Awarding the
Contemporary Arts

Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations Policy (Graded Examinations)

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy applies to the following RSL brands:

- Rockschool
- Classical
- Performance Arts Awards (Stageschool)
- Career Qualifications at Levels 3, 4 and 6

This policy is aimed at teachers and candidates who are involved with RSL graded qualifications. RSL staff and examiners should also refer to this policy. For information about reasonable adjustments and special considerations for RSL vocational qualifications please see the *Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations for Vocational Qualifications* policy.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the procedures that candidates, teachers and examiners should follow when implementing reasonable adjustments and special considerations. The policy also gives details of the service provided by RSL for these arrangements. This policy is informed by the guidance provided by the Joint Council for Qualifications. Further information and guidance about reasonable adjustments can be found at **www.jcq.org.uk** This policy is available on our website at **www.rslawards.com/about-us/policies-regulations/**

This policy will be subject to review and monitoring by RSL and if necessary, will be amended and updated following feedback from candidates and examination venues. All versions of this policy will be approved by the Qualifications and Compliance Committee (QACC) and posted on our website dating each review.

Please note that we treat all records of reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements in confidence and retain them in accordance with our GDPR obligations.

If candidates wish to appeal against the decision by RSL for reasonable adjustments or special consideration arrangements, please refer to our Enquiries and Appeals policy (Graded Examinations), available to download from our website at **www.rslawards.com/about-us/policies-regulations/**

2. Issue and review

2.1 The date of issue of this policy is April 2025

2.2 This policy will be subject to regular review and monitoring by RSL and will be amended and updated accordingly. As part of this monitoring process, feedback from candidates, teachers and parents will be considered. All revisions of this policy will be posted on our website.

3. What are reasonable adjustments and special considerations?

RSL is committed to fair and equal assessment of its qualifications. We expect all candidates to have equal and fair access to all the assessments we provide. We recognise that in some cases there will be a need for some candidates to have access to a range of accommodations to meet their individual needs and provide fair access to the assessments they are undertaking.

- Reasonable adjustments can be applied for candidates who have a permanent disability or specific learning needs.
- Special considerations can be applied for candidates who have a temporary disability, medical condition or learning needs or who are indisposed or are affected by unforeseen circumstances beyond their control at the time of the assessment.

The provision for reasonable adjustments and special consideration arrangements is made to ensure that candidates receive fair recognition of their achievement whilst maintaining the integrity of the assessment.

3.1 Reasonable adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is defined as an action that will reduce the effect of a permanent disability or difficulty that places the candidate at a substantial disadvantage during assessment. Reasonable adjustments must not affect the integrity of the assessment, but may involve:

- Making changes for individuals to the standard assessment arrangements, for example allowing candidates extra time to complete the assessment
- Adapting assessment materials, such as providing materials in Braille for those with visual impairments
- Providing access facilitators during assessment, such as a sign language interpreter or a reader
- Re-organising the assessment room, such as removing visual stimuli for an autistic candidate

Reasonable adjustments are requested and approved by RSL before the assessment takes place and supporting evidence must include the diagnosis by a medical professional or substantiated by an Educational Psychologist or Paediatric practitioner on headed paper. The use of a reasonable adjustment will not be taken into consideration during the assessment of a candidate's work and does not affect the standards applied. Reasonable Adjustments are procedural adaptations which apply to how the examination or assessment is conducted, not the assessment of the work.

Every request for a reasonable adjustment will be considered on a case-by-case basis by RSL. What is reasonable in terms of an adjustment to the assessment will depend on the individual circumstances, cost implications and the practicality and effectiveness of the adjustment

3.2 Special considerations

Special considerations are different to reasonable adjustments as they apply to a temporary illness or adverse circumstance that could affect the candidate's performance. This could be taken into account before, during or after the assessment. RSL will consider applications for special consideration based on the information provided on a case-by-case basis.

4. Reasonable adjustment examples

Below are examples of adjustments that could be made for candidates with particular disabilities and/or learning difficulties. A more detailed explanation of these adjustments can be found at Appendix 1. The examples are not exhaustive and are for illustrative purposes only.

4.1 Practical examinations

- **Supervised rest breaks**
  Rest breaks may be taken during the examination. For Recorded Digital Exams filming may be split into several sessions (recorded on the same day) rather than one continuous take.
- **Extra time**
  Usually up to 25% of the examination time can be added. For Recorded Digital Exams this can be added to the filming time. Please see Appendix 1 for more detailed information about how extra time is applied.
- **A practical assistant/prompter**
  This may include someone in the examination to help the candidate stay focussed. It cannot be the candidate's teacher. For Recorded Digital Exams the person assisting should introduce themselves on the video as such. For face-to-face examinations the examiner could act as the prompter for the candidate or another suitable person if appropriate.

- **Instruction to examiner/examiner to be made aware**
  This may include instructions to the examiner about how they ask questions (e.g. using simple language), repeating instructions or speaking slowly for the candidate to aid understanding. Examiners may also be requested to check and confirm understanding before the candidate undertakes an assessment activity (e.g. performance pieces, technical exercises). If the examiner is to be made aware of a candidate's condition / circumstances but not requested to make any change to normal procedure, this strictly speaking is not a reasonable adjustment; however, this can still be arranged via the reasonable adjustment application process.

4.2 Written examinations

Please see Appendix 1 for further information about how each of these adjustments may be applied for written examinations. Please note that some adjustments will not be applicable to written examinations which are taken online.

- Supervised rest breaks
- Extra time. Usually up to 25% of the examination time can be added.
- A practical assistant/prompter
- Coloured/enlarged papers
- A reader
- A scribe
- Coloured overlays
- A live speaker
- A Sign Language Interpreter
- Separate invigilation
- Alternative site arrangement

Where additional personnel such as interpreters, prompters, scribes or assistants are not provided by RSL, they are responsible to the candidate or candidate's representative (teacher, parent, private venue etc.). The person appointed must not be the candidate's music teacher, relative, friend or peer. The person appointed must be appropriately trained and understand the rules of the particular access arrangement they are facilitating.

Awarding the
Contemporary Arts

5. Submitting applications for reasonable adjustment arrangements

Requests for reasonable adjustments must be sent to RSL at least 4 weeks before the assessment. Any late applications may not be processed. Requests should be submitted for any examination where a candidate wishes to apply for an adjustment. This includes Recorded Digital and Live Stream exams.

Requests for reasonable adjustments should be sent in by completing and submitting the *Rockschool Application for Reasonable Adjustments* form which is available on the website at **www.rslawards.com/about-us/policies-regulations/**

RSL reserves the right to refuse an entry from a candidate if the adjustment required would affect the integrity of the examination.

Each request should include the following information:

- The nature of the candidate's disability/learning need
- The special assessment arrangements requested
- Any supporting evidence or a copy of the evidence

Subsequent applications for a reasonable adjustment must be accompanied by supporting evidence as a candidate's condition may change over time or a different adjustment may be required for an examination at a higher grade or in a different discipline.

6. Evidence requirements

Each application must be accompanied by supporting medical evidence where disabilities are present. For individuals with physical or mental conditions RSL accepts diagnostic confirmation on headed paper by medical practitioners and for learning needs from Educational Psychologist or SEND qualified personnel.

Subsequent applications for a reasonable adjustment must be accompanied by supporting evidence as a candidate's condition may change over time or a different adjustment may be required for an examination at a higher grade or in a different discipline.

Please note that under GDPR requirements we cannot accept or process medical information about a candidate without having received informed consent from the candidate (if aged 18 or above) or their parent / guardian (if aged under 18); therefore if such information is supplied and the application form is not properly signed, the application will be returned and not processed. RSL will only store supporting medical or other evidence for a maximum of 1 year.

7. Special considerations

Special considerations are granted for a temporary illness, indisposition, or other circumstances adversely affecting the candidate's performance. This can be applied for before, during or after the assessment has taken place.

7.1 Before the assessment

A candidate may apply for a special consideration prior to the assessment (for example if they have broken their arm a few weeks beforehand), although it would normally be more appropriate to apply for a reasonable adjustment where the condition is understood to be permanent rather than temporary.

Teachers and/or candidates need to complete the form available on the website at **www.rslawards.com/about-us/policies-regulations/** and provide sufficient information to RSL about the disability, illness, injury or other circumstance and whether they feel that this is permanent or temporary. RSL would then make a decision about how to process the application. In the case of a permanent disability this would be processed as a reasonable adjustment and for a temporary illness or indisposition this would be processed as a special consideration.

Examples of special consideration could be:

- deferring the examination to a later date
- allowing an adjustment to the examination process – these could be similar in nature to those granted for reasonable adjustments

Applications for a special consideration to be applied must be made no later than 7 days prior to the assessment taking place. RSL will do its best to accommodate any special considerations; however, it may not always be possible to arrange for adjustments to be made in the timescales. In these cases, it may be appropriate to defer the assessment to a later date.

Applications should include:

- Venue name (if applicable)
- Candidate name
- Qualification title and level
- Date of the examination/assessment
- Summary of the temporary illness or circumstances affecting the candidate's performance
- Any medical evidence to support the application

7.2 During an assessment

In some cases, a candidate can be affected by an event which happens on the day of the examination or in the examination itself.

In the case of a candidate being late for an examination due to a temporary indisposition, examiners will sometimes be able to accommodate a change to the examination schedule to allow the candidate to take an examination later in the day.

Candidates who wish to request special consideration on the day of the examination should submit evidence to support their request to the examiner. Please note that the examiner is unable to make a decision straight away and RSL will be the final arbiter of whether special consideration will be granted. RSL will contact the candidate directly to inform them of the outcome.

7.3 After the assessment

Teachers or candidates may in some cases apply for a special consideration after an assessment if there was a circumstance that affected the candidate's performance. Examples of special considerations which would be considered include:

- serious disturbance or disruption during the examination such as a fire alarm or power failure
- temporary illness, injury or indisposition either prior to or during the examination (but assuming that the candidate attempted to, or did, complete the examination, and did not elect to withdraw)
- illness during the examination of the examiner or music operator
- recent bereavement or terminal illness of a member of the candidate's family, close friend or pet
- serious and disruptive domestic crisis leading to acute anxiety

A candidate will not be eligible for special consideration due to:

- very minor disturbances during an examination which did not materially impact on their ability to demonstrate the requirements of the examination
- a Recorded Digital Exam submission that has not followed our guidance, available here **www.rslawards.com/graded-music-exams/recorded-digital-exams/**
- a permanent disability or difficulty which is known about at the time of entry to the examination (in these cases candidates should apply for reasonable adjustments)

Examples of special consideration could include:

- A free or discounted re-mark (for live stream or recorded digital examinations)
- A free or discounted re-submission (for recorded digital examinations)
- A free or discounted re-entry (for live stream or face to face examinations)

Teachers and/or candidates need to complete the form available on the website at https://www.rslawards.com/about-us/policies-regulations/ and provide sufficient information to RSL no later than 3 working days after the assessment.

Awarding the
Contemporary Arts

Appendix 1: Detailed information about types of reasonable adjustment

This section sets out the potential arrangements that can be made to RSL assessments. As RSL provides a range of assessments including practical and written, some arrangements may not be applicable to certain types of assessment. Each request for an adjustment to assessment will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Extra time

It may be permissible to allow an individual candidate extra time to complete an assessment if he or she has a learning difficulty/disability which affects the speed at which they are able to process the instructions (but not their ability to carry them out in accordance with the set standard).

The amount of extra time allowed should accurately reflect the extent to which the completion of the assessment will be affected by the candidate's difficulty.

'Unlimited' extra time will not be allowed. RSL will set a maximum amount of extra time in relation to the individual candidate's requirements which must be adhered to by the venue or examiner.

The candidate or candidate's representative is responsible for ensuring they can cope with the content of the examination and that they are medically fit to undertake an extended assessment period before additional time is requested.

Extra time will not be allowed in cases where the timing is a crucial part of the assessment or in group activities where the candidate's performance will be assessed in conjunction with others.

RSL may apply the following extensions to time allowances during the assessment. This will be applied to particular sections of the examination where the candidate may require additional time to process written or verbal instructions or directions. In all cases evidence must be presented that the extra time is in accordance with the candidate's normal way of working.

25% extra time may be added for a candidate who has evidence of requiring additional time for verbal explanation or instruction. This may apply to the following sections of an assessment:

- Unset work where an examiner may have to repeat instructions or break down an exercise for a candidate to be able to demonstrate that exercise. Examples of candidates who may need this include those with dyslexia, memory problems or other learning difficulties meaning that they need instructions repeated.
- Set exercises where a candidate requires the examiner to repeat an instruction or where the candidate needs the exercise to be broken down into smaller elements and requires extra time to complete these.

In certain exceptional cases a candidate may be allowed up to 50% extra time; however, there must be a strong justification for this.

In very exceptional cases a candidate may be allowed more than 50% extra time in order to manage a very substantial impairment. These will be granted on a case-by-case basis in the light of the candidate's needs and medical evidence provided by the applicant.

Supervised rest breaks

Additional rest breaks could be permissible for some candidates. Rest breaks could be incorporated into the format of the assessment within the assigned time schedule.

A rest break is not the same as extra time. Should a rest break be required, the examination should be paused and re-started when the candidate is ready to continue.

Sign Language Interpreter

A Sign Language Interpreter can be used during assessment, but only where this does not compromise a candidate's ability to complete the assessment themselves. Where Sign Language is the primary means of communication for a candidate with hearing impairment, these candidates may have the support of a BSL/English interpreter to sign the instructions or directions to them which are being given.

Where a Sign Language Interpreter is used in an assessment, RSL will also permit additional time to allow for instructions to be relayed to the candidate via the interpreter.

The candidate or candidate's representative is responsible for providing a Sign Language Interpreter.

The Sign Language Interpreter should be recruited with integrity by the venue/teacher and hold an appropriate qualification in the sign language and a good working knowledge of the content of the assessment. They must not be the candidate's music teacher relative, friend or peer.

A candidate should, wherever possible, have had previous experience of working with a Sign Language Interpreter and should have used this arrangement during their classes.

A reader

A reader is a responsible adult who reads the exam instructions and questions to the candidate.

This may involve reading all the instructions to the candidate or the candidate may request only some words to be read.

A reader is not a practical assistant, a prompter, a scribe or a Sign Language Interpreter. The same person may act as a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader, a scribe and/or a Sign Language Interpreter as long as permission has been given for these arrangements by Head Office in advance. The regulations for the use of each arrangement must be strictly adhered to.

So as not to give an unfair advantage, a computer reader or a reader will only be allowed if a candidate has:

- language and vocabulary difficulties which have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to access on-screen text; or
- a substantial and long-term vision impairment and cannot read a modified script independently, or at a sufficient speed even with extra time allowed (or RSL is not able to provide such a modified script).

The use of a computer reader or a reader must reflect the candidate's normal way of working in light of their substantial and long-term impairment.

Read aloud
It can make a significant difference to a candidate who persistently struggles to understand what they have read, but who does not qualify for a reader, to read aloud. Where a candidate is reading difficult text, he/she may work more effectively if they can hear themselves read. The arrangement must reflect the candidate's normal way of working. A candidate who reads aloud to himself/herself must be accommodated separately within the venue.

A scribe
A scribe is a responsible adult who, in controlled assessment, coursework and/or in an examination but not in orals, inputs a candidate's dictated answers to the questions. If a candidate dictates answers on to a tape, a responsible adult must input the candidate's dictated answers to the questions. A scribe is not a practical assistant, a prompter or a reader. The same person may act as a practical assistant, a prompter, a reader and/or a scribe as long as permission has been given for these arrangements. So as not to give an unfair advantage, a scribe will only be allowed where:

- an impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the candidate's ability to input responses; or
- a candidate cannot input responses independently, or at sufficient speed to record their answers even with extra time allowed, as a result of a substantial and long-term impairment.

The use of a scribe must reflect the candidate's normal way of working in light of their substantial and long-term impairment.

Word processing software/speech recognition technology

Where it reflects the candidate's normal way of working, as appropriate to his/her needs, the candidate may alternatively use:

- word processing software with the spelling and grammar check facility enabled.
- word processing software with predictive text/spelling and grammar check facility enabled.
- speech recognition technology with predictive text when the candidate dictates into word processing software. A screen reader) may be used to read back and correct the candidate's dictated answers
- computer software, producing speech, which is used to dictate to a scribe.
- has little or no sense of time (e.g. candidates with ADHD or ASD); or
- persistently loses concentration; or
- is affected by an obsessive-compulsive disorder which prevents them from moving onto the next part of the exam.

However, in these circumstances the candidate will not have access to marks awarded for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Prompter
A prompter may be permitted where a candidate has a substantial and long-term adverse impairment resulting in persistent distractibility or significant difficulty in concentrating. For example, the candidate:

Practical assistant
A practical assistant must not be allowed to carry out physical tasks or demonstrate physical abilities where they form part of the assessment objectives. RSL will grant the use of a practical assistant only in particular cases where there is a clear need for such assistance and a defined set of activities that the practical assistant is required to perform.

Bilingual translation dictionaries with up to a maximum of 25% extra time
A bilingual translation dictionary must:

- only be used in examinations by candidates whose first language is not English, Irish or Welsh; and
- reflect the candidate's normal way of working. A standard bilingual translation dictionary must be used by the candidate. This may be an electronic bilingual translation dictionary or more typically a hard copy paper bilingual translation dictionary. Monolingual dictionaries (which define words and phrases), translators (including web-based translators), wordlists or glossaries must not be used. The bilingual translation dictionary must not:
- contain/display pictures; or
- provide an explanation or clarification of words and phrases. For example, a Chinese to English dictionary must simply be the word in Chinese and the equivalent word in English.

Bilingual translation dictionaries to be used in an examination must be:

- held in the venue under secure conditions; and
- thoroughly checked to ensure that no unauthorised information such as notes and revision data have been enclosed within or written on the pages of the dictionary.

Alternative assessment arrangements
In some cases, it may be permissible for a candidate to be assessed in an alternative way. For example, this could include:

- Modification of the examination room (e.g. placement of the examiner or equipment)
- Allowing the candidate to be examined on their own
- Allowing the candidate to be examined with friends/peers
- Allowing the teacher to be present in the examination room

Where a modification of the examination room is proposed, this must not impact on the assessment. The examiner must be able to see the candidate performing so that they can make an accurate assessment against the standards.

Awarding the
Contemporary Arts

Braille papers
Braille papers may be provided for candidates on a case-by-case basis and where a clear need is established. In these cases, the standard paper is modified prior to Brailling by a teacher specialised in vision impairments. The layout and presentation of the standard paper is modified accordingly. There may be a cost incurred to the applicant due to the cost of Brailling.

Coloured/enlarged paper (e.g. A3 unmodified enlarged papers)
RSL can provide coloured or enlarged versions of question papers or assessment material. This should be agreed in advance with RSL.

Other modifications to assessment materials
RSL will consider requests for other forms of modification to assessment materials on a case-by-case basis. RSL will require sufficient evidence that the modification requested does not impact on the integrity of the assessment nor gives the candidate an unfair advantage. Such modifications should be within the candidate's normal way of working.