



**A guide to the *Viva Voce*
requirements of ABRSM's
Diploma Exams**

Contents

General Information on the <i>Viva Voce</i>	3-4
The Purpose of the <i>Viva Voce</i>	3
The Conduct of the <i>Viva Voce</i>	3
How the <i>Viva Voce</i> affects the overall mark	4
<i>Viva Voce</i>: Teaching Diplomas	5-8
Topics that the <i>Viva Voce</i> will cover	5-6
How the <i>Viva Voce</i> is marked	7-8

The *Viva Voce* - Guidance and Information for Diploma candidates

The Purpose of the *Viva Voce*

The *Viva Voce* is an important mode of assessment, providing an opportunity for candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, approach and understandings with the examiners. In all cases it is used to reassure examiners that the candidate is the author of all submissions made for the Diploma and examiners are asked to comment specifically on this point in their reports. It is to be hoped that examiners will be able to reach such a judgement in the normal course of events. However, if examiners perceive a significant discrepancy between the level of authority communicated by the submission and the candidate's performance in the *Viva Voce* (after allowing for the fact that candidates may be nervous, and that some candidates are better at writing than they are at spoken discourse), then it may be necessary to probe deeper. Candidates who have had improper levels of assistance with their submission will usually be unable to express a clear view on the main sources used in their investigation, or to expand on key issues contained in the work they have submitted.

In the Teaching line the Teaching Skills *Viva Voce* is the main part of the exam and includes performances and demonstration of teaching techniques. Your own individual approach to teaching will be observed and discussed.

The Conduct of the *Viva Voce*

Viva Voce exams vary in duration, content and style, according to the subject under examination. The following general guidelines apply to all subject-lines.

- (i) The tone and manner of *Viva Voce* exams is as relaxed as possible and every effort is made to put candidates at ease. The opening questions are informal, progressing to topics on which candidates are likely to be knowledgeable, then on to more challenging questions.
- (ii) All questions are clearly and directly expressed and phrased so that they can elicit genuine answers. Some will be open-ended, others will be more direct.
- (iii) Candidates are not penalized if they ask for clarification of a question.
- (iv) Examiners are not concerned by short periods of silence if candidates are considering their answers.
- (v) Candidates may opt not to answer a question because, for example, they feel they might expose an area of fundamental ignorance. If this happens, examiners will assist the candidate with a number of helpful prompts. Examiners will form a judgement as to whether a candidate's incapacity to offer an answer to a particular question or series of questions is a significant factor in the assessment of the candidate's overall performance in the exam.
- (vi) Examiners may invite candidates to expand upon or clarify a particular point raised. Demonstrations can take place at any point in the exam. Examiners will invite candidates to indicate when they would like to perform, and demonstrations can be given at any time upon the candidate's initiative or the examiner's request. It is perfectly permissible for candidates to demonstrate a particular feature by performing it rather than describing it verbally, if this is appropriate.
- (vii) At the end of the exam candidates are given time to say something (if they so wish) which emphasizes the value of their work.

How the *Viva Voce* affects the overall mark

Programme Notes, Written Submissions, Case Studies and Videos of Teaching are drawn into *Viva Voce* discussions. With the exception of Programme Notes (which are reviewed during the exam) these requirements are assessed before the exam and given a guideline mark according to ABRSM's criteria.

The mark given to Section 2.1 Written Submissions for Teachers may be either confirmed or reduced, depending on the supporting commentary given by the candidate during *Viva Voce*.

In the case of FRSM Case Studies and Video, the guideline mark contributes to the overall *Viva Voce* mark. Because in these cases the *Viva Voce* covers others areas in addition to these submissions, the guideline mark may be adjusted or confirmed on the basis of the candidates responses in the *Viva Voce*.

Viva Voce: Teaching Diplomas

The ability to communicate both verbally and through musical demonstration is central to the art of instrumental teaching. For this reason it is the main mode of assessment in the Teaching Diplomas. This type of *Viva Voce* is designed to reflect your daily experience as a teacher. The specialist examiner will administer the exam. The aim is to explore your ability to teach up to and including the level specified in the Syllabus. At DipABRSM level, for example, you are required to explore repertoire up to and including Grade 6 standard and you should be prepared to discuss openly and to answer questions relating to the teaching of that repertoire.

The examiners will invite you to perform and demonstrate examples from the music you have brought with you. They may also select other items from the Syllabus in order to amplify discussion and enable you to reinforce answers to questions. Be prepared to act as teacher to one of the examiners. The *Viva Voce* also draws on your Written Submission and, at LRSM level, the Case Study Portfolio and Video of Teaching Practice. Examiners will ask open-ended and progressively more probing questions at each level of Diploma. You will therefore have the opportunity to talk about teaching strategies and learning styles. Examiners will be looking for a practical and personal approach to teaching.

Topics that the *Viva Voce* will cover

DipABRSM

Teaching Skills *Viva Voce*, (c.40 minutes) with demonstrations of teaching approaches, making use of current graded repertoire up to and including ABRSM Grade 6. Candidates will be expected to prepare to perform three pieces, one from each of the current ABRSM Grade 6 lists in the instrument taught. They will be asked to perform extracts from these, as selected by the examiner, and to discuss teaching and learning issues as they arise. The *Viva Voce* may cover issues relating to the teaching of pupils up to and including Grade 6 and also include matters arising from the Written Submission.

At DipABRSM level you may be asked questions

- relating to the repertoire chosen for the teaching demonstration.
- arising from the demonstration.
- about your strategies, if you are not a keyboard, harp or guitar teacher, for making your pupils familiar with the full texture of the accompaniments to their pieces.
- relating to the Written Submission and the sources you have used.
- that prompt you to expand on points of detail in the submission or which seek clarification or expansion of points made.

LRSM

Teaching Skills *Viva Voce*, (c. 50 minutes) with demonstrations of teaching approaches, making use of current graded repertoire up to and including ABRSM Grade 8. Candidates will be expected to be prepared to perform a piece from each of the current ABRSM Grade 8 lists in the instrument taught, as selected by the examiner, and discuss teaching and learning issues as they arise. The *Viva Voce* may cover issues relating to the teaching of pupils up to and including Grade 8 level and also include matters arising from the Written Submission, Case Study Portfolio and Video of Teaching Practice.

Additionally, at LRSM level there may be questions:

- arising from the video submission.
- relating to the case studies in terms of their content and how the experience of teaching the pupils featured has informed the approach taken in the demonstration.
- designed to link the case studies, video submission, Written Submission and demonstration.

FRSM

Teaching Skills *Viva Voce*, (c. 60 minutes) with demonstrations of teaching approaches, making use of current ABRSM graded repertoire up to and including DipABRSM. Candidates will be expected to prepare to perform three pieces from the DipABRSM list in the instrument taught. One of these must be taken from the list below and performed complete, normally at the beginning of the examination, whilst the other two will be chosen by the candidate from the entire DipABRSM list and should provide stylistic contrast. DipABRSM performance criteria will be applied both to the complete performance and the performance of extracts from the other two pieces selected by the examiners. Candidates must provide their own accompanists. The *Viva Voce* may cover issues relating to the teaching of pupils up to and including Grade 6 and also include matters arising from the Written Submission.

Additionally, at FRSM level there may be questions

- on the relationship of your written submission to standard texts in that area.
- that prompt you to expand on points of detail in the submission which are particularly interesting or original.

How the *Viva Voce* is marked

	DipABRSM	LRSM	FRSM
<p>42-60 Distinction Excellent. Candidate has demonstrated exemplary standards in most areas examined.</p>	<p>Outstanding communication skills and assured demonstration of the principles of instrumental/vocal teaching. Commanding knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to teach that repertoire. An excellent grasp of the issues raised in the Written Submission. An excellent knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>	<p>Outstanding communication skills and authoritative demonstration of teaching concepts, techniques and processes. Commanding knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to perform and teach that repertoire. An excellent grasp of the issues raised in the Written Submission. An excellent knowledge of professional values and practice. Discussion of Case Study Portfolio and Video of Teaching Practice confirm exceptional qualities as a teacher.</p>	<p>Outstanding communication skills and a consummate demonstration of concepts, techniques and processes in music education. An expert knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to teach that repertoire. Mastery of the issues raised in the Written Submission. An excellent knowledge of professional values and practice. Performance skills at DipABRSM level.</p>
<p>36-41 A high pass Very good. Candidate has demonstrated commendable standards in most areas examined and may have shown excellence in some.</p>	<p>Impressive and persuasive communication skills. A thoroughly convincing demonstration of the principles of instrumental/vocal teaching. A comprehensive knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to perform and teach that repertoire. A firm grasp of the issues raised in the Written Submission. A very good knowledge of professional values and practice.</p>	<p>Impressive and persuasive communication skills and authoritative demonstration of teaching concepts, techniques and processes. A comprehensive knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to perform and teach that repertoire. A firm grasp of the issues raised in the Written Submission. A very good knowledge of professional values and practice. Discussion of Case Study Portfolio and Video of Teaching Practice confirm excellent qualities as a teacher.</p>	<p>24-41 Pass <i>See below</i></p>
<p>30-35 A clear pass Good. Candidate has demonstrated a good overall</p>	<p>Good communication skills. A convincing demonstration of the principles of instrumental/vocal teaching. A thorough</p>	<p>Good communication skills. A thoroughly convincing demonstration of teaching concepts, techniques and processes. A thorough working</p>	<p>24-41 Pass Impressive and persuasive communication skills. An authoritative demonstration of concepts, techniques and processes in music education. A commanding knowledge of the</p>

standard in most areas examined.	working knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to perform and teach that repertoire. A broad grasp of the issues raised in the Written Submission. A good knowledge of professional values and practice.	knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to perform and teach that repertoire. A broad grasp of the issues raised in the written submission. A good knowledge of professional values and practice. Discussion of Case Study Portfolio and Video of Teaching Practice confirm good qualities as a teacher.	instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to perform and teach that repertoire. Impressive understanding of the issues raised in the Written Submission. A very good knowledge of professional values and practice. Performance skills at DipABRSM level.
24-29 Pass Candidate has shown competence in most areas examined and has satisfied the requirements for the award.	Competent communication skills. A broadly convincing demonstration of the principles of instrumental/vocal teaching. A working knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to perform and teach that repertoire. A grasp of the issues raised in the Written Submission. A satisfactory knowledge of professional values and practice.	Competent communication skills. A convincing demonstration of teaching concepts, techniques and processes. A sound working knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to perform and teach that repertoire. A grasp of the issues raised in the Written Submission. A satisfactory knowledge of professional values and practice. Discussion of Case Study Portfolio and Video of Teaching Practice confirm competence as a teacher.	
0-23 Fail Candidate has not satisfied the basic requirements for the award.	Weak communication skills. Little understanding of the principles of instrumental/vocal teaching. Patchy knowledge of the instrument, its idiom and repertoire, and the techniques required to teach that repertoire. Unconvincing grasp of the issues raised in the Written Submission. Overall, insufficient evidence to give confidence in an ability to teach.	Insufficient evidence that the candidate has advanced significantly beyond the competence required at DipABRSM level.	Insufficient evidence that the candidate has advanced significantly beyond LRSM level. No evidence of performance skills at DipABRSM level.