

Royal New Zealand Pipe Bands' Association

*College of Piping  
and Drumming*

**Bagpipes Syllabus and Guidelines  
Booklet 4**



**Level 5 - Senior**

**GUIDELINES FOR THE AWARD OF A  
SENIOR CERTIFICATE  
PIPING**

**Section One - Theory and Knowledge**

- a. Ability to complete the requirements of the Advanced Certificate.

*The examiner is to satisfy him/herself that the candidate can fulfil the requirements set down in the Advanced Certificate.*

- b. Ability to write out any type of tune from memory. The examiner is to select three tunes from the list submitted by the candidate.

*Tunes must be on manuscript paper  
Tunes must be neatly and legibly written out  
Tunes must be musically and notationally correct.*

**Section Two - Practical**

**Practice Chanter**

- a. Sight read, explain and play six tunes presented by the examiner. Examiners may select from any time signature. The explanation is to include recognition of time signatures and positioning of pulses.

*The candidate is expected to read the manuscript first without playing, and then play the tunes at a moderate tempo on the practice chanter. The candidate must achieve the correct rhythm for the tune, play embellishments correctly, and complete the tunes without notational error.*

**Bagpipe**

- a. Candidates are to submit a list of tunes to the examiner which shall include:

six competition type 2/4 marches (four or more parts)  
four 6/8 marches (four or more parts)  
six competition type strathspeys (four or more parts)  
six competition type reels (four or more parts)  
six competition type jigs (four or more parts)  
six competition type hornpipes (four or more parts)  
four tunes of two or more parts selected from any time signatures not already covered in this section

*The examiner will select three tunes of each time signature for the candidate to perform. The candidate may have any number of tuning breaks, but may only tune the drones at the completion of a tune. Tuning must be of a high standard, producing a good blend of drones and chanter.*

*Candidates must play the tunes without technical or notational error. Tempos must be at a speed suitable for competition without compromising the melody of the tunes or forcing technical errors. The bagpipe must 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 this 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.*

*A higher degree of technical and musical performance is required than in the Advanced Certificate with the candidate showing full control over the Bagpipe, its setup and tuning, and full control over the technical and musical expression of the tunes.*

### **Section Three - Maintenance**

- a. A good knowledge of materials used in making bagpipes.
- b. A good knowledge of the principles behind producing a good tonal and steady drone sound.

*Parallel drone bores*

*Stocks and drones free from debris*

*Drone reeds that are not too old (ie have not soaked up too much moisture, swelling the tongue and softening the reed seat end).*

*Bridles correctly positioned to ensure the drone reed is operating freely*

*Drones reeds not taking too much air*

- c. Demonstrate the ability to finely set chanter and drone reeds. This is to be a practical demonstration with reeds supplied by the examiner.

*The candidate will have 30 minutes to get the bagpipe working to a high level. This means all drones sounding, steady, and in tune. The chanter must be of a blowable strength, with an accurate scale. Minimum use of tape on holes of the chanter is permissible. The degree to which the pipe can be finely set up will be dependent on the quality and choice of reeds available. Examiners will need to use their own judgement to ascertain the degree of ability of the candidate to set pipes up.*

## Section Four - Piobaireachd Endorsement (optional)

- a. Submit six piobaireachd with at least one of each type of crunluath, ie  
one with a standard crunluath  
one with a crunluath a mach (may be the same as above)  
one with a crunluath fosgailte  
one with a crunluath breabach
- b. Explain the history or story behind each of the six piobaireachd submitted.

*A good reference is David Glen. A further reference is the Commun na Piobaireachd (Piobaireachd Society of New Zealand) notes printed in the schedule for the Gold Medal and Clasp competitions. Additionally, publications by the Rt Hon Sir Ian McKay (The Art of Piobaireachd, 1997) and Roy Gunn (Legendary and Historical Notes on Ceol Mor).*

- c. Play on the practice chanter all embellishments used in piobaireachd from the piobaireachd exercise sheet as chosen by the examiner.

*The examiner may ask the candidate to repeat any incorrect playing a maximum of two times. Errors that are not corrected during this time will result in the candidate failing this section of the examination.*

- d. Play on the practice chanter one complete line of crunluath, crunluath fosgailte, crunluath breabach, and crunluath a mach.

*Each line is to be taken from one of the piobaireachds submitted by the candidate. Candidates must play the lines fluently, at correct tempo for the tune, correctly fingering all movements. The examiner may ask the candidate to repeat any incorrect playing a maximum of two times. Errors that are not corrected during this time will result in the candidate failing this section of the examination.*

- e. Play on the bagpipe two of the six piobaireachd submitted as selected by the examiner.

*The candidate must finely tune his/her pipes without assistance from the examiner. The pipes must stay acceptably in tune throughout the performance. The examiner must exercise judgement in this area. The tunes must be played without notational or significant technical error. The tunes must be musically expressed.*

*The standard of performance should be more mature than that at the Advanced Certificate level. The examiner must use his/her judgement in this area, but as a guide, the standard achieved should be worthy of a prize in a good New Zealand 'A' grade competition.*