

Archbishops' Certificate in Church Music

ACertCM is open to all involved in Christian worship as singers (choral or soloists), choir directors, organists, players of other types of instruments – and indeed to others with a keen interest in church music.

The course has four components, with examinations for Components 3 and 4.

Component 1: Previous Experience

Component 2: Courses and Training

Component 3: Practical and Written Work (worth 60% of the total marks)

Component 4: Extended Viva (40%)

To qualify for the Certificate, you must satisfy the examiners in Component 1 and in Component 2, and attain the pass mark of 60% in both Component 3 and in Component 4.

A Distinction will be awarded, following attainment of an average mark of 80% or more in Components 3 and 4.

The four components are described in **Section 1** below. **Section 2** gives details of how you enter. **Section 3** will help you prepare to meet the requirements of ACertCM.

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Section 1

Component 1: Previous Experience

You must demonstrate

- **EITHER** competence as a player, singer or director in the place(s) where you regularly or frequently worship
- **OR** a strong interest in church music as a regular worshipper and in terms of listening and appreciation.

Section A: Music-making (30%)

Choose **one** of the following three options. See 'Guidance' below for further information on each option.

- Composition and/or arrangement. Complete two pieces suitable for use before, during or after worship. These must involve voice(s) and/or instrument(s) that are regularly available to you, and must together last between 4 and 6 minutes. Submit a score for each piece. If your score does not give a complete indication of what is to be sung and/or played including dynamics, tempo and other necessary directions for the performer(s), you **must** provide a recording as well. Your work must be submitted not less than a month in advance of the examination date. You must read and take careful note of the information about copyright and performing rights which appears under 'Guidance' below.
- Performance (short recital of music appropriate to the place of worship in which it is to be performed). Your recital, to be performed live on the day of the examination, must last between 8 and 12 minutes, and will contain two or more pieces. There must be a programme note (400–600 words) in which you provide background information on each piece, and explain how it is an appropriate choice for the place of worship in which it is to be performed. The programme that you intend to offer must be submitted for approval by the Chairman of the Academic Board as far in advance of the examination as possible.
- Leadership. You will present a teaching session (choir practice, instrumental rehearsal, etc.) as part of the examination, lasting between 20 and 30 minutes and based on two pieces suitable for use before, during or after worship. You must choose these pieces, and ensure that you are completely familiar with them at the time of the examination.

Section B: Knowledge and Experience of Music, Liturgy and Worship (30%)

Choose **one** of the following two options. See 'Guidance' below for further information on each option.

- Portfolio. You will compile a portfolio based on description and analysis of between 20 and 25 services that you have attended in a period of six to nine months during your time of study for ACertCM. These services must show some variety (e.g. there may be visits to traditions or denominations other than your own), and for at least some of them you may be a member of a congregation (rather than a participant in a choir, singing group, etc., or active in leading the worship). For each service you should briefly discuss to what extent the choice of music enhances the liturgy or worship (for example by underlining a seasonal message, readings, or preaching), and where possible general conclusions should be drawn.
- Written examination: 2 hours – with previously-unseen questions to test your knowledge and experience of church music and its place within Christian worship. You will select two short questions from a choice of four, and one longer essay question from a choice of three. Questions will be 'open', to allow you to demonstrate knowledge and experience of whatever type of church music you specialise in within the context of the liturgy or worship of your denomination.

Section C: Reflecting on Music, Liturgy and Worship (30%)

You must write an essay of **3000–3500** words on a topic which involves reflection on the relationships between music, liturgy and worship.

Your work must be submitted not less than a month in advance of the examination date. Your essay is 'coursework' – in other words, it is not produced under examination conditions.

Credit will be given for references to the practice of your own denomination and to other tradition(s) where possible. Where appropriate, include comment on the practices of past age(s) – from c.1500 onwards. Identify particular works which endorse points that you make.

The following are examples of suitable topics. You are free to devise your own topic, but **must** submit it for approval to the Chairman of the Academic Board before beginning work.

obtain one from the Chairman of the Academic Board, Dr Hugh Benham at email H.Benham@Soton.ac.uk

You should return your completed entry form by post to the Chairman of the Academic Board, together with the examination fee of £200 payable to 'The Guild of Church Musicians'. Entries may be made at any time of the year.

The Chairman will arrange the date and venue of the examination in consultation with you as candidate and with your two examiners.

Your examination will normally be held in your own church, or school, or at another approved centre. A piano, organ or other suitable keyboard instrument must be available.

You must ensure that the Chairman knows which options you are offering as soon as possible after entry, and that you provide any other required information in good time. Please note in particular that any topic that you devise for Section C must be approved before you start working on it.

Your result will usually be issued within three weeks of the examination.

If successful, you will be awarded a certificate. Certificates are presented at Guild events or in a church with which you have connections. Academic dress, which may be worn by certificate holders, may be obtained from the official robemakers to the Guild, Shepherd and Woodward.

If you should pass in one or more components, but not in other(s), you may retake just the component(s) in which you have been unsuccessful within two years of your first attempt.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Component 1

You should send *copies* of certificates, not originals. They will not be returned to you, unless you provide stamped addressed envelope(s).

Component 2

If you have regular contact with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults, it is expected that you will have (and will be able to show proof of) the necessary CRB/DRB clearance.

Excellent courses and training events are provided by such bodies as The Royal School of Church Music, The Royal College of Organists, and Church Music Future as well as by The Guild of Church Musicians itself.

Component 3

Section A: Composition and/or arrangement.

Compositions might, for example,

- set the scene before or during worship, or provide effective postlude(s)
- be settings for unison voices and organ or piano (or for four-part choir) of liturgical texts – perhaps, for example, longer ones than those suggested for the Archbishops' Award: for example a setting of the Gloria from the Eucharist (in English or Latin), or the Magnificat (complete with Gloria Patri)
- worship songs, with accompaniment for keyboard, guitar or band.

At this level, simple repetitive musical settings will not offer you sufficient scope to demonstrate your skills as a composer.

Any *arrangement* offered must be much more than just a transcription for different performing forces. For example, a four-part hymn tune re-scored for string quartet without any harmonic change, elaboration or extension would be unacceptable. On the other hand, a 'hymn anthem' based on an existing tune would be appropriate (with a different treatment of the tune in each verse, and perhaps some contrasting material).

You should be aware that the level of harmonic skill needed to compose successfully in four-part vocal harmony is considerable, and that some technical competence is expected (with, for example, effective part-writing and spacing and a sense of melodic shape in each part).

When submitting your work, you must aim to show the examiners as clearly and fully as possible how each piece should sound.

You must provide a score, which may be a printout from a software package such as Sibelius or Finale, or may be handwritten. If your score does not give a complete indication of what is to be sung and/or played (e.g. if it is a lead sheet), you **must** provide a recording as well.

A recording must be on a CD playable on standard domestic hi-fi equipment (not, for example, an MP3 or wav file).

You may wish to provide a recording even if this is not actually required – it can help examiners in the assessment of your work.

You must read the statement about copyright and performing rights that is printed below, and study the Code of Fair Practice published by the Music Publishers' Association at [http://www.mpaonline.org.uk/sites/default/files/The Code of Fair Practice Revised Apr 2016.pdf](http://www.mpaonline.org.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Code%20of%20Fair%20Practice%20Revised%20Apr%202016.pdf) . You will not be examined on this, but candidates offering composition must be well acquainted with it.

If you wish to use copyright material, whether words and/or music, you are advised that the Music Publishers' Association consider the use of copyright material to be within paragraph 7 on page 7 of The MPA Code of Fair Practice. This enables you to use copyright words and/or music solely for the purposes of the examination. Any publication or public performance of copyright material is always subject to the usual rules and prior permission must be obtained.

Section A: Performance

The expression 'appropriate to the place of worship in which it is to be performed' means that you are not limited to music composed for use in church, but equally that you must consider carefully what is 'appropriate'. Your audience in the examination will be your two examiners, but you should also consider what a potential public audience might find engaging and enjoyable.

You are responsible for providing and setting up any instruments or other equipment to be used in the examination.

The Guild does not set a level of difficulty. First and foremost, you should choose music that you can sing or play with confidence. However, you

should aim for Grade 5 (or higher) if you are choosing pieces from the syllabuses of any recognised examination board.

You are responsible for providing any accompanist or accompanying group that may be needed. Neither examiner will act as accompanist.

Any breaks between pieces do not count towards the required performance time of 8–12 minutes.

If a piece has a *da capo* indication, you must observe this, and you will receive credit if you successfully introduce stylistically appropriate ornamentation in such a repeat. You should not observe any other repeat signs.

You can perform your recital (or part of it) from memory if you wish, but this is not required. You will receive credit for performing from memory if this helps create a convincing performance, but no allowance can be made for any lapse of memory.

Section A: Leadership

It is your responsibility to set up this event (to engage the necessary singers and/or players, to ensure that any safeguarding and/or health and safety requirements are met, etc.). You must provide any music copies, etc. that the participants will need, and must send in advance to the Chairman of the Academic Board copies for the examiners to use. It is in everyone's interests that the pieces that you choose are within the capabilities of the performers, but that they present sufficient challenges for you to be able to demonstrate your teaching and leadership skills.

You are responsible for providing and setting up any instruments or other equipment to be used in the examination.

Section B: Portfolio

Your portfolio is best presented electronically (as a Word document or PDF) but other forms of presentation (in a ring binder, for example) are possible. Handwritten submissions are better avoided – word-process your work wherever possible.

Your portfolio should be accompanied by a short signed statement by a priest, minister or other suitable person who can vouch for the authenticity of your work.

Section B: Written examination.

A specimen paper will be available on request from the Chairman of the Academic Board.

Section C: Reflecting on Music, Liturgy and Worship

Please see <http://www.churchmusicians.org/fellowship-and-licentiate-diplomas/brief-study-guide> (sections B4, B5 and B6) for information on the use of quotations, style, and presentation. (This information is as applicable to ACertCM as it is to LGCM and FGCM.)

Component 4

You are advised to go beyond short closed responses to questions where possible, while still aiming for relevance and conciseness.