MTB Theory Specification

Awards in Music Theory
(Graded Exams 1-7 plus Foundation)

The qualifications' objectives

MTB Exams Awards in Music Theory (Grades 1-7 plus Foundation Grade) are intended to provide targets to enable candidates to develop the knowledge required to understand, read and correctly write music notation from a very basic to advanced level. Also, from Grade 6 onwards, to understand the principles of harmony and counterpoint and apply this knowledge when completing harmony and counterpoint exercises.

With these qualifications, the Music Teachers' Board aims to increase the value of, and accessibility to, graded theory exams by enabling students to take interactive online theory exams at any time. This is made possible by the use of state-of-the-art technology. These graded theory examinations are taken and submitted online. This is designed to remove some of the barriers candidates and teachers sometimes encounter when taking graded music theory examinations. The nature of delivery of our qualifications means that they are available to candidates of any age, in any location worldwide at any time, without the need to enter a long time in advance or adhere to specific exam dates or periods. We also have a Reasonable Adjustments Policy (available via our website) to further maximise accessibility to our qualifications.

Regulation

MTB Exams (The Music Teachers' Board) graded awards in Music Theory is regulated in England by Ofqual (The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation).
Recognition by Ofqual is a mark of quality – it shows that as a board we meet their rules and requirements and are able to combine expertise in assessment with effective operational delivery. In turn, this provides assurance that the learners who have taken our Ofqual regulated qualifications have the required level of knowledge and skills in the relevant subject area.

Who may submit our qualifications

There are no restrictions around who can take and submit MTB theory exams. They can be entered, taken and submitted by anyone of any age, anywhere in the world and at any time. There are no prerequisites for taking an MTB Theory qualification.

The Specification

This specification provides the information required to help Teachers, Centres, Parents and Candidates to prepare for our qualifications and facilitate their delivery. It should be read

Copyright © MTB Exams

along with the syllabuses which are available via the website www.mtbexams.com.

Specification Review

The specification is valid from November 15th 2022 and will be reviewed in September each year. The specification may be updated from time to time and the most recent version will be available at all times from www.mtbexams.com

The qualifications we offer:

Qualification Number	Qualification Title
610/1450/3	MTB Entry Level Award in Music Theory – Foundation
610/1445/X	MTB Level 1 Award in Music Theory – Grade 1
610/1446/1	MTB Level 1 Award in Music Theory – Grade 2
610/1447/3	MTB Level 1 Award in Music Theory – Grade 3
610/1448/5	MTB Level 2 Award in Music Theory – Grade 4
610/1449/7	MTB Level 2 Award in Music Theory – Grade 5
610/5234/6	MTB Level 3 Certificate in Music Theory – Grade 6
610/8036/6	MTB Level 3 Certificate in Music Theory – Grade 7

The Guided Learning Hours (GLH), Total Qualification Time (TQT) and Credits for each grade:

Grade	GLH	TQT	Credit Value
Foundation	4	10	1
Grade 1	6	20	2
Grade 2	9	30	3
Grade 3	9	50	5
Grade 4	12	70	7
Grade 5	12	90	9
Grade 6	18	130	13
Grade 7	24	170	17

What will be assessed

MTB Exams' Theory Qualifications assess knowledge and understanding of the processes required to read and write music, as well as the ability to apply this to the recognition and identification of musical sounds.

At the Foundation level, candidates learn the basics of rhythm and pitch using the treble and bass clefs. From grades 1-5 this knowledge is extended to different keys, clefs and time signatures and applied to tasks such as writing scales, key signatures, triads, intervals and transposition as well as rhythmic and melodic dictation, plus aural recognition of scales and intervals. Grades 6 & 7 introduce the concepts of harmony and counterpoint in Common Practice Music. The syllabus content for each grade can be seen here.

The method of assessment

Assessment is through interactive online examinations. The length of the exams are: 45 minutes (Foundation), 60 minutes (Grade 1), 75 minutes (Grades 2 & 3), 90 minutes (Grades

4 & 5), 105 minutes (Grades 6 & 7)*. They use computer generated, randomised questions based on the syllabus content for each grade, meaning that these qualifications can be accessed anywhere at any time. The result is calculated based on the level of accuracy of answers submitted, with partial credit being awarded for partially correct answers to longer questions.

**These are the current length of assessments at each grade but may be updated at any time by MTB Exams*

The criteria against which learners' levels of attainment will be measured

The following are the expected levels of expectation at each grade:

RQF Entry Level – Foundation:
Ability to answer very elementary knowledge-based questions requiring very rudimentary understanding of the concepts of music theory. Also, to perform very basic tasks associated with the knowledge acquired at this level (e.g. adding bar lines or beams, etc.).

RQF Level 1 – Grades 1-3
Ability to demonstrate a knowledge of simple theoretical concepts such as scales, chords, keys, etc. Apply this knowledge to performing basic tasks involving reading, interpreting and writing musical notation as well as the simple aural recognition of how this written music will sound.

RQF Level 2 – Grades 4 & 5
Ability to demonstrate knowledge of straightforward theoretical concepts such as compound or irregular rhythm, a range of clefs, transposition etc. Apply this knowledge to performing straightforward tasks involving reading, interpreting and writing musical notation as well as the straightforward aural recognition of how written music of moderate difficulty and complexity will sound demonstrating a moderate level of aural awareness in straightforward situations.

RQF Level 3 – Grades 6 & 7
Ability to demonstrate knowledge of complex theoretical concepts such as Harmony and Counterpoint. Apply this knowledge to performing complex tasks involving completing harmony and counterpoint exercises, alongside related tasks including applying and demonstrating an understanding of chord qualities, Roman numerals, figured bass and lead sheet notation. Also, to display knowledge of the characteristics of periods of musical history as well as advanced aural recognition of how complex written music will sound, demonstrating an advanced level of aural awareness in complex situations.

To see the marking criteria for Music Theory – Click Here

Levels of attainment.

The examination is marked out of 100 with a pass mark of 60
Levels of attainment are categorised as follows:

87-100 Distinction
75-86 Merit
60-74 Pass
45-59 Blue
0-44 White

Equipment required to deliver the qualification

Candidates will need access to a computer with a stable wi-fi connection to take the examination. They may have a blank sheet of paper (plain or manuscript) and a pencil/pen but no other written or informative materials. They will need to be in a quiet space with no-one else in the room (apart from approved supervisors/technical assistants – see below) and apart from where technical assistance may be required, there must not be any verbal (or any other) communication between the candidate and any other person during the exam itself. Phones or other devices must not be used or accessed during the exam after the initial setup.

Supervision of the exam

For younger candidates or those requiring extra support, another adult may be present in the room at the beginning of the exam to help with the initial set up. They are also permitted to remain in the exam room for the whole exam once the exam has started but must not communicate with the candidate during the exam itself unless technical assistance is required.

Supporting materials

Some guidance on how to submit answers is provided on the website to support candidates.

MTB Exams provide optional paid courses and practice questions for each grade to help candidates gain a clearer understanding of the requirements, the way answers to questions are expected to be written using the computer keyboard and to get used to the nature of questions and structure of the assessments, before taking the final qualification. This is however not necessary to access and take the qualification assessment.
The verification system will guide them through setup for the assessment and automatically run alongside the exam software. This will ask the candidate to scan the room and show that any note paper/manuscript they have is completely blank.

Malpractice and Maladministration

MTB Exams take any malpractice or maladministration very seriously as it can compromise confidence in our qualifications for other users. We publish a 'Malpractice and Maladministration Policy' which can be viewed here.
A verification system will automatically run alongside the exam software during the assessment. It will record the whole exam in video using the computer's webcam. Any violation of the rules such as communication with a third party or use of disallowed aids during the assessment itself, will be checked and if found to have breached the rules may lead to the submission being disqualified and potentially further sanctions as explained in the MTB Exams 'Sanctions Policy' available on the website.

Copyright © MTB Exams

Rules

The following is a list of violations which may result in disqualification of the candidate's submission. It is not an exclusive list but designed to give examples of attempts to gain an unfair advantage, which constitute a violation of our rules for these theory assessments.

- Impersonation – someone other than the registered candidate takes the assessment
- Using disallowed technology aids – Using a phone or watch to access answers or to gain an unfair advantage
- Communication – Communicating with a third party to gain an unfair advantage
- Using disallowed written material – accessing written paper or materials during the exam to gain an unfair advantage
- Wearing dark glasses to compromise verification software
- Written aids within the exam space – having material in view such as on walls which can be used to access answers or gain an unfair advantage
- Accessing secondary windows on computers – opening other windows on a computer to access answers or gain an unfair advantage

Submitting exams for marking

Once the online assessment has been completed the exam is automatically submitted to MTB Exams for confirmation of the result.

Results

Exams are marked by the system software and the verification record checked. The result will be emailed to the teacher, centre or candidate after verification checks have been completed and approved, and usually within 2 weeks of submission. A certificate is then posted to the address supplied by the teacher/centre/candidate. Certificates will normally be issued/posted within 2-4 weeks of receiving the marksheet. Receipt may vary depending on the speed of the postage delivery service.

SEND

Candidates with a disability, condition or special educational need which compromises their ability to access these qualifications can ask for a Reasonable Adjustment by completing the 'Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Form' available from the MTB Exams website, at least 30 days prior to taking the assessment. MTB Exams will aim to provide support to all SEND candidates to help them access these qualifications where this is possible. Please note that in some circumstances, it may not be possible to accommodate a need if doing so were to compromise the validity of the qualification.

Customer Services

If you require clarification of any aspect of our exams or their delivery, please contact us via the 'contact us' page on the website.

Copyright © MTB Exams