

Can I enter for the Silver award without taking my Bronze first?

Most singers, working through the *Voice for Life* stages, will want to take their Bronze (Dean's) award first. Consideration will be given by your Area to a request to enter for Silver standard, without taking Bronze first, if your choir trainer or teacher supports it. Usually some evidence will be needed that you are already a reasonably experienced singer: you may have already taken a Grade 5 singing exam, or GCSE or A-level Music – and you certainly will have completed all the targets in your Red training book. Contact your Area awards administrator in advance of the entry deadline date, to check on what evidence is needed.

I am having problems finding an accompanist: can you help?

Most Areas expect the candidate to supply their own accompanist, giving you the chance to rehearse and prepare rather more detail and finesse in your performance. Certainly you are always entitled to bring, and sing with, your own accompanist during Section A. The person examining you can not also accompany your performance. Your Area may be able to help you if you have problems finding someone to accompany you, provided you raise the problem with your Area awards administrator no later than the entry deadline date. Maybe there will be a list of approved accompanists, or you may be offered the name of an accompanist in a nearby town. It will usually be up to you to make the approach. If candidates are under 18, parents (and your church Child Protection Officer) are responsible for checking that appropriate clearances are in place. You should offer to pay accompanists a suitable amount for their time and travel: this could be around £30, or maybe more if you arrange to meet for a rehearsal before the day. Always raise this question at the time of the initial approach, to avoid any misunderstandings later.

Can I enter an exam on my own behalf, or must my choir trainer represent me?

Candidates who are under 18 years old will always be entered by a representative, who will receive the notice of the exam and your result. This may be your choir trainer or teacher, or your minister or a parent – but remember that a testimonial from the choir trainer will be needed. Adult candidates may be their own applicant, but (as a matter of courtesy) do check with your choir trainer first and ask for a testimonial. Even if your church is not affiliated to the RSCM, it is still possible to take our awards; check your local syllabus as (often) you will need to be an RSCM Individual or Student/Junior Member first. [Click here for membership details](#). Sometimes there is no choir trainer to ask – or the choir trainer may be you! In these cases, your Area will gladly accept a testimonial from your minister, or from another musician counter-signed by a minister who knows your musical and leadership skills.

I have a learning difficulty or a physical disability: may I still enter for an RSCM exam?

We welcome entries from all candidates who have reached the requisite standard in their *Voice for Life* training. Every effort will be made to ensure examinations are accessible to all candidates, including those with disabilities or learning difficulties. Please make such situations known to your Area awards administrator as soon as ever possible, and certainly no later than the entry deadline date. All such candidates will receive an extra time allowance, to help ensure their singing exam is unrushed and fairly administered. In cases of dyslexia or ASD (autistic spectrum disorder), please include a copy of the assessment with the entry, and a parent may request to 'sit in' during the exam to give reassurance. Candidates with a severe visual impairment may ask, at the time of entry, for an aural repetition assessment rather than sight reading. Areas will gladly assist candidates who have a physical disability by allocating a venue that is accessible to them; and candidates may choose to be seated for the whole or any part of their exam. Examiners will always be sympathetic to candidates' needs, but they will mark all exams to the same musical and understanding criteria, as printed in your Area syllabus.

I have missed the entry deadline, so may I enter with a neighbouring Area instead?

The answer, usually, will be 'sorry, no', because we value highly the local nature of these Awards. Your Area officers take great care in planning for all the candidates who do enter in time for the deadline – there are examiners and venues to book, and central registration to complete, for insurance and other safeguards. So, understandably, Areas must reserve the right to refuse late entries. Special consideration may be possible in certain extenuating circumstances, such as illness, especially if a candidate might be kept waiting a full further year – some Areas already run reciprocal arrangements with exams open to members in nearby Areas, if they do not mind travelling some distance to the planned venue. Do ask your Area awards administrator for guidance, if you think you may have a special case to plead.

May I take notes into the exam room to help me with Sections C and E?

These Sections of the exam are primarily a test of your understanding of the repertoire and of Christian worship and ministry – not of your ability to remember every detail. So, an occasional handwritten note, whether in your music copy or on a separate piece of paper, is acceptable, provided you ask the examiner if you may refer to it. Maximum marks, however, are reserved in these Sections for answers that are fluent, logical, perceptive and completely unprompted. Do not attempt to bring in any downloaded answers, since reading out such material would show us no evidence at all of any real preparation or understanding! The syllabus does allow you to bring, and refer to, a service book or card. Please take advantage of this provision: it may be helpful to the examiner (who may ask to look at it briefly) in framing some questions suited to your own liturgical tradition. Remember to bring your Bible, too, with your chosen passage relating to the Season or Festival bookmarked. Also (for your Silver award) you might like to bookmark the references you have found to the six standard liturgical texts in test E1. Please [click here for further guidance](#) on the knowledge, and understanding of the Biblical origins, of these texts that is expected of you at this standard in Section E.
