



# 2015–2017 SYLLABUS

Bass

Drums

Guitar

Keyboards

Vocals

Trinity College London (Trinity) is an awarding body recognised in the United Kingdom by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual) in England, the Welsh Government (WG) and the Northern Ireland Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA). Trinity's qualifications are recognised by these authorities within the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Various arrangements are in place with governmental education authorities worldwide.

Trinity College London's Rock & Pop syllabus and supporting publications have been devised and produced in association with Faber Music and Peters Edition London.

Trinity College London  
[www.trinitycollege.com](http://www.trinitycollege.com)

**Charity number** 1014792

**Patron** HRH The Duke of Kent KG

**Chief Executive** Sarah Kemp

Copyright © 2014 Trinity College London

Published by Trinity College London

First impression, May 2014

**TRINITY**  
COLLEGE LONDON

# Contents

Introduction.....	4
Range of qualifications .....	5
Exams at a glance .....	6
How the exams are marked.....	7
About the exams .....	9
Group exams .....	10
Choosing songs.....	12
Session skills .....	14
Bass.....	15
Songbook lists.....	16
Publications .....	18
Drums.....	19
Songbook lists.....	20
Publications .....	22
Guitar.....	23
Songbook lists.....	24
Publications .....	26
Keyboards .....	27
Songbook lists.....	28
Publications .....	30
Vocals .....	31
Songbook lists.....	32
Publications .....	34
Accreditation .....	35

# Introduction

Trinity's groundbreaking Rock & Pop exams for Bass, Drums, Guitar, Keyboards and Vocals provide an opportunity for rock and pop musicians to gain accredited qualifications through performing carefully chosen and arranged songs across the rock and pop genres.

This syllabus is valid for the duration of 2015–2017, but please check the website regularly for any amendments or updates at [www.trinityrock.com](http://www.trinityrock.com)

These exams have been developed through a unique partnership with two of the world's leading music publishers: Faber Music and Peters Edition London.

Available from Initial to Grade 8, the exams are supported by 48 books which provide essential support for the learner through:

- 🎵 sheet music
- 🎵 demo and backing tracks on CD
- 🎵 background information on the songs
- 🎵 performance hints and tips
- 🎵 Technical focus
- 🎵 support for Session skills.

In addition there are many resources online including song downloads, transpositions and additional repertoire. This is a growing resource which will expand the scope of the syllabus and provide support material for teachers and learners in the future – [www.trinityrock.com](http://www.trinityrock.com)

The exams are available internationally and entering for the exam is easy. Further details are available from the website together with information about the mark schemes, Session skills and assessment criteria for the exams.

Performance is at the core of Trinity's Rock & Pop exams. Whether self-taught or taking lessons, learning for fun or heading for a career in the music industry, these exams will help musicians develop valuable playing skills and achieve their musical ambitions.

# Range of qualifications

Trinity's Rock & Pop exams are part of a suite of qualifications offered by Trinity College London across a range of musical styles, instruments and disciplines:

QCF* Level	EQF** Level	Classical & Jazz	Rock & Pop	Theory & Written	Music Tracks †	Solo Certificate †	Group Certificate †
7	7	FTCL Diploma		FMusTCL			
6	6	LTCL Diploma		LMusTCL			
		ATCL Diploma		AMusTCL			
4	5	Certificate for Music Educators (Trinity CME)					
3	4	Grade 8	Grade 8	Grade 8		Advanced	Advanced
		Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7			
		Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6			
2	3	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5		Intermediate	Intermediate
		Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4			
1	2	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3		Foundation	Foundation
		Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2	Track 2		
		Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1	Track 1		
Entry Level 3	1+	Initial	Initial	n/a	Initial Track		
Entry Level 1&2					First Access Track		

\* Qualifications and Credit Framework in England, Wales and Northern Ireland

\*\* European Qualifications Framework

† Not QCF or EQF accredited   ‡ Excludes Classical & Jazz Initial exams

# Exams at a glance

For the Rock & Pop exam, candidates will need to perform a set of **three Songs** and one of the **Session skills** assessments, either **Playback** or **Improvising**. Candidates can choose the order of the set list, however the default order is listed below.

## Exam structure

Component	Option	Pass mark	Maximum mark
Song 1	Choose a song from the relevant Trinity Rock & Pop book <b>or</b> from <a href="http://www.trinityrock.com">www.trinityrock.com</a>	15	25
Song 2	Choose a different song from the book <b>or</b> from <a href="http://www.trinityrock.com">www.trinityrock.com</a> <b>or</b> perform a song you have chosen yourself <b>or</b> perform a song you have composed yourself. For Song 2 you may choose to sing <b>and</b> play, e.g. by adding vocals to playing keyboards or adding a guitar accompaniment to your vocals, or you may choose to be accompanied live by a single musician.	15	25
Session skills	Choose either <b>Playback or Improvising</b> .	12	20
Song 3	Choose one of the two <b>Technical focus</b> songs from the book or from <a href="http://www.trinityrock.com">www.trinityrock.com</a> , which cover three specific technical elements.	18	30
TOTAL		60	100

# How the exams are marked

The marks for the Songs are made up of three assessment areas:

Assessment area	Criteria include the following elements:	Songs 1 & 2	Song 3 Technical focus
Fluency & Musical Detail	Sense of pulse, synchronisation with backing track, continuity, rhythm, notes, dynamics, phrasing, articulation	8	8
Technical Control	<b>All instruments and Vocals:</b> balance, tone, sound quality, co-ordination, expressive shaping of phrases, use of instrumental resources  <b>Bass &amp; Guitar:</b> bends, slides, vibrato, slurs, pick/right-hand control, use of fx pedals and amp  <b>Drums:</b> stick control, rudiments, posture, independence of hands and feet, use of the kit  <b>Keyboards:</b> pedalling, fingering, use of function keys  <b>Vocals:</b> breathing, diction, intonation, use of microphone	8	12
Communication & Style	Giving a confident performance, being musically engaged, feel and expression, communicating the musical mood and character, demonstrating stylistic awareness in ad libs, fills, improvised bars and solos	9	10
TOTAL		25	30

The marks for Song 3 are different because higher marks are awarded under Technical Control to reflect the three areas of **Technical focus**.

Trinity College London Rock & Pop exams are designed to encourage musical performances in which the candidate can demonstrate their own personal style and approach. This may involve some flexibility in the interpretation of the written notes, particularly at the higher grades, where consistent and stylish interpretation is encouraged. However, performances should not be simplified and musical integrity should always be maintained.

For further details on the assessment criteria go to [www.trinityrock.com](http://www.trinityrock.com)

# How the exams are marked

Candidates choose one of the two **Session skills**. Each is marked out of 20:

## Session skills

Component	Criteria	Total mark
Playback	How accurately and fluently the candidate performs the music	20
<b>OR</b>		
Improvising	How effectively the candidate creates an original response to a backing track	20

## Pass bands

Pass band	Mark
Distinction	87–100
Merit	75–86
Pass	60–74
Below Pass 1	45–59
Below Pass 2	0–44

Further details of the assessment criteria are available on the website [www.trinityrock.com](http://www.trinityrock.com)



# About the exams

## Entering for an exam

Exams can be taken at Trinity's international network of centres. Details of closing dates, fees, how to enter, and location of exam venues and centres are available on the website.

## Special needs

Trinity welcomes applications from those with special needs. It is essential that these are notified at the time of entry by using the special needs provision form available at [www.trinitycollege.com/musicspecialneeds](http://www.trinitycollege.com/musicspecialneeds)

## Taking the exam

When the exam timetables are prepared, candidates will be sent an appointment form. This will confirm the details of the candidate, grade and instrument together with the time and place of the exam.

Candidates should complete the details of the songs being performed, the order they will be performed, indicate which song is their **Technical focus** song, and indicate which of the two **Session skills** will be presented.

Candidates taking Initial to Grade 5 Vocals exams will need to inform the examiner if any of their song choices are in an alternative key. They can do this by including it in 'other important information' on the appointment form.

It is the candidate's responsibility to hand this completed appointment form to the examiner at the start of the exam.

## Examiners

Examiners are carefully recruited and trained to conduct the exams in a friendly and professional manner.

Assessments are made using the published criteria and examiners deliver the exams and carry out the assessment of the candidate's performances through a fair and standardised process.

Examiners invite candidates to perform their set list in their chosen order and administer their chosen **Session skills**. Examiners will write a report on the candidate's performance but will not be able to reveal the outcome of the assessment at this stage.

## Page turners

The examiner will not be able to help with page turning. Difficult page turns may be overcome by photocopying the relevant pages. A page turner may assist candidates at Grades 6–8 if necessary, but may only remain in the exam when required.

## After the exam

Report forms are normally issued within a week of completion of a centre's exam session, although at larger centres representatives may issue report forms on a fortnightly basis.

In the case of successful candidates, results are provisional until confirmed by the issue of a certificate six to eight weeks after the end of the exam session.

## The exam room

The exam room will be equipped with the following:

- ✔ amplifiers suitable for Bass, Guitar, Keyboards and Vocals
- ✔ CD player, speakers
- ✔ small mixer connected to examiner's laptop for playing backing tracks
- ✔ digital or acoustic piano (contact centre for details)
- ✔ jack-to-jack and mic leads
- ✔ table, chairs and a music stand
- ✔ vocal microphone and adjustable microphone stand
- ✔ adjustable piano stool
- ✔ A good-quality drum kit which comprises:
  - snare drum with adjustable drum kit size stand
  - toms (three minimum): high/medium/low
  - bass drum (18–22")
  - hi-hat (12–14")
  - ride cymbal (18–22")
  - crash cymbal (14–18")
  - adjustable drum stool

A mains power supply will be available at centres; candidates are responsible for the electrical safety of any of their own equipment used in their exam.

There may be a warm-up room or area where candidates can prepare just before the exam. Facilities will vary between centres.

# Group exams

## Rock & Pop group exams

Group exams are available for any combination of instruments at three Certificate levels; Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced:

Initial and Grade exams		Certificate exams		
Level	Exam duration (minutes)	Level	Programme duration (minutes)	Exam duration (minutes)
Initial	13			
Grade 1	13			
Grade 2	15			
Grade 3	15	Foundation	8–10	13
Grade 4	20	Intermediate	15–20	23
Grade 5	20			
Grade 6	25			
Grade 7	25	Advanced	25–30	33
Grade 8	30			

# Group exams

## **Song choice**

Candidates can create their own band from any combination of bass, drums, guitar, keyboards and vocals. To help, we have provided at least one song at each level from Initial–Grade 5 with all the parts for each instrument. Band songs are marked with ⚡ in the song list sections further on in this syllabus.

At each Group exam level the group will need to create a set list of the required length (see p.10). They should use at least one of the band option songs at the appropriate level: Foundation level is equivalent to Grade 3 and Intermediate level is equivalent to Grade 5.

Otherwise there is a free choice, but ensure the required parameters for 'Choosing your own song' (available on the website) are followed. For Advanced level there are no prescribed songs so it is a completely free choice, although candidates will be expected to choose songs at the appropriate level for all of the instruments and vocalists (Advanced is equivalent to Grade 8).

## **Assessment**

In the exam the group will be assessed in two areas:

### **1. Performing the set (90 marks)**

The set should be presented as if in a gig in front of an audience. The group will be assessed in the following areas:

- ✔ fluency & musical detail
- ✔ technical control
- ✔ communication & style.

### **2. Presentation skills (10 marks)**

The group will be assessed in the following areas:

- ✔ programme planning
- ✔ promo pack
- ✔ presentation skills.

More details and help on Group exams can be found at [www.trinityrock.com](http://www.trinityrock.com)

# Choosing songs

## Song 1

Song 1 must be selected from the relevant Trinity Rock & Pop book (songs are also listed in this syllabus), or from [www.trinityrock.com](http://www.trinityrock.com), and must be performed with the backing track from the songbook or download.

## Song 2

Song 2 may be selected from the relevant Trinity Rock & Pop book, or from appropriate tracks on [www.trinityrock.com](http://www.trinityrock.com) or be an **own-choice song**:

### Own-choice song

Candidates may perform an own-choice song. This must conform to the parameters set out on the website in terms of length and level of difficulty. This could be:

- ✔ sheet music from a printed or online source
- ✔ an original song that the candidate has written
- ✔ a song that the candidate has arranged (cover version).

The song may:

- ✔ be unaccompanied
- ✔ have a backing track (must not include the solo part) – this may be self-created
- ✔ include (for singers) a live self-played accompaniment on any instrument
- ✔ include (for instrumentalists) added vocals performed live by the candidate
- ✔ include (for any candidate) an accompaniment played or sung by any one other live musician, e.g. guitar, drums, piano accompaniment. The additional musician may be a teacher, and should remain in the exam room for Song 2 only.

Candidates must provide a (photo)copy of their chosen song for the examiner, with name and candidate number clearly shown. The examiner will retain this copy. Own-choice songs may be presented as an original score, handwritten or computer generated in one of the following formats:

- ✔ a lead sheet with lyrics, chords and melody line
- ✔ a chord chart with lyrics
- ✔ a full score using conventional staff notation.

## Song 3

Two of the songs in each of the Trinity Rock & Pop books are identified as **Technical focus** songs and these are marked with [TF] in the song list sections further on in this syllabus. One of these must be chosen for Song 3. These songs are designed to develop technical skills. Each song has three technical elements specifically identified. Guidance on the preparation of these technical skills is included in the books. For the **Technical focus** song, higher marks will be awarded under Technical Control to reflect the increased emphasis on this area. Examiners will refer to the three technical elements in their comments.

If a candidate performs more than one song that has been designated as a **Technical focus** song, then they must select only one of these songs as Song 3 and should indicate clearly on the appointment form which of these songs is intended for the **Technical focus** assessment. This must be performed with the backing track from the songbook or download.

All songs in the exam books and on the download site are available as printed music (using staff, tab or drum notation appropriate to the instrument or voice), demo recordings, and backing tracks.

## Important

Songs listed may be subject to change for copyright reasons: candidates should refer to the website for the most up-to-date information: [www.trinityrock.com](http://www.trinityrock.com)

# Choosing songs

## **Repeats, expressive techniques and tempi**

All songs should be prepared in full with all repeats, da capo and dal segno instructions and 1st and 2nd time bars observed. Candidates are encouraged to include a range of expressive techniques such as vibrato, slides/glissandi, tapping, grace notes, pitch bend, whammy bar, etc. appropriate to the style of the song, particularly in the higher grades. Candidates should observe terms showing tempo, character and style of the music.

## **Backing tracks**

Backing tracks for own-choice songs must be of good quality and presented on a computer-readable audio CD or other portable media, e.g. USB stick or MP3 player. These must not include the solo part.

## **Performing from memory**

Candidates are free to perform any or all of their songs from memory although no extra marks will be awarded.

## **Music and copies**

It is essential that candidates bring an original copy, or an authorised download of the music being performed into the exam room. If an unauthorised copy is used Trinity may not award marks for that song. Original copies of own-choice sheet music can be purchased or downloaded from music shops and publishers. Proof of purchase will be required for downloads. Allowances cannot be made for delays in obtaining printed music.

## **Copyright in a song**

Points to remember:

- ✔ candidates can create a cover version of a song and perform it in an exam or other non-public performance
- ✔ candidates cannot record a cover version or make recordings available to others (by uploading it to a website or copying) without the appropriate licence
- ✔ candidates own the copyright of any songs they have written themselves.

Further information is available on the website.

# Session skills

Either **Playback** or **Improvising** must be selected for the exam.  
For further information on **Session skills**, the requirements for each grade and the assessment criteria visit [www.trinityrock.com](http://www.trinityrock.com)

## Playback

If candidates choose Playback, they will be asked to perform some music they have not seen or heard before.

Candidates will be given a song chart and have 30 seconds to study it or to try out any sections. The examiner will then play the recorded backing track. Candidates should listen to the audio, copying what they hear; they can also read the music from the song chart.

Candidates will hear a series of short melodic phrases or drum grooves and fills, and are required to repeat each of them straight back in turn. A count-in will be given at the beginning of the recording, and a backing rhythm will be played throughout.

In the exam candidates will have two chances to play along with the track:

- ✔ first time – for practice
- ✔ second time – for assessment.

No variation or improvisation is required – what is printed on the song chart/heard on the track should be copied as accurately as possible, including any details of phrasing, articulation and dynamics at higher grades.

## Improvising

If candidates choose to improvise, they will be asked to improvise in a specified style over a backing track that they have not seen or heard before.

Candidates will be given a chord chart and the examiner will play a short section of the backing track so they can get a feel for the tempo and style. They then have 30 seconds to study it and to try out any sections. The examiner will then play the recorded backing track, which consists of a passage of music played on a loop.

Candidates should improvise in the given style over the backing track, which will be played four times through before fading out. A count-in will be given at the beginning of the recording, and a backing rhythm will be played throughout. Guitar and Keyboards candidates can choose whether to play a lead melodic line, rhythmic chords, or a combination of the two.

In the exam candidates will have two chances to play along with the track:

- ✔ first time – for practice
- ✔ second time – for assessment.

## Set-up

Up to and including Grade 5, somebody may assist with set-up. From Grade 6 onwards, candidates are expected to adjust the drum kit and set up equipment without assistance.

## Types of instrument

For Initial to Grade 5, candidates can use either an electric or an acoustic kit in the exam. From Grade 6 onwards, an acoustic kit must be used. Please note that centres are only required to provide an acoustic kit.

## Electric drum kits

Exams may be taken on electric drum kits up to and including Grade 5. However, it is vital that the instrument is capable of producing all timbral and dynamic variety demanded by the score, as well as any particular effects that individual songs may call for. Particular attention should be paid to the following areas: dynamic contrast; snares on/off; cross stick; use of brushes; clarity of grace note rudiments; clarity of rolls; use of any additional percussion (e.g. cow bell); differentiation between ghosted and non-ghosted notes; choked cymbal.

## In the exam room

The examiner will have all the backing tracks so the candidate's CD is only required as a back-up copy. At the beginning of the exam, the examiner will play the first few bars of the backing track of the first song as a sound check, and any adjustments to volume, set-up, etc. can be made before the exam begins.

## Backing tracks

All Drums candidates can choose to play the exam songs to the backing tracks with metronome click or the backing tracks without metronome click. The candidate should indicate their preferred choice on the appointment form.

## What to bring to the exam

### Essential

Drums candidates must bring:

- ✔ an original Trinity Rock & Pop book with the included CD, and any authorised download(s) from the website (including a copy of the sheet music for the examiner, backing track on CD/portable media, and certificate of authenticity clearly stating the candidate's name), even if performing from memory
- ✔ the completed appointment form
- ✔ their own drumsticks
- ✔ if performing an own-choice song – the original score and one copy for the examiner, plus the backing track (if appropriate).

### Optional

Drums candidates may bring:

- ✔ any other equipment required for their performances, e.g. additional cymbal, double bass drum pedal, cowbell, china cymbal, additional sticks/brushes, etc.
- ✔ headphones, headphone splitters

Please note that any additional equipment should not take more than three minutes to set up.

### Additional information for Drums candidates:

- ✔ candidates at Grades 6–8 wishing to use their own kits may request this at the time of entry
- ✔ left-handed Drums candidates must state this clearly on the exam entry form
- ✔ Trinity College London recommends the use of ear defenders by candidates and examiners for the performance of drum kit songs for health and safety reasons. These should be used for all songs
- ✔ candidates may prefer to play using headphones for accompanied songs. A separate headphone mix or a splitter should be used as the examiner must be able to hear the backing track through the main speaker system. Candidates are responsible for providing their own headphones and cables.

# Drums songbook lists

## Initial

And The Cradle Will Rock  
Van Halen

Black Betty ⚡  
Lead Belly

Boulevard Of Broken Dreams  
Green Day

Days [TF]  
Kirsty MacColl

I Am The Music Man ⚡  
Traditional

I'm Gonna Be (500 Miles) [TF]  
The Proclaimers

## Grade 3

All Day And All Of The Night ⚡ [TF]  
The Kinks

Chain Of Fools  
Aretha Franklin

Creep  
Radiohead

John Barleycorn ⚡ [TF]  
Traditional

Natural Blues  
Moby

Sunshine Of Your Love  
Cream

## Grade 1

Freight Train ⚡  
Taj Mahal

Green River  
Creedence Clearwater Revival

I Believe I'll Dust My Broom ⚡ [TF]  
Robert Johnson

Jump Into The Fog  
The Wombats

Road To Nowhere [TF]  
Talking Heads

Sheena Is A Punk Rocker  
Ramones

## Grade 4

The Bones Of You [TF]  
Elbow

Greased Lightnin'  
From Grease

Man On The Moon  
R.E.M.

Minority [TF]  
Green Day

Scarborough Fair ⚡  
Traditional

Time Is Running Out  
Muse

## Grade 2

Heroes ⚡ [TF]  
David Bowie

Jumpin' Jack Flash  
Rolling Stones

Mean Jumper Blues ⚡  
Blind Lemon Jefferson

Rock Around The Clock [TF]  
Bill Haley And His Comets

Sing For Absolution  
Muse

You Really Got Me  
The Kinks

## Grade 5

Airbag [TF]  
Radiohead

My Generation  
The Who

Primitive Notion  
New Order

The Raggle Taggle Gypsies ⚡  
Traditional

White Room [TF]  
Cream

Would?  
Alice In Chains



# Drums songbook lists

## **Grade 6**

Funky Drummer [TF]  
James Brown

Pencil Full Of Lead [TF]  
Paolo Nutini

Run To The Hills  
Iron Maiden

Scratch Your Name  
The Noisettes

Use Somebody  
Kings Of Leon

Won't Get Fooled Again  
The Who

## **Grade 7**

1 Thing  
Amerie

Come Dancing [TF]  
Jeff Beck

Crazy In Love  
Beyoncé

Dance With The Devil [TF]  
Cozy Powell

Pick Up The Pieces  
Average White Band

Welcome To Paradise  
Green Day

## **Grade 8**

Billion Dollar Gravy  
London Elektricity

Chuck E's In Love  
Rickie Lee Jones

Knights Of Cydonia [TF]  
Muse

Rock Steady  
Aretha Franklin

That Golden Rule  
Biffy Clyro

YYZ [TF]  
Rush

⚡ = Band option song  
[TF] = Technical focus song

A list of alternative songs for Drums is  
available online at [www.trinityrock.com](http://www.trinityrock.com)

# Drums publications



## **Drums Initial**

ISBN: 978-0-85736-245-2

## **Drums Grade 1**

ISBN: 978-0-85736-246-9

## **Drums Grade 2**

ISBN: 978-0-85736-247-6

## **Drums Grade 3**

ISBN: 978-0-85736-248-3

## **Drums Grade 4**

ISBN: 978-0-85736-249-0

## **Drums Grade 5**

ISBN: 978-0-85736-250-6

## **Drums Grade 6**

ISBN: 978-0-85736-251-3

## **Drums Grade 7**

ISBN: 978-0-85736-252-0

## **Drums Grade 8**

ISBN: 978-0-85736-253-7

# Accreditation

UCAS points	A levels (Grades A–E)		Rock & Pop exams (Pass, Merit, Distinction)		
	AS level	A2 level	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
120		A			
110					
100		B			
90					
80		C			
75					D
70					M
65					
60	A	D		D	
55				M	P
50	B				
45			D		
40	C	E	M	P	
35					
30	D				
25			P		
20	E				
15					
10					
5					

## Entry to UK higher education and UCAS points

The United Kingdom Universities' and Colleges' Admissions Service (UCAS) has confirmed the inclusion of Trinity Grade music exams within the UCAS tariff system, which is open to any student applying for a course of study at a UK university or other higher education institution. These exams will contribute towards a student's 'score' of UCAS points when they apply for entry to higher education.

The UCAS points system assists admissions tutors to make broad comparisons across applicants to higher education with different types and levels of qualifications. The way in which points are awarded provides a level of confidence to university admissions staff for the use of the tariff within the higher education sector. Therefore, recognition is attributed to qualifications offered by applicants which may otherwise not be known by university staff, and is important in the context of increasing participation in and widening access to higher education as a whole. Trinity College London Diplomas are also awarded credit by The Open University towards their degree programmes.