



THE ROYAL CANADIAN COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS LE COLLÈGE ROYAL CANADIEN DES ORGANISTES

REQUIREMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMA IN CHORAL CONDUCTING (2023-25)

This examination is intended for musicians who have significant experience conducting choirs at an advanced level. It requires candidates to have mastered the normal conventions of professional conducting, which generally requires some formal study of conducting technique. There is no prerequisite for the examination; it is open to all College members in good standing. Candidates who are Fellows by examination of the RCCO, AGO or RCO are exempt from the first written paper.

The examination is offered in one or two centres (depending on applications) at the same time as the other College examinations. Initially all sections must be taken at the same examination session. The examination centre is responsible for providing a competent choir (at least two singers per part), and an accompanist.

Successful candidates are entitled to use the letters Ch.RCCO after their names. Candidates who are Associates or Fellows of the RCCO may instead append the letters (Ch) to their diploma designations thus: ARCCO(Ch) or FRCCO(Ch).

MARKS

Marks are assigned to each part of the examination as indicated in brackets. In order to pass, candidates are required to obtain at least 70% in each part of the Practical Section of the examination and at least 70% in the Written Section of the examination. A report will be sent to each candidate showing itemized marks and the comments of the examiners.

PRACTICAL SECTION (100 Marks)

40 minutes allowed, followed by 15 minutes for keyboard skills and viva voce

Conduct a rehearsal of an anthem, a hymn and a psalm, as indicated below. The candidate is responsible for planning how to use the allotted time to achieve maximum effectiveness with the choir, and to ensure that all the music is covered within the given rehearsal time. Marks may be deducted for a poorly organized rehearsal.

1. (30) Rehearsing choir

Candidates must select two contrasting pieces, one from each of Lists A and B. The titles of the pieces selected, together with a note of the editions and sources to be used, must be indicated on the Application Form. At the examination, candidates will be asked to rehearse all or part of one of the selected pieces. The candidate will be marked on the ability to use the allotted time to achieve the best results with the choir and to ensure that all the music requested by the examiners is covered in this time. Marks may be deducted for a poorly organised rehearsal.

List A

- Brahms, Johannes – Lass dich nur nichts nicht dauren, op. 30 (Peters 6093)
- Byrd, William – Ave verum corpus (OUP TCM 3, revised)
- Elgar, Edward – My love dwelt in a northern land (Novello PSB 585)
- Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus – Agnus Dei, from Missa brevis in D minor, K 65 (CPDL)

List B

- Kodály, Zoltán – Evening Song *Esti dal* (Boosey and Hawkes B6120)
- Lauridsen, Morten – O nata lux (Southern/Faber)
- Poulenc, Francis – Salve Regina (Salabert)
- Telfer, Nancy – Silence (Waterloo Music)

2. (30) Presenting new music

Introduce and rehearse a short passage of unaccompanied music. The music will be sent to the candidate at least one week before the examination. The piece will be new to the choir.

3 (15) Keyboard skills

Play at sight on the piano a passage of four-part vocal music written in open score, using G and F clefs.

4. (25) Viva Voce

Discuss with the examiners various aspects of the rehearsal and performance, answering questions about rehearsal technique, conducting technique, and performance practice.

WRITTEN SECTION (2 papers)

Paper I (3 hours allowed – 100 Marks)

1. (35) SATB Harmonization

Harmonize a given choral melody for four voices in the style of J. S. Bach, using open score with G and F clefs.

2. (35) Analysis

A portion of the full score of a work for chorus and orchestra will be given. Candidates will be asked to analyze the score with reference to harmony (writing chord symbols with Roman numerals), instrumental considerations, rehearsal challenges, performance practice, etc.

3. (35) Composition

Complete a short composition in modern style for unaccompanied voices (SATB); one outer part and the text will be given. OR, using the same text, but not the given opening, compose a short piece in modern style for unaccompanied voices (SATB). Marks will be given for originality and creativity; simple block harmony is not sufficient.

Paper II (3 hours allowed – 100 Marks)

1. **(30) Choir Training**

Answer questions related to aspects of choir training, including (but not limited to) questions on vocal health, intonation, sight-singing, group vocal technique, conducting technique, performance practice, editing choral music, etc.

2. **(40) Repertoire**

Answer questions regarding sacred choral repertoire, citing specific works. For example, candidates may be asked to draw up a concert program on a specific theme, or one using a specific combination of voices or instrumentation, or to relate a specific form or text to the works of several composers.

3. **(30) History**

Answer (in approximately 500 words) a question on Renaissance choral music of all national schools from the period covering the work of Josquin to that of Palestrina.

EAR TESTS SECTION (Pass or fail)

Ear tests will be given immediately prior to the Written section of the examination. Ear tests do not have marks allotted but are an independent section which must be passed.

1. Candidates will be given a copy of a passage in hymn style. The passage will then be played with intentional errors of pitch and/or rhythm. The candidate is required to mark any errors heard on the examination paper. The passage (in its erroneous form) will be played four times.
2. Write from dictation a passage of not more than eight four-part chords which may include any diatonic triad or seventh, secondary dominant (including diminished seventh), the Neapolitan and augmented sixth chords. The key will be stated and the tonic chord sounded. The passage will be played four times.

For the complete Regulations, please refer to <http://www.rcco.ca/exam-regulations>.

To apply online, go to <https://rcco.ca/Online-Exam-Registration>