



**TRINITY**  
COLLEGE LONDON

# YOUNG COMPOSERS' COMPETITION

**Piano Syllabus 2021-2023**

## Compositional Brief

- ▶ Pieces must be written for solo piano. Duets will not be accepted.
- ▶ Pieces may be in any style.
- ▶ Pieces must comply with the listed durations, keys and time signatures.
- ▶ Details given under the heading of 'General characteristics' are designed for the guidance of composers and are not comprehensive.
- ▶ All parameters are cumulative.

## INITIAL

<b>Duration</b>	approx. 30 seconds
<b>Keys</b>	C, G, F majors; A minor
<b>Time signatures</b>	$\frac{2}{4}, \frac{3}{4}, \frac{4}{4}$ (without anacrusis)
<b>Note values</b>	Semibreves, minims, crotchets, quavers
<b>Rests</b>	Minims, crotchets, whole bar
<b>Articulation</b>	<i>legato, staccato</i> , accents
<b>Dynamics</b>	<i>pp, p, mf, f, ff</i> , crescendo, diminuendo
<b>Tempo marks and other signs</b>	<b>Andante, allegro, moderato, rallentando, ritenuto</b> , repeat marks
<b>General characteristics</b>	Basic 5-finger hand positions mainly on white keys, hands together, simple melody (mainly step-wise) with accompaniment, ties, similar motion parts, use of 2-note harmonic intervals and easy 3-part chords, very elementary writing showing independence of hands, interchange of material between hands, elements of one hand copying the other, striking/sudden dynamic contrast

## GRADE 1

<b>Duration</b>	approx. 45 seconds
<b>Keys</b>	D, B $\flat$ majors; D, E, G minors; pentatonic on black notes
<b>Time signatures</b>	$\frac{2}{2}, \frac{4}{8}, \frac{3}{8}$
<b>Note values</b>	Dotted crotchets, dotted quavers, semiquavers
<b>Rests</b>	Quavers, dotted quavers
<b>Dynamics</b>	<i>mp</i>
<b>General characteristics</b>	Grace notes, harmonic intervals of a 6th, use of accidentals, simple contrapuntal movement and some syncopation, independence of hands, simple use of 3-part chords, shifts of hand position, basic finger patterns, thumb passing

## GRADE 2

<b>Duration</b>	approx. 1 minute
<b>Keys</b>	A, E $\flat$ majors
<b>Time signatures</b>	$\frac{6}{8}$
<b>Note values/formations</b>	Triplets
<b>Rests</b>	Semiquavers
<b>Articulation</b>	<i>tenuto</i> , phrase marks
<b>Dynamics</b>	<i>decrescendo</i>
<b>Tempo, expression marks and other words/signs</b>	<b>Adagio, allegretto, vivace, cantabile, espressivo, grazioso, molto</b> , octave signs, first and second time bars, metronome marks, pause marks
<b>General characteristics</b>	Motivic patterns in both hands, simple syncopation, more contrapuntal writing, more frequent use of leaps and shifts in hand positions

## GRADE 3

Duration	approx. 50-75 seconds
Keys	E major; C minor
Time signatures	$\frac{9}{8}$
Articulation	<b>Marcato, semi-staccato</b>
Dynamics	<i>fff</i>
Tempo, expression marks and other words/signs	<b>Al, alla, a tempo, con, da Capo, al Fine, dolce, e, ed, leggero, ma, marziale, meno, mosso, moto, non, più, poco, tranquillo, troppo, vivo</b>
General characteristics	More demanding syncopation and rhythmic motifs, more frequent use of chords and melodic leaps, 3-part voicing, changes of register within each hand, crossing of hands, upper and lower mordents and trills, some use of sustaining pedal, more motivic conversation and development between the hands

## GRADE 4

Duration	approx. 1 minute 45 seconds
Keys	A $\flat$ , D $\flat$ majors; B, F minors
Articulation	<i>sforzando, fortepiano</i>
Dynamics	<i>ppp</i>
Tempo, expression marks and other words/signs	<b>Accelerando, animato, assai, con moto, ben, brio, giocoso, largo, l'istesso, maestoso, pesante, primo, sempre, senza, simile, subito, troppo, ma non troppo</b>
General characteristics	Moderately complex ornamentation and rhythmic patterns, elements of polyphonic writing, generous use of piano registers, continuous but regular use of sustaining pedal, independence of hands, longer melodic phrases and musical structures, use of more experimental harmonic progressions, spread chords, use of different tempi to characterise a contrast in sections

## GRADE 5

Duration	approx. 2 minutes
Keys	B major; F $\sharp$ , C $\sharp$ minors; contrasting section in a different key
Time signatures	$\frac{12}{8}$ and irregular metres $\frac{5}{8}$ , $\frac{7}{8}$ , $\frac{5}{4}$
Note values	All note values
Rests	All rests
Articulation	<i>sotto voce</i>
Dynamics	Full range
Tempo, expression marks and other words/signs	<b>Agitato, arpeggiando, con forza, energico, grave, larghetto, appassionata, fuoco, morendo, quasi, risoluto, rubato, scherzando, secondo, stringendo</b>
General characteristics	More complex variations of melody and rhythm, thicker harmonic and melodic textures, moderately long scalic passages, full use of all registers, equal technical difficulty in both hands, more sophisticated use of the sustaining pedal, some use of the <i>una corda</i> , generous use of expression markings, <i>ad libitum</i> sections

## GRADE 6

<b>Duration</b>	approx. 2 minutes 30 seconds
<b>Time signatures</b>	Any
<b>Articulation</b>	Full range
<b>Dynamics; gradation of tone</b>	Full range
<b>Tempo changes/variants</b>	Full range
<b>General characteristics</b>	Fuller and more complex use of all preceding characteristics

## GRADE 7

<b>Duration</b>	approx. 3 to 4 minutes
<b>General characteristics</b>	Further development of nuance and texture; melody/ accompaniment in one hand requiring more sophisticated independence of fingers; harmonic language more complex; polyrhythms; contrapuntal textures (to include, perhaps, contrasting articulations); imitative counterpoint; development of larger scale structures; increased expressive parameters; exploitation of registers; wide leaps/use of the full range of the keyboard; sophisticated employment of rubato/tempi manipulation

## GRADE 8

<b>Duration</b>	approx. 3 to 4 minutes
<b>General characteristics</b>	As above but more fully embracing a wide and diverse range of pianistic techniques and interpretational considerations. Figurations may include more advanced use of double note passages (eg 3rds, 8ves in one hand)

**PUTTING PERFORMANCE FIRST**

**TRINITY**  
COLLEGE LONDON

[trinitycollege.com](http://trinitycollege.com)