Your personalised guide to taking RSL Graded Acting exams via recorded digital submission

RSL Awards can accept and mark Graded Acting exams via video submission at all grades. For RSL Acting Recorded Video exams to be valid, there are a number of rules you must adhere to:

1. The performance needs to captured as a single, continuous shot in real time - you must not stop or pause the camera in between scenes.
2. Candidates should introduce themselves by stating their full name and the exam grade they are taking, as well as introducing each scene.
3. You must not use video editing software to cut out takes or reduce the time between scenes, or between the final scene and the Knowledge and Understanding - the video should represent an exam taken in person as closely as possible, so do not worry about taking a little time to reset between scenes.
4. After the performance, **with the camera still rolling**, present your responses to the chosen questions as required for the Knowledge and Understanding component.
5. Your whole face and body must be visible in the video - please refer to the framing guide for further details.
6. For Grades 6-8 candidates should clearly display for at least ten seconds valid photographic identification (such as Passport, Driving Licence, Student Union Card, ID Card) at the start of the video recording in line with our policy.
7. Candidates taking grades 6-8 should, in addition, outline the context of each scene, as required by the syllabus.
8. Another person is permitted to be present in the room in order to operate the camera. However, the other person is not permitted to interact with the candidate or intervene in the exam.
9. Check the video recording of your exam carefully before submission, making sure that each scene is introduced to camera, the picture and sound are of a reasonable quality and that all scenes have been captured in full.
10. Upload the unedited video of the performance of your scene(s), followed by your presentation of prepared responses to chosen questions (for the Knowledge and Understanding component).

Framing Guide:

- We need to have a good view of the performance - you should capture your face and whole body clearly in the video frame.
- The room you choose should have easily enough space for any movement required in your scene(s), and free of furniture that may get in the way when you are performing. You may consider marking the boundaries.
- You could record yourself moving around the space, and watch the recording back, carefully checking that you will be in shot throughout your performance(s)
- The shot needs to be well lit:
  Please try and avoid shooting in very dark environments, as this significantly affects the video quality. If you can record your performance in a space with good natural light, or have access to good quality photographic or stage lighting, the end result will be better. Ensure you are lit from the front, and don't have a window behind you. Please avoid coloured or moving lights in your videos too - we need to see you clearly.
- Keep your footage as steady as possible. If you can use a tripod or some other kind of camera mount, that would be ideal. If you do need someone to hold a camera or phone,

please ensure you keep the video as stable as possible and avoid zooming in or out during the exam.

How to register for an Exam

To register for a video exam, candidates (or their parents or their teacher) fill in the online entry form with information about the candidate and the exam grade.

Please note that Video Exams are not bound to exam periods. However, the online entry requires selection of a time period. Please choose the earliest range of dates available. It will not affect when you can enter for the video exam and when you can submit it. In the online entry form, under Exam Details please choose 'Acting'.

Video Exam Checklist

- Record the performance of the scene(s), followed by the Knowledge and Understanding, **in one take**
- Only the candidate(s) in the room and one chaperone/camera operator
- Upload the unedited video:
  - Premiere candidates submit the video of the performance of their scene
  - Grade Debut-8 candidates submit the video of their scene(s) followed by the Knowledge and Understanding
- Ensure the file size is no more than **2GB per exam**:

After uploading the recording of the exam, the candidate can relax and we will send a notification when the result is available. Candidates will be marked by an official RSL Awards examiner in exactly the same way that they would be in a face to face exam. Additionally, the examiner will record a short video message to candidates that delivers feedback on the exam performance on top of the usual marksheet feedback. We will then produce the official qualification certificate. A minimum of 'Pass' is required to receive the certificate.

Technical Guidance for all PAA Recorded Video exams

Video file size:

The current file size limit is **2GB per exam.** For Screen Acting exams, the file size limit for **all videos in one exam is 2GB**. **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.

Audio Guide for Video

Avoid very noisy or reverberant spaces. Your examiner wants to give your performance their full attention, so avoid recording your exam in a space where there is likely to be background noise. Whilst you can record reasonable audio using a mobile phone in most instances, there are a number of devices you may wish to consider if you want to ensure your audio is of a good quality. Please see below for a list of devices and apps that RSL recommends that can help you improve audio quality when creating your video exam.

Recommended audio / video devices and apps
Microphone for use with mobile phones (check for handset compatibility):

Zoom iQ7 Shure MV88 RØDE iXY
RØDE VideoMic

Mobile phone video apps that allow manual control of audio:
- FV-5 (supported Android devices)
- Filmic Pro (IOS devices and some supported Android devices)

Dedicated video cameras for recording high quality audio:
- Zoom Q4
- Zoom Q2n

We hope this set of guidelines has helped you understand the RSL graded syllabus video exam

process and provided a clear set of guidelines for capturing and submitting exam material. Should you require any further advice, please contact us on: info@rslawards.com

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