

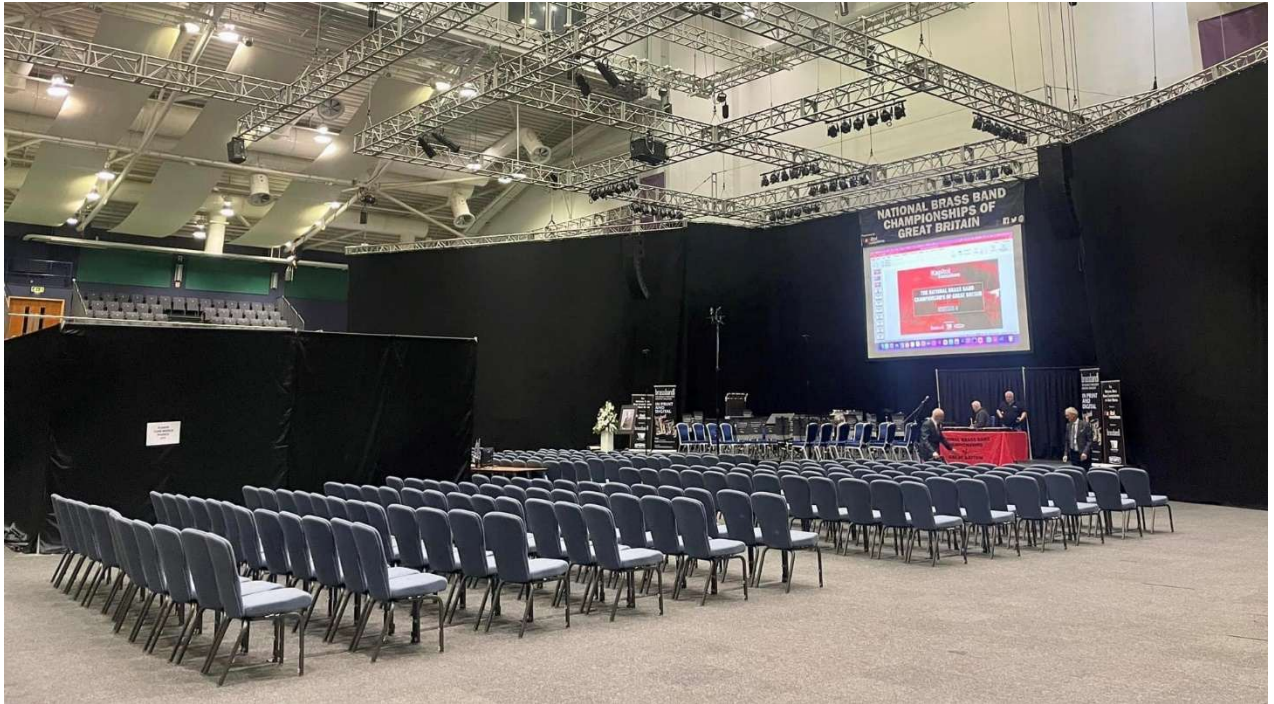
AoBBA

the association of
brass band adjudicators

ASSOCIATION OF BRASS BAND ADJUDICATORS

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

2025



(Endorsed by)



Welcome from our Chair

On behalf of the Association of Brass Band Adjudicators, I would like to welcome you to our AoBBA Handbook and hope you will find it beneficial and informative if you are new to AoBBA or indeed if you are an experienced and established adjudicator.

Our role as an adjudicator is an extremely important one, and it is our duty to ensure that we maintain the highest levels of professionalism, integrity and competence at all times. It is also the Association's responsibility to make sure that all stakeholders feel they have been assessed by someone who is experienced, prepared, organised and qualified to make such important decisions.

You will find all the information you require to help maintain and fulfil your responsibilities as an AoBBA Adjudicator in this handbook. It is a great honour for me to serve as Chair, and I am focused on continuing our core mission of "Delivering professional and experienced adjudication for the modern brass band contest". I look forward to supporting you all in your Adjudicating endeavours this year as well as working with you all.

Brett

L Brett Baker
AoBBA Chair

AoBBA Trainee Programme

The AoBBA have a formal training programme for trainee adjudicators. Candidates for this programme will have demonstrated a requisite level of experience either as players, conductors or preferably both. Participants have usually undergone a formal education in music, including performance, graduating in their chosen study area. The training programme is two years in duration and will include a range of contests such as, a fixed test piece; own choice tests and an 'entertainment programme' style event.

The participants will work together, but under the same conditions as the official adjudicator(s) of the selected contests viz., closed adjudication following attendance at the draw for order of play (unless this order is pre drawn). AoBBA members will act as mentors, encouraging discussion at the conclusion of each performance and in producing an order of merit of the competing bands. Initially, participants start at circa Section 2/3 levels, becoming exposed to the higher level bands as confidence and ability progresses. It is also important to have experience in 4th section and, where possible, youth contests, so that the full range can be experienced before 'going it alone'. Prior to the start of each event, the official adjudicator discusses the adjudication process with the participants and after the results have been announced, a discussion takes place between the adjudicator and the participants. The relative merits of each performance are considered with those present justifying the reasons for establishing an order of merit. The official adjudicators have always been enthusiastic to participate.

The training of a new generation of adjudicators as part of a structured 'correct style' progression is important. The understanding and demonstration of the Performance Assessment Criteria (PAC) – see below, remain an integral part of the purposeful and progressive approach by AoBBA to "maintain and improve a professional level; and to protect and enhance the status of Brass Band Adjudicators".

- Training period – two years from confirmation email. Failure to complete within two years will invalidate the trainee from continuing on the scheme. This can be extended, but only in exceptional circumstances and by agreement with the Head of the Trainee Programme and the Executive Committee.
- A training fee of £100 will be payable on acceptance to the scheme and is non-refundable. If a candidate is deferred, having not reached the appropriate standard after the initial training period, a further fee of £100 will be payable to complete the candidates training.
- All new trainees must undertake an induction session with the Head of the Trainee Programme.

- On completion of the induction session and payment of your enrolment fee you will be added to the members directory as a 'Trainee Member' on the AoBBA website and receive a user name and password in order to access the members area. Please do not reveal your password to others, or allow non-members to access the website.
- Trainees will be expected to undertake six (6) assignments over the two year training period.
- All trainees will be supported by the Head of the Trainee Programme and must be mentored by an AoBBA member at each assignment. **Only AoBBA members** can validate a trainee's assignment experience.
- Trainees are expected to source suitable contests for completion of 6 assignments. The Head of the Trainee Programme will also pass on opportunities, as good partnerships have already been established with several contest organisers. (See below)

NB:-Please check with the Head of the Trainee Programme to ensure all assignment meet our criteria.

- Whilst on the trainee programme you are free to accept adjudicating engagements on the strict proviso that you are not representing the association and these cannot count towards your assignments. **We do however insist that trainees do not accept engagements at major and area contests**

Assignment Opportunities/Partnerships

Set Test Piece

- Cheltenham National Finals Sections 1-4 – Kapitol Promotions
- Area Contests
- Spring Festival/British Open (TBC)

Own Choice Test Piece

- Dr Martins
- Leicester Contest
- NEMBBA Contest

Entertainment Contest

- Welsh Open
- Wychavon

Hymn Tune and March Contest

- Brighthouse Contest
- Morley Contest
- Blackburn and Darwen

This is not an exhaustive list and other contests have previously been open to hosting a trainee where an AoBBA member has been adjudicating. A trainee may propose another contest, perhaps closer to home, where they have contact with organisers and an AoBBA member is adjudicating. However, the above list are the contests that have the most experience in hosting trainees and have proved of significant worth to the trainee experience. Usually, a minimum number of seven (7) bands are required for an assignment to proceed.

When embarking on this training programme some trainees will find it quite difficult to simultaneously:-

- follow the score being performed,
- listen to the performance,
- write a constructive critique,
- retain reference points for significant aspects of the critique.

This is an excellent example of multitasking requiring:-

- well-practised score reading,
- knowledge of repertoire,
- appreciation of the technical capabilities of brass instrumentation and the use of percussion,
- well-honed awareness of musical shapes and styles,
- fluency in the use of vocabulary and phraseology.

It is expected that a range of different standards of bands will be sampled by trainees who should experience performances by Fourth section to Championship section bands.

- These should comprise of the following:
 - 1 Set Test Piece
 - 2 Own Choice Test Piece
 - 3 Entertainment Contest
 - 4 Hymn Tune and March Contest
 - 5 Solo Contest
 - 6 To be discussed between the trainee and the Head of the Programme to give further experience in a particular type of contest according to feedback received during the training period.
- Where the trainee is attending a 'set piece' contest, trainees must provide their own scores for advance preparation purposes.
- For Own Choice contests trainees will be given a list of selected pieces and should try to obtain scores.

- Trainees are expected to attend the allocated contests at their own expense but where possible, trainees will be allocated assignments within a reasonable distance of their home.
- Trainees will be assessed on each individual assignment and feedback given. The trainee will be closely monitored by the Head of the Trainee Programme and we reserve the right to terminate if the required progress is not being achieved and is at an unsuitable level. Where necessary an appropriate action plan will be put in place to support the trainee.
- At the end of the training period the AoBBA Executive will assess the trainee's portfolio and a decision will be reached either to offer 'Adjudicator Member' status, deferment or failure to meet the required standard.
- **NB:-**Trainees should scan and email their remarks, placings and mentor sheets together with a short report on your assignment to Martin Heartfield, Head of Training Programme **within 7 days** of the assignment to **musicbloke@aol.com**
- Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) - Trainees who have already completed a number of adjudicating assignments, prior to being accepted as a trainee member, may be allowed to 'fast track' their training period provided that their prior learning can be accredited in accordance with the AoBBA training programme and validated by the AoBBA mentor.
- **All trainees are required to attend the AoBBA AGM and participate in the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) seminars and presentations.** Further information and copies of the CPD seminars can be found on the 'Resources' page of the AoBBA website :
– www.aobba.com

As part of completing each assignment you are expected to:-

- Produce a written critique of each performance, attempting to capture salient features (positive and negative), to aid the subsequent comparative assessment. This critique will emerge from multi-tasking via., listening to the performance; constantly following the score; identifying a feature then formulating and providing an appropriate comment in legible meaningful statements. It is useful to have an aide memoir to help spelling some words, e.g. rhythm, percussion, anacrusis.

Obviously, the length of the critique is less important than its substance. With limited experience, the use of relatively short cryptic sentences will be helpful! At the end of each performance try to include as a summative comment, a precise summary of what you have heard.

- Use the time between each performance to construct an order of merit. This tends to become a rather more complex exercise as the contest proceeds. It is worthwhile remembering that there is an extremely short "time window" after the last band has played to finalize your order of merit and annotate each adjudication sheet with the points and placings you have allocated.

During this period, you should also be mentally preparing your on-stage remarks to the audience. This may be as part of the official contest, or, if not required to speak at the time, is useful training to consider what you will have said.

- After the results have been announced there should be an opportunity for a discussion with the official adjudicators.
- **NB** - Please remember that your critique sheets and order of merit list are confidential and should remain so. It would not be ethical to disclose your findings to third parties that are external to AoBBA, the mentors and yourself. Please ensure each mentor completes the mentor report sheet will also send a short report to him.
- If possible pre-prepare paperwork, this will save valuable time (as the contest proceeds), between each performance to allocate to continuing comparative assessments.
- Your mentor is there to guide you; answer queries; act as aide memoir; but not to influence your decision. That is your pleasant and enjoyable task!!
- If you are unused to a prolonged period of handwriting you may find that the quality of your script may start to lapse and the clarity starts to diminish!!! Please consider this - you will be writing for several hours, as with performances try to retain clarity.
- Please remember to pack your score, metronome, spare pens and whistle.
- It will be a relief to know that there will be a short but welcome break at the halfway point of the contest! (Usually only if there are more than 9 bands)

PREPARING YOUR RESULTS

- 1) All adjudicators should be reminded that all paperwork should be completed by them in the box at the end of the contest. The Control Sheet and placings on the Remark Sheets should be checked and double-checked before leaving the box.
- 2) Adjudicators should avoid rearranging mark sheets in to placing order, but keep them in draw order.
- 3) Only adjudicators should write on Remark Forms and Control Sheets i.e. do not allow any other person including organisers and scrutineers to write numbers of placings on any sheets.
- 4) Members should not allow themselves to be hurried by any Steward or Contest Controller and should calmly, but as quickly as possible complete all relevant paperwork.
- 5) If points are not involved on the results then a clear description of the places should be made on the Control Sheet using letters as well as numbers ie 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc. Try to avoid 2 columns of numbers which can be confused. Also, circle or indent the podium prizes.
- 6) Check and Double-check all paperwork before leaving the box and sign the Control Sheet.
- 7) After the Scrutineer has completed the Results Sheet, check and sign before the

results are announced.

ADDRESSING THE AUDIENCE

At most competitive events, part of the adjudicator's role is to explain what factors have influenced the decision making process. At the majority of levels, this can be highly informative and educational, both for the audience and the competitors but at the very highest echelons of banding, these aspects become much less obvious.

Assemble a series of bullet points that relate to the performances you have heard. These must include reference to the musical and technical challenges of the test-piece.

What factors influenced your thought process in arriving at your decision. Were you pleased, satisfied or disappointed with the overall standard of performance?

If relevant, comment upon any individual awards and what influenced your choice.

Such an explanation must be crystal clear and concise and must match the results! The correct use of phraseology is fundamental to minimize ambiguity and misunderstandings amongst the audience who are listening intently, but perhaps under varying degrees of duress or tension. Adjudicators should always remain fully aware that the audience is knowledgeable, certainly to varying degrees, but it is likely that there will be many present who have just as good a critical capability as the adjudicator and who will also have listened impartially to the entire contest. It is wise to remember that there are people who listen to what you say, and not just listen to you speaking!

SOCIAL MEDIA

The use of social media can be a powerful tool for good and for bad. As an association upholding professional standards, as individuals of the association (which for this purpose includes trainees) we must always be aware of our presence online and how even seemingly innocuous comments can be taken out of context and possibly used against us and the Association. This includes but is not limited to; any form of comment on performances we have heard, sharing of others' views, and ill-judged humour.

MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones should be switched off on arrival and handed in to contest controllers prior to or at the draw.

PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

A polite reminder that trainees are representing the association whilst on assignment and therefore should dress appropriately.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT CRITERIA (PAC)

1. FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

- Accuracy - Note Values, Pitch, Rhythm
- Precision of Ensemble
- Balance, Blend, Tonal Quality
- Tuning, Intonation
- Control, Pitch, Dynamics

DO WE HEAR WHAT WE SEE!!! Quite simply these are the basic requirements of ensemble or solo playing. The requirements of the score must be reproduced in sound to ensure that what is written is heard.

Each note must be correctly played – in time, pitch and value. Notes from each player must be precisely together, as shown in the score. Chords balanced and blended to achieve an effective tonal (sound) quality.

Inaccurate pitch between consecutive notes (intonation) will adversely affect these aspects as described. Discrepancies should not be difficult to identify – they are either right or wrong (black or white!). No shades of grey!

2. MUSICIANSHIP

- Consistency of tonal quality (Band Sound)
- Use and range of dynamics
- Control and use of Vibrato
- Phrasing, expression and shape
- Convincing soloists – control, style, shape
- Effective communication of composer's score

Having satisfied the fundamental aspects as described, the conductor and players can now combine to explore and express musical qualities that include, tonal colours, relative shaping of dynamics, phrasing, expressive mood changes to convey the nature and characteristics of the music.

An effective stylistic approach must be adopted that incorporates aspects such as attack, release, correct note length, use of rests, vibrato, idiom and vibrato that effectively portrays the composer's intentions as shown in the score. Solo and accompaniments need to be effectively balanced and committed. The relevant rhythmic pulse is essential.

3. SCORE READING

- Accuracy of score reading
 - Interpretation
 - Tempo, relativity to style
 - Tempo, relativity to technical ability (Too fast/slow)
 - Shape, delivery, impact
 - Communication, commitment
- Has the score been read accurately by the conductor and players. This is a vital aspect especially during the development stages of band personnel.
 - Has the reading which must be accurate been faithfully re-produced in sound, style and rhythm?
 - Are the fundamental requirements as described being adversely affected in flow and delivery?
 - Is the music sterile and lifeless or is it vibrant with latent energy in evidence?
 - Is the performance unique in musical shape or more simply incorrect musically and technically?

4. PERFORMANCE RELATED ASPECTS

- Soloists, assurance, delivery, errors
- Accompaniments, security, empathy
- Anxiety, nerves, impact upon fundamental aspects
- Ensemble mishaps, breakdowns, recoveries

Rehearsals may have demonstrated that fundamental aspects have been achieved and performances are well shaped and secure until individual nerves, tensions and anxieties blight the contest performance to varying extents.

Adjudicators should be able to differentiate between lapses of the moment and those aspects that have almost never been corrected in rehearsals. This will enable performances to be assessed effectively and accurately. It is important to realise that all blemishes both Fundamental and Performance related will be taken into consideration and penalised accordingly.

Sometimes complete breakdowns in a performance will occur. When this happens the adjudicator should seek to ascertain the reasons for the breakdown, before making an appropriate assessment.

5. INSPIRATIONAL QUALITIES

- Exceptional communication with listeners

- Exceptional interpretive insight of score
- Exceptional quality of performance
- Query, perceived inspirational approach that detracts from fundamental aspects and musicianship

This is a sparkling facet for the very elite performances, mostly at the higher level, but occasionally experienced in lower sections too!

This results in memorable and readily recalled performances, which have highlighted parts of the music not heard in other performances.

Commonly known as the WOW or X factor in today's jargon. In some memorable instances this will be so, otherwise there could be an impression that this may result in just a "perceived inspirational" performance.

Membership Benefits

The benefits of AoBBA membership include the following:

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
- Support and advice for members
- Website with members directory
- An annual AGM
- Regular updates
- Handling enquiries from the general banding public
- Working with strategic partners

Please be assured that by being accepted onto the scheme, through your application you have proved to the Executive you are considered to have enough musical experience and potential to be a future member of AoBBA. We, the Association, are here to support you and offer friendly but professional mentoring. The importance of the scheme and the status it has (as endorsed by the London College of Music) should not be underestimated. Alongside the obvious work involved, we do hope you enjoy your time 'in the box'.

AoBBA Trainee Record Sheet

Name.....

Date Commenced.....

Please tick the box when trainee has achieved the objectives

Contest:	Date:
Description (Set Piece etc...)	
Assignment 1 - Objectives	✓
Is punctual and well presented?	
Understands the Performance Assessment Criteria (PAC)?	
Is able to organise documentation prior to contest?	
Demonstrates the ability to prepare score(s)?	
Can ascribe written remarks on each performance, including correct spelling and legible handwriting	
Demonstrates the ability to place competitors in rank order	
Can complete result sheets and associated paper work to the satisfaction of the Contest organiser	
Demonstrates effective communication from the stage	
Comments:	
Mentor:	Signed:

Assignment 1 - Results					
Trainee Results			Official Results		
Placing	Draw	Points	Placing	Draw	Points
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		
6			6		
7			7		
8			8		
9			9		
10			10		
11			11		
12			12		
13			13		
14			14		
15			15		
16			16		
17			17		
18			18		
19			19		
20			20		
21			21		
22			22		
23			23		
24			24		
25			25		
Trainee:			Signed:		Date:

Contest:	Date:
Description (Set Piece etc...)	
Assignment 2 - Objectives	✓
Is punctual and well presented?	
Understands the Performance Assessment Criteria (PAC)?	
Is able to organise documentation prior to contest?	
Demonstrates the ability to prepare score(s)?	
Can ascribe written remarks on each performance, including correct spelling and legible handwriting	
Demonstrates the ability to place competitors in rank order	
Can complete result sheets and associated paper work to the satisfaction of the Contest organiser	
Demonstrates effective communication from the stage	
Comments:	
Mentor:	Signed:

You should attach a copy of your remarks sheet to this page

Assignment 2 - Results					
Trainee Results			Official Results		
Placing	Draw	Points	Placing	Draw	Points
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		
6			6		
7			7		
8			8		
9			9		
10			10		
11			11		
12			12		
13			13		
14			14		
15			15		
16			16		
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18			18		
19			19		
20			20		
21			21		
22			22		
23			23		
24			24		
25			25		
Trainee:			Signed:		Date:

Contest:	Date:
Description (Set Piece etc...)	
Assignment 3 - Objectives	✓
Is punctual and well presented?	
Understands the Performance Assessment Criteria (PAC)?	
Is able to organise documentation prior to contest?	
Demonstrates the ability to prepare score(s)?	
Can ascribe written remarks on each performance, including correct spelling and legible handwriting	
Demonstrates the ability to place competitors in rank order	
Can complete result sheets and associated paper work to the satisfaction of the Contest organiser	
Demonstrates effective communication from the stage	
Comments:	
Mentor:	Signed:

You should attach a copy of your remarks sheet to this page

Assignment 3 - Results					
Trainee Results			Official Results		
Placing	Draw	Points	Placing	Draw	Points
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		
6			6		
7			7		
8			8		
9			9		
10			10		
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25			25		
Trainee:			Signed:		Date:

Contest:	Date:
Description (Set Piece etc...)	
Assignment 4 - Objectives	✓
Is punctual and well presented?	
Understands the Performance Assessment Criteria (PAC)?	
Is able to organise documentation prior to contest?	
Demonstrates the ability to prepare score(s)?	
Can ascribe written remarks on each performance, including correct spelling and legible handwriting	
Demonstrates the ability to place competitors in rank order	
Can complete result sheets and associated paper work to the satisfaction of the Contest organiser	
Demonstrates effective communication from the stage	
Comments:	
Mentor:	Signed:

You should attach a copy of your remarks sheet to this page

Assignment 4 - Results					
Trainee Results			Official Results		
Placing	Draw	Points	Placing	Draw	Points
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		
6			6		
7			7		
8			8		
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25			25		
Trainee:			Signed:		Date:

Contest:	Date:
Description (Set Piece etc...)	
Assignment 5 - Objectives	✓
Is punctual and well presented?	
Understands the Performance Assessment Criteria (PAC)?	
Is able to organise documentation prior to contest?	
Demonstrates the ability to prepare score(s)?	
Can ascribe written remarks on each performance, including correct spelling and legible handwriting	
Demonstrates the ability to place competitors in rank order	
Can complete result sheets and associated paper work to the satisfaction of the Contest organiser	
Demonstrates effective communication from the stage	
Comments:	
Mentor:	Signed:

You should attach a copy of your remarks sheet to this page

Assignment 5 - Results

Trainee Results			Official Results		
Placing	Draw	Points	Placing	Draw	Points
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		
6			6		
7			7		
8			8		
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25			25		
Trainee:			Signed:		Date:

Contest:	Date:
Description (Set Piece etc...)	
Assignment 6 - Objectives	✓
Is punctual and well presented?	
Understands the Performance Assessment Criteria (PAC)?	
Is able to organise documentation prior to contest?	
Demonstrates the ability to prepare score(s)?	
Can ascribe written remarks on each performance, including correct spelling and legible handwriting	
Demonstrates the ability to place competitors in rank order	
Can complete result sheets and associated paper work to the satisfaction of the Contest organiser	
Demonstrates effective communication from the stage	
Comments:	
Mentor:	Signed:

You should attach a copy of your remarks sheet to this page

Assignment 6 - Results

Trainee Results			Official Results		
Placing	Draw	Points	Placing	Draw	Points
1			1		
2			2		
3			3		
4			4		
5			5		
6			6		
7			7		
8			8		
9			9		
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18			18		
19			19		
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21			21		
22			22		
23			23		
24			24		
25			25		
Trainee:			Signed:		Date:

