

PREPARATION TIPS for students

Repertoire

- With the help of your teacher, choose pieces that you really like. Practise them slowly at first. Careful preparation at this stage will make the final performance so much better.
- After the initial stages, practise your pieces right through without stopping and get in the habit of going on immediately if you do make a slip. Pluck up courage to play them through to family or friends to help build up your confidence.
- Practise page-turns where these occur and try to memorize the first few bars of the next page to help your confidence. Difficulties with page-turning, however, will not actually affect the mark.
- In most cases you are allowed to photocopy a page of your piece for the exam where it will help to overcome an awkward page-turn. Organize this in advance and practise putting the photocopy in the right position on the music stand.

Scale requirements

- Practise scales and arpeggios daily. Practising them should be as routine as cleaning your teeth! They help you build up reliable technique and develop general co-ordination.

Sight-reading

- Remember that **keeping going** is the key to a Pass; aim to keep a basic pulse, despite slips on the way, rather than stopping to correct them.

Ear Training

There are many painless ways to get in some ear training practice between lessons. These might include:

- Listening to as much music as possible on radio or recordings. If you can get to a concert, even better.
- Joining a choir, band, orchestra or chamber group.
- Clapping the rhythm of excerpts of music you don't know before you play them.
- Singing back parts of tunes which you have just heard for the first time, possibly on the radio or TV.

- Singing through the notes of music excerpts or themes you haven't seen before, or indeed of any music you may have in your music books. Singing just a few notes will be helpful, keeping the intervals in mind as you go.

In general, before the exam

- Remember that you don't have to perform the pieces or do any of the other exam sections in syllabus order. Discuss with your teacher which part of the exam or which piece you should start with to make you feel most confident.
- Don't leave any of your practice to the last minute!
- Remember to let your teacher know of any holidays or school trips that might be coming up, so you can plan your music exam preparation around them.