

ROYAL ACADEMY OF  
**DANCE**



# FOCUS ON Exams

Issue | 2021



## **Health and safety and social distancing in exams**

Adaptations to exam formats

## Focus on Exams Issue | 2021

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Original series design: Consider This  
Editor: Harriet Grant  
Design (English version): Nandita Dutta  
Front cover photo: Elliott Franks

*Focus on Exams* is published by the Royal Academy of Dance, a charity registered in England and Wales No. 312826 on behalf of the worldwide Royal Academy of Dance Group. Contact details for RAD Group offices may be found on pp11–13.  
VAT Registration Number: GB 603 1763 71

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## Welcome to Focus on Exams

A Happy New(ish) Year to all our teachers and candidates! We hope that despite the continued effects of the pandemic, most are able to find a hopeful gaze forward as vaccination programmes get under way. Unfortunately, as we move into 2021, we are not entirely back to normal, and are unlikely to be for some time. Every day, however, we see the resilience of our teachers and candidates as they continue to enter for exams despite changing rules and restrictions, curtailed studio time and many of you having prepared via Zoom next to your sofa!

As well as face-to-face where possible, we will continue to offer filmed exams during 2021. We give thanks to our candidates, teachers and examiners for being flexible and pragmatic about the implementation of filmed exams – we understand the effort involved in adjusting existing processes to work in this way during an exceedingly stressful time.

Adaptations to exam formats and administration are still in effect and will continue to be so until at least December 2021, and these, as well as our COVID-19 refund policy, social distancing guidelines and other paperwork, are all available in the Members' area. We will continue to include news and updates there, and if you have suggestions for what would be useful here, please do let us know.

We are trying to look forward and focus on areas where we hope there will be positive development this year – key events and initiatives include moving into our new headquarters and continuing work on our marking app, which we hope will streamline exams processing.

In this edition we include updates and reminders, and a further part of the history of the RAD in Greece by Belinda Tanner.

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)



## COVID-19 exam adaptations (until December 2021)

- We will be limiting extensive examiner travel, and international travel will be signed off by the Director of Examinations to try and ensure the safety of candidates, teachers, examiners and exam day staff/assistants.
- Teachers and exam organisers must have a risk assessment in place for their examination session.
- Where possible we will be using more examiners who are local to the country/region in which exams are taking place.
- We usually minimise instances of examiners being allocated to tours in areas close to where they live and work, to avoid conflicts of interest with pupils they may have taught, coached or examined in the previous two years. Using our temporary examinations model, examiners may be examining closer to home and it may not always be possible to follow the two-year allocation policy. We will closely monitor any possible conflicts of interest, using information from both teachers and examiners, and we will ensure that all cases are logged with the Quality Assurance Manager.
- Filmed exams will remain an option for teachers and candidates until **December 2021**.
- Where teachers have face-to-face exams planned, we advise that they also have a 'plan B' in place to film in case of emergencies. That way the work spent on planning the examination day is not wasted.
- Sessions may not follow normal patterns as organisers react to lockdowns, quarantines or closures – your local office will advise about options in your area.
- All the format and administrative adaptations previously circulated will be in place until December 2021, to help teachers with reduced studio and preparation time for their candidates.
- Reasonable adaptations of exam procedures (to allow for social distancing) are permitted.
- Grade 6,7 and 8 Class Awards are now available for candidates. We no longer provide grade 6,7,8 Presentation Classes.
- Teachers will not be required to use a pianist for their vocational examinations in AECs and for filmed examinations. In RAVs, where possible, a pianist will be provided. If teachers can use a pianist, and would like to do so, we would of course encourage this.

Photo: David Tett



- To facilitate the free enchaînement in face-to-face examinations without a pianist at the relevant levels, teachers should provide access to the free music found on the official RAD vocational CDs, associated with the level that is being examined. Guidance for teachers on how to deliver the free enchaînement in filmed examinations can be found in the filming guideline documents available from the [Members' area](#).
- The use of soft-pointe shoes will not be compulsory for relevant vocational graded examinations (Intermediate Foundation to Advanced 2). Soft ballet shoes may be worn with either ribbons or elastic. Pointe shoes are required for all pointework sections.

## Filmed exams

Since March 2020, the Examinations Department have processed a total of 20,674 video assessments. This is a big achievement as it meant creating a new, untested process during the pandemic, dealing with exam entries from many countries worldwide with reduced staff and picking up some new IT troubleshooting skills as the entries were processed!

Although not the way we would choose to deliver assessments, and a process that has had to undergo refinement since its inception, filmed exams are giving members and candidates the opportunity to take examinations when it may otherwise not have been possible during pandemic restrictions. We will continue to review this process, and are currently engaging with IT suppliers to see if there is work that can be done to make it more straightforward and user friendly for our teachers.

## Filmed examinations and missing work

Teachers are reminded to take extra care that all required exercises and dances/variations are presented in filmed exams. When sections are missing in filmed footage, this can significantly delay the processing of results not only for the schools involved but others as well.

Therefore, from **1 November 2020** we will no longer be contacting teachers if exam footage is incomplete. Any exercise and dance/variation missed will be given a mark of '0' and will have a negative impact on the overall result. Please refer to the *Specifications* for a complete list of exercises required in all examinations and class awards. We strongly advise that footage is reviewed by teachers prior to submission.

Teachers are also reminded that the RAD online examination entry must match the footage submitted, including candidate and set order. Where the footage is submitted in a different order to that which is listed on the examination entry, this can cause delays in the footage being marked and results being released.

## Attainment bands from 2021

Further to our announcements in January 2021, unfortunately we will now postponing the introduction of the Merit, High Merit, Distinction, High Distinction bands. 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 regulated qualifications.

We are working towards confirmation 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 [website](#) for further details about UCAS points and RAD qualifications.

## Risk assessments

Some teachers have asked about our requirement for risk assessments.

We are asking teachers to think about their examination day and the kinds of issues (particularly around COVID-19) that could occur and may require some sort of action from the person in charge.

The risk assessment in the members' area is a sample – most teachers and schools have some form of risk assessment paperwork already in place – highlighting potential risks and what to do to mitigate these. Completing a copy of the RAD document is not necessary, but having your own version of a risk assessment in place is something that is helpful to ensure that the day runs smoothly, and for teachers to consider what they would do if there were any difficulties (e.g., if a student did develop COVID-19 symptoms in their warm-up studio, etc.).

## Exam payments from 2021 – UK

From **January 2021** in the UK, to improve our membership service and finance processes, there will only be one payment option of 'online card payments' available to you in your online exam entry. When you submit your entry, you will be automatically directed to the card payment portal. If you don't have card available, please contact your local office to arrange an alternative method of payment. As per our specifications, this payment must be received on the date the entry is submitted,

If at the stage of submitting your entry, you have a query regarding the total fee, please contact your local office prior to completing the 'submit' process.

Please also note that we only accept the payment from the school, this includes RAV entry payments, with reference to our specifications, we will not accept separate payments from individual students.

## London Headquarters and certificates and medals

England (and other parts of the UK) are currently in lockdown as a COVID-19 containment measure. Unfortunately, this means that RAD headquarters is closed to our results team and there will be a delay in certificate and medal dissemination. As we are not sure when the lockdown period will end, we cannot give a specific timeframe for the printing of these certificates. The Government is due to review the lockdown situation mid-February, so we hope to have further information then.

We understand the disappointment this causes, particularly at such a difficult time. As soon as headquarters reopens, and we can access our printers, we will once again begin to print, and will update teachers as soon as we can with news on progress.

The closure also means that teachers should not send any paperwork or exam footage to the office at the moment, as we have no way of collecting post. Please contact your local office if you have exam footage which you were planning to send to headquarters, and we can look at how to proceed.





Photo: Maridav/shutterstock.com

## Health and safety and social distancing

Teachers should follow local social distancing government guidance with regard to teaching and exams. Reasonable measures to facilitate social distancing are encouraged and will vary from country to country, school to school. The following are some suggestions of how social distancing can be incorporated into your exams. If necessary, please liaise with your local RAD office for further guidance specific to your area.

- Have a risk assessment/action plan in place, including contact details for all involved in the exam day. Think about relevant paperwork/processes, e.g. health declaration forms, emergency contact numbers, temperature testing etc.
- If holding a face-to-face examination, it would be sensible to have in place the processes/paperwork to film the day, should an issue arise – that way the work that has gone into arranging the examination day is not wasted.
- Provision of hand washing/sanitising facilities for candidates, music operators/pianists, teachers, parents, and the examiner. Regular hand washing should be encouraged at appropriate times, e.g. during scheduled breaks, and gloves may be used, as required.
- Masks and face coverings may be worn by candidates, music operators, pianists, teachers, and examiners if there is a personal preference, or if required by local law. If masks are worn by candidates, performance will be assessed via expression shown through the body including the eyes. All participants should be aware that verbal communication may be affected. It may be that masks are required when inside a building, but that they can be removed in the exam studio, as long as local rules and social distancing are in place. If this is the case, you can make your examiner aware that students will enter with a mask, but they will remove it for the exam if preferred.
- Sanitise the barre between examination sets.
- Where required, the floor should also be sanitised - this may be particularly relevant for exercises/dances/variations which have floor work. Alternatively, candidates may opt to wear disposable gloves while performing exercises/dances/variations which require the hands to come in to contact with the floor. If candidates choose to wear gloves, they should be safely disposed of as soon as possible, and the method for this should be covered in the teacher's risk assessment/action plan.

- If possible, those already assisting with the exam day could help with wiping down barres/ equipment between sets, as this reduces the number of people in the exam room.
- Positions at the barre and general dance space can be marked with tape to help candidates space their performance and waiting positions to keep within social distancing guidelines.
- Examination group sizes may be reduced to meet local social distancing guidelines. For example, a group of four could divide to make two groups of two. Please liaise with the local RAD office to facilitate this. This may not be necessary in schools with larger studio spaces.
- Depending on local guidelines, teachers are advised to consider adapting their settings for the 'teacher arrangement' exercises found in Pre-Primary Grade 5 to remove any physical contact between candidates, e.g. handholding. As already permitted, the Grade 6 Character exercises may be performed 2 x 2 as two solos on the same side rather than working in opposition.
- The use of props is optional for most settings. Where they are required for some dances, we suggest candidates have their own personal props to avoid shared usage.
- Reasonable adjustments to floor patterns for exercises will be accepted, if required, to facilitate social distancing guidelines.
- Teachers may require candidates to arrive at the exam venue ready (wearing uniform, hair in bun, etc.) to limit the amount of time/people in changing area.
- If candidates require water bottles, these should be filled before arriving at the venue.
- Separate entrance and exit pathways for venues/examination room could be employed if there is the facility to do so.
- Extra time may be scheduled for changeover/ cleaning between sets – teachers can add notes for this in their exam entry so that the local RAD office can add additional breaks as required.
- Shared restroom facilities should be appropriately sanitised between usage.
- Single-use candidate identification numbers may be used.
- Consider social distancing in the warm-up space or changing area, with staggered arrival times to limit the number of people congregating. Markers on floor/cornered areas for warm up and changing areas and the use of personal yoga mats in shared warm up areas.
- Restrict the number of people attending with the examination candidate (we would recommend one accompanying adult). Make any accompanying adults aware of whether there is space for them to wait, or whether they need to drop off their candidate and return once the exam is completed.
- Examiners will be updated regarding the local social distancing protocols prior to their tour. They may choose to follow their own personal preference with regard to wearing a mask and gloves even if it is not required by law. Should there be specific information you wish to share with the examiner about the protocols at your school prior to their arrival, please add notes in your online exam entry so that the local RAD office can share this with the examiner.
- In some areas, examiners will be asked to bring their own packed lunch, snacks and drinks, although access to hot water to facilitate tea/ coffee would be appreciated.
- Please contact your local RAD office or the examinations team at headquarters if you have any queries or concerns, require further guidance, or feel that further measures or exceptions may be required to accommodate your particular situation. We are aiming to deliver as much flexibility as possible to facilitate examinations during this time.



## The history of the Royal Academy of Dance in Greece, 1990–2020

*Examiner Belinda Tanner explores the history of the Royal Academy of Dance in Greece*

As the curtain rose on 1990, the RAD was celebrating seventy years and Greece eighteen. Although temporarily lacking a stage manager, six examiners assessed over 2,000 candidates. After nine years in the European Community, Greece was enjoying economic growth and greater political stability. Melina Mercouri's 1980's cultural policies stimulated an explosive emergence of predominantly contemporary dance ensembles<sup>1</sup>, and north and south state-subsidised organisations thrived.

However, the demise of two long-standing private companies, combined with an accelerando of ballet schools, left employment-seeking dancers wanting.

Preluding headquarters' leadership changes, Greek RAD administration found shelter at the British Council (BC), who designated Marissia Tzioufa Local Organizer (LO). Before 1990 faded though, Vlasis Klitsiotis was promoted from the 'corps de livres' to Principal. Surviving his first examiner onslaught almost intact, Vlasis embraced challenging LO choreography including the impact of Teacher Registration and accommodating 276 members learning the New Grades launched in 1991.

Prompting a flurry of activity in the nineties, an 'Anniversary Seminar' in April 1992 at the Athens Concert Hall marked Greece's twentieth anniversary, attended by 250, with Brian Chenery, BC Deputy Director, hosting a Grande Bretagne<sup>2</sup> reception. Richard Thom (Director of Finance) addressed attendees; Alfreda Thorogood (Artistic Co-ordinator) conducted repertoire and scholarship classes, the latter revitalising John Saunders' 1980 initiative; and Jacqueline Ferguson (Assistant to the Chairman of Examiners) unveiled examination mystique with a mock Grade Three. Completing the team were Carolyn Parker (Head of Music) directing seminars for nineteen pianists, and Overseas Development Manager, Laura Anderson.

1. Savrami, K. (2019)
2. Hotel
3. Anderson, Laura. February 1993
4. 2.93 euros



Advocating a suggestion at the seminar, Anderson and Carol Hanis initiated emergence of a Regional Advisory Panel (RAP) based on a 1950's initiative evolved in the UK, to meet teachers' needs and promote the RAD<sup>3</sup>. With midsummer elections in 1993 at the Titania Hotel, naturally, eleven teachers formed the first committee: Valerie Harden (Chairman), Anna Petrova (Vice-Chairman), Carolyn Fotopoulos (Secretary), Sarah Marris (Treasurer), Theresa Brown, Susan Graham, Carol Hanis, Sophie Katsouli, Phillipa Richards, Elizabeth Scarlatos and Tonia Venieri. In October they presented their mission to a curious congregation of twenty-nine at the inaugural Annual General Meeting (AGM), attendees parting with 1,000 drachmas<sup>4</sup> for membership. Two years later, after many coffee-strewn meetings, a draft constitution provided by Thom had been modified to comply with Greek civil law and Academy RAP policy, assisted by Constantinos Couccoullis, Georgos Hanis, Nikos Synodinos<sup>5</sup>, Vlasis and headquarters' financial muscle. The new Articles of Association signed by forty-three members, with Thom as RAD representative, was approved by court decision on 9 February 1995, and subsequent registration signified the birth of the 'Hellenic Association of the Royal Academy of Dancing in London'<sup>6</sup>; unceremoniously known as GRAP<sup>7</sup>. Petits and grands changements to Articles were effected in 2002 and 2020 respectively.

5. Former Director of the Athens Festival and GNO
6. GRAP (1995)
7. Greek Regional Advisory Panel

*The full article and Greek translation are available [here](#).*

Photo: David Tett



## A word of thanks

We would like to note our continued appreciation for our dedicated panel of examiners for their ongoing support, with both face-to-face exams where these have been possible, and for adapting to the marking of filmed examinations. It is through challenging times such as this where the worldwide connection of the panel feels even more valuable.

## In memoriam

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of UK examiner Susan Robinson and former UK examiners Jean Nuckey, Janet Palmer and Laura Faulkner towards the end of last year and early this year. Our thoughts are with all of their families and friends, as well as their teaching and examining colleagues who have lost very special members of the RAD family.

## Recruitment and training

We hope to be able to commence the new examiner training programmes later this year and in 2022 as previously advised.

Future recruitment campaigns, including details of the role of RAD examiner 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. For general queries about examiner recruitment, please contact [examinerrecruitment@rad.org.uk](mailto:examinerrecruitment@rad.org.uk).

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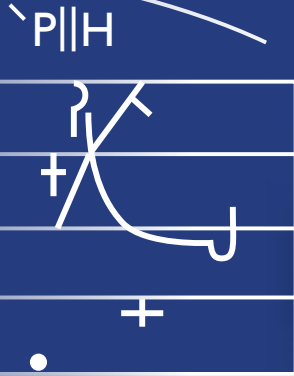
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