

PAA Musical Theatre Recorded Digital Exams

Guidance for schools/venues

PAA graded exams can now be assessed via video submission across our suite of qualifications. These digital solutions are part of our commitment to making PAA graded exams as accessible as possible. Recorded digital exams can be requested by schools, exam centres, and teachers across all disciplines.

This guide comprises two sections:

1. Procedure guide for Musical Theatre recorded digital exams
2. Technical guidance for all PAA recorded digital exams

1. Procedure guide for Musical Theatre recorded digital exams

NB. By submitting your entry you agree to abide by the regulations for all RSL PAA Recorded Digital Exams, found here <https://www.rslawards.com/paa/paa-video-exams/>

Schools/venues are responsible for ensuring the welfare of candidates throughout the examination. Measures must be taken to ensure:

- candidates have an adequately sized space for the examination/recording to take place safely, with plenty of room for all dance movements
- a well-lit performance space, with no outside distractions or background noise
- flooring which is safe for dancing on, clean and free from debris, spillages, and any other hazards
- a chaperone to be present throughout the recording of the video, responsible for ensuring the physical and mental wellbeing of the candidates
- all relevant safeguarding procedures are adhered to

RSL Awards assumes no liability for damage to property or injury sustained by any candidate or staff member while participating in recorded video examinations.

Additional regulations as follows:

There must be a minimum of two and a maximum of eight candidates on screen at any one time and schools/venues must ensure that all candidates are fully visible.

The whole exam must be videoed continuously in one take, as if it was a live exam, with no editing permitted.

The Group Performance must adhere to the maximum duration indicated in the syllabus at the relevant grade.

The video should capture the entire performance space from the front, as if from the vantage point of the examiner. Different camera angles, close-ups etc. should not be used.

The music operator or principal will undertake the running of the exam, including introducing the exam session at the start (centre name, date, candidate names and numbers) and introducing each exam component (Group Performance, Technical Skills Demonstration, and Understanding & Reflection). RSL has provided an example script to assist when conducting a Musical Theatre video examination.

Centres should ensure that the music, and the music operator’s voice, are clearly audible on the video.

The music operator and chaperone must be visible on the video. They must not be positioned out of shot.

For dancing, teachers should ensure that the candidates’ whole body is clearly visible.

For singing, candidates should have a phrase of solo singing each, either within the performance, or within a repeat of the song after the performance. Below are the minimum durations:

GRADE	Indicative Content		
	NUMBER OF SOLO LINES	BARS IN MUSIC	TIME IN SECONDS
Premiere/Debut	1	2-4 bars	5-10
Grade 1-3	2	4-8 bars	10-20
Grades 4-5	4	8-12 bars	20-30
Grades 6-7	6	16-20 bars	40-50
Grade 8	7	20-28 bars	50-70

Note that the examiner will contact the principal or venue representative by email approximately 7 days before the day that the Technical Skills Demonstrations are due to be filmed, to introduce themselves and confirm information specific to the exam

Technical Skills Demonstration:

- If Acting is chosen for the Technical Skills Demonstration (at grades 1-5 only), the teacher should put the candidates into pairs and each pair should demonstrate **all** of the scenarios for two candidates at the relevant grade. If there is an odd number of candidates, another student should partner that candidate (this student would not be assessed). The examiner will select at random **one** of the scenarios to watch and assess.
- If Acting is chosen for the Technical Skills Demonstration at grades 4 or 5, the examiner will send the previously unknown extra element on the day of the exam. Therefore, it is important that RSL are informed **at least one month in advance** of the date that the Technical Skills Demonstrations are due to be filmed.
- Debut candidates should be organised into groups of no more than 8, and, in these groups, they should demonstrate **all four** characters (Lion, Witch, Monkey, Clown) to the set music. The examiner will select at random **one** of the demonstrations to watch and assess.
- If Singing is chosen (Grades 1-8 only), candidates should sing solo. Please refer to the minimum durations above.

Understanding and Reflection:

As per the syllabus specifications, each candidate must select one question from List A and one question from List B, and present their responses to the questions. Please see the syllabus specifications for grade-by-grade questions.

- Facing directly to camera, each candidate should announce their chosen questions followed by presenting their response to each question.
- Small notecards may be used if required, but only as a reminder of the questions chosen. **Candidates must not read their responses.** If notecards are used they must be handheld, and not positioned out of camera shot.

2. Technical Guidance for all PAA Recorded Video exams

Video file size:

The current file size limit is **2GB per exam**. For Screen Acting exams, the file size limit for **all videos in one exam is 2GB**. Please note that if a file exceeds this limit the applicant will be asked to resend the video(s) in a smaller file size.

What frame size should I set my equipment to use?

RSL is asking for a minimum of 720HD videos and a maximum of 1080HD, to ensure your picture quality is good whilst keeping the file sizes manageable

Rationale: Some file sizes are big and can cause download and compatibility issues. At the other end of the spectrum, if the frame size is too small, the images can look blurry or pixelated when you try and view them on computer monitors or tablets, so it is best to go for a happy medium - striking a balance between detail and file size. Full HD (often referred to by the names 1080i or 1080P) is a happy medium. However, 720HD video can still look very good (720i or 720P) and will produce noticeable smaller file sizes.

What frame rate should I use?

Frame rate has an impact on the perceived quality of video to an extent - a very low frame rate will result in jerky video. However, you don't need a huge number of frames per second before things start to look pretty smooth. Feature films, for instance, typically use 24 frames per second. This is important, because mobile phone and camera manufactures are currently increasing the frame rates that their devices can capture, largely so extreme slow-motion video can be produced. Whilst this is impressive, Rockschoool don't need this - and the more frames your video contains, the bigger the file sizes get again.

So, it's for this reason RSL is asking you to set your frame rate to somewhere between 24 fps (frames per second) and 30fps. Typically, this will be a choice between 25fps and 30fps, depending on the hardware. This will generate video that is smooth but should keep your video file size manageable.

What video format should I use?

Smart phones and consumer cameras largely gather video and process them and store them in a file, which makes it easier to share using the internet. The results vary, but a well-designed video format can do an excellent job of retaining a good sound and image while squeezing it into a small package. The most common formats are .MP4 files which are a good choice, as they are both quite small and open across lots



of devices, but .mov files and .avi files are also pretty well supported. If you are at all confused or concerned, it may be worth contacting RSL to check that your submitted video files will open.

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