

MUSICAL THEATRE LIVE VIDEO EXAMS

GUIDANCE FOR EXAM VENUES

OVERVIEW

Live Video Exams are conducted by video conference between the candidates at the exam venue and the examiner based at another location.

We use standards-based technology which runs on a wide range of devices. For a Musical Theatre exam conducted remotely video quality is of particular importance and therefore a suitable device is required.

Musical Theatre live video exam content is exactly the same as the specifications in the syllabus, however, the following must be adhered to:

Venues are responsible for ensuring the welfare of candidates throughout the live video examination, including provision of:

- an adequately sized space for the examination to safely take place, with plenty of room for all scenes, musical numbers and dance movements, appropriate to the number of candidates
- flooring which is safe for dancing on and offers the dancer some cushioning on impact (such as sprung or vinyl flooring manufactured to industry standards), which is clean and free from debris, spillages, and any other hazards. RSL Awards assumes no liability for damage to property or injury sustained by any candidate or staff member while participating in live video examinations
- a chaperone (in addition to the music operator) to be present throughout the live video examination, responsible for ensuring the physical and mental wellbeing of the candidates. Venues must ensure that all current safeguarding protocols are adhered to.

Other conditions:

- there must be a minimum of two and a maximum of eight candidates per live video examination, and the principal/teacher must ensure that all candidates are fully and equally visible to the examiner. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure the examiner can easily see the whole area in which the candidates will perform, including immediate surrounding areas
- all candidates must be visible throughout the examination, including moments when they are offstage. This is to ensure that each and every candidate's performance can be seen from start to finish, including entrances and exits
- to ensure the above, it is permissible to split candidates into smaller groups

- the music operator and chaperone must also be visible to the examiner. They must not be positioned out of shot
- quiet, private location in a walled room
- bright lighting (day light or artificial light), ideally illuminating the candidates from their front
- the room should not be highly reverberant. If there are areas/pockets of the room where audibility or visibility is compromised (e.g. due to the shape), candidates should not perform in these areas
- if the dance, or part of the dance, is performed in lines, teachers must ensure that all candidates have an equal opportunity to be positioned in the front line, or downstage area, for at least part of the routine
- a maximum of two non-exam students are permitted to take part in live video examinations
- an audience is permitted, with the following guidelines to be adhered to:
 - the audience must be filmed, and the video sent to RSL. This is to ensure that the presence of the audience does not affect or compromise examination conditions and requirements. A separate camera/device can be positioned to allow a clear view of the audience when seated. The camera can then be left to run for the duration of each performance
 - a maximum of 30 people
 - the audience should be asked to avoid unnecessary background noise

PRIOR TO THE LIVE VIDEO EXAMINATION

Prior to the examination day, venues should undertake a Tech Check to test the technical setup. This is normally done in the form of a **Self Tech Check**, following the guidance provided by RSL, but guided tech checks, either in whole or in part, may be available in certain circumstances; please contact paa@rslawards.com for further information.

If, before booking your exam, you would like to check that your exam venue is adequate in terms of space, this can be arranged. Please contact paa@rslawards.com .

A few days before the exam the examiner will contact the principal (UK venues) or relevant RSL representative (International venues), to introduce themselves and:

- review the schedule, highlighting any applications for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations
- confirm which technical skill each grade group will be demonstrating, or, in the case of grades 6-8, which technical skill each candidate has chosen to demonstrate
- confirm that the Tech Check has been done and the technical set-up is functional

PROCESS

The live video examination will be set up using Zoom video conferencing software. Ahead of the scheduled exam day, an RSL Exams Officer will provide a link for the exam Zoom video conference to be opened on the venue's computer.

Approximately 30 minutes before the exam start time, candidates should wait outside of the exam room with a chaperone, and the examiner will join the video conference.

The examiner will need to have a private conversation (ie. with no candidates in the exam room) with the principal and music operator to go through the schedule highlighting any absences, special considerations or applications for reasonable adjustments.

Sound check: The examiner will ask the music operator to play some music to check volume levels. The examiner may ask the principal or music operator to speak a few words whilst walking around different areas of the room.

If applicable, the examiner will check that the principal has read and adhered to all relevant **COVID-19 information and guidance for PAA Exam Venues** on the RSL website.

The music operator and chaperone must remain visible to the examiner throughout the examination.

In the event of any connectivity issues, a member of staff needs to be available on a phone number provided by the venue.

All candidates must be wearing their candidate number clearly on the front and back of their clothing.

Candidates taking grades 6-8 should have their ID ready to present to the examiner during registration.

The candidates and chaperone will then enter the exam space and the examiner will introduce themselves and check that the lighting is adequate and the candidates and staff are fully visible. The examiner may ask the candidates to walk around the room for this.

The examiner will then take the register. The principal or teacher will be present when the register is being taken to ensure candidates are taking the correct grade.

The exam will proceed as follows:

The examiner prompts the candidates to get ready for the Group Performance. The music operator then checks they are ready and prompts them to start.

After the Group Performance the examiner may ask for sections to be repeated.

The examiner will then conduct the Technical Skills Demonstration. Candidates demonstrate their technical skill in their grade groups, although the examiner may split them into smaller groups (for example, if there are six Grade 1 candidates demonstrating dancing, the examiner may split them into two groups of 3.)

If Acting has been chosen for the Technical Skills Demonstration, the examiner will divide the candidates into twos or threes as normal, then they may ask each pair/three to step nearer to the camera to tell them which scenario/character they will be performing, before stepping back into the performance space for their demonstration.

After the Technical Skills Demonstration, the examiner will ask the candidates to sit in a semi-circle, in preparation for the Understanding and Reflection component.

Each candidate is then asked, in turn, to stand and step nearer to the camera to answer the examiner's questions.

Candidates taking this grade have now completed their exam and may leave.

If the Group Performance included candidates taking various grades, the examiner will then move on to the next grade group and conduct their Technical Skills Demonstration and Understanding and Reflection sections, as above.

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Video conference device: Laptop / Desktop computer + screen

- Laptop or Desktop computer preferred
- We use Zoom – please refer to [Desktop client requirements](#) and [Mobile App requirements](#)
- Good quality webcam, built-in or external, minimum 1080x720 (720p) resolution
- Built-in speakers or audio output connected to PA speakers
- Internet connection, ideally through ethernet cable

Microphone:

- Good quality, external microphone is advised, but not mandated.
- For ease of setup we recommend a USB microphone such as [RØDE NT-USB mini](#)

Sound system / PA:

- Connected Video Conference device and for any locally played backing tracks

Internet connection:

- Minimum (as specified by Internet Service Provider): 5Mbps download / 1 Mbps upload
- We will ask you to run a customised speed test prior to the exam
- We recommend to conduct a generic test with Zoom via <https://zoom.us/test>
- We recommend to have the device connected by Ethernet cable if possible, to avoid variabilities and complexities of Wifi
- If the device does not have a wired connection option, care should be taken to optimise the Wifi signal, for example by finding the position in the room providing the best signal. This can be checked with apps such as [Wifi Analyzer](#) (Android) or [Wifi Analyzer](#) (Windows). Using these apps it is also possible to identify if the Wifi channel is overcrowded by neighbouring Wifi networks. Some routers allow to change the channel to one that is less crowded and therefore reducing interference
- The firewall/router must allow outbound connections to TCP port 8000 for the streamed audio material. This can be checked with <http://portquiz.net:8000> . If successful, the page will load and show “You have reached this page on port **8000**” (etc, number varying). If it is unsuccessful the page won’t load. NB: it is unusual to encounter restrictions, but they may occur in corporate or school networks
- in restrictive networks it is also worth checking whether the [Zoom firewall requirements](#) are met.

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