

Royal New Zealand Pipe Bands' Association

EDUCATION GROUP

*College of Piping  
and Drumming*

**Bagpipes  
Curriculum and Guidelines**

December 1999



**Booklet 4  
Advanced Certificate**

# GUIDELINES FOR THE AWARD OF AN ADVANCED CERTIFICATE PIPING

## Section One - Theory and Knowledge

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

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

- b. Ability to write 2/4 march time, strathspey time and reel time from the tunes 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 an understanding of the principles behind obtaining ensemble balance between pipes and drums.

*The candidate must be able to explain the principles in general terms based on the explanation given below.*

*It is important that the pipe corps and drum corps are well set up before trying to achieve a good ensemble effect. For the pipe corps, it involves all chanters being matched together, drones being in tune together, the relative volume balance between drones and chanter being acceptable, and a good tone being achieved from the chanter sound. The drum corps needs to be well tuned with all snares at the same pitch, and the tenors and bass being in tune with the drones of the pipe corps. If the pipe corps is playing at quite a high pitch, then the snare drum pitch should be set higher to blend in. The opposite is also true if the pipe corps are playing at a lower pitch.*

*While the sound of the individual corps is vital, it is just as important for each of the corps to play together and precisely on the beat. When the two corps are playing together, the pipe major, bass drummer and leading side become pivotal in ensuring the corps are playing on the same beat and together.*

## Section Two - Practical

### Practice Chanter

- a. Sight read, explain and play two tunes presented by the examiner. Examiners may only select from the time signatures presented below. 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 slowly on the practice chanter. The candidate must achieve the correct rhythm for the tune, play embellishments correctly, and complete the tunes without major notational error.*

## **Bagpipe**

- a. Candidates must submit a list of tunes to the examiner from which eight will be selected for examination. The list must include:

four slow airs  
four 2/4 marches (four or more parts)  
four 6/8 marches (four or more parts)  
four 4/4 marches (four or more parts)  
four strathspeys (four or more parts)  
four reels (four or more parts)  
four jigs (four or more parts)  
four hornpipes (four or more parts)  
four tunes of two or more parts selected from the following time signatures:

4/4                  3/4                  9/8                  12/8

*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 produce a good blend of chanter and drones, be steady and stay in tune. The examiner must use 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 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 more mature performance is required than in the Intermediate Certificate with the candidate showing full control of the Bagpipe, its setup and tuning, and full control over the technical and musical expression of the tunes. The candidate must be able to tune accurately, tuning a minimum of two drones at a time and using a positive method.*

## **Section Three - Maintenance**

- a. Ability to complete the requirements for the Intermediate Certificate.

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

- b. Display the knowledge necessary for tying in a pipe bag by giving a practical demonstration of at least chanter and blowpipe stocks.
- c. Demonstrate the ability to set up the instrument using reeds supplied by the examiner. This includes explaining faults and remedies for drone and chanter reeds.

*The candidate will have 20 minutes to get the bagpipe working to a satisfactory level. Satisfactory 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.*

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

**The candidate will submit three piobaireachd for the examination.**

- a. Demonstrate a good knowledge of the classification and construction of piobaireachd.

*The candidate must satisfactorily explain the classification of Piobaireachd as utilised by Maj Gen Thomason, RE. Reference to this can be found in the introductory notes to the Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor.*

- b. Explain the history or story behind each of the three submitted piobaireachd.

*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. Failing either of these, the candidate could write to the Commun na Piobaireachd to obtain the history prior to sitting the Advanced Certificate.*

- c. Correctly play on the practice chanter the following movements used in piobaireachd:

- (i) taorluath a mach
- (ii) crunluath
- (iii) crunluath fosgailte, crunluath breabach, crunluath a mach

*Examples of these movements are contained in the Piobaireachd Society Collection Books 1 - 15 and in the Piobaireachd Exercise Sheet at the end of this booklet.*

- d. Perform one of the three piobaireachd submitted on the bagpipe, as chosen 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 tune must be played without notational or significant technical error. The tune must be musically expressed in accordance with one of the recognised piobaireachd styles.*