

Using an interpreter or a translator for your exam or qualification

March 2023

Contents

General Principles	2
A note about language	2
PAA exams	3
Rockschool vocals exams	3
Interpreters	3
Information for the interpreter	3
Signed declaration	4
Translations	4
Signed declaration	4

General Principles

For face-to-face and live stream exams, candidates may use an **interpreter**. An interpreter's role is to facilitate communication between the candidate and examiner in real time.

For submitted assessment evidence (written, audio or visual), a **translator** may be used to provide a translated version of written or spoken material.

The candidate is normally responsible for all arrangements and costs of an interpreter or translator. In certain circumstances RSL may provide an interpreter or translator as part of the service.

An interpreter or translator must be:

- independent of the candidate (so not their teacher or someone related to them), and free of any potential conflict of interest (i.e. not likely to translate responses or materials in such a way as to advantage/disadvantage the candidate)
- suitably qualified to undertake the role
- fluent both in English and the candidate's language
- experienced in undertaking similar work in an assessment context
- familiar with the relevant subject matter and genre
- able to translate the technical/musical terms that will be needed
- where possible, someone that the candidate has worked with before

Online machine translation services, such as Google Translate, may not be used. This is because these systems cannot always fully interpret context and complexities of text (e.g. idiomatic expressions, technical vocabulary) and therefore may not reflect the true meaning of the original content, which can work to the candidate's disadvantage.

RSL cannot accept responsibility for any dispute between the candidate and their chosen interpreter/translator.

Unless provided as a service by RSL in certain circumstances, RSL does not endorse any interpreters or translators and cannot intervene in any disputes. If you are not happy with your interpreter/translator or the service you have received from them, you must take this up with them or their agency directly.

With respect to assessment, **all candidates are treated equally and will be marked in the same way.** Every attempt is made to minimise any effect of the use of translation on the marking; however it is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that they have worked through any potential problems with their interpreter/translator and are ready for the exam/are happy with the translation.

A note about language

By default, in all countries, examinations and assessments are conducted in English by an examiner who speaks and understands English. In certain circumstances, and by special arrangement, it may be possible to arrange for a candidate to be assessed in another language by an examiner who speaks and understands that language (thus avoiding the need for an interpreter or translation). Please contact your local RSL rep for more information and advice.

PAA exams

Interpreters and translations are not allowed for PAA Acting and Public Speaking examinations, where direct assessment of the candidate's use of language by an examiner who speaks and understands the same language is a requirement.

For the Group Performance component of the **Musical Theatre** exam, and (if chosen) the Singing Technical Skills Demonstration, candidates may perform in a language other than the language of assessment, so long as a translation of the words is provided for the examiner. **Translations are not allowed for the Acting Technical Skills Demonstration (if chosen)**, as this involves direct assessment of the candidate's use of language by an examiner who speaks and understands the same language.

Rockschool vocals exams

In Rockscool Vocals exams, candidates may perform songs (usually free choice pieces) in a language other than the language of assessment, so long as they provide a translation of the words for the examiner.

Interpreters

Interpreters are allowed for candidates whose first language is not English and where the candidate does not have sufficient mastery of the English language for the communication requirements of the exam. Their involvement must be agreed with the centre/representative in advance of the exam.

It is important for candidates to let us know **at the point of registration/entry** if they intend to use an interpreter. We will advise the examiner on how best to conduct the exam, and will also pass on any extra advice or information provided at the time of entry.

An interpreter's role is to facilitate communication between two or more people who use different languages – the interpreter is not responsible for what is said by either party, but for ensuring that everything that is said is communicated accurately in the other language. The type of interpretation required will be consecutive interpretation (taking turns).

During the exam, the interpreter must:

- communicate terms and ideas that are on a level with the exam or qualification being taken and communicate these appropriately
- interpret everything that is said during the exam, by both candidate and examiner, as accurately as possible

The interpreter must not:

- give any undue assistance in answering any of the questions
- explain or re-word anything said by the examiner. If the candidate does not understand, the examiner will re-word the question and the interpreter will then interpret this
- physically demonstrate any of the technical instructions (unless copying the examiner)
- alter the candidate's response in any way when interpreting it back to the examiner

Information for the interpreter

We recommend you are familiar with the relevant syllabus guide and (where relevant) appropriate grade book before the exam takes place. This is to ensure you are familiar with the sort of dialogue and vocabulary that can be expected in the exam for the required level.

To make the instructions and questions from the examiner to the candidate as clear as possible we recommend that you position yourself next to the examiner.

Some of the interpreting needed will be quite simple, e.g. greetings, or 'Would you like to begin?'

Components of exams which will require more complex interaction between the examiner and the candidate include the ear tests in graded music exams and the understanding and reflection section in Performance Arts Awards (PAA) exams.

The examiner will be prepared to re-word questions using different language if necessary.

You should interpret the words of the examiner as closely as possible in the candidate's language, and should not explain or re-word anything.

If the candidate does not understand something, relay this to the examiner, who will re-word what he or she has said, and you should then interpret this to the candidate.

Signed declaration

Interpreters are required to sign a declaration confirming that they have read and understood this guidance. A signed and dated declaration to this effect must be handed to the examiner on the day of the exam. A declaration form is available to download at <https://www.rslawards.com/about-us/policies-regulations/>

Translations

For submitted assessment evidence, a **translation** may be provided in the form of a separate written document or as subtitles on video evidence.

Where the translation is separate to the evidence, all evidence, in its original form, must be submitted along with the translation.

Subtitles provide a translated version of the words being spoken on the video in real time, so it is important that, as well as being accurate, they should reflect the sense and meaning of the spoken content as closely as possible.

Subtitles should:

- appear at the bottom of the screen, timed so as to match the words as closely as possible
- be white or another light colour, on a black background. Where there are multiple candidates, use different colours for each candidate
- use a font size which is easy to read but not too big and does not obscure the candidate(s). A wide font is recommended, e.g. Verdana.

There are several good websites to visit for technical advice, including: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/academy-guides/how-do-i-create-subtitles>

It is the responsibility of the candidate or entrant (teacher, parent, etc.) to ensure that any translation is accurate and adheres to this guidance.

Signed declaration

Translators are required to sign a declaration confirming that they have read and understood this guidance. A signed and dated declaration to this effect must be submitted by the candidate with their assessment materials. A declaration form is available to download at <https://www.rslawards.com/about-us/policies-regulations/>