

Royal New Zealand Pipe Bands' Association

# *College of Piping and Drumming*

## **Bagpipes Syllabus and Guidelines Booklet 2**



### **Level 3 - Elementary**

**GUIDELINES FOR THE AWARD OF AN  
INTERMEDIATE CERTIFICATE  
PIPING**

**Section One - Theory and Knowledge**

- a. Requirements for the Elementary Certificate.

*Examiners are to satisfy themselves that the candidate can fulfil the requirements set down Section One of the Elementary Certificate.*

- b. Write out four bars of music from one of the 2/4 Marches submitted, as selected by the examiner.

*Tunes must be on manuscript paper  
Tunes must be neatly and legibly written out  
Tunes must be correctly written out with bar lines in the right places  
and all notation correct.*

- c. Explain (i) beats, pointing, phrasing, rhythm, tempo

*Beats:*

       *Where the pulse of a tune falls on a note*

*Pointing:* *Where a beat note or other long notes are held and shorter notes are cut.*

*Phrasing:* *Many tunes are made up of musical phrases. 2/4 marches, for example, are written in two-bar phrases. The aim of phrasing a tune properly is to ensure each phrase is separated by a 'musical comma' so they are not run together. This may be achieved by ensuring the last down beat and last up beat in the phrase are played to their full note values and are not skipped through.*

*Rhythm:* *A regular series of beats. Rhythm may also be achieved through a series of irregular beats repeated.*

*Tempo:* *The speed of a tune.*

- (ii) upbeats and down beats

*Down beats:* *Where the major pulse of the tune falls.*

*Upbeats:* *Sometimes referred to as the 'off beat'. It fall precisely half way between two down beats.*

- (iii) simple and compound time signatures

Simple Time: Where the beat is divisible by 2. Each pulse or beat represents the value of an undotted note, ie a quarter note (crotchet) in 2/4 time with the upper figure divided by two.

Compound Time: Where the beat is divisible by 3. Each pulse or beat represents the value of a dotted note, ie a dotted crotchet in 6/8 time with the upper figure divided by three to give two pulses (beats) per bar.

- (iv) sound, tone, and pitch

Sound: The regular vibrations produced from a well tuned bagpipe. The sound will vary from one pipe to another in volume, pitch and tone.

Tone: The quality of sound.

Pitch: The highness or lowness of a note or scale.

- d. Demonstrate the ability to identify time signatures. A number of pieces of music will be presented in the examination for the candidate to identify the time signature.

## Section Two - Practical

### Practice Chanter

- a. Submit tunes of the following time signatures to the examiner, who shall select a minimum of six tunes for the candidate to play:

two 2/4 marches (four or more parts)  
two strathspeys (four or more parts)  
two reels (four or more parts)  
two 6/8 marches (four or more parts)  
two jigs (four or more parts)  
two hornpipes (four or more parts)

*Candidates must play the tunes without technical or notational error. Tempos must be reasonable without compromising the melody of the tunes or forcing technical errors. The examiner must use his/her judgement in this area. The examiner may ask the candidate to repeat any incorrect playing a maximum of two times. If errors are not*

*corrected during the is time, the candidate will not pass this section.*

- b. Sight read and play a manuscript presented by the examiner (time signatures are to be within the range of (a) above).

*One measure of 2/4 march, strathspey, reel, jig and hornpipe will be presented for the candidate to sight read.*

*The candidate is expected to read the manuscript first without playing, and then play the tunes slowly on the practice chanter.*

*The candidate must achieve the correct rhythm for the tune, play embellishments correctly, and complete the measure without major notational error.*

### **Bagpipe**

- a. Present a well maintained instrument and demonstrate the ability to tune the bagpipe, two drones at a time with a positive method.

*A well maintained instrument involves:*

*Correctly fitted bag cover and cords*

*All joints well hemped and not too loose or tight*

*Reeds in good condition*

*Chanter kept in a dry stock (recommended)*

*A clean instrument.*

*The candidate must demonstrate that he/she knows what they are listening for when they are tuning their instrument, and tunes with a method as opposed to haphazardly.*

- b. Play the six tunes selected by the examiner from those submitted. The examiner will allow breaks for tuning.

*Candidates must play the tunes without technical or notational error. Tempos must be reasonable without compromising the melody of the tunes or forcing technical errors. The bagpipe must produce a good blend of chanter and drones, be steady and stay in tune. The examiner must exercise his/her judgement in these areas. The examiner may ask the candidate to repeat any incorrect playing a maximum of two times. If errors are not corrected during the is time, the candidate will not pass this section. The candidate must march (as appropriate) in time with the music with satisfactory deportment and a relaxed poise.*

- c. Demonstrate an understanding of the effect of varying bridle positions and chanter reed seatings.

*Shortening the tongue of a drone reed will raise the pitch, make the reed take less air, but may also make the reed squeal if shortened too far.*

*Lengthening the tongue of a drone reed will lower the pitch, make the reed take more*

*air and produce a coarser sound. The drone may then not be as steady or easy to tune.*

*Pushing a chanter reed into the reed seat will raise the pitch of the chanter sound. Generally, the notes on the top hand will rise in pitch more than notes on the bottom hand.*

*Raising a chanter reed in the reed seat will have the effect of lowering the pitch of the chanter sound. Generally, the notes on the top hand will be more affected than those on the bottom hand.*

### **Section Three - Maintenance**

- a. Requirements for the Elementary Certificate.

*Failure to satisfy these requirements will result in the candidate not passing this section*

- b. Knowledge and ability to care for and maintain the bagpipe, including the ability to explain:

- (i) purpose and method of seasoning a bag

*The purpose is to swell the hide to ensure it is airtight and to absorb moisture blown into the bag before it gets to the reeds.*

*The method is discretionary as long as not too much dressing is used, the dressing is well rubbed into the hide. The stocks should be blocked off with rubber corks and the bag inflated to ensure it is airtight, stocks do not twist in the bag and to force seasoning into the pores and stitching in the bag. Stocks should be thoroughly cleaned and dried after dressing.*

- (ii) care of wood

*The wood on bagpipes may be treated every six months or so with a light covering of Almond Oil. This is normally applied on the inside of the drones and chanter. Pipes should be stored out of direct sunlight and in an area of the house not subject to extremes of temperature.*

- (iii) care of reeds

*Reeds should be kept free of excess moisture.*

*After playing, all reeds should be checked for moisture, wiped dry with tissue as applicable, and restocked.*

*Reeds should not be left out of the pipe for too long (10 mins approx) or dried using a heater/hair dryer. This will only serve to dry the reeds out too much causing unsteady drones and a sharp chanter sound.*

*The pipe chanter and reed should be kept in a dry stock. This is particularly important during the winter season.*

*Reeds should be handled carefully at all times*

- (v) cleaning and keeping the inside of drones dry

*The inside of the drones must be a symmetrical chamber for the sound waves to travel up. This will give the best chance of achieving a steady drone sound. The inside of the drones may be cleaned using brushes, but only if there are foreign bodies present to be removed. Drones should be pulled through with a moisture absorbing cloth/pull through to ensure the wood does not soak up too much moisture and be prone to wetting up quickly when playing. This should be done immediately after playing.*

- (vi) the importance of clean stocks

*It is vital to ensure the insides of the stocks are kept clean and free of any build up of old bag dressing. Any build up will make it almost impossible to achieve a steady drone sound.*

#### **Section Four - Piobaireachd Endorsement (optional)**

- a. Demonstrate a general understanding of the construction of Piobaireachd.

*The candidate must explain that a piobaireachd is generally made up of a themal ground or urlar, followed by several variations, normally including taorluath and crunluath variations. The candidate should also be aware of other types of crunluath variations including the crunluath fosgailte, crunluath breabach, and crunluath a mach. Additionally, the candidate should be aware of other general types of variations, eg, the dithis (pronounced 'jee-ish'), and lemluath.*

- b. Correctly play on the practice chanter the following movements used in piobaireachd:
- (i) from all notes, taorluath to low A and low G

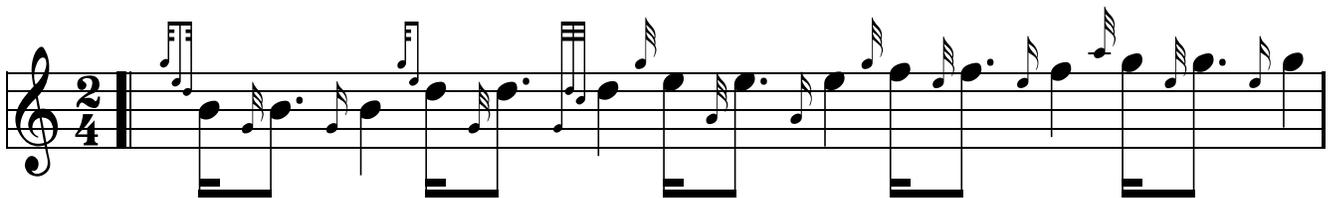
- (ii) Throws on E from all notes (the 'dre' and 'edre')



- (iii) Throws on F from all notes (the 'dare' and 'vedare')



- (iv) Double echoes on B, D, E, F, and high G



- (v) The 'darodo' movement (C to B with low G, D, low G, C, low G gracenotes)



- (vi) Submit three Grounds or Urlar, one of which the examiner will choose to be played.

*The candidate must perform on a good, finely tuned bagpipe, without notational or technical error. The examiner will make an assessment of the musical interpretation of the Urlar.*