

Street Dance and Jazz Dance recorded digital examinations

PAA Street Dance and Jazz Dance exams (all grades) can be assessed through recorded video evidence. These digital solutions are part of our commitment to making PAA graded exams as accessible as possible.

1. Exam Content:

The exam content is exactly the same as the specifications in the syllabus. *Note that the syllabus has been revised (September 2023). Candidates and teachers are advised to refer to the Revision History on page 54 of the syllabus.*

For recorded digital exams, the following additional guidelines must be adhered to:

There must be a minimum of two and a maximum of eight candidates per exam.

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

- an adequately sized space for the examination to take place safely, with plenty of room for all routines and dance movements, appropriate to the number of candidates
- a well-lit performance space, with no outside distractions or background noise
- 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
- a chaperone (in addition to the music operator) to be present and visible throughout the video examination, responsible for ensuring the physical and mental wellbeing of the candidates.

Centres must ensure that 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 video examinations.

Note that the examiner will contact the principal or venue representative by email approximately 7 days before the day that the examination is due to be recorded, to introduce themselves and confirm information specific to the exam. Therefore, it is important that RSL are informed **at least one month in advance** of the date that the exam is due to be recorded.

Improvisation/Freestyle (Grades 4-8 only): For the Improvisation/Freestyle component, the examiner will email a link to the dance track (chosen by the examiner) on the morning of the exam day. For international venues, any time difference will be taken into account when sending the email. At the appropriate time in the exam, the music operator must play this track for

approximately one minute, and the candidates listen. The candidates will then improvise for the correct amount of time, as specified in the syllabus at the relevant grade.

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

Group Performance: There should be no more than six candidates for the performance component (revised 2023). If there are seven or eight candidates taking the exam, the music operator should split candidates into two groups.

Centres must ensure that all candidates are fully visible throughout the examination. Therefore, if necessary to ensure all candidates are visible, it is permissible to split candidates into smaller groups, which perform sections of the exam in sequence (one after the other).

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 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 exercise/dance routine. RSL has provided example scripts (for both Street Dance and Jazz Dance) to assist when conducting a dance 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 the Performance only, an audience is permitted; however, as the video is continuous, the time taken to seat the audience must be minimal. The audience does not need to be in shot.

Staff or audience members must not lead, direct or influence the candidates during any component of the examination

The unedited video should be submitted as soon as practically possible after the date of the video examination.

2. Technical Guidance for all PAA Recorded Digital exams

Video file size:

The current file size limit is **2GB per exam**. 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, Rockschool 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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