

# Music Theory Diplomas Syllabus

Qualification specifications  
from 2017



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Please check [trinitycollege.com/theory-diplomas](https://trinitycollege.com/theory-diplomas) to make sure you are using the current version of the syllabus and for the latest information about our music theory diplomas.

Trinity accepts entries for its exams on the condition that candidates conform to the requirements of the appropriate syllabus.

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# Welcome

Welcome to Trinity College London's Music Theory Diplomas syllabus.

Music Theory diplomas require a broad understanding of theoretical and analytical concepts and procedures, in addition to a wide-ranging knowledge of music history in the Western classical tradition.

They are offered at two levels, assessed by a written exam:

- ▶ Level 4 Diploma in Music Theory (known as AMusTCL)
- ▶ Level 6 Diploma in Music Theory (known as LMusTCL)

Trinity aims to treat each candidate individually when considering how we can make our exams accessible to all, recognising that requirements vary. Please visit [trinitycollege.com/music-csn](https://trinitycollege.com/music-csn) for more information, or contact us directly to discuss any specific requirements.

Trinity would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success in your exams and wider music-making. Further information on all our exams, as well as additional supporting materials for teachers and candidates, can be found at [trinitycollege.com](https://trinitycollege.com).

## About Trinity College London

Trinity College London, established in 1872, is a leading internationally recognised awarding organisation (exam board), publisher and independent education charity. We specialise in the assessment of communicative and performance skills covering music, drama, combined arts and English language. With over 850,000 candidates a year in more than 60 countries worldwide, Trinity qualifications are specifically designed to help people progress. We inspire teachers and learners through the creation of assessments that are enjoyable to prepare for, rewarding to teach and that develop the skills needed in real life.

At the heart of Trinity's work is the belief that effective communicative and performance skills are life enhancing, know no boundaries and should be within reach of us all. We exist to promote and foster the best possible communicative and performance skills through assessment, content and training that is innovative, personal and authentic.

# Range of qualifications

Trinity's music qualifications offer flexible progression routes from beginner to advanced levels in a range of musical genres. All are designed to help candidates develop as musicians according to their individual needs as learners.

Graded exams assess a broad range of musicianship skills, including performance, while certificate exams focus entirely on performance, including separate marks for presentation skills. Candidates can enter any combination of graded or certificate exams, and do not need to pass any particular level in order to proceed to a higher level.

Theory exams are available from Grade 1 to support learners to develop their understanding of the technical language of music. However, no theory qualifications or other prerequisites are required to enter graded or certificate exams at any level.

After Grade 8 or the Advanced Certificate, candidates can progress to diplomas at Associate (ATCL), Licentiate (LTCL) and Fellowship (FTCL) levels. These assess higher skills in performance, teaching and theory.

This syllabus focuses on diplomas in Music Theory. Visit [trinitycollege.com](https://trinitycollege.com) for information about graded and certificate exams, and diplomas in Performance and Teaching.

## Trinity music qualifications

RQF* Level	EQF** Level	Classical and Jazz	Rock & Pop	Theory of Music	Teaching	Music Performance in Choirs	Graded Awards in Music Performance	Music Performance in Bands	Awards and Certificates in Musical Development	Solo and Group Certificates <sup>3</sup>
7	7	FTCL	FTCL <sup>2</sup>							
6	6	LTCL	LTCL <sup>2</sup>	LMusTCL <sup>1</sup>	LTCL					
5										
4	4/5	ATCL	ATCL <sup>2</sup>	AMusTCL <sup>1</sup>	ATCL					
					Certificate for Music Educators (CME)					
3	4	Grade 8	Grade 8	Grade 8					Level 3	Advanced
		Grade 7	Grade 7	Grade 7						
		Grade 6	Grade 6	Grade 6						
2	3	Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 5					Level 2	Intermediate
		Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 4						
1	2	Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 3					Level 1	Foundation
		Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2		Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 2		
		Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1		Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 1		
Entry Level 3	1	Initial	Initial			Initial	Initial	Initial	Entry 3	
Entry Level 2						Pre-Initial		Pre-Initial	Entry 2	
Entry Level 1									Entry 1	

\* Regulated Qualifications Framework \*\* European Qualifications Framework

1 Available only as in-person exams

2 Available only as digital exams

3 Available only as in-person exams and not EQF or RQF regulated

# Introduction to Trinity's music theory diplomas

## About the exams

Trinity's diplomas in Music Theory demand a broad understanding of analytical concepts and procedures, while drawing on an extensive knowledge of music history in the Western tradition.

**AMusTCL** is a written diploma in which the standard is comparable to the written work component at the end of the first year of an undergraduate course at a conservatoire or other higher education institution. This qualification provides evidence that candidates can manipulate musical materials, understand the notational and structural conventions of representative Western classical music, and can demonstrate both awareness of musical styles based on analysis of set works, and also aural imagination and creativity in responding to specific stimuli.

**LMusTCL** is a written diploma in which the standard is comparable to the written work component on completion of an undergraduate course at a conservatoire or other higher education institution. Building on the foundation of study needed for AMusTCL, this qualification provides evidence that candidates can, in responding to set tasks, demonstrate a wide understanding of analytical concepts and procedures as well as draw on an extensive knowledge of all periods of musical history in the Western arts tradition, including an in-depth understanding, based on a set work, of the historical development of a particular genre.

## Exam structure

AMusTCL	LMusTCL
<p><b>Musical skills and stylistic development</b> (written exam, 3 hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Section A: Musical skills</li> <li>▶ Section B: Prescribed works</li> </ul> <p>Candidates answer <b>five</b> questions, of which at least <b>one</b> must be from section A and at least <b>one</b> must be from section B.</p>	<p><b>Musical skills and stylistic development</b> (written exam, 3 hours)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Section A: Musical skills</li> <li>▶ Section B: Prescribed works</li> </ul> <p>Candidates answer question 1 and <i>either</i> 2a, 2b or 2c in section A, and <i>either</i> i or ii in section B.</p>

## Age requirements

There are no minimum age requirements for Trinity's Music Theory diplomas.

## Prerequisites

Candidates must hold the following qualifications prior to entry:

AMusTCL	LMusTCL
No prerequisite	AMusTCL or Trinity Grade 8 Music Theory

## Alternative prerequisites and approved prior learning

Alternative qualifications and prior learning will be considered in place of the listed prerequisites.

Candidates who wish to offer alternative prerequisites must send evidence of their qualification in the form of a copy of their certificate or final transcript of studies to the music team at Trinity's central office at least six weeks before the closing date for entries at their local centre. The decision of the music team will be final in such cases.

Examples of alternative qualifications are as follows:

In place of:	Trinity will consider one of the following:
AMusTCL or Trinity Grade 8 Music Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Grade 8 Music Theory from any other Ofqual-regulated board (ABRSM or LCM) or from UNISA, AMEB or other regulated body</li> <li>▶ Any other qualification containing music theory and/or composition at an equivalent level</li> </ul>

Candidates wishing to offer approved prior learning should send suitable evidence to the music team in the same way as for alternative prerequisites. Trinity reserves the right to request further supporting evidence if necessary. Each case will be considered on its individual merits, having due regard to the academic standing and validity of the award or experience offered.

Proof that all requirements or prerequisites have been met, or have been deemed by Trinity to have been met, will be needed before a candidate is permitted to register for a qualification. Provisional and conditional entries cannot be accepted.

## Exam centres

Exams can be taken at one of Trinity's public exam centres, which are available throughout the world. Details of these are available at [trinitycollege.com/worldwide](http://trinitycollege.com/worldwide), and candidates should contact their local Trinity representative for more information.

## Exam dates

Theory diploma exams are held twice a year, normally in May and November. Exam dates and times are available at [trinitycollege.com/theory](http://trinitycollege.com/theory).

## Recognition

Trinity College London is an international awarding organisation regulated by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) in England, CCEA Regulation in Northern Ireland and by Qualifications Wales. Various arrangements are in place with governmental education authorities worldwide.

## Where the qualifications could lead

While for some learners music theory diplomas represent a personal goal or objective, they can also be used as a progression route towards:

- ▶ Higher level diplomas offered by Trinity and by other awarding organisations
- ▶ Postgraduate music courses at conservatoires and universities
- ▶ Employment opportunities in music and the creative arts

## Post-nominals and academic dress

Candidates who have passed a Trinity diploma are entitled to use the letters standing for that diploma after their name: AMusTCL or LMusTCL as appropriate.

Holders of Trinity diplomas are also entitled to wear academic dress. Associates are entitled to wear an academic gown, and Licentiates a gown and hood (purple edged with mauve).

## Regulations for written exams

- ▶ Candidates are advised to arrive at least 20 minutes before the start of the exam.
- ▶ Candidates are not allowed to bring books, papers or music (except for an unmarked copy of the set work(s) chosen for AMusTCL and LMusTCL) into the exam room. Bags must be left at the back of the exam room - they may not be taken to candidates' desks.
- ▶ Candidates must not communicate in any way with each other during the exam. A candidate may ask a question of the supervisor on exam procedure, but not on the content of a question paper. Both question and answer must be spoken aloud.
- ▶ Candidates who are late are permitted to enter the exam room and begin answering questions if they arrive up to 25 minutes after the starting time. Late arrivals will not be given any extra time in which to complete their answers.
- ▶ Candidates are not permitted to leave the exam room until 30 minutes after the starting time of the exam. If a candidate leaves the exam room, he/she will normally not be allowed to return.
- ▶ Neither rough work nor the question paper may be taken out of the exam room.
- ▶ If a candidate is absent, the representative will mark him/her 'Absent' on the attendance report form. Under no circumstances may another person be substituted for an absent candidate.
- ▶ Errors, such as an entry for the wrong grade or diploma, cannot be put right in the exam room. If any errors become apparent, the candidate should alert the supervisor.

# AMusTCL

The AMusTCL comprises one written exam of three hours' duration.

## Prerequisites

There is no prerequisite for this qualification, but it is assumed that, before embarking on study for this diploma, candidates will have gained a knowledge of diatonic and chromatic harmony, melodic writing, music history and analysis such as that required for successful completion of Trinity's Grade 8 Music Theory exam, alongside general listening and reading.

## Assessment objectives

Candidates should demonstrate:

- ▶ A broad-based body of knowledge in music theory and familiarity with relevant concepts and issues, including knowledge of how to analyse musical structures by studying a written score
- ▶ Knowledge of how to observe, interpret, manipulate and develop written music
- ▶ Specific knowledge of the set works studied, including an understanding of their underpinning theoretical systems and how this relates to written practice

## Exam requirements

Candidates are required to answer a total of **five** questions, including at least one question from section A and at least one question from section B.

### Section A: Musical skills

Section A tests knowledge of written musical skills including harmony, counterpoint, orchestration and melodic composition.

The periods and types of questions are:

#### 1. Baroque (before c.1760): Lutheran chorale

The opening phrase of a Lutheran chorale is given in full. Candidates are required to add alto, tenor and bass to the given soprano in phrases 2 and 3 then add a fourth phrase, ending in the tonic.

#### 2. Classical (c.1760-1810): Orchestration

A specially prepared reduction of a few bars from a classical work for orchestra is given. Candidates are required to orchestrate the music for a specified group of instruments, following the conventions of the period.

#### 3. Early Romantic (c.1810-1860): Pianoforte

Part of a piano work is given in full. Candidates are required to complete the remainder of the extract, some of which will be provided. In the last few bars an appropriate conclusion must be written.

#### 4. 20th century: Popular song

Part of a song is given in full. Thereafter the words, music of the vocal line and lettered chord symbols are provided and candidates are required to write the piano accompaniment. In the last few bars the song has to be concluded in full.

## 5. 20th century: Melodic composition

A choice of two openings is given. Candidates are required to write an original complete melody of between 24 and 30 bars' duration for a voice or single-line instrument of their choice. The music must not use the system of major/minor keys.

### Section B: Prescribed works

Section B tests knowledge of prescribed repertoire. For each work there are two options. Candidates may answer either by writing a single essay or by answering a series of sub-questions requiring answers ranging between a few words and a paragraph.

The current list of prescribed works is available at [trinitycollege.com/theory-diplomas](http://trinitycollege.com/theory-diplomas).

Candidates will need to take an unmarked score of each work prepared for section B into the exam room. If the copy does not have printed bar numbers candidates should insert them in advance, as questions will refer to places in the score by this method.

Begin numbering afresh at the start of each movement. Bar numbers are the only permitted markings that candidates may have in their scores.

### Mark scheme

Each question carries 20 marks. It is not necessary to pass all sections or any particular section in order to achieve a pass overall. The total mark for the exam corresponds to different attainment levels as follows:

Total mark	Attainment level
80-100	Distinction
60-79	Pass
0-59	Below Pass

Assessment criteria are available at [trinitycollege.com/theory-diplomas](http://trinitycollege.com/theory-diplomas).

### Support materials

A reading list, sample paper, specimen answers and guidance for preparing for section B are available free-of-charge at [trinitycollege.com/theory-diploma-resources](http://trinitycollege.com/theory-diploma-resources).

A study guide for section A is available to purchase from [trinitycollege.com/shop](http://trinitycollege.com/shop) or from your local music retailer.

Past papers are available to purchase from [trinitycollege.com/shop](http://trinitycollege.com/shop) or from your local music retailer.

# LMusTCL

The LMusTCL comprises one written exam of three hours' duration.

## Prerequisites

Candidates are required to have passed AMusTCL or Trinity Grade 8 Music Theory or an approved equivalent qualification (see [Prerequisites](#)) before entering for this diploma.

## Assessment objectives

Candidates should demonstrate:

- ▶ A broad-based body of knowledge in the conventions of music composition (from the Renaissance to the present day) and familiarity with relevant concepts and issues at a professional advanced level, communicating musical intentions clearly and economically
- ▶ The ability to engage effectively with a range of musical briefs by demonstrating the ability to complete them while displaying an understanding of the relevant stylistic and technical considerations
- ▶ Knowledge of how to develop materials into well-formed and coherent musical structures, employing relevant compositional techniques and methodologies, and composing idiomatically for instruments
- ▶ The ability to communicate answers clearly in continuous prose, using appropriate terminology
- ▶ The ability to orchestrate an extract of moderate length while displaying an understanding of the relevant technical considerations, including attention to instrumental balance, colour and effect
- ▶ A high level of creativity in analysing and developing music, including familiarity with concepts and procedures of the major 20th century analysts, applying these to previously unseen contexts as well as set works.

## Exam requirements

Candidates are required to complete both sections of the exam.

### Section A: Musical skills (50 marks)

Candidates are required to answer both questions. Each question carries 25 marks.

#### Question 1: String quartet

Candidates must answer this question by continuing the given opening in an appropriate style for about 20 bars. The opening will be taken from any movement from either a classical or early romantic string quartet and either the top or bottom part will be given, but the final bars will be left for the candidate to complete.

Candidates must answer *either 2a or 2b or 2c*.

#### *Either* Question 2a: Analysis

Five extracts of works are set. Candidates are required to suggest a possible period and date of composition for each extract (eg late romantic, 1890) and to support this by reference to the style, texture, harmony and any other relevant musical features.

#### *or* Question 2b: Theme and variations

Writing for piano, candidates are required to harmonise a given theme and then write two variations. The second variation is acceptable as a sketch.

### or Question 2c: Orchestration

Candidates are required to orchestrate a given extract presented in piano score of up to 20 bars in length. The response should be scored for full orchestra, which may include percussion at the candidate's discretion.

### Section B: Prescribed works (50 marks)

Candidates should select one genre from the options given for their chosen year of exam. Questions requiring essay-type answers will be set covering a) analytical and b) historical and contextual matters relating to various genres and the associated set works.

The current list of prescribed works is available at [trinitycollege.com/theory-diplomas](http://trinitycollege.com/theory-diplomas).

Candidates will need to take an unmarked score of each work prepared for section B into the exam room. If the copy does not have printed bar numbers candidates should insert them in advance as questions will refer to places in the score by this method. Begin numbering afresh at the start of each movement. Bar numbers are the only permitted markings that candidates may have in their scores.

### Mark scheme

50 marks are available for each section. It is not necessary to pass both sections in order to achieve a pass overall. The total mark for the exam corresponds to different attainment levels as follows:

Total mark	Attainment level
80-100	Distinction
60-79	Pass
0-59	Below Pass

Assessment criteria are available at [trinitycollege.com/theory-diplomas](http://trinitycollege.com/theory-diplomas).

### Support materials

A sample paper is available free-of-charge at [trinitycollege.com/theory-diploma-resources](http://trinitycollege.com/theory-diploma-resources).

Past papers are available to purchase from [trinitycollege.com/shop](http://trinitycollege.com/shop) or from your local music retailer.

# Policies

## Safeguarding and child protection

Trinity is fully committed to safeguarding and protecting the candidates that we work with. All posts, including examiners, are subject to a safer recruitment process, including the disclosure of criminal records and vetting checks. Our safeguarding policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and promote safeguarding and safer working practice across all parts of our work.

## Equal opportunities

Trinity is committed to providing equality of opportunity and treatment for all, and will not unlawfully or unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly on the basis of any characteristic.

## Reasonable adjustment

Trinity is committed to creating an inclusive environment where candidates with special needs are able to demonstrate their skills and feel welcomed. We aim to make our exams accessible to all. We treat each learner individually when considering how we can achieve this aim, recognising that requirements vary. Candidates can be assured that we do not compromise on the standard of marking or allow the quality of exams to be affected in any way.

All provision is tailored to the particular needs of each candidate. In order to be most beneficial, as full an explanation as possible of the required provision should be given. The need and request for provision should be made on the appropriate form available to download from [trinitycollege.com/music-csn](http://trinitycollege.com/music-csn). For enquiries please contact [music-csn@trinitycollege.com](mailto:music-csn@trinitycollege.com).

## Data protection

Trinity is registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office in the United Kingdom under data protection legislation. Please see [trinitycollege.com/data-protection](http://trinitycollege.com/data-protection) for the most up-to-date information about Trinity's data protection procedures and policies.

## Customer service

Trinity is committed to providing a high-quality service for all our users from initial enquiry through to certification. Full details of our customer service commitment can be found at [trinitycollege.com/customer-service](http://trinitycollege.com/customer-service).

## Exam infringements

All exam infringements will be referred directly to Trinity's central office by the examiner. Exam reports may be withheld until the outcome of any referral has been considered by Trinity. Depending on the severity of the infringement, marks may be deducted or, in extreme cases, the exam may be invalidated.

## Malpractice

Trinity requires its registered exam centres to report any suspected malpractice by candidates, teachers or examiners. In situations where a centre is found to be inadequate or to be guilty of malpractice, either in terms of provision of facilities or in administration, the exam centre may be required to suspend all of its activities relating to Trinity exams until the cause of the problem is identified and rectified, if appropriate. In extreme circumstances, the centre may have its registered status withdrawn.

In the very rare cases or circumstances where a centre or individual may be suspected of malpractice, Trinity will aim to minimise any inconvenience caused to any affected candidate, and would like to thank candidates, teachers and centre staff for their kind co-operation in reporting any suspected incident of cheating, thereby assisting Trinity in upholding the quality and integrity of its exam process.

## Results review and appeals procedure

Anyone who wishes to question their exam result should refer to [trinitycollege.com/results-enquiry](https://trinitycollege.com/results-enquiry) for full details of our results review and appeals process.

# Diploma resources

Join us online to access a range of resources to support teaching and learning at [trinitycollege.com/theory-diploma-resources](https://trinitycollege.com/theory-diploma-resources) including:

- ▶ Sample papers
- ▶ Specimen answers and comments
- ▶ Study guide
- ▶ Reading list

For further help please contact your local representative. Contact details are listed at [trinitycollege.com/worldwide](https://trinitycollege.com/worldwide).

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