

# London College of Music Examinations

Qualifications are awarded  
and certificated by  
Thames Valley University

# electric guitar

## Examination Grades

## Information Booklet

valid from 2006 until further notice



Examinations devised by

**Registry**  
**RGT**  
*Registry of Guitar Tutors*

RGT board of Patrons: Sir Paul McCartney,  
Hank Marvin, David Gilmour, Ronnie Wood,  
Mick Green, Carlos Bonell, Gordon Giltrap,  
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“RGT offers quality exams you can have confidence in”.

RGT electric guitar grade 1 to 8 exams are accredited by:



## London College of Music Examinations

Founded in 1887 as an establishment devoted to musical education, the London College of Music was incorporated as a public educational institution in 1939, and became part of Thames Valley University in 1991. Today, London College of Music Examinations enjoys an esteemed reputation as a major international music examination board.

London College of Music Examinations is a QCA accredited and DfES approved music examination board.

Grade one to eight examinations are accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and have been placed on the National Qualifications Framework. From Grade Six onwards, the examinations attract UCAS points towards university entrance. The qualifications are awarded and certificated by Thames Valley University.

### LCM Examinations

Walpole House, Thames Valley University, 18-22 Bond Street, London W5 5AA

Tel: 020 8231 2364 Fax: 020 8231 2433

## Registry of Guitar Tutors

The Registry of Guitar Tutors (RGT) was established in 1992 with the aims of improving standards in electric, bass and classical guitar education and helping the guitar teaching profession achieve recognition within the mainstream of music education by the establishment of an accredited range of comprehensive and well-structured teaching programmes.

RGT publishes a Directory of registered guitar and bass tutors, and organises regular music education conferences and training seminars.

In association with LCM Exams, RGT also has a full range of graded examinations in popular music theory, classical guitar and bass guitar.



Registry of Guitar Tutors  
Registry Mews, 11-13 Wilton Road  
Bexhill, Sussex TN40 1HY  
Tel: 01424 222222  
Email: [mail@RegistryOfGuitarTutors.com](mailto:mail@RegistryOfGuitarTutors.com)  
Web site: [www.RegistryOfGuitarTutors.com](http://www.RegistryOfGuitarTutors.com)

# Introduction To Electric Guitar Examinations

## Internationally Recognised Qualifications

These examinations offer a formal recognition of the specific talents of electric guitar players. The examinations have been developed by the Registry of Guitar Tutors, in association with London College of Music Examinations (one of the world's most established and respected music examination boards – established in 1887), and are awarded and certificated by Thames Valley University. These examinations are accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA), and have been placed on the National Qualifications Framework, so establishing a formal and recognised standard by which the skills and abilities of electric guitarists can be assessed. The examinations are endorsed by a range of eminent guitarists from the fields of rock, jazz, pop and blues, including Sir Paul McCartney, Hank Marvin, David Gilmour and Ronnie Wood.

## What happens during an examination?

The examiner will begin by asking you to play a selection of scales and (from Grade 3 onwards) arpeggios. He will then request a selection of chords. The examiner will then show you a chord chart and ask you to play through it using an appropriate rhythm. Next the examiner will show you another chord chart – but this time he will play through it once whilst you listen, then you should improvise some lead guitar over further playings. After this, the examiner will ask you a few spoken questions to test your knowledge of the instrument. The exam will conclude with the examiner testing your 'ear for music' by giving you a selection of aural assessments. At Grades 6-8, you will be asked to perform your specialism.

## Marking structure

The following table shows the maximum marks that can be awarded in each section of the examination.

|   |                    |                    |                    |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Section 1 – Scales (& arpeggios from Grade 3 onwards) |                    |                    |                    |
| Preliminary: 8.                                       | Grades 1 & 2: 10.  | Grades 3 & 4: 12.  | Grades 5 to 8: 10. |
| Section 2 – Chords                                    |                    |                    |                    |
| Preliminary: 12.                                      | Grades 1 & 2: 10.  | Grades 3 to 8: 8.  |                    |
| Section 3 – Rhythm playing                            |                    |                    |                    |
| Preliminary: 30.                                      | Grades 1 to 5: 30. | Grades 6 to 8: 25. |                    |
| Section 4 – Lead playing                              |                    |                    |                    |
| Preliminary: 30.                                      | Grades 1 to 5: 30. | Grades 6 to 8: 25. |                    |
| Section 5 – Spoken tests                              |                    |                    |                    |
| Preliminary: 10.                                      | Grades 1 to 4: 10. | Grades 5 to 8: 12. |                    |
| Section 6 – Aural assessment                          |                    |                    |                    |
| Preliminary: 10.                                      | Grades 1 to 8: 10. |                    |                    |
| Section 7 – Specialism (Grades 6 to 8 only)           |                    |                    |                    |
| Grades 6 to 8: 10                                     |                    |                    |                    |

0-54.5 = BELOW PASS, LOWER LEVEL. 55-64.5 = BELOW PASS, UPPER LEVEL  
65 or above = PASS. 75 or above = MERIT. 85 or above = DISTINCTION.

The requirements for each grade are shown on the following pages.

# Examination Content

## Section 1 – Scales and arpeggios

The examiner will request a selection from the lists below. **All should be played ascending and descending and from memory.**

*Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives full details of all required scales and arpeggios and includes helpful advice on the techniques involved in scale and arpeggio playing.*

### Preliminary Grade

The use of open strings is permitted at this grade.

- a). C Major scale – 1 octave.
- b). G Pentatonic Major scale – 1 octave.
- c). A Natural Minor scale – 1 octave.
- d). E Blues scale – 1 octave.

### Grade 1

- a). 'Open' scales of E Natural Minor, E Blues and G Pentatonic Major – 2 octaves.
- b). 'Fretted' scales of A Major and A Pentatonic Minor – 2 octaves.

### Grade 2

At this grade all scales should be played *without* the use of open strings.

- a). C Major and G Major – 2 octaves.
- b). B Pentatonic Minor – 2 octaves.
- c). A Natural Minor – 2 octaves.
- d). D Pentatonic Major – 2 octaves.
- e). A Blues and G Blues – 2 octaves.

### Grade 3

Scales and arpeggios may be selected by the examiner in ANY key. Candidates, particularly those using acoustic guitars, will not be asked to play in fingerboard positions that are inaccessible for their particular instrument.

- a). 2 octave Major scale.
- b). 2 octave Pentatonic Major scale.
- c). 2 octave Pentatonic Minor scale.
- d). 2 octave Blues scale.
- e). 2 octave Natural Minor scale.
- f). All Major and Minor 2 octave fretted arpeggios.

### Grade 4

Scales and arpeggios may be selected by the examiner in ANY key. Candidates, particularly those using acoustic guitars, will not be asked to play in fingerboard positions that are inaccessible for their particular instrument.

- a). 2 octave Major scales in 2 different fingerboard positions.
- b). 2 octave Pentatonic Major scales in 2 different fingerboard positions.
- c). 2 octave Blues scales in 2 different fingerboard positions.
- d). 2 octave Natural Minor scales in 2 different fingerboard positions.
- e). All Minor 7th, Dominant 7th and Major 7th 2 octave fretted arpeggios.

## Grade 5

Scales and arpeggios may be selected by the examiner in ANY key. Candidates, particularly those using acoustic guitars, will not be asked to play in fingerboard positions that are inaccessible for their particular instrument.

- a). 1 octave Pentatonic Minor scale in 5 different fingerboard positions.
- b). 1 octave Blues scale in 5 different fingerboard positions
- c). 1 octave Major scale in 3 different fingerboard positions.
- d). 2 octave Pentatonic Major scale in 3 different fingerboard positions.
- e). 2 octave Harmonic Minor scale.
- f). 1 octave Pentatonic Minor scale in 5ths.
- g). All Minor 7th, Major 7th, Dominant 7th, Suspended 4th, Major 6th, Minor 6th 1 octave arpeggios in 2 different fingerboard positions.
- h). All requirements from the previous grade.

## Grade 6

Scales and arpeggios may be selected by the examiner in ANY key. Candidates, particularly those using acoustic guitars, will not be asked to play in fingerboard positions that are inaccessible for their particular instrument.

- a). Natural Minor scale – 1 octave in 5 different fingerboard positions.
- b). Major scale – 1 octave in 5 different fingerboard positions.
- c). Dorian modal scale and Mixolydian modal scale – 2 octaves.
- d). Chromatic scale – 2 octaves.
- e). In 8ths: Major scale and Pentatonic Minor scale – 1 octave.
- f). In 3rds: Major scale – 1 octave.
- g). 1 octave arpeggios in two different fingerboard positions – Augmented 5th, Diminished 7th, Minor 9th, Dominant 9th, Major 9th.
- h). All requirements from the previous grade.

## Grade 7

Scales and arpeggios may be selected by the examiner in ANY key (except where indicated). Candidates will not be asked to play in inaccessible fingerboard positions.

- a). 1 octave Pentatonic Major scale in 5 different fingerboard positions.
- b). 2 octave Dorian modal scale and Mixolydian modal scale, both in 2 different fingerboard positions.
- c). 2 octave Phrygian modal scale and Lydian modal scale.
- d). In 8ths: 1 octave Natural Minor scale.
- e). 2 octave Whole-tone scale.
- f). 3 octave Pentatonic Minor scale and Blues scale in the keys of F to C inclusive.
- g). 1 octave Minor 7th and Dominant 7th arpeggios including  $\sharp$  or  $\flat$  5ths and/or  $\sharp$  or  $\flat$  9ths.
- h). All requirements from the previous grade.

## Grade 8

Scales and arpeggios may be selected by the examiner in ANY key (except where indicated). Candidates will not be asked to play in inaccessible fingerboard positions.

- a). 3 octave Chromatic scale F to C inclusive.
- b). 1 octave Dorian and Mixolydian modal scales, in 3 different fingerboard positions.
- c). 1 octave Phrygian and Lydian modal scales, in 2 different fingerboard positions.
- d). 3 octave Major scale in the keys of F $\sharp$  to C inclusive.
- e). 3 octave Natural Minor scale in the keys of F to C inclusive.
- f). 2 octave Locrian modal scale.
- g). 1 octave Dominant 11th and Dominant 13th arpeggios.
- h). All requirements from previous grades.

## Section 2 – Chords

The examiner will request a selection from the lists below. **All should be played from memory.**

*Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives full details of all the required chords and includes helpful advice on the techniques involved in chord playing.*

### Preliminary Grade

Non-barré (open position) chords are expected at this grade.

- a). Major chords – C, D, E, G.
- b). Minor chords – Am, Dm, Em.
- c). Dominant 7th chords – A7, B7, E7.

### Grade 1

Non-barré (open position) chords are expected at this grade.

- a). Major chords – A, C, D, E, G.
- b). Minor chords – Am, Dm, Em.
- c). Dominant 7th chords – A7, B7, D7, E7.
- d). Major 7th chords – AMaj7, CMaj7, DMaj7.

### Grade 2

- a). Non-barré chords – Am7, Bm, C7, Em7, FMaj7, G7, GMaj7.
- b). Chords using half-barré – Dm7, F, F#m.
- c). All requirements from the previous grade.

### Grade 3

Candidates should be able to play the following barré chords at any pitch (as selected by the examiner), in 2 different fingerboard positions.

- a). All Minor chords.
- b). All Major chords.

### Grade 4

Candidates should be able to play the following barré chords at any pitch (as selected by the examiner) in 2 different fingerboard positions.

- a). All Minor 7ths.
- b). All Dominant 7ths.
- c). All Major 7ths.
- d). All requirements from the previous grade.

### Grade 5

Candidates should be able to play the following chords at any pitch (as selected by the examiner), in 2 different fingerboard positions.

- a). All Major 6ths.
- b). All Minor 6ths.
- c). All Sus 4ths.
- d). All requirements from the previous grade.

## Grade 6

Candidates should be able to play the following chords at any pitch (as selected by the examiner), in 2 different fingerboard positions.

- a). All Major 9ths, Minor 9ths and Dominant 9ths.
- b). All Diminished 7ths and Augmented 5th chords.
- c). All requirements from the previous grade.

## Grade 7

- a). All Major and Minor chords using 'non-root' or altered bass notes.
- b). All Minor 7th and Dominant 7th chords using altered 5ths and/or altered 9ths.
- c). All requirements from the previous grade.

## Grade 8

- a). All Dominant 11th and Dominant 13th chords in 2 different fingerboard positions.
- b). All Major chords and Dominant 7th chords in 5 different fingerboard positions.
- c). All requirements from previous grades.

# Section 3 – Rhythm Playing

## All Grades

- a). Candidates will be given a chord progression to play containing chords selected from Section 2 above. Time signature, tempo, (and from Grade 1 onwards) dynamics and other indications may be marked, however the style of the performance will be left to the candidate's initiative.
- b). At the examiner's discretion, candidates may be given an additional chord progression to play (as 3a above).

*Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives full details and examples of the all requirements for the rhythm playing section. In addition, a series of books entitled 'Rhythm Guitar Playing' has been produced by the Registry specifically to complement this section of the examination.*

# Section 4 – Lead Playing

## All Grades

- a). The examiner will play a chord progression similar to that presented in Section 3 above. The candidate will be required to improvise over this, demonstrating the practical application of scales (and, where appropriate, arpeggios) from Section 1 above.
- b). At the examiner's discretion, a further performance (as 4a above) but with an alternative progression may be required.

*Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives full details and examples of the requirements for the lead playing section. In addition, a series of 'Improvising Lead Guitar' books with CD backing tracks has been produced by the Registry specifically to complement this section of the examination.*

## Section 5 – Spoken Tests

Candidates may be asked questions relating to any of the topics listed below. Knowledge of notes on the fingerboard (taken from the scales and arpeggios listed in the relevant grade of Section 1) is a core requirement – particularly at earlier grades.

### Preliminary Grade

- a). Notes on the fingerboard (selected from the scales set in Section 1).
- b). Basic anatomy of the guitar.

### Grade 1

- a). Notes on the fingerboard (selected from the scales set in Section 1).
- b). Anatomy, mechanism and basic techniques of the instrument.

### Grade 2

As for the previous grade, but in greater range and detail.

### Grade 3

- a). Notes on the fingerboard up to the 12th fret, including knowledge of all major and minor arpeggios.
- b). Knowledge of the instrument, including anatomy, tone production, methods of achieving clarity and fluency.

### Grade 4

- a). Notes on the fingerboard up to the 15th fret, including knowledge of all the scales and arpeggios set in Section 1.
- b). Knowledge of the instrument as for the previous grade, but in greater detail and extended to include methods of guitar tuning and string replacement.

### Grade 5

- a). Naming intervals from major scales.
- b). Identifying any note on the fingerboard.
- c). Application of scales and arpeggios, including knowledge of which chords occur in each key.
- d). Knowledge of the instrument as for the previous grade, but in greater depth and detail.

### Grade 6

As for the previous grade, but in greater range and depth and extended to include: application of extended chords.

### Grade 7

As for the previous grade, but in greater depth and detail and extended to include: an in-depth knowledge of chord relationships and keys; application of altered chords; chromatic intervals.

### Grade 8

As for the previous grade, but in greater depth and range and extended to include: chord construction; transposition; application of extended chords.

*Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives full details and examples of the spoken tests.*

## Section 6 – Aural Assessment

Candidates' aural abilities will be assessed via tests appropriate to the grade which may include some of the following:

- a). Repetition of rhythms.
- b). Repetition of melodic phrases.
- c). Keeping time, and (from Grade 4 onwards) recognition of time signature.
- d). Pitch tests (including recognition of intervals and scale types).
- e). Harmony tests, involving recognition of chord types or (from Grade 7 onwards) cadences.

*Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives full details and examples of the aural assessment tests.*

## Section 7 – Specialism (only for Grades 6 to 8)

Candidates should select and demonstrate skill in one of the following topics. At Grade 8, if selecting a, b or c, candidates should also be prepared to answer questions about the musical structure and technical content.

- a). Slide/Bottleneck playing.
- b). Finger-tapping.
- c). Solo fingerstyle or solo flatpicking.
- d). Sight-reading from standard notation or from tablature.
- e). Rhythm guitar playing.
- f). Improvisation.

*Candidates should consult the relevant grade examination handbook, which gives more information regarding this section of the examination.*

### DIPLOMA SYLLABUS

Post grade 8 players should contact the RGT  
for more information about electric guitar  
Diploma examinations.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **How Do I Enter For An Examination?**

You should contact the RGT office or website to obtain a current examination fee list, then you should use the official entry form included at the back of the relevant grade handbook. Photocopies of the entry form will NOT be accepted. If you have lessons, your tutor may be able to administer your exam entry on your behalf.

### **How Do I Obtain An Entry Form**

Examination entries for electric guitar are accepted only on official RGT entry forms – standard LCM entry forms are NOT valid for electric guitar. A specially stamped examination entry form for each appropriate grade is supplied with each Examination Handbook. In order to ensure that, before entering the examination, all candidates are fully conversant with the exact requirements of these examinations the acquisition of an Examination Handbook is the only method of obtaining an individual examination entry form. Handbooks can be obtained from the RGT or any good music/book store.

A special group entry form is available for UK registered schools and colleges only.

### **Can I Use An Acoustic Guitar For The Examination?**

Yes. You may play electric or acoustic guitar. Amplification is provided for electric guitar players.

### **Can I Enter Straight For Grade 8?**

Yes. Candidates may enter for any examination without having taken any preceding examination. In other words, you *don't* need to have taken Grade 1 to enter for Grade 2. However, it is recommended that you work through all the handbooks to ensure that you develop your playing in a structured and comprehensive way.

### **Can I Enter More Than One Examination At The Same Session?**

Yes. For example, you could take Grade 2 followed by Grade 3 on the same day.

### **Do I Need To Have Lessons With An RGT Tutor Before I Can Enter An Examination?**

No, you can enter whether you have a tutor or not – however tuition from an experienced tutor would undoubtedly prove helpful in preparing for an examination.

### **Do I Have To Use The Fingering Given In The Examination Handbooks?**

No. The Handbooks give fingering for general guidance only. Alternative systematic and effective fingerings will also be acceptable.

### **What Do I Get When I Pass?**

If you obtain the 65% pass mark you will be awarded an official Thames Valley University / London College of Music Examinations Certificate for the relevant grade. This holds the same validity, as those issued for classical music examinations. If you achieve 75% you will be awarded a Merit certificate. If you obtain 85% you will be awarded a Distinction certificate.

### **When Do Examinations Take Place?**

In the UK examinations are held 3 times a year. The entry deadlines are: 1st February for the March/April exams; 1st May for the June/July exams; 1st October for the November/December exams.

### **Do I Have To Live In The UK?**

No. Examinations take place in many countries across the world. Special arrangements apply to overseas examinations, and candidates should contact the LCM Exams head office (or the local representative) prior to submitting an examination entry.

### **Where Are Examinations Held?**

Examinations are held in a wide variety of venues. These may include rooms in schools, colleges, teachers' houses, examiners' houses, rehearsal studios, guitar centres, arts centres and community halls.

### **Will I Have To Travel Far?**

Not normally. There are several hundred examination centres spread widely across the UK. You will be assigned to the centre operating nearest to your home address, usually within one hour travelling distance. Whether a centre is operating in a particular session depends entirely upon the numbers of entrants from that area.

### **When The Exam Is Finished Will The Examiner Tell Me If I've Passed?**

No. After the examination the examiner will write a full examination report for you. The report will highlight your strengths and weaknesses, and list the marks awarded for each section. This will normally be sent to you within 8 weeks. If you have passed, the certificate will follow within 16 weeks. If you have been entered by your tutor, or if you have given the name of your tutor on your entry form, then all documentation will be sent direct to your tutor.

It is recommended that candidates read the full Examination Syllabus. This can be obtained free of charge by contacting London College of Music Examinations on 020 8231 2364, or it can be downloaded from [www.RegistryOfGuitarTutors.com](http://www.RegistryOfGuitarTutors.com).

## SUPPLEMENTARY STUDY AIDS

The educational materials below have been designed especially to provide useful additional study aids for those considering taking an electric guitar grade examination.

# Improvising Lead Guitar

by Tony Skinner – Principal RGT/LCM Guitar Examiner

Jamming along with a band is the ultimate way of improving your lead guitar solos.

The 10 track full-band backing CD that accompanies each book enables you to do just that! On the CD you'll hear a full band line-up, but without the lead guitar – YOU will be the lead guitarist.

**Experience the thrill of creating your own guitar solos and playing along with your own backing band.**

Learn:

- how to develop your improvisation skills
- how to invent stunning solos
- how to use scales, modes and arpeggios
- how to use string bends and other specialist techniques



Everything is explained in a clear and straightforward way – with no compulsion to read traditional musical notation.

**These books and CDs have been designed to reflect the exact requirements of the Lead Guitar sections of the RGT electric guitar examinations.**

# Rhythm Guitar Playing

by Chaz Hart LRAM - Senior RGT/LCM Examiner

Designed especially to accompany the Rhythm Guitar Playing section of the RGT electric guitar examinations, the books serve as an invaluable study aid in preparing for the exams.

The series is in 3 volumes covering: Preliminary Grade to Grade 2; Grades 3 to 5; and Grades 6 to 8. Each book includes 30 examples of the type of chord charts that will appear in the examinations, as well as providing tips and advice on how to gain those elusive extra marks.



The books are thoroughly recommended for anyone considering taking an examination, but will also prove helpful to all guitar players who want to improve their rhythm playing in a structured and progressive way.

To order any of these books, or for a list of stockists, call **01424 222222**  
You can buy on-line at [www.BooksForGuitar.com](http://www.BooksForGuitar.com)



# electric guitar examination handbooks

## GET QUALIFIED

Each book covers all the material needed for each electric guitar examination, and includes essential advice about preparing for the examination, enabling you to gain an internationally recognised qualification.

These books form a series that is widely recognised as the most comprehensive method of studying the electric guitar. The series provides an unrivalled source of theoretical knowledge and practical insight into electric guitar.

## IMPROVE YOUR PLAYING

Even if you do not intend to take an examination, each book will help you to:

- develop *all aspects* of your guitar playing
- increase your *knowledge* of specialist electric guitar techniques
- understand the *music theory* that relates to electric guitar playing
- achieve your *full potential* as a guitarist

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