PAA ACTING 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 an Acting exam conducted remotely video quality is of particular importance and therefore a suitable device is required.

PAA Acting live video exam content is exactly the same as the specifications in the syllabus; however, the following additional requirements 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, appropriate to the number of candidates
- flooring 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 to be present throughout the examination, responsible for ensuring the physical and mental wellbeing of the candidates
  - a member of staff must be available outside of the examination room, to chaperone candidates waiting for their examination to start
  - venues must ensure that all current safeguarding protocols are adhered to
- all candidates must be visible throughout the examination, including when they are not performing
  - in the case of an exam with two/three candidates, if one/two are standing aside and another is performing a monologue, the candidates not performing must still be visible
- quiet, private location in a walled room
- bright lighting (day light or artificial light), with light source coming from behind or to the side of the camera, not pointing directly towards the camera
- 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

o it should be noted that the further candidates are away from the microphone, the more audio quality may be affected for the examiner, particularly in reverberant rooms.

PRIOR TO THE EXAMINATION

Prior to the examination day, venues should ensure that they have the required equipment, it is functioning correctly and that internet connectivity is sufficient to run the exam (see below, Technical and Equipment Requirements)

For UK venues, the examiner will contact the principal / venue representative by phone a few days before the exam. For International venues, the examiner will contact the relevant RSL representative by email a week before the exam. This is to introduce themselves and:

- review the schedule, highlighting any applications for reasonable adjustments and/or special considerations
- confirm that the technical and connectivity testing has been completed.

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 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 / venue representative to go through the schedule highlighting any absences, special considerations or reasonable adjustments.

Sound check: the examiner may ask the principal to speak a few words to check the sound quality.

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

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

For exams with two or three candidates, candidates must be wearing their candidate number clearly on the front of their clothing.

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

The candidates will then enter the exam space and the examiner will introduce themselves and check that the lighting is adequate and the candidates are fully audible and visible. The examiner may ask the candidates to walk around the room for this, and speak from various points.

The examiner will then check the candidates' names, grades and, in the case of an exam with two or three candidates, candidate numbers. The principal / venue representative will be present to ensure candidates are taking the correct grade. They will then leave and wait outside the exam room.

The chaperone must remain visible to the examiner throughout the examination.

The exam will then proceed in the same way as a face-to-face exam.

Once the first exam is finished, the examiner will ask the candidates to leave. The examiner will ask the chaperone to call in the next candidates when ready to do so. The time taken between exams will be kept to a minimum.

TECHNICAL AND EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Video conference device: laptop / desktop computer + screen / tablet
- laptop, tablet or desktop computer preferred (smartphones are not considered suitable)
- 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](#)
  - venues should be aware that the further candidates are from the microphone, the less clear the audio may be for the examiner

Internet connection:
- minimum (as specified by Internet Service Provider): 5Mbps download / 1 Mbps upload
- run a speed test, eg. https://speedtest.net or http://rslawards.speedtestcustom.com/
- test Zoom at http://zoom.us/test
- we recommend connecting the device 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 networks
  - some routers provide the ability to change the channel to one that is less crowded, thereby reducing interference
- in restrictive networks it is also worth checking whether the [Zoom firewall requirements](#) are met.

April 2021