

## **Filmed examinations:**

Extension to December 2022

Guidance for teachers



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## Focus on Exams Issue 2 2021

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## Welcome to Focus on Exams

We recently saw the 100th anniversary of the first RAD examination – an 'elementary' level, back in May 1921. It is extraordinary to think about the journey we have taken from that initial examination to our operations today, with many thousands of candidates working for their chance to perform for the examiner, or, during the continuing pandemic, for the camera!

We are still seeing great variations in the way that our members and candidates are affected by the pandemic: some are back to normal, some going about their business with restrictions in place, while others are experiencing further lockdowns and restrictions to curb rising infection rates.

Travel is still curtailed for many, meaning worldwide examiner travel remains impossible for the moment - although in some areas, we are starting to see limited travel resume (with appropriate risk assessments of course!). Filmed examinations continue to make a large contribution to the RAD's worldwide entry figures. To facilitate exams for all Members and candidates during these difficult times **we are extending the permitted timeframe for both filmed examinations and COVID exam adaptations until 31 December 2022**. Inside we talk more about this and provide further guidance on how to run a filmed exam day.

We also talk more about our Marking App pilot and what this might mean for examinations and results timings, and we look at developments in our filmed examinations process with an introduction to Planet e-stream, a platform we are providing to help teachers with issues uploading footage.

Thanks once again to our examiners, members and candidates for keeping calm and carrying on, especially during this difficult time.

Stay safe and best wishes

**James Stockdale**  
Director of Examinations

If you have any questions or feedback about RAD exams, contact us at [exams@rad.org.uk](mailto:exams@rad.org.uk)



## Filmed examinations – extension to December 2022

In 2020, as a direct response to pandemic measures and restrictions, the RAD implemented the use of filmed exams more widely to its members. This allowed many candidates to take exams where they may otherwise have been unable to do so.

Filmed exams have been permitted for all teachers until the end of 2021. Worldwide there is great variation in pandemic status; some areas continue almost as normal, others are still in lockdown, and many still have some form of social distancing or restriction. We are already mid-way through 2021 and it would be realistic to assume that we are not going to be 'post-pandemic' even in 2022.

**We have, therefore, made the decision to extend the timeframe for teachers to choose to take filmed exams , until the end of 2022. This includes an extension for all COVID adaptations currently in place.**

Throughout 2022 the cost for exams (filmed or face-to-face) will remain the same. Candidates will receive the same regulated qualification for either a filmed or live exam. Although we will not have examiner travel or accommodation expenses, we will still be paying them (and RAD staff) for a less cost-effective and more time-consuming process (many filmed examinations have included fewer candidates due to social distancing, with much shorter tours). We have recruited additional staff to help with the processing of the filmed exams, and have taken on additional software and development costs, both in the first phase of filming, and later as we worked to streamline the process for our teachers – tackling the issue of uploading and downloading footage. The RAD has had significant loss of income due to COVID-19, and this, along with the additional costs, and the fact that either a film or face-to-face examination provides the same regulated qualification outcome, sits behind the rationale that exam fees will remain the same for both.

We will review this timeframe based on the pandemic and its effects and will now aim to consolidate how filmed exams fit in with our services. Our plan is, however, to **resume with live exams as soon as it is safe to do so, as we believe they deliver the best experience for the candidate.** As we now have procedures in place for filmed exams and have spent time and effort on the technology and processes round these, it seems reasonable to continue to use this process in extenuating circumstances. As such, we are looking at filmed examinations and in what circumstances these could be used post 2022. We will communicate these details as soon as they are finalised.

## Examiner lateral flow tests and vaccinations

Where possible and relevant in their country of residence, we will be encouraging all examiners to take rapid lateral flow tests before any in person examinations and will provide examiners with guidance on this where necessary. If any schools require visitors to take these tests, following their own school's policy, **please inform your organiser and include this information in your entry.** We will not be stipulating a policy on vaccinations, and any teachers who have concerns may be more reassured by the filming option.

## Specifications

An updated version of the specifications can now be found online and in the members' area. Additions have been highlighted with a yellow background, and sections specifically relevant to COVID-19 are written in green text.

## Certificates and medals update

### Australia

The Australian office are currently on time with certificate printing and meeting target dates and deadlines.

### London HQ

As lockdown is now relaxing, our team is working in a socially distanced capacity to fulfil the backlog of certificates and medals for many countries.

We have now processed the 2020 backlog and are moving on to examination sessions for 2021 – the 2020 certificates have been sent to the distributor, who is adding the medals, and sending these out to teachers.

We apologise for the delays, and understand the disappointment it must cause, particularly at such a difficult time but, we assure you that sending out certificates and medals is at the top of our priority list.

We are also sending out more direct communications to teachers about the status of their certificates, and have also started a training programme for more support staff to enable them to assist with this process.

### Canada

The RAD Canada office has also been dealing with government-mandated lockdowns. Using a strict, COVID-specific rotation schedule, they have been able to work at reduced capacity to issue all certificates and medals for their Hub within the published six week windows: results for Canada, USA, Caribbean, Mexico, Brazil, Central and South America are all up to date.

RAD Canada is also printing the results for China again this year and these are still in progress. Issuing of these certificates was authorised to begin at the start of April and more than 20% are already completed and shipped.

Finishing these will remain a priority for the coming weeks until they are all completed. Any questions about the status of the China certificates should be directed to the China National Office.

## Attainment bands

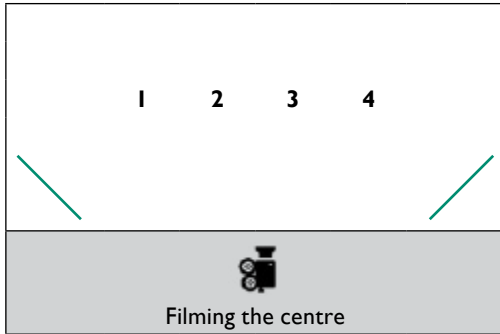
Despite announcements about attainment bands being introduced in January 2021 (Merit, High Merit, Distinction, High Distinction), we will unfortunately now be postponing their introduction. This is because we have not yet had sign-off from the regulators about the way in which the change would affect the UCAS\* points attributed to the qualifications.

We are chasing for confirmation on this point and will get the new bandings in place as soon as we can. We will keep teachers updated with our progress.

*\*UCAS is a UK based Universities and Colleges Admissions Service. See the [website](#) for further details about UCAS points and RAD qualifications.*

## 1. Room preparation

Clear the room/studio space as much as possible. Blinds/curtains may need closing to avoid sunlight glare. Mirrors should be covered as per normal examination specifications. The camera should be positioned at the middle and front of the room where the examiner would normally be sitting. It may be useful to mark with tape which areas of the room are out of camera shot. The teacher/music operator/pianist **do not** need to be visible during the filming.



## 2. Examination introduction

Prior to the start of the examination session, the teacher should **clearly** state the date, scheduled time and level of examination. Alternatively, they may film a copy of the confirmed exam report which clearly shows the necessary information. After ringing the bell, candidates should enter the studio space and position themselves centrally towards the front of the studio space in ascending numerical order.

Candidate 1	Candidate 2	Candidate 3	Candidate 4
Examiner			

The teacher should then greet the candidates "good morning/afternoon" and ask the candidates to say their name. After the candidates have verbally confirmed their name, the teacher should clearly repeat their full name and ID number. This process is repeated for each candidate. It is important that each candidate name and ID number is audible, and we suggest that this information is delivered as close as possible to the recording device.

After the candidates' names have been confirmed, they should be asked to place their belongings (character skirt, shoes, props, pointe shoes, etc.) at the side towards the back of the room, and then to take their starting position for the first exercise.

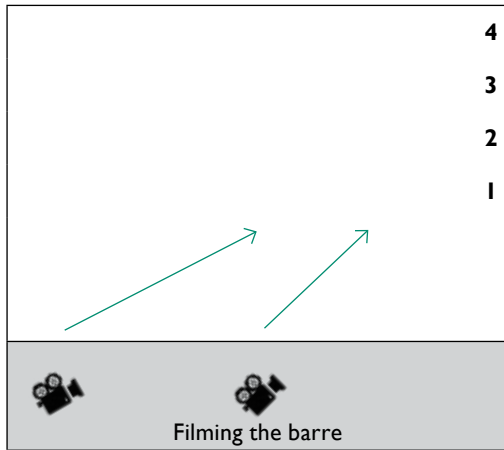
Candidates should be encouraged to rest and place their belongings towards the back at the side of the room and not along the back wall. They do not necessarily need to be in camera shot whilst resting at the side.



### 3. Barre work

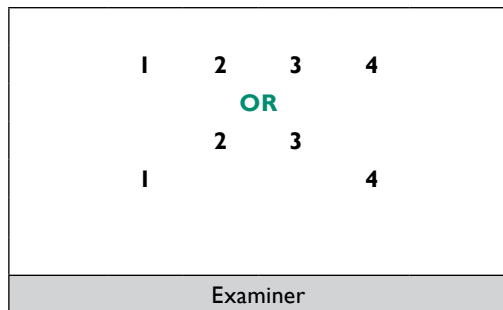
For barre work, the camera should be angled so that all candidates are visible. With a narrow studio space, you may consider positioning the camera slightly off centre when candidates are at the barre to clearly see them all. The camera can then be moved back to the centre for centre work.

**Candidates should not be placed at the barre along the back of the room.** If there is insufficient room to place candidates along the barre then the set should be divided, e.g. a set of 4 candidates entered as a set of 2.



## 4. Centre work

Always keep candidates in ascending numerical order. Spacing will vary from studio to studio depending on the shape of the room, and social distancing guidelines. Aim to keep candidates as close to the front as possible, particularly for exercises that do not travel forward or across the room. The camera may follow the candidates if required to capture the full performance of an exercise/dance.



## 5. Candidate numbers

Make sure candidates' numbers are clearly visible in the footage from the back of the room. Numbers are required on the **FRONT** and **BACK**.



## 6. Conducting the examination/class award

The person acting as the examiner should keep verbal instructions clear and concise: announce the titles of the exercise after which the candidates should prepare their starting position and then say 'thank you' or 'ready and' to the music operator/pianist, as appropriate. Exercises which commence on the first note of the introduction should be introduced with a 'ready and' – Example: Grade 2 - Pliés exercise.

Aim to maintain a positive tone when conducting the examinations, however, please refrain from giving feedback to candidates or reacting to what they have performed, e.g.: 'Well done', 'Good work' etc... The atmosphere should be encouraging and professional.

Although candidates should have a thorough knowledge of the examination settings and should be able to recall starting positions independently, teachers conducting the exam are permitted to remind students of their starting position if there is confusion or a moment of forgetfulness.



If an incident occurs during the performance of the exercise/dance or variation where, for example: character skirt/shoe falls off/they trip or fall/have a momentary lapse of memory at the beginning of an exercise, they may be permitted to restart. The filming should not be stopped in this circumstance. Otherwise, candidates should only perform an exercise/dance/variation once unless otherwise indicated in the specification (or accompanying a fellow candidate in a group of 3 arrangement). Generally, if candidates move out of camera shot for a small section, e.g.: 1-2 counts of an exercise or dance/variation, it is not necessary to ask them to repeat this. If a significant section of an exercise or dance/variation where the candidate is completely out of camera shot, then it is permissible to ask the candidate to repeat the exercise.

## 7. Examination format and groupings

### Barre work

The pliés exercise at all levels is performed only performed **once**, any continuous barre exercise which show both sides should only be performed **once** (e.g. Grade 2 - Preparation for grand battement) and commence facing the examiner. All barre exercises which commence facing the barre are performed once. All other barre exercises which only show one side in a setting should also be performed on the second side (e.g. Grade 2 – Battement tendus).

### Formats and groupings

Teachers should refer to the most up to date copy of the official **specifications** document. Refer to **Section 2** for guidance regarding the full title of the exercises, the order of the examination, candidate groupings, exercises formats, and current COVID-19 examination format adaptations which have been permitted to help facilitate examinations.

## 8. Timing and breaks

The timing of the examinations/class awards should follow the **specifications**.

It is customary to have a break between each of the technique sections to allow candidates to rest and for examiners to input marks.

An additional short break can be given half-way through the barre work at the Higher Grades (6-8) and Vocational levels. For single candidates, particularly at more advanced levels, additional breaks may be required after more physically demanding exercises.

## 9. Free enchaînement

There is a separate document with guidance regarding the structure and delivery the free enchaînement at **Intermediate Foundation**, **Intermediate** and **Advanced Foundation** levels. Example settings are provided at each level.

## 10. General reminders

- 10.1 We advise teachers to review the complete footage before submitting, to ensure that all required exercises/dance/variations are performed, and that there are no technical issues.
- 10.2 Any exercise/dance/variation not presented will be allocated a **mark of '0'**.
- 10.3 Each individual examination/class award should be filmed continuously from start to finish without stoppage. If the filming device has a limited storage capacity which exceeds the examination time, and the footage must be stopped and restarted, the applicant must identify this in the entry notes.
- 10.4 Footage should be saved as single file for each individual examination/class award and labelled so it is easily identifiable, e.g. **ex. Grade1\_10.30am\_31/4/21**.
- 10.5 Please keep your footage until you have received your results after which point you must delete the footage from all devices to ensure compliance with the GDPR.

## II. Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. I have chosen to film my exam, and my local office is happy with this. Should I do anything in my RAD Online Exam Entry?**

**A.** Yes, once the RAD office has confirmed that you may film, please refer to the guidelines that the office will provide. This includes adding a note to your entry so that we can see it was filmed so that we have a clear audit trail for all examinations.

**Q. Can I film some of my candidates and postpone others?**

**A.** Speak to your local office in the first instance to see if this can be facilitated.

**Q. I would like to film my examination, but it would be on a different day to my planned exam entry. Is this ok?**

**A.** Yes. As we won't be sending an examiner, there is some leeway with filming dates. Please consult with your local office.

**Q. Will my exam still be regulated?**

**A.** One of our Panel of Examiners will mark the footage and this will be quality assured using all our normal processes.

**Q. Will my students be awarded special consideration marks because of issues during the pandemic?**

**A.** If you feel the preparation of your candidates has been compromised due to long periods of remote learning for either live or filmed examinations, then you are entitled to apply for 'Special Consideration' marks. This must be done at the time of the examination entry and the **appropriate form** would need to be completed. The allocation of these marks is at the discretion of the Examinations Customer Service Manager.

**Q. Should I engage a professional videographer?**

**A.** It is not necessary to engage a professional videographer to film the examinations. A normal camcorder/camera will be fine, as long as the picture and sound are clear and the footage captures all candidates.

**Q. Can I have another person present in the exam room to do the filming?**

**A.** The teacher should act as the examiner and may choose to oversee the filming as well. An additional person to help is permitted as well as a music operator/pianist. Anyone other than the teacher should not be left alone with the candidates. They should be made aware of the RAD Safeguarding policies and should follow the instructions of the person leading the exam.

**Q. My first language isn't English – how do I present the information about my exam before the video starts? When I act as the examiner, can I speak in my first language?**

**A.** You can film the top of your entry or type out clearly or write down this information and then film it at the beginning of your footage. The name of the exercise should be given in English/French as appropriate. Where you might need to instruct candidates, e.g. about grouping, or to ask two candidates to move to the side so others can perform, this may be done in your first language.

**Q. I have candidates taking graded examinations where some exercises involve partner work. How do I manage this in accordance with social distancing rules?**

**A.** Teachers should adapt choreography for these particular settings to ensure appropriate social distancing. It is possible to choreograph partner settings without person-to-person contact.

**Q. Do I need a pianist for Vocational examinations?**

**A.** Vocational entries (live and filmed) may be accompanied by CD until the end of 2021.

**Q. When will we get our results for filmed exams?**

**A.** We will try to process all filmed examinations in a timely manner. We usually set target dates that are four weeks after the end of the exam session.

**Q. Will there be any discount for filmed exams?**

A. After further review of the examinations service, the decision has been taken that the cost of filmed examinations and face-to-face examinations will continue to remain the same. This is for several reasons:

- Candidates will receive the same regulated qualification for either a filmed or live examination.
- Although we will not have examiner travel or accommodation as an expense, we will still be paying the examiner and RAD staff for a less cost-effective and more time-consuming process (many filmed examinations have included fewer candidates due to social distancing, with much shorter tours).
- We have recruited additional staff to help with the processing of the filmed examinations, and have taken on additional software and development costs, both in the first phase of filming, and later as we worked to streamline the process for our teachers, tackling the issue of uploading and downloading footage.

As you will know, the RAD has had significant loss of income due to COVID-19, and this, as along with the additional costs, and the fact that either a film or face-to-face examination provides the same regulated qualification outcome, sits behind the rationale that examination fees will remain the same for whatever route is used by teachers and candidates.

**Q. Will the RAD consider filmed exams after the pandemic?**

A. Our preferred method of delivery will always be face-to-face examinations. Although candidates will receive the same qualification for a filmed examination, we believe that an examination with an examiner gives the best experience for a candidate. Therefore, our plan is to resume with live examinations as soon as it is safe to do so. That said, as we have seen, there are occasions when additional methods of delivery may be useful for teachers and candidates. As such, we are looking at filmed examinations and in what circumstances these could be used. We will communicate the details as soon as they are finalised.

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## Marking app – pilot update

We are now in the process of piloting the marking app across a selection of examination tours with the Panel of Examiners in Australia and the UK. The app is hosted on RAD iPads and, at the end of each day, the examiner will send the marks back to the relevant RAD results processing office.

This is an important step forward for the RAD and, following the conclusion of a successful pilot, will give us the ability to release exam results more quickly, and therefore also print and send certificates and medals sooner.

## Planet eStream

We are now providing teachers with a free-to-use video hosting platform for uploading video assessment footage. As of 1 June you should use Planet eStream - we will no longer be accepting footage across different hosting platforms. Please liaise with your local office if you would like to submit your footage on a memory stick.

If your local RAD office has approved your video assessment entry, please liaise with them to have your login details sent to you.

You can find more information and guidelines for using Planet eStream in the Members' Area.

## Panel of Examiners

Where we have seen the resumption of in-person examinations in more places around the world, examiners have been delighted to be back in the studio with candidates and teachers. Meanwhile, a large number of the panel are enjoying marking filmed examinations remotely and are pleased to see so many teachers and candidates utilise this option where live exams cannot be facilitated. The panel have continued to meet for online standardisation training with their colleagues, and this connection has been invaluable this year.

## Future recruitment and training

We recently held a targeted recruitment campaign in Australia and New Zealand, with successful applicants scheduled to train in 2022.

We are not currently accepting examiner applications, while we focus on planning the auditions and training programmes for the applicants whose recruitment has been delayed due to the pandemic.

When we open for applications again, details of the RAD examiner role and the application process will be advertised on the 'Current Vacancies' page on the RAD website, via members' publications and on the RAD's social media sites. We do not anticipate further recruitment to happen until 2023/24 at the earliest. General queries about examiner recruitment can be sent to [examinerrecruitment@rad.org.uk](mailto:examinerrecruitment@rad.org.uk).

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