



Ukulele Ensemble

Graded Exams & Performance Awards

Exam Information Booklet

Valid from September 2015 until further notice

Exams are run in partnership with

London College of Music Exams

Qualifications are accredited and certificated by the University of West London



UNIVERSITY OF
WEST LONDON

LONDON COLLEGE OF MUSIC EXAMINATIONS

Ensemble size

The minimum number of ukulele players that can enter together for an ensemble exam is two. There is no maximum number.

Exam types and format

Two types of exam are available for ukulele ensembles: 'Grade Exams' and 'Performance Awards'.

- **Grade Exams** are available only for ensembles that attend an exam venue and perform their pieces in front of an examiner.
- **Performance Awards** are available only for ukulele ensembles who submit an audio or video recording of their performance, rather than attending an exam venue.

The format of the RGT Ukulele Ensemble Grade Exams and Ensemble Performance Awards is identical. Performance Awards offer greater flexibility as entries can be submitted at any time throughout the year without the need to attend an exam venue; exam entry fees are also substantially lower for Ensemble Performance Awards. Full details of the entry fees for both the Grade Exams and the Performance Awards are available at www.RGT.org.

The Ensemble exams contain the following components:

- Component 1: Rhythm Playing
- Component 2: Prepared Accompaniment
- Component 3: Free Choice Performance

Range of Exams

Ensemble exams are offered for Grade Exams and Performance Awards at the following levels:

Grades	Performance Awards
Initial Stage	Initial Level
Preliminary Grade	Preliminary Level
Grade 1	Level 1
Grade 2	Level 2
Grade 3	Level 3
Grade 4	Level 4

Unless otherwise stated, throughout the text below, all references to the term 'grade' also apply to the term 'level' for Performance Awards.

Assessment Focus

As well as accuracy, fluency, clarity, musical interpretation and style, assessment will also focus on the ability of the members of the ensemble to play in time together and sympathetically with each other throughout the performances. There should be clear evidence of a co-ordinated participation throughout the ensemble, including an awareness of other members demonstrated by a clear sense of musical communication within the ensemble. The standard of the ensemble's performance as a whole will be assessed according to the grade being examined, regardless of the standard, age or status of individual members of the group.

Exam components

Component 1: Rhythm Playing

Ensembles should select and perform **ONE** rhythm playing piece from the two options listed below.

Option 1: Rhythm Study from the RGT Grade Handbook

The 'Rhythm Study' chapter of each RGT Ukulele Playing grade handbook provides a choice of four chord charts with a one-bar notated rhythm pattern. Ensembles selecting this option should jointly choose and play ONE of these charts together, using the notated rhythm pattern provided. The chord chart should be played through twice without stopping. From Grade One onwards, some rhythmic variation of the notated rhythm pattern of the ensemble's own choosing is expected during the second play through. Each exam handbook contains fretboxes showing the suggested fingering for all the required chords for the grade. The range of chords and time signatures that will occur at each grade is listed below.

Initial Stage

- C, F, G, Am
- $\frac{4}{4}$ only

Preliminary Grade

- As previous grade plus Dm, C7, G7
- $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$

Grade 1

- As previous grades plus A, D, Gm, A7, E7
- $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$

Grade 2

- As previous grades plus Bb, Em, F#m, D7, Cmaj7, Gm7
- $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$

Grade 3

- As previous grades plus Bm, Fm, Dmaj7, Gmaj7, B7, Em7, Edim7
- $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$

Grade 4

- At this level full/partial barre chords, higher position chords, chords in a range of voicings and a variety of other chord types are included. Please refer to the Grade 4 handbook for full details and fretboxes.
- $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$

- OR -

Option 2: Free Choice Rhythm Playing

If selecting this option, ensembles can pick a piece of their own choice to perform. The piece can be from any style of music and the performance should be of the rhythm playing that accompanies the piece. Although it is not compulsory, the ensemble performance for this option can include a melody, sung or played live (on any instrument), but only the ukulele rhythm playing, and its empathy with any melody, will be assessed.

When selecting a free choice piece, it is the candidates' responsibility to ensure that they are choosing a piece that is of at least a similar technical standard and chordal range to

the rhythm studies in the appropriate grade handbook. RGT will not advise on the suitability of free choice pieces as part of the assessment process here includes ensemble candidates' ability to research and select an appropriate piece to perform. Any free choice piece performed should be of a maximum duration of 3 minutes.

Component 2: Prepared Accompaniment

Ensembles should select and perform **ONE** piece from the two options listed below.

Option 1: Prepared Accompaniment from the RGT Grade Handbook

The 'Prepared Accompaniment' chapter of each RGT Ukulele Playing grade handbook contains three tunes with chord charts. Ensembles should select ONE of these tunes and play a suitable chordal accompaniment. The selected tune can be played via the CD provided with the handbook or, if preferred, a member of the ensemble can play the tune (although only the accompaniment will be assessed).

The style of accompaniment is left to the ensemble's discretion.

Up to Grade 3 each tune is 8 bars long, at Grade 4 the tunes are either 8 bars or 12 bars long. The tune will be played three times on the CD handbook recording, although only the ensemble's last two playings of the chord chart will be assessed. If the melody is played live by a member of the ensemble it should also be played three times to match the format of the CD handbook recording.

The range of chords matches those in the Rhythm Studies presented up to Grade 3. At Grade 4 some different chords and chord voicings are introduced, fretboxes for all of these are given in the handbook. The number of chords that appear, and the rhythmic complexity of the tunes, increases as the grades progress. The time signatures for each grade are listed below.

Initial Stage and Preliminary Grade: $\frac{4}{4}$ only.

Grades 1 and 2: $\frac{3}{4}$ and $\frac{4}{4}$.

Grade 3 and 4: $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{6}{8}$.

- OR -

Option 2: Prepared Accompaniment of a Free Choice Tune

Ensemble candidates can select a tune of their own choice to accompany. The tune can be from any musical style. The ensemble can perform either a strummed or fingerstyle accompaniment, or a combination of both within the ensemble. The tune that is being accompanied can be either sung or played live (on any instrument), but only the ukulele accompaniment playing, and its empathy with any melody, will be assessed.

When selecting a free choice tune, the ensemble should ensure that the accompaniment performance is of at least a similar range and standard to the prepared accompaniment chord charts presented in the appropriate grade handbook. RGT will not advise on the suitability of free choice tunes as part of the assessment process here includes the ensemble's ability to research and select an appropriate tune to perform. The accompaniment to any free choice tune should last a maximum of 3 minutes.

Component 3: Free Choice Performance

Initial Stage, Preliminary Grade and Grade One ensembles should select and perform **ONE** piece from the options listed below. The maximum duration of any free choice piece should be 3 minutes.

Grades Two, Three and Four ensembles should select and perform **TWO** pieces chosen from any mix of the options listed below, including choosing both pieces from the same option if preferred. The total combined duration of both pieces should be 7 minutes.

OPTION 1: Free Choice Piece. Ensembles can select a piece of their own choice to perform. The piece can be in the format of accompaniment to a melody (the accompaniment can be either strummed or fingerstyle, or a combination of both within the ensemble) OR a combination of rhythm playing and melody, with the melody being played on ukulele by at least one member of the ensemble.

The piece can be from any musical style, but the ensemble should ensure that the chosen piece is of at least a similar technical standard and range to the rhythm studies and/or melodies presented in the appropriate grade handbook. RGT will not advise on the suitability of free choice pieces as part of the assessment process here includes the ensemble's ability to research and select an appropriate piece to perform.

- OR -

OPTION 2: Another Rhythm Playing Piece. Ensembles can select and perform another, different, Rhythm Playing piece from either option outlined above in Component 1 (Rhythm Playing).

- OR -

OPTION 3: Another Prepared Accompaniment. Ensembles can select and perform another, different, prepared accompaniment from either option outlined above in Component 2 (Prepared Accompaniment).

Marking scheme

- Component 1 - Rhythm Playing: Maximum 30%
- Component 2 - Prepared Accompaniment: Maximum 30%
- Component 3 - Free Choice Piece(s): Maximum 40%

85-100% = Distinction

75-84.5% = Merit

65-74.5% = Pass

55-64.5% = Below Pass Upper Level

0-54.5% = Below Pass Lower Level

A University of West London awarded London College of Music Exams ensemble certificate will be issued to each ensemble achieving the 65% pass mark or above and, in addition, similar individual certificates will be issued for each candidate within the successful ensemble.

Entry Procedure

Ensemble entry forms are available from www.RGT.org or by calling the RGT office on 01424 22222. Entry forms should be submitted by post (or scanned and emailed) to RGT. The name of the ensemble should be provided, as well as the name of each candidate in the ensemble.

Some RGT examination centres are unsuitable for large ensembles. Candidates must check with RGT in advance of entry to ensure the selection of an appropriate venue. The provision of all necessary equipment for ensemble performances, including music stands, instruments, any amplification requirements etc, is the responsibility of the candidates.

Additional Information

There are no pre-requisite entry requirements for ukulele ensemble exams; candidates may enter for any level without having taken previous examinations.

There is no requirement for any performances to be from memory.

For ensembles who do not wish to select their own 'free choice' material, all the necessary performance repertoire, for each of the three components, required to take an ensemble exams is available in the appropriate RGT Ukulele Playing Grade handbook. All ensemble candidates are advised to refer to the appropriate handbook to ensure they are fully conversant with the content and requirements for their Ensemble exam. Exam Handbooks for each grade are available from www.BooksForGuitar.com or call 01424 222222 to find your nearest stockist.

For Ensemble Grade Exams, one person within the ensemble must be designated to be in charge of the ensemble. This person should be the sole communicator with the examiner and should also be responsible for ensuring that the ensemble are all in position and ready to perform, and that the exam room is set up correctly in time for the scheduled exam start time.

Exam Durations

Exam durations for Ensemble Grade Exams are as follows:

Initial Stage – 20 minutes

Preliminary Grade – 20 minutes

Grade One – 20 minutes

Grade Two – 25 minutes

Grade Three – 25 minutes

Grade Four – 25 minutes

These timings include some allowance for entrance of candidates, adjustments of positioning, departure of candidates from the exam room etc. Where additional setting up time may be required (for instance for larger ensembles) candidates should liaise with RGT when submitting the exam entry.

Extra Information for Filmed Performance Awards

The equipment used to film the performance need not be of a professional quality, a standard domestic-quality camcorder or similar will normally suffice, providing it is of sufficient quality that the examiner will be able to see and hear all members of the ensemble clearly enough to enable a reliable assessment to be made. The quality of the filming itself, or any visual effects, will not be part of the assessment.

Each piece should be filmed without edits.

Because videoing a performance will allow candidates the opportunity to film several attempts at performing a piece and then submitting their best take, the performance standard expected for a Filmed Performance Award is slightly higher than that expected for the 'live' Ensemble Grade Exam of the same Level.

A single disc containing all the performances, in a format that will play on a standard DVD player, should be submitted by post, together with the entry form. The ensemble's name should be clearly written on the disc. A list of the titles of all the pieces, in the order they are performed on the disc, should be attached to the entry form.

The entry form includes a declaration to confirm that the performances on the video were given by the candidates; an adult witness needs to countersign the entry form.

Extra Information for Recorded Performance Awards

The equipment used to record the performances need not be of a 'studio' quality, however it should be of sufficient quality that the examiner will be able to hear all aspects of the ensemble's performance clearly enough to enable a reliable assessment to be made.

The fidelity of the recording itself will not be part of the assessment. Edits, overdubs and drop-ins are all part of the armory of techniques used by recording musicians and so these are permitted. However, where these are used the results should be seamless; where they are poorly executed and sound obvious, the marking may be adversely affected.

Because recording the performances may allow candidates the opportunity to use edits and overdubs, and to have numerous attempts at performing a piece and then submitting their best take, the performance standard expected for a Recorded Performance Award is significantly higher than that expected for the 'live' Ensemble Grade Exam of the same Level.

A single CD disc containing all the performances should be submitted by post, together with the entry form. The ensemble's name should be clearly written on the disc. A list of the titles of all the pieces, in the order they are performed on the disc, should be attached to the entry form.

The entry form includes a declaration to confirm that the performances on the recording were given by the candidates; an adult witness needs to countersign the entry form.

For more information about ukulele exams contact:

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