - *sadly, plaintively*

Sotto voce - *softly in an undertone*

Giocoso - *gay, merry*

Grazioso - *gracefully*

Assai - *very*

Quasi - *as if, as it were*

Scherzando - *playfully*

Subito, (sub.) - *suddenly*

Terms for Strings Playing

Sul ponticello (sul. pont.) - *bow on or near the bridge*

Sul tasto - *bow on or near the finger board*

Tremolo - *bowing very rapidly (usually on one note at a time) to produce a shimmering or wavering effect*

Pizzicato, (pizz.) - *pluck the string with the finger (instead of bowing it)*

Arco - *with the bow (used after a pizz. sign)*