

VPMA MUSIC PERFORMANCE GRADES

Valid for exams from October 1, 2024, to October 1, 2026.



VIENNA PREMIER
MUSIC ACADEMY

Academy for **Highly Gifted Musicians**

October 1, 2024

Qualification Specification: Music Performance Grades

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1. Introduction

About VPMA, Vienna Premier Music Academy

The Vienna Premier Music Academy (VPMA) is a prestigious institution dedicated to nurturing highly gifted musicians. Based in Vienna, we offer Performance Grades assessments for young musicians up to the age of 24, providing a valuable opportunity for students from around the world to showcase their talent and progress.

At VPMA, our Performance Grades are designed to be accessible and relevant for instrumentalists. We believe in fostering a supportive environment that encourages musical development through structured examinations. Our system allows learners to progress through levels 1 to 8, with each level tailored to assess their skills and achievements comprehensively.

Our mission is to inspire and empower young musicians by providing high-quality assessments that highlight their abilities and facilitate their growth as artists. Through our Performance Grades, we aim to cultivate a passion for music while recognizing and celebrating each learner's unique journey.

About Qualification Specification

What it covers

This specification provides all the relevant requirements and information that teachers, candidates, parents, and organizations need in order to prepare for the Performance Grades qualifications offered by the Vienna Premier Music Academy (VPMA) for instrumentalists up to the age of 24. It covers the following levels:

- **VPMA Performance Grades (Grades 1 to 8)**

This document outlines how the exams will be assessed, learning outcomes, and additional qualification details specific to VPMA.

Document structure

This specification contains several sections. The first sections provide general information about the Performance Grades and regulations governing them. Subsequent sections detail the specific requirements and repertoire lists for each grade.

Validity of this specification

This specification is valid from October 1, 2024. The repertoire lists contained within each instrumental syllabus will have specific validity periods, confirmed in the respective syllabus.

Updates to this specification may occur; however, changes will not be made to the relevant syllabus during its period of validity except in exceptional circumstances. Any updates will be

announced on our website in advance. The latest version of this specification will be available at www.vpma.at

About our Performance Grades qualifications

Qualification objectives

The Performance Grades qualifications at VPMA are designed for learners to demonstrate key performance-related skills such as **technical skills, interpretation, and Overall Presentation**. Each level is progressive, representing new challenges that motivate learners and structure their development.

Exams provide learners with formal recognition of their performance mastery and constructive feedback to support their musical journey. These qualifications reward and recognize the ability to deliver cohesive performances.

Who the qualifications are for

These qualifications are intended for learners interested in developing their performance skills holistically. Candidates may enter at any age, as long as they are under 16 years old.

Every effort has been made to feature a broad repertoire that appeals to learners of various ages and interests. Candidates are also encouraged to include one piece of their own choice (of an appropriate standard) in their program, promoting personal expression.

Structure

Each Performance Grade is designed to assess the skills needed for effective music performance, including technical control, interpretation, and communication through a sustained musical program. Candidates will perform a set number of pieces, with specific requirements outlined for each grade.

Progression route

VPMA Performance Grades are available from Level 1 to Level 8, with each level progressively increasing in difficulty. While candidates are not required to complete one level before moving on to the next, they must fulfill specific prerequisites for the higher levels, which will be detailed in the syllabus.

Regulations

Regulatory Framework

The Vienna Premier Music Academy (VPMA) is a renowned academy specializing in the education of gifted musicians, setting high standards in both musical training and the

assessments offered. Our examination system emphasizes transparent and fair processes to best support the musical development of our students and to document their progress.

Qualification Details

VPMA offers Performance Grades for instruments and Voice up to Level 8. These qualifications are designed to provide learners with the opportunity to demonstrate their progress and skills within a structured framework.

Entry Requirements

Candidates may register for VPMA examinations without fixed prerequisites. They can choose the appropriate level for themselves to ensure that all participants are challenged according to their individual performance levels.

Assessment Criteria

Assessments are conducted by a panel of professors from the respective subject or instrument. This panel evaluates the candidates' technical skills, interpretation, and overall presentation in a fair and objective manner.

Access and Reasonable Adjustments

We strive to provide all learners with fair access to our examinations. If necessary, reasonable adjustments can be made to accommodate the individual needs of candidates.

Validity of Regulations

These regulations apply to all examinations taking place from October 1, 2024. Candidates will be informed in advance of any changes or updates.

2. Performance Grades

The Vienna Premier Music Academy (VPMA) is a renowned academy that offers high-quality programs and courses for gifted musicians. In addition to these programs and courses, VPMA provides an examination system for young musicians from around the world up to the age of 24 in instruments and Voice that meet international standards. We place great importance on transparent and fair assessment processes to support the musical development of our students.

Syllabuses

When preparing for an examination, it is essential to consult the relevant VPMA syllabuses, which outline the requirements and repertoire for each performance level. These syllabuses are designed to ensure that candidates are aware of the expectations and standards for their assessments. The MUSIC PERFORMANCE GRADES Qualification Specification for each offered instrument contains detailed descriptions of all tasks.

Examination Locations

The examinations are conducted online. Candidates record their performances on video and submit them to the VPMA.

How the Examination Works

Candidates perform their chosen repertoire by recording video performances. The recordings are assessed by a commission of professors of the respective subjects and instruments, who evaluate the performance based on technical skill, interpretation, and overall presentation.

Performance Duration Requirements for Performance Grades

(For all instruments & Voice)

Grade	Minimum Duration	Maximum Duration
1	5 minutes	8 minutes
2	8 minutes	10 minutes
3	10 minutes	12 minutes
4	12 minutes	15 minutes
5	15 minutes	18 minutes
6	18 minutes	20 minutes
7	20 minutes	25 minutes
8	25 minutes	30 minutes

Examination Booking

Candidates can apply directly through the VPMA website www.vpma.at – Exams – APPLY - for the examinations. There is no requirement to book an examination in advance.

Special Considerations

The VPMA is committed to providing all candidates with a fair assessment experience. As the examinations are conducted online, requests for special considerations are neither required nor permitted.

Exam Regulations

When preparing for an exam, it is important to understand the rules governing the assessment process. This information - see below.

Malpractice and Maladministration

The VPMA takes any form of malpractice or maladministration very seriously. This includes any act that compromises or attempts to compromise the assessment process or the integrity of the qualification.

Entry Requirements

Candidates can enter for the Performance Grades up to the age of 24. There are no prerequisites for entering any grade, ensuring accessibility for all young musicians.

Special Considerations

Special consideration is given to candidates who suffer from temporary illness or adverse circumstances at the time of assessment. However, this will not result in an adjustment to marks or change the assessment criteria applied by the examiner.

How to record and submit your exam

a. Assessment requirements

For your Performance Grade, you will need to submit the following:

1. A continuous video recording that includes:
 - An announcement of your name, instrument, grade, and the pieces/songs you will perform.
 - A continuous, unedited performance of your three pieces/songs.
2. An online programme form (APPLY), to be completed during the application process by the candidate or a responsible adult (if the candidate is under 18).

b. The Responsible Adult

Candidates under the age of 16 must have a responsible adult present during the exam recording. If you are taking on this role, you must:

- Ensure that the candidate follows all requirements, and the guidance provided on this page.
- Remain in the room for the entire duration of the exam.
- Ensure that the exam is recorded in one continuous take, without any pauses or interruptions.

Additionally, you must be present when the candidate uploads the exam video to a video streaming platform (such as YouTube, Vimeo, Youku) and enters the link into the application form.

Please note that - NO additional declaration form from the responsible adult is required.

c. You can also:

- Turn pages
- Provide accompaniment
- Assist with the video recording device
- Carry out any other necessary measures

d. Getting ready to record

Most modern smartphones, tablets and laptops will be suitable for video recording the exam.

- The recording must be of a good enough quality to allow assessment of all aspects of the performance, including tone quality and dynamic range. Our examiners mark based on what they hear and see.

Test your recording device and do a trial recording before the exam to make sure the recording will be of good quality with clear, undistorted sound and vision.

Other things to check include:

- suitable lighting levels
- camera position
- clarity of the information shown to the camera

e. Camera position

You can record the video in either portrait or landscape orientation. The camera should remain static, ensuring that the candidate, their instrument, and the music stand (if applicable) are clearly visible.

- The candidate's face should be visible throughout the entire performance, either facing the camera or in profile.
- If there is an accompanist, they should also be included in the frame.
- If it is not possible to capture both the candidate and the accompanist, the candidate should be the main focus.

Additionally, it is important that the examiner can hear the candidate with an appropriate balance.

3. Assessment Criteria for Performance Grades

Technical Skills (30%)

What is assessed?

The technical execution of the piece.

Criteria:

- Accuracy: Were the notes and rhythms played correctly?
- Technique: Was the piece technically well-executed?
- Finger Dexterity: How skillfully and controlled is the instrument played?

Interpretation (30%)

What is assessed?

The musical expressiveness and understanding of the piece.

Criteria:

- Expression: How well are emotions and musical ideas conveyed?
- Empathy: Does the candidate understand the style and emotional depth of the piece?
- Style: Does the performance fit the historical and stylistic context of the work?

Overall Presentation (40%)

What is assessed?

The overall impact of the performance.

Criteria:

- Stage Presence: Does the candidate hold the audience's attention throughout the performance?
- Body Language: Is the candidate engaged and expressive in their physical demeanor?
- Professional Demeanor: Is the candidate appropriately dressed, confident, and presenting the performance in a polished manner?

4. Grading System

Rating Scale:

- **Distinction:** Outstanding performance (94% – 100%)

The candidate consistently demonstrates exceptional technical precision, musicality, and presentation. They show mastery across all criteria with near-perfect accuracy and expression, performing at a level that embodies the highest standards of professional musicianship.

- **Merit:** Solid performance with minor weaknesses (85% – 93%)

The performance is strong overall, with only minor areas needing improvement. The candidate shows solid technical ability and musical understanding, though there may be small weaknesses that do not detract significantly from the overall performance.

- **Pass:** Acceptable performance with areas for improvement (70% – 84%)

The candidate meets the basic requirements of the performance, but there are noticeable areas that need development. Technical precision or interpretative depth may be lacking, but the performance is acceptable for the level.

- **Fail:** Performance does not meet the requirements (below 70%)

The candidate has significant deficiencies in technical execution, interpretation, or presentation. These weaknesses suggest the need for substantial improvement before meeting the expected performance standards.

5. Performance Grading Breakdown

Candidates are graded based on their total weighted score across all assessment areas:

- **Distinction:** 94% – 100%

Reserved for performances of the highest caliber, with near-perfect execution in all areas: technical skills, interpretation, and presentation.

- **Merit:** 85% – 93%

A strong performance overall, showing solid technical and musical skills, though there may be minor areas for improvement.

- **Pass:** 70% – 84%

The performance meets the basic requirements but requires further refinement in multiple areas.

- **Fail:** Below 70%

The performance does not meet the necessary standards and requires significant improvement in multiple aspects.

6. After the Exam

Results

All candidates will receive a copy of their mark form. Successful candidates will also receive a certificate that shows the qualification title, subject, and level at which they were examined. Examiners do not disclose or discuss a candidate's result with others. The mark forms and certificates for successful candidates will be issued by VPMA after the exam. Unless otherwise specified at the time of registration, the mark forms and certificates will be sent to the applicant, who is responsible for passing them on to the candidates.

Appeals

VPMA is committed to upholding the highest standards in the evaluation of all performances. Each examination is rigorously assessed by a commission of subject professors to ensure fairness and consistency in grading. Therefore, the results awarded by VPMA are final and binding and cannot be appealed.

7. Processing Fees

The VPMA has established a tiered pricing structure for the processing fees associated with performance examinations, tailored to accommodate the varying levels of proficiency among candidates. These fees cover examination costs and include the issuance of a certificate upon successful completion.

Grade 1-3 (Beginner)

- **Processing Fee:** € 130
- **Included:** Examination fee and certificate

Grade 4-6 (Intermediate)

- **Processing Fee:** €150
- **Included:** Examination fee and certificate

Grade 7-8 (Advanced)

- **Processing Fee:** €170
- **Included:** Examination fee and certificate

Important Note:

- **Non-Refundable Fees:** Please be aware that all processing fees are non-refundable. Once the fee has been paid, it cannot be returned under any circumstances.

Submission of Payment Confirmation

- **Candidates are required** to submit a confirmation of payment (screenshot) for the processing fees along with their application. This confirmation serves as proof of payment and must be included in the application package to ensure that the registration process can proceed without delays. Applications submitted without the payment confirmation will not be accepted.

Bank Account Information

Name: Tone Terrace GmbH

Name of the Bank: BAWAG P.S.K.

IBAN: AT42 1400 0009 1019 1730

BIC(SWIFT): BAWAATWW

Bank Address: Wipplingerstrasse 1, 1010 Vienna, Austria

Purpose: VPMA Exam

Copyright Regulations

When selecting pieces for Performance Grades, it is crucial to consider copyright regulations. Candidates and their teachers must ensure that all performances comply with applicable copyright laws.