

Fellowship of the Guild of Church Musicians

Brief study guide

A. Self-directed study

Welcome to the first modules of study for the Fellowship diploma of the Guild of Church Musicians (FGCM).

The diploma is based primarily on self-directed study. On gaining the diploma you will be able to identify not only the subject-specific knowledge and skills you have gained, but the transferable experience and skills gained from self-directed study.

A1. Keeping in touch

The Guild is a relatively small organization which relies heavily on voluntary support for the administration of its courses. However, we shall do everything we can to help you in your studies. Where possible we shall try to help you to identify local or correspondence tutors if you request them.

Contact with the Guild should always be made through the Course Secretary, who will liaise with the Course Director where appropriate.

It is important that you feel you can get in touch with us, and let us know of any problems with the materials or assignments. If your progress is being held up contact us as quickly as possible, but also keep a note in your module log (see section B below) so that the examiners can bear any problems in mind when assessing your work.

At the end of each module we shall welcome your evaluation and suggestions for improvement.

A2. Workload and periods of study

The total time required for study and assessment for the Fellowship diploma is estimated at 800 hours (roughly 100 hours for each module of 10 credits). Study will normally be spread over 20 to 24 months of part-time study. Exceptionally, a candidate who can undertake full-time study will be able to complete the work for the diploma in 10 to 12 months.

There are two study periods in each year. One study period will begin in early September with submissions due on 31 January, and the other study period will begin in early February with submissions due on 30 June. A part-time candidate will normally undertake studies over four study periods, taking modules totalling 20 credits during each study period. A candidate may commence formal study in either September or February.

A3. Patterns of study

Each module has a defined programme of study, with appropriate guidance for self-directed learning and the preparation of assignments. Much of this will be based on reading books and articles, supported where appropriate by scores and recordings.

Some students will be well used to self-directed study, others will be able to transfer skills from their work. However, if you feel apprehensive about organizing and undertaking your studies there is a wealth of published literature. A local Further Education college may have its own favourites to recommend, but an obvious book from an organization well used to distance learning is Andrew Northedge, *The Good Study Guide* (Milton Keynes, Open University, 1990, available in paperback). Another shorter book is Anne Murdoch and Bryn Davies, *An Introduction to Self-directed Study* (London, Scutari Press, 1992; rev. edn. 1994).

You will need to consider allocating time for study, undertaking effective reading and note-taking, setting aside time for assimilation and reflection, planning of assignments and essays. Month one is likely to be spent acquiring resources and setting up a study plan. Months two to four will form the core of reading, study, assimilation and reflection (about 75 hours per module). Month five (about 25 hours per module) for completion of written assignments. (The pattern will be different for composition and practical modules where some assignment work is likely to be undertaken as an ongoing part of the study process.)

If the reading and other studies recommended seem too challenging (or too undemanding) get in touch with us, and we will try to make alternative suggestions. In every case the reading studies are recommended rather than mandatory, and alternatives may be appropriate. If you are unsure about the suitability of alternative study materials get in touch.

You are advised to undertake one study area within a module at each time. If there is an obligatory study area it is best to study that first. Some modules (e.g. A1 and A2) have general reading which is best completed before starting on the study areas since it will provide a context relevant to all the studies.

A4. Resources

It is unlikely that you will be able to find all the necessary resources on the shelf of a local bookshop or library. You can find out fairly readily what books are available in print (and how much they cost) from the Internet or from local booksellers, most of whom keep a computerized listing. Music is more of a problem.

If you do not have a suitable local supplier one of the largest and most capable suppliers of books on liturgy and music is Blackwell's, at 48-51 Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BQ. They have a large mail order department. They can be contacted by phone (01865 792792) or fax (01865 794143).

Your local library will be able to obtain books and music through the service known as Inter-Library Loans. There is normally a small fee for this but you will be able to borrow the book for three weeks, with an extension up to a total of 12 weeks.

If you live near a university with a Theology (or Religious/Biblical Studies) Department or a Music Department you may be able to register as an external reader during your period of study. There will normally be a modest fee. Inter-Library Loans are available through university libraries, but the item cost may be higher.

B. Logs and notes

B1. Logging your studies

Although your assessment is based on specific submissions you have also to establish that you have undertaken an adequate range of study overall. You need to log all your studies. This module log will establish what you have studied and for how long. It will also record any problems which the examiners can take into account. A standard form is supplied, but if you use a computer you can submit your own form so long as it follows the same format. If you run out of sheets make photocopies or request more from the Course Secretary.

B2. Keeping notes

You should keep a file of notes based on your studies and reading which can be available to the examiners should they so request. (Notes may be written by hand, typed or entered on computer, but the examiners will request submission of them on paper.)

C. Some guidelines on undertaking your written work

C1. Preparatory reading and note-taking

It is good to read as widely as you can around the subject of an essay. Assimilate other views and ideas, and then decide what you want to say and how you want to say it, referring where appropriate to the ideas and words of other writers - but making them plain as such.

When you take notes from a book or article, make sure you are clear which are your own words or summary, and which are directly copied extracts from the author. Such a practice avoids you mistakenly using words of another writer when you are using your notes for an essay.

C2. What is your own work?

Some students can feel uncertain about their own ideas, particularly when studying a new subject area. In some cases this means that their essays are very close indeed to the contents

of books or articles. At diploma level you are not *expected* to present new ideas. Rather you are expected to show a knowledge and understanding of the subject, supported by the available books (and/or articles) written about it. (If you come up with a new idea or new information that is fine, but that is not *required*.)

However, you are expected to structure your own argument, and to use your own words. If you want to use the words of another author, they must be placed in quotation marks, and you should state who wrote them and where they are found (see below, section C4). It is unacceptable to submit an essay which is dependent on passages copied or closely derived from another author (or authors). This is plagiarism and you should expect a very poor grade, below pass standard.

C3. Some suggestions for planning and writing an essay

Once you have completed your reading, listening and study for an essay, give yourself time to think about the issues raised by the question you are answering in the essay. Make sure you are clear of those parts of your reading that are directly relevant to the question: a different emphasis or approach may be required than that adopted by the author of a book or article you have read. When writing you should avoid having source books and articles open in front of you: work from your outline and notes, and just use the books to check details.

Lay out the main points of the essay as headings and sub-headings, and be ready to re-organize them so that they make a coherent series of points and contribute to an overall whole. Develop this skeleton into more detailed notes for each section. Consider which examples you want to refer to, and any quotations from or direct references to books and articles. Decide how you want to introduce the essay, and how you want to conclude it. (At the simplest you may want to outline your intentions in the introduction, and draw together your main points in the conclusion, but there are other approaches.)

C4. Quotations, examples and references

Passages from other authors should be placed in quotation marks, or acknowledged in the text (e.g. by writing 'As John Williams points out ...'), and annotated in a footnote or short reference.

If it is a more extended quotation indent it as a separate paragraph like this, and do not include quotation marks. This applies to quotations that are more than about 25 words.

References to other writings may be placed in footnotes or endnotes, or you may include short references to author, date and page number in the main text, ensuring that the work cited is included and identifiable from the bibliography.

Proper titles of complete works should appear in italic (*Solomon*) or underlined (Messiah). Items within works or first lines normally appear within quotation marks ('For unto us a child

is born'). The same applies to titles of books (*italic* or underlined) or articles ('in quotation marks'). If you have music examples head them as Ex. 1 or Example 1 (not e.g. 1). Try where possible to choose your own music examples; do not simply copy those selected by the author of a book or article.

C5. Style and presentation

Write in a clear, accessible, but formal style. Do not make your sentences long and convoluted: be ready to divide a long sentence into two. You are writing for a reader and need to communicate your subject and argument. Avoid spoken contractions like 'don't' and 'can't' - write them out in full, and avoid colloquialism and slang. Check your spelling and syntax carefully. Beware that computer spell-checkers usually adopt American spellings, which may differ from those usually accepted in the U.K.

Essays should be printed, typed or written on one side of A4 paper only. It is preferable to present an essay as a printed or typescript document. Use 1.5 or double spacing, except for any footnotes or endnotes. If you have to submit handwritten work, please write clearly on alternate lines, and leave a margin on the left-hand side of the paper.

Every essay must include a bibliography which lists all the books and articles you have consulted in preparing and writing it.

In preparing written work you may find the following books helpful:

The Oxford Dictionary for Writers and Editors
The Oxford Spelling Dictionary (there are also comparable dictionaries from other publishers)

D. Some notes on attainment and evaluation

D1. Levels of attainment

In order to pass the diploma you must complete satisfactorily 80 credits of study, achieve a minimum standard of 40% in every individual module and an average mark of 50% in all modules.

To achieve a pass with credit you must complete satisfactorily 80 credits of study, achieve a minimum mark of 50% in every individual module and an average mark of 60% in all modules.

To achieve a pass with distinction you must complete satisfactorily 80 credits of study, achieve a minimum mark of 60% in every individual module and an average mark of 70% in all modules.

D2. Evaluation of individual modules

There are two parts to the evaluation of your achievement in every module: (1) to establish that you have completed the module satisfactorily (this does not involve marks or grades, but rather a yes/no decision), and (2) to determine the level of attainment you have achieved (this is where the quality of your work is assessed).

In order to complete a module satisfactorily you must (a) undertake the work specified, and (b) complete the assignments set. To establish satisfactory completion you should keep and submit a log of your study for each module.

In order to determine the level of attainment selected work will be assessed. This assessment will be based on the specified essays or assignment(s) required for the module.

Work which satisfies the assessors will be graded as pass (50-59%), credit (60-69%) or distinction (above 70%).

In grading written work the assessors will take account of

a - physical presentation, spelling, grammar, syntax

b - accuracy and relevance of content

c - organization and style of writing

d - quality of argument

e - evidence of original thought

In order to achieve a pass, *a-c* listed above must be judged adequate in the view of the assessors. In order to achieve pass with credit *a-d* must be judged good. In order to achieve pass with distinction *a-d* will be good, and there will be clear evidence of *e*.

You will receive a brief written report on your work, with guidance for further development or improvement where appropriate. This is an informal report to you as an individual. It is not open to questioning or challenge, though where possible clarification will be provided on any advisory comments.

D3. Unsatisfactory attainment in a module

Candidates who achieve a mark below 40% are permitted to take the module again once only or to take another in its place in the following session (e.g. a candidate who submits work for assessment on January 31 and fails to achieve 40%, may repeat the module or take a replacement in the study period beginning in the following September).

Candidates may proceed with other studies in Part One even though a module has not been passed at a satisfactory level, but may not proceed from Part One to Part Two until all the necessary modules for Part One have been passed satisfactorily.

E. Submission of assessed work, logs and other evidence of

study

E1. Submission of assessed work

Two copies of all written submissions should be sent to the Course Secretary, and postmarked not later than 31 January or 30 June. They may be photocopies, but must be legible. Fax submissions will not be accepted. Both copies should bear a copy of the statement of authorship. You are advised to keep an additional copy of the submission in case of loss in the post, since your work will not be returned.

E2. Submission of module study logs

Two copies of your study log for each module (see section B above) should be sent to the Course Secretary, and postmarked not later than 31 January or 30 June. They may be photocopies, but must be legible. Fax submissions will not be accepted. You are advised to keep an additional copy of the log in case of loss in the post, and since it will not be returned.

E3. Study notes and other evidence of study

There is no need to send study notes or other evidence of study unless specifically requested. If requested they will be returned subsequently.

E4. Late submission

If you are unable to meet the submission deadline you must contact the Course Secretary in advance of the deadline. Late work may be accepted up to one week late at the discretion of the Course Secretary. Work submitted any later (for whatever reason) may be too late for assessment at that stage and may have to wait until the next assessment period.

F. Notification of results

Candidates will normally receive formal notification of their results for each module within eight weeks of submission of work for assessment. You will receive a brief written report on what you submitted.

Anyone who feels they have grounds for appeal against a result should contact the Course Secretary in the first instance.