

ABRSM

MUSIC DIRECTING
DIPLOMAS



Music Directing Diplomas

Our Music Directing diplomas provide a pathway for a wide range of individuals involved in music directing, and have been developed to reflect the current practices, contexts and responsibilities of the role, whether in a formal or informal setting.



ARSM

Level 4 qualification–
Equivalent in level to Year 1 of
an undergraduate course

What do I need to prepare?

Unit 1A: Music Directing in Practice

- 30-minute video recording of your ensemble
(*one-off rehearsal/session*)
- Supporting Commentary of 1,500 words or 8 minutes
spoken ($\pm 10\%$)

Unit 1B: Music Directing in Context

- Written submission of 2,500 words or 12.5 minutes
spoken ($\pm 10\%$)

Unit 2: Music Directing and Reflective Practice

- A 30-minute structured conversation with an examiner

LRSM

Level 6 qualification –
Equivalent in level to Year 3 of
an undergraduate course

What do I need to prepare?

Unit 1A: Music Directing in Practice

- 45-minute video recording of your ensemble ($\pm 10\%$)
(*a series of rehearsals and a performance*)
- Supporting Commentary of 3,000 words or 16 minutes spoken ($\pm 10\%$)

Unit 1B: Music Directing in Context

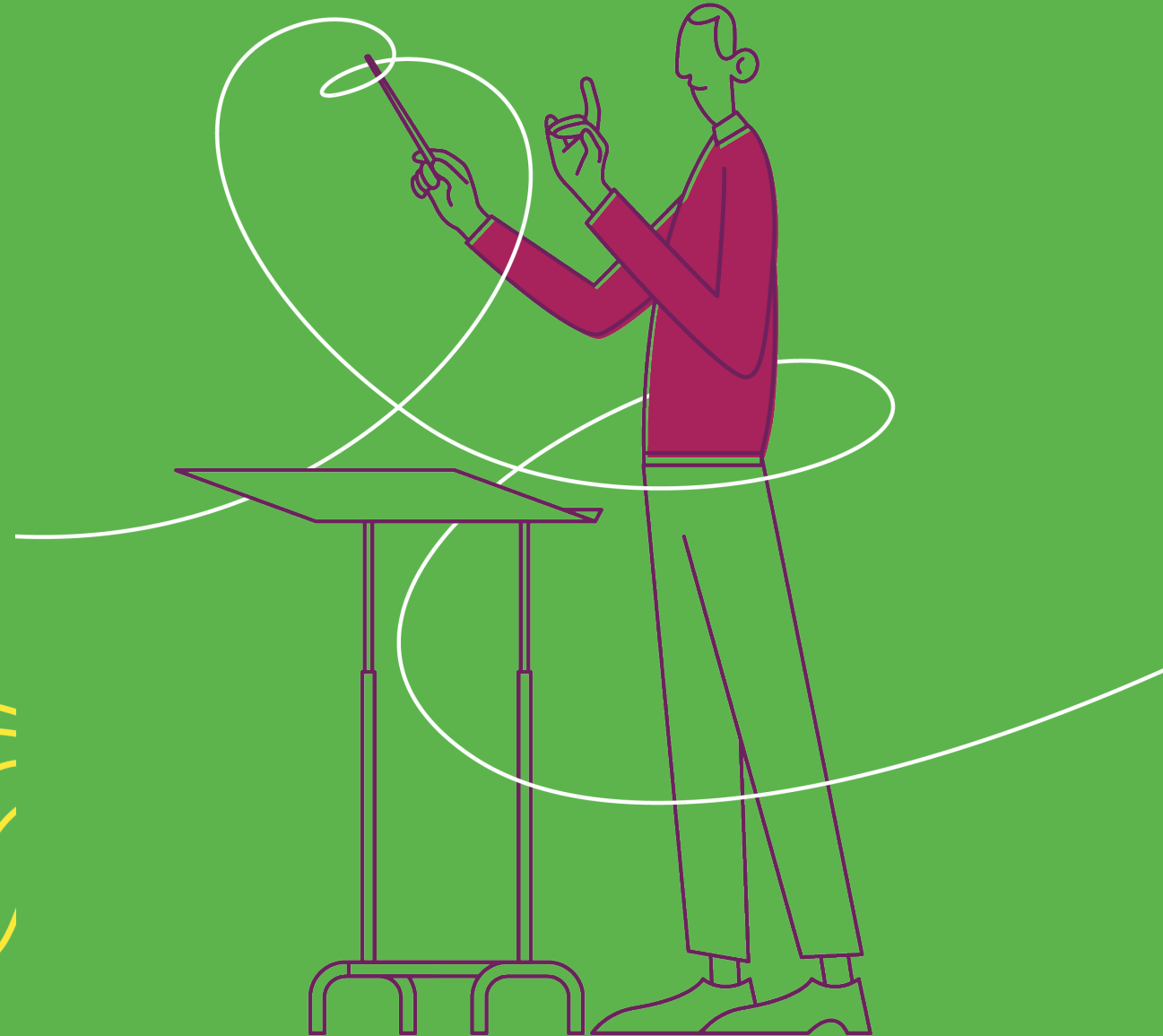
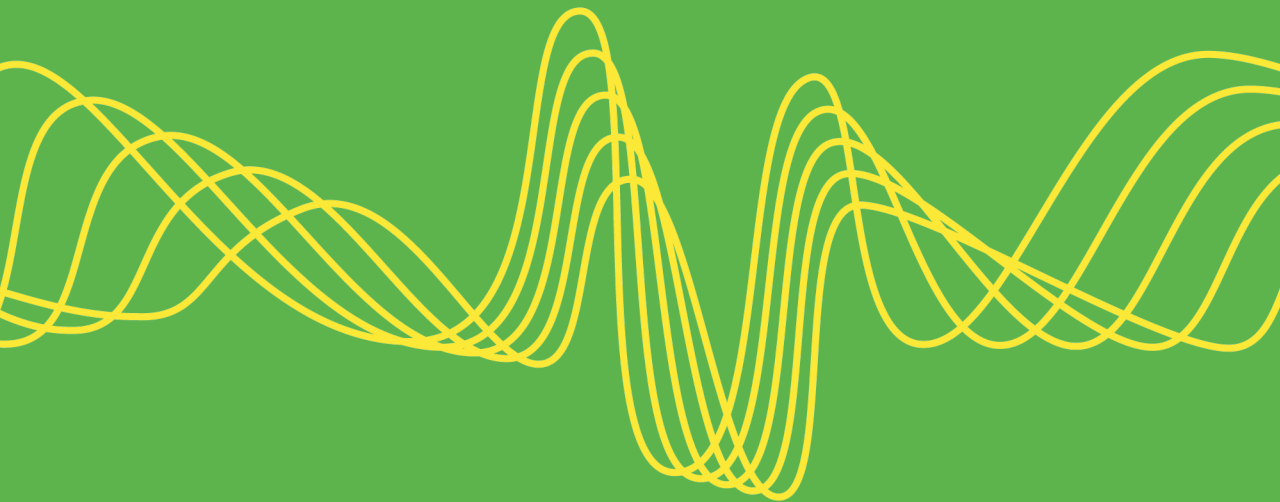
- Written submission of 2,500 words or 12.5 minutes spoken ($\pm 10\%$)

Unit 2: Music Directing and Reflective Practice

- A 40-minute structured conversation with an examiner

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Unit 1A: Music Directing in Practice



What do you need to prepare for this Unit?

ARSM

30-minute video recording of you directing your ensemble ($\pm 10\%$)
(one rehearsal, including a short run through)

Supporting Commentary of 1500 words or 8 minutes spoken ($\pm 10\%$)

LRSM

45-minute video recording of you directing your ensemble ($\pm 10\%$)
(a series of rehearsals and a performance)

Supporting Commentary of 3000 words or 16 minutes spoken ($\pm 10\%$)

Managing the filming situation

Practical considerations

- Choice of ensemble
- Light source
- Temperature of the room
- Location of the camera

Managing you and your ensemble

- Are they used to being filmed?
- Are they nervous for you?
- What can you do to manage your and their nerves?

Administration and planning

- Do you have permission to film your ensemble?
- Resources easily accessible, e.g. rehearsal plans, musical scores, musical games, apps etc.

Assessment

There was an *evident sense of connection between the director and the band*, with a positive mixture of focus and, as needed, humour demonstrated.

Verbal descriptions were clear, with the one instance of a phrase sung achieving its intended result immediately.

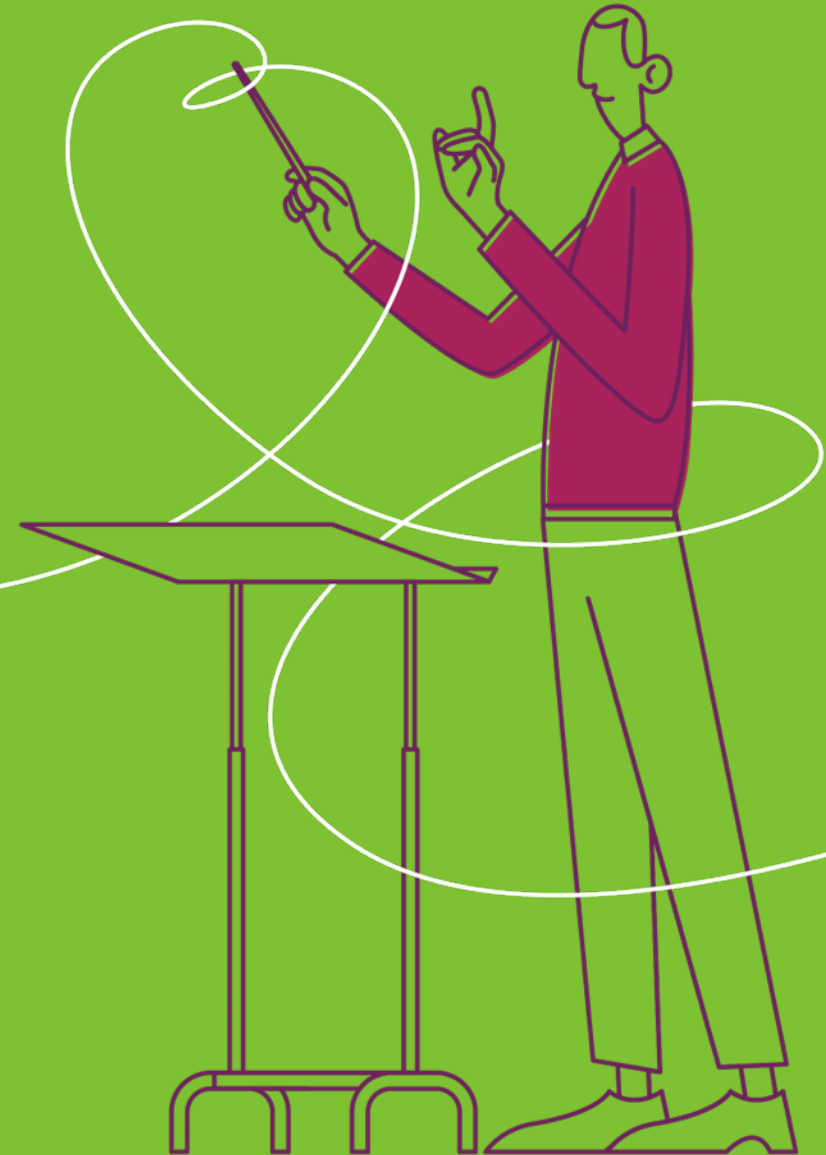
Overall beating was fully clear for the most part, with room to reduce the amount of shadowing from the left hand – which, although used to an extent as such in the performance, could have been more effective in terms of dynamics, indications of leads, and enhancing the sense of line through phrases. (The latter may have helped avoid in-performance small fluffs in some of the melodic lines.) Similarly, although there is always something of a journey through rehearsals for the director as well as the ensemble, there was room for a more ‘head up’ stance in the rehearsals, to connect more directly musically with individual players during the playing itself. The conducting brought a good sense of atmosphere and musical style to the performance (extract), though.

Supporting Commentary

This submission gives you the opportunity to:

- Give background information about your ensemble and their musical journey
- Share the context of the rehearsal
- Share the plan for the rehearsal(s) and reflect on what *actually* happened

Keeping strictly to rehearsal plans isn't necessary for success. Adapting in the moment demonstrates spontaneity, creative thinking, and allows rehearsals to flow in a natural way.



Online Candidate Resources

- Guidance to help with the writing of the Unit 1A written evidence
- Guidance to help with the planning and writing of Unit 1B tasks
- Sample Rehearsal Plan and Evaluation Templates

ARSM

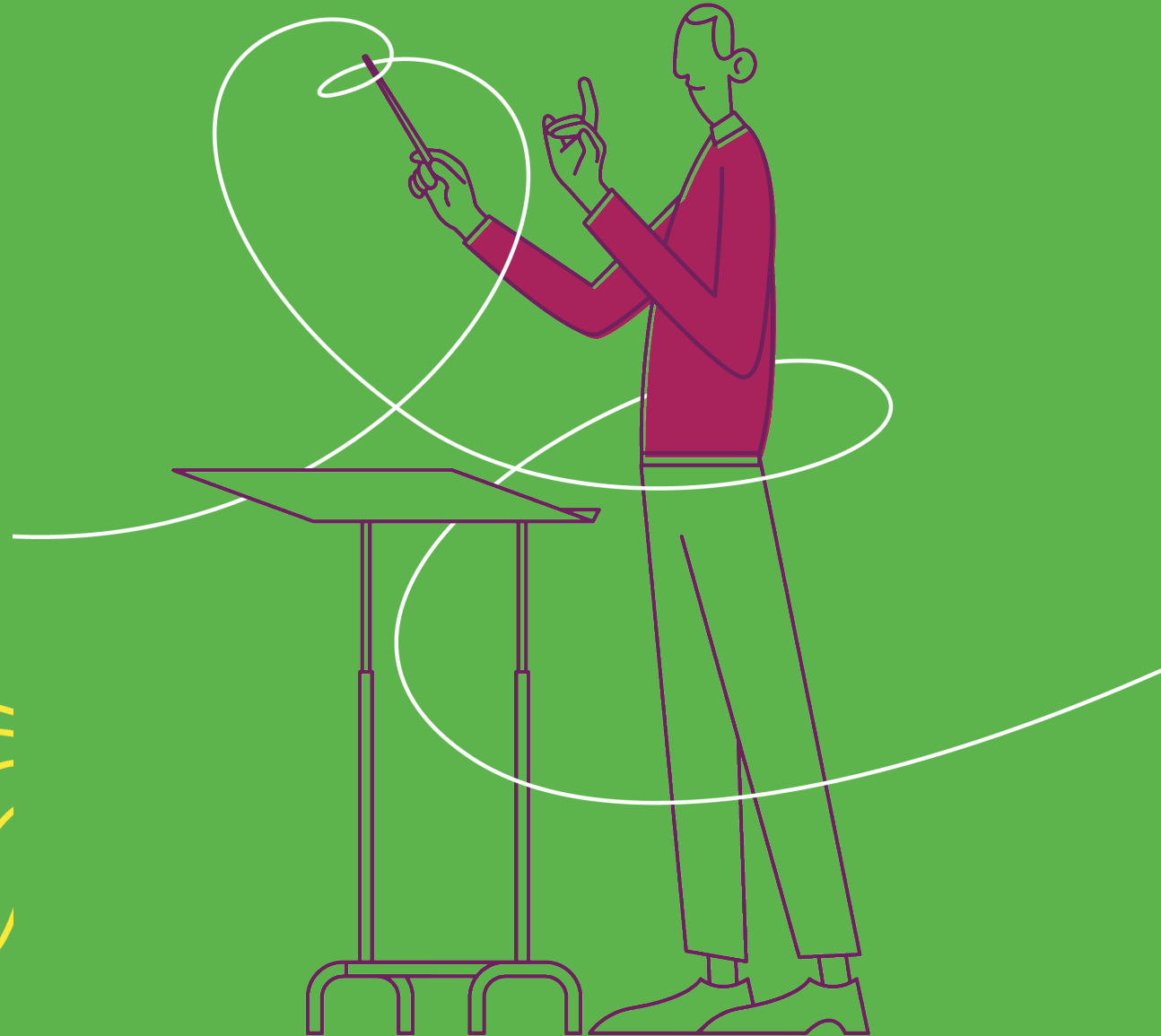
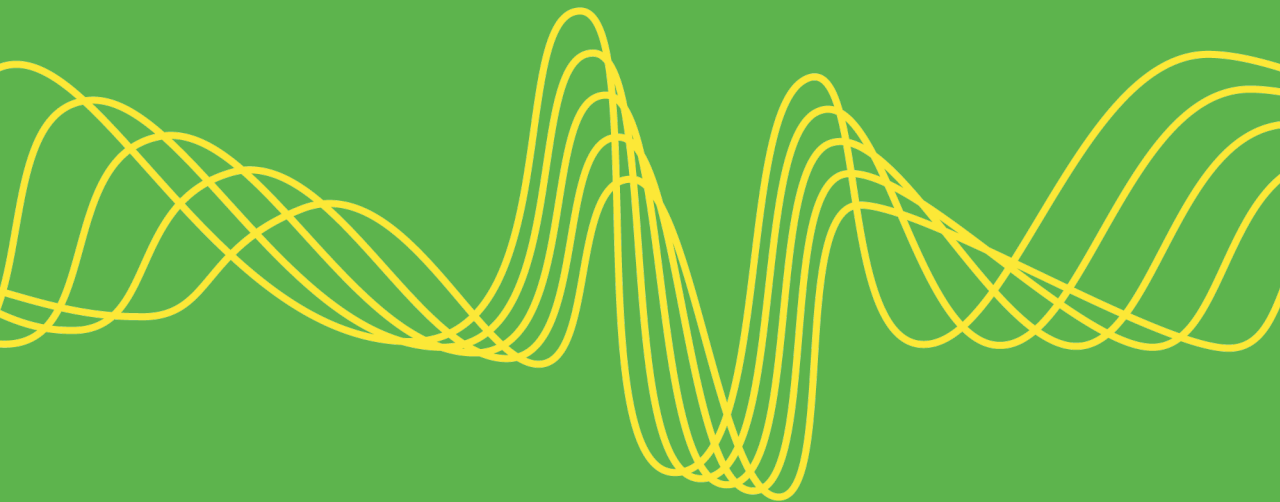


LRSM



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Unit 1B: Music Directing in Context



Unit 1B: Music Directing in Context (ARSM)

Mandatory Task:

Your personal ethos and approach as a music director.

What values inform your directing?

- What are the strongest influences on your work as a music director?
- What does successful music directing look like for you?
- How do you go about making sure your values are aligned with the needs and aspirations of those you are working with?
- How, if at all, has your ethos and approach evolved in the light of experience?

Unit 1B: Music Directing in Context (ARSM)

One task chosen from Group A

1. An analysis of your own prior musical experiences and the influence this has had on your approach to music directing.
2. A description of a music directing training event/class you found particularly inspirational and the impact it has had on your directing.
3. An account of how you went about identifying and solving a problem as a music director and the musical approach/communication strategies/activities you chose to achieve your aims.

Unit 1B: Music Teaching in Context (ARSM)

Two tasks chosen from Group B

1. A case study based on another rehearsal/session you have directed in a different context to that covered in Unit 1A.
2. A short evaluation of two resources and how you have used them to inform your approach to directing.
3. A report detailing two rehearsal/session observations where you were the observer.
4. An example of an original resource/piece of repertoire that you have developed or adapted to use when directing a group.

Unit 1B: Music Directing in Context (LRSM)

Two tasks chosen from Group A

1. An account of how you identified and solved a problem as a music director, and the musical approach/ communication strategies/activities you chose in order to achieve your aims.
2. An account of, when taking on music directing responsibilities in a previously unfamiliar context, the ways in which you had to adapt your approach to suit different types of musicians and meet their needs.
3. An account, with examples, of your approach to nurturing musical progression and how you evaluate your success as a music director.
4. An account of any legislation that impacts on you as a music director, and what your professional responsibilities are towards those with whom you are working.

Unit 1B: Music Teaching in Context (LRSM)

Two tasks chosen from Group B

1. A short evaluation of two resources and how you have used them to inform your approach to directing.
2. A report detailing two rehearsals/sessions where you were the observer.
3. An example of an original resource/musical approach that you have developed or adapted to use when directing a group, with a rationale or contextual information.
4. An example of a piece of repertoire that you have arranged for use when directing a group, with a score and a rationale or contextual information.

+ A Self-Reflection

More examples



Hints and Tips

Plan your submission to ensure that all the assessment criteria areas are covered across the written / spoken work

Choosing similar things could mean not covering all the criteria.

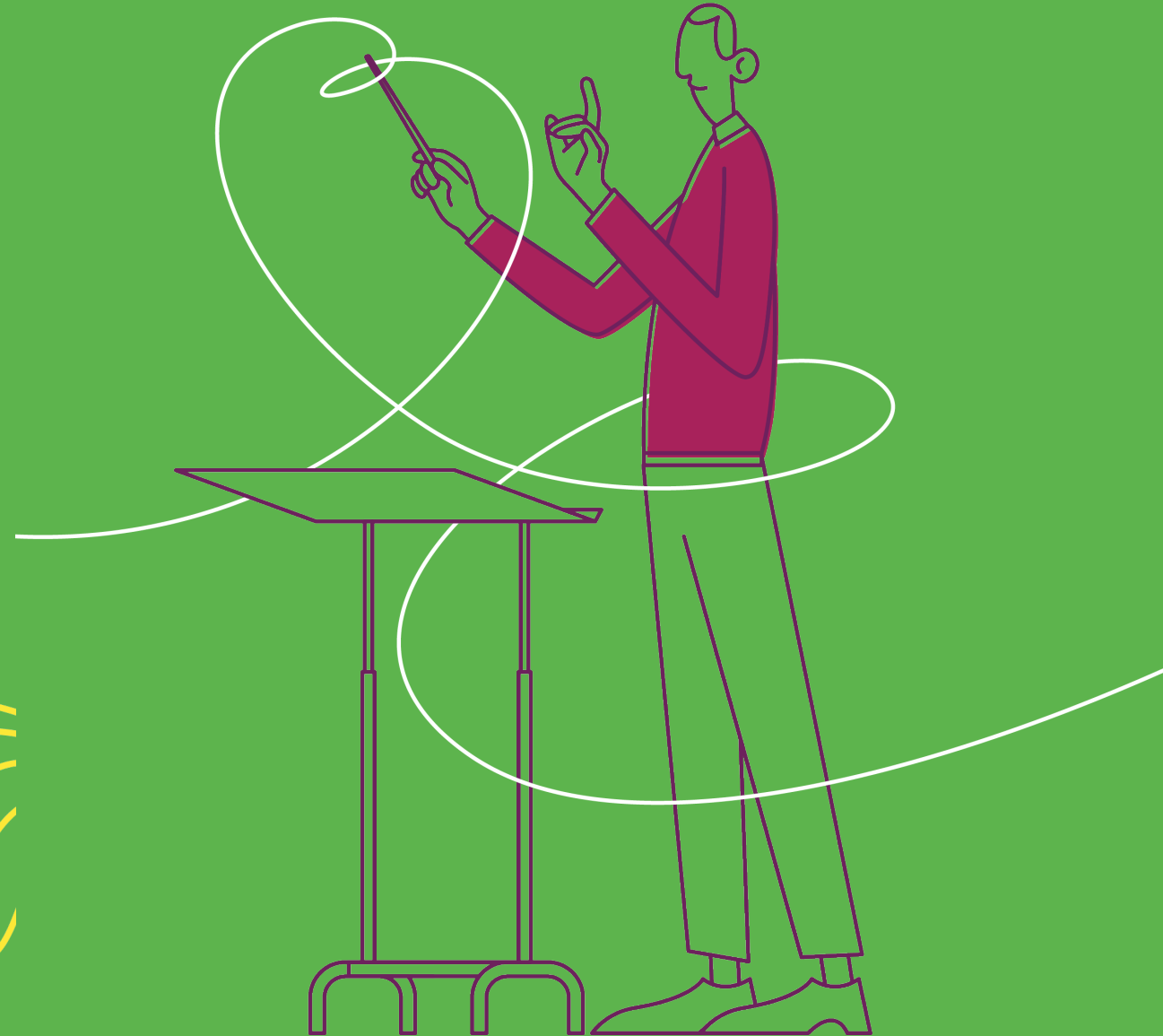
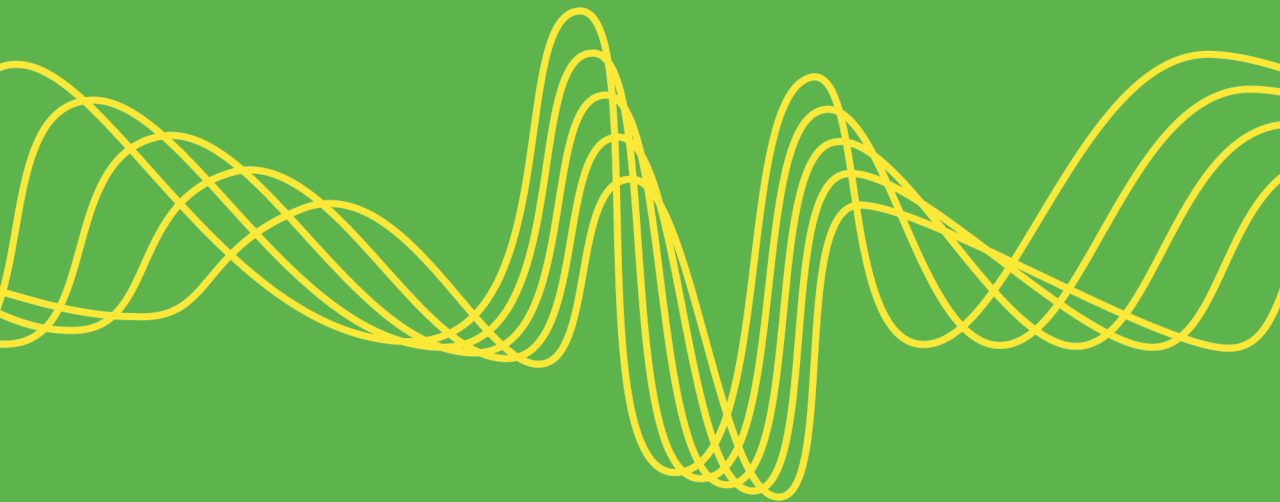
Consider what this means for strengths you bring to the work; variety will enhance the overall impression of the submission.

The examiner marks the whole submission as one piece of work; there is no individual mark for each element



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Unit 2 – Music Directing and Reflective Practice



Professional Discussion

ARSM
30 minutes

LRS
40 minutes

FRSM
50 minutes

The professional discussion will cover:

Questions arising from the Unit 1 submissions, expand on any information you provided and add clarity and greater detail.

Scenario-based questions to explore the directing decisions taken, including differentiation.

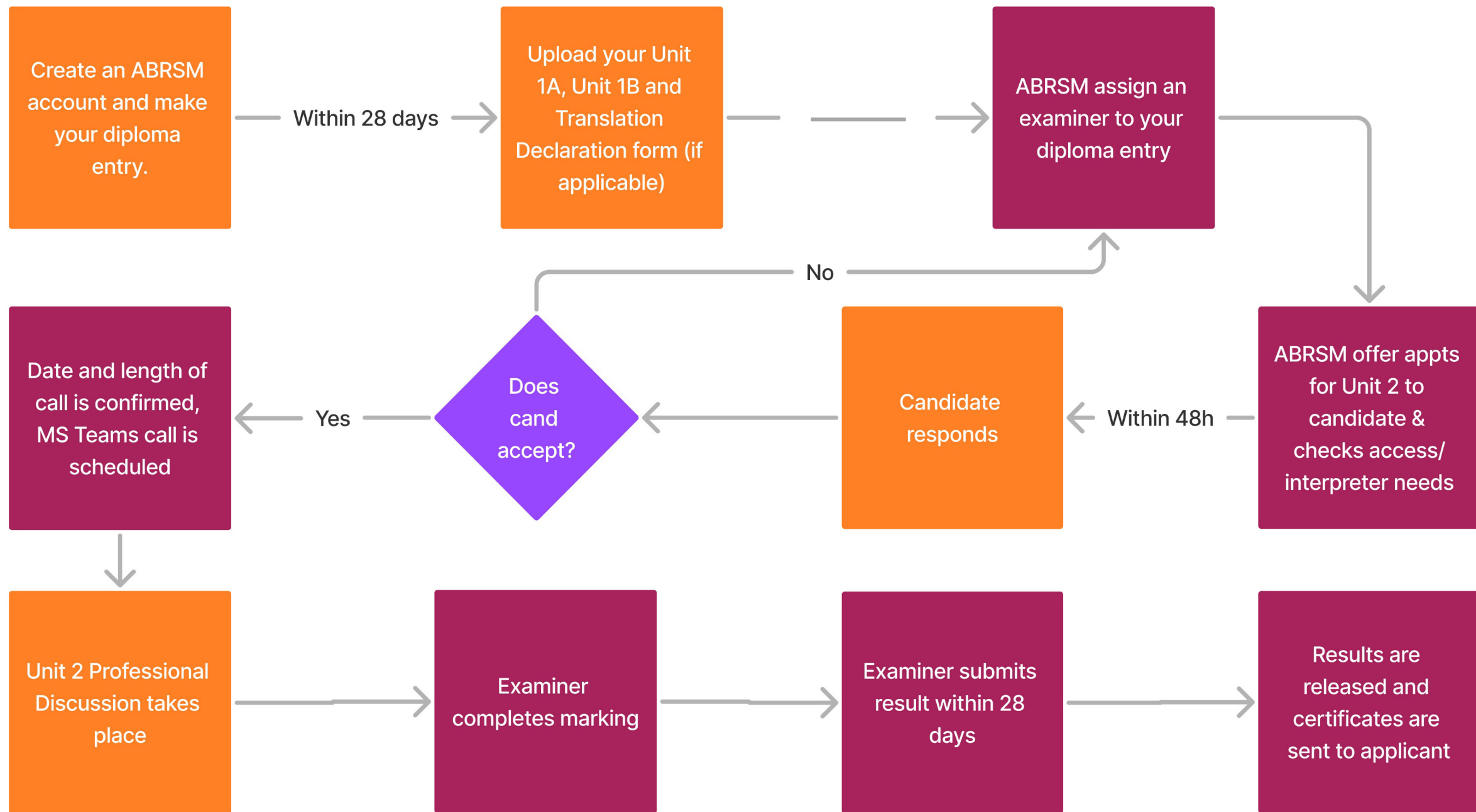
Questions regarding a music directors' responsibilities around health and safety, safeguarding, copyright and performance licenses.

Questions about anything you found interesting during your exploration of music directing.

Discussion of your self-reflection and any next steps you identify for your own professional development.

LRSM Professional Discussion - extracts





Submitting your evidence

- Information on word counts, or lengths of spoken submissions, formatting, film file types, translation, are available in the Qualification Specification.
- Further information is available in ABRSM's Filming Guidance.



Directing Diplomas: marking

ARSM

Components	ARSM (%)
Unit 1A	15 (30%)
Unit 1B	15 (30%)
Unit 2	20 (40%)

LRSM

Components	LRSM (%)
Unit 1A	30 (40%)
Unit 1B	15 (20%)
Unit 2	30 (40%)

FRSM

Components	FRSM (%)
Unit 1	45 (60%)
Unit 2	30 (40%)

Results Categories

ARSM

Result categories	Marks available
Distinction	45 - 50
Merit	40 - 44
Pass	34 - 39
Below Pass 1	25 - 33
Below Pass 2	17 - 24

LRSM and FRSM

Result categories	Marks available
Distinction	68 - 75
Merit	60 - 67
Pass	50 - 59
Below Pass 1	37 - 49
Below Pass 2	25 - 36

Safeguarding

ABRSM is dedicated to promoting the safety and well-being of all our candidates, with a rigorous system of governance and a strong culture of vigilance. We expect everyone who holds one of its directing diplomas to share this commitment.

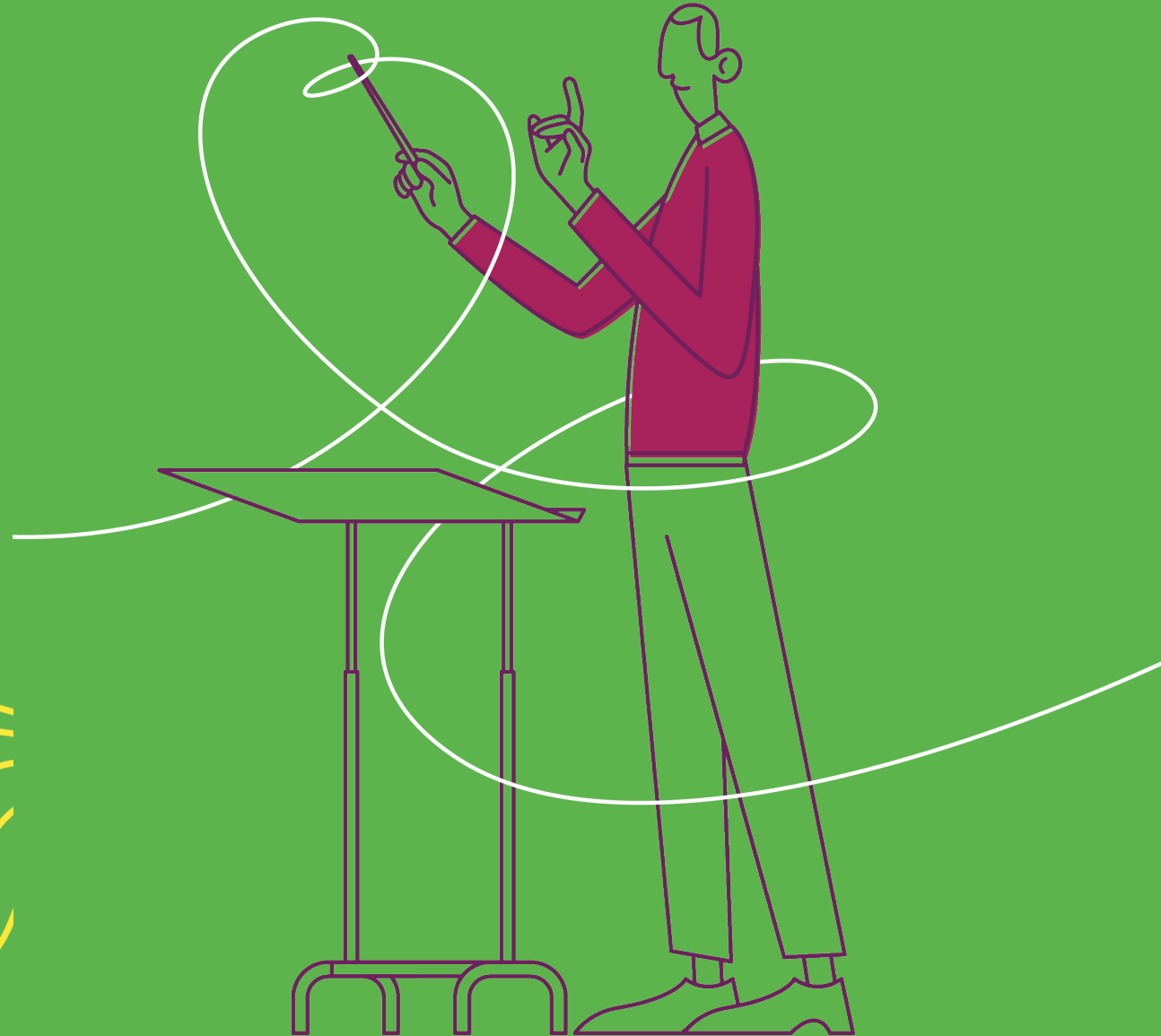
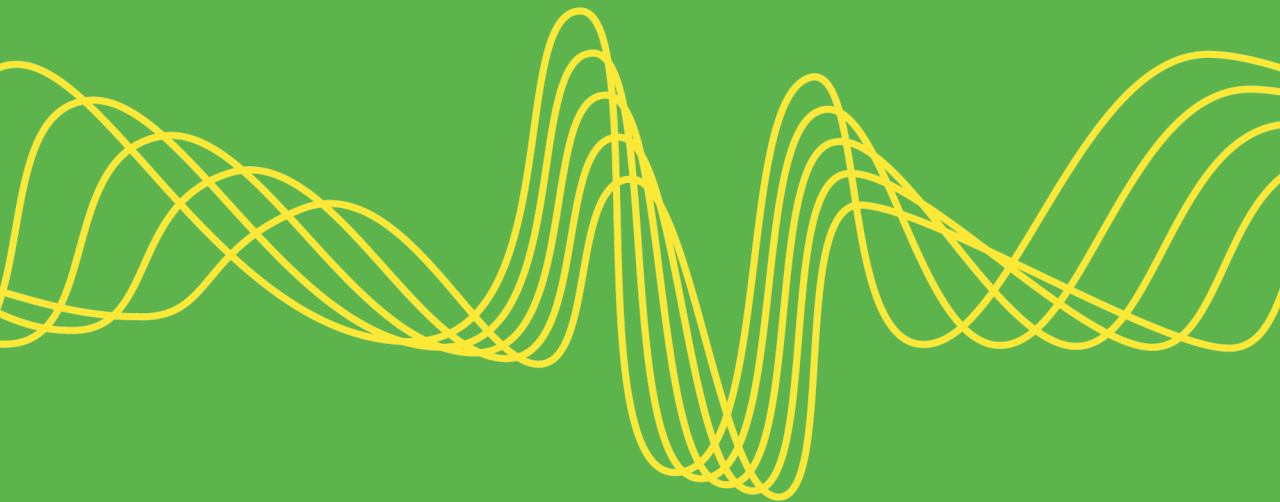
Resources:

- ABRSM website and Teacher Hub
- NSPCC Learning website



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FRSM information



FRSM

Level 7 qualification –
Equivalent in level to
postgraduate study

What do I need to prepare?

Unit 1: Music Directing in Practice

- **Option A:** Public Performance and Supporting Commentary
55 minute ($\pm 10\%$) video of rehearsal and performance and commentary of 3,500 words or 17 minutes spoken ($\pm 10\%$)
- **Option B:** Extended Research (10,000 words) or 50 minutes spoken ($\pm 10\%$)

Unit 2: Music Direction and Reflective Practice

- A 50-minute structured conversation with an examiner

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Questions?



Further CPD opportunities

Choral Leadership Levels 1, 2 and 3

Perfect preparation for the ABRSM
Directing Diploma!

Presented by Charles MacDougall

Classroom Teacher to Music Lead Levels 1, 2, 3

Perfect training for those engaged in
school music making and a great step
towards the ABRSM Teaching Diploma!

Presented by Jenny Trattles

Face to Face CPD-accredited
training days in London,
Manchester and Leicester.

Buy all three days for just
£150!

Available on the ABRSM
Teacher Hub
www.abrsm.org/teacherhub

Thank you, let's talk some more.

ABRSM Team

teacherdevelopment@abrsn.ac.uk



Supporting a life with music in partnership with four Royal Schools of Music

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