

ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE

Reasonable adjustments and special consideration policy and procedures in relation to examinations

Difference between reasonable adjustment and special consideration

Reasonable adjustments are intended to address conditions (normally a disability or other medical condition) known about at the time of entry. They involve changes to examination or administrative procedures. Where no such procedural changes are necessary, we will normally inform the examiner so that they are aware of a candidate's condition.

Special considerations are post-examination adjustments to the mark for a candidate who was prepared for and present at an exam, but who may have been disadvantaged by adverse circumstances that arose immediately before or at the time of the exam.

SECTION A: REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

1 Overview

- 1.1 Candidates who feel unable to enter for an examination, or who feel that their ability to take and complete an examination may be compromised, due to the presence of a barrier, such as a disability or other medical condition, may request for special arrangements or aids to be put in place. The RAD will make adjustments to administrative and/or examination procedures if such adjustments are judged to be reasonable, necessary, and practicable.
- 1.2 In order to safeguard the integrity of the award, including for candidates for whom no such adjustments are put in place, all candidates will be assessed against the same criteria and no concessions (i.e. alterations to marks) will be made in respect of assessment.

2 Barriers to entry

Examples of barriers to entry are as follows:

- 2.1 *Financial.* Entry to examination may be denied to learners whose economic status prevents them from being able to pay the required fee.
- 2.2 *Disability.* Specifically: lack of physical mobility, visual impairment, and hearing impairment, all of which may prevent candidates from achieving learning outcomes in units based on the physical performance of dance.
- 2.3 *Religious.* Candidates may, for religious reasons, be unable to take part in an examination on a certain day, or may wish to wear special items of clothing or artefacts.
- 2.4 *Age.* Candidates may be younger than the stated minimum age for entry to examination.
- 2.5 *Gender.* According to the heritage of the art form, the requirements for males and females in ballet are different. Candidates may feel unable to enter for a particular qualification if it is designed for a specific gender.
- 2.6 *Location.* Candidates may be unable to take examinations if the number of candidates at a particular location does not, logistically and financially, permit examinations to take place.

3 Mitigation of barriers

Examples of ways in which the effects of the above barriers can be mitigated are as follows:

- 3.1 *Financial.* Examination fees are set at a level which is considered to be the minimum possible, given the need to provide a professional service and to ensure the long-term financial security of the organisation. Normally, it is not possible for the RAD to reduce the published fees for examinations. The *Fiona Campbell Examinations Bursary* allows teachers to apply for a bursary on behalf of

deserving candidates to the value of their next examination. Additionally, in certain countries, specific fees policies targeted at candidates from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may at the RAD's sole discretion be from time to time applied, as part of the RAD's social responsibility initiative.

- 3.2 *Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and other medical conditions.* The RAD invites applications from candidates requesting reasonable adjustments on the grounds of SEND, or of any other physical, mental, or medical condition whether classed or considered as SEND or not.¹

Dance, by its very nature, is a precise physical art concerned with shape, line, co-ordination, musical, and performance qualities, and candidates are required to demonstrate these in examinations. It is within these parameters that the RAD welcomes candidates with disabilities or other medical conditions.

- 3.3 *Religious.* RAD National Directors, National and Regional Managers, and RAD representatives, whose remit includes the planning of examination tours, are instructed via the Examination Annual Tour Planning Policy to avoid religious holidays where possible. Examination specifications indicate that regulation uniform for examinations is recommended rather than required, and where a candidate requests permission to adapt their dress for religious reasons, every effort will be made to accommodate such a request, while keeping the health and safety of the candidate, the safeguarding of the examination environment, and the integrity of the unit and/or qualification, paramount.
- 3.4 *Age.* Minimum age requirements are published in the *Specifications* document. The purpose of these requirements is to promote the health and safety of the candidate and to maximise their chances of achievement. For these reasons, it is not normally possible to amend these requirements. Applications for exemption are considered on a case by case basis, according to internal guidelines.
- 3.5 *Gender.* It is the policy of the RAD to ensure that equal opportunities for examinations are accorded to males and females, in the context of the heritage of classical ballet. All candidates may enter according to the gender with which they identify.
- 3.6 *Location.* The RAD will make every effort to accommodate locations with small candidate numbers, but, in the wider interests of all candidates as seen through the long-term financial viability of the business, in certain circumstances may ask candidates to travel to a different location.

¹ The term 'disabled', for the purposes of the RAD's examinations, is that contained in the UK Equality Act of 2010. "You're disabled under the Equality Act 2010 if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities."
<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>
<https://www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/special-educational-needs-disabilities>

However, the RAD can normally accommodate such entries where the published minimum fee is paid and where an examination session takes place in that geographical locality.

4 Examples of reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are applied on a case by case basis. The nature of the adjustment applied will be based on the candidate's condition or circumstances and the request made to the RAD. Examples of reasonable adjustments include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- 4.1 Targeted fee assistance for candidates from economically deprived backgrounds in certain countries
- 4.2 Candidate to take the exam on his or her own
- 4.3 Candidate to be given extra time to complete the exam (this may be for the purpose of administering diabetes insulin tests, or other necessary medication, and/or to rest should they feel unwell during the examination)
- 4.4 Special access arrangements to the examination studio to be put into place
- 4.5 Special lighting arrangements to be made in the examination studio
- 4.6 The music for the examination to be amplified and/or examiner to wear personal amplifiers or place them on the table for the purpose of amplifying the sound for candidates wearing hearing aids
- 4.7 Agreement made for modifications to examination uniform (subject to health and safety considerations)
- 4.8 Examination to take place at a specially appointed date and time
- 4.9 Examination to take place at a specially appointed location

- 4.10 Candidate to be examined according to the syllabus criteria for the gender with which they identify (this will normally require them to follow all required procedures related to the chosen syllabus, including performing the whole of that syllabus and wearing the related uniform).

5 Example of action taken which is not classed as a reasonable adjustment

- 5.1 The examiner may be informed about the candidate's condition or situation, in order to ensure the appropriate and sensitive handling of the examinations. If appropriate, the examiner may be informed that the candidate may give a limited response, or may give no response, to certain parts of the examination content.

6 Application procedure

- 6.1 Parents should be encouraged to inform teachers when they enrol their child at a dance school if there is any physical, mental, or behavioural condition which they feel is likely to affect the student's ability to take part in an examination. Where this is the case, they should be informed that they may need to provide medical evidence to support a reasonable adjustment application and that their signature might be required when applying for a reasonable adjustment which may include the submission of such medical evidence.
- 6.2 An applicant who intends to apply for a reasonable adjustment on behalf of a candidate should complete a reasonable adjustment form, available from RAD headquarters, Regional and National Offices, and RAD websites.
- 6.3 Following the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018, the RAD has produced a GDPR-compliant form including a Privacy Notice. Only this form should be used regardless of the teacher/candidate location worldwide. Any applications sent on outdated non-GDPR compliant forms will have to be re-submitted. No application will be processed until a new form is received.

- 6.4 The completed form, should be returned to RAD headquarters directly (to the email address on the form) or via the relevant RAD office. Forms may be submitted via RAD Online Exam Entry at the time of the closing date of the entry. Please ensure the information icon next to the specific candidate is activated (if uploaded after the closing date, an email notification should be sent to the local officer and exams customer services). For examinations taking place imminently, it is recommended to send the form directly to the RAD headquarters to avoid possible delays. If medical documentation is required RAD headquarters will request this directly.
- 6.5 No application will be processed until the form is submitted as prescribed above. Should adjustments to or further clarification of the submission be required and no response received within 5 working days, the application may be rejected.
- 6.6 Applicants should clearly state on the form the nature of the condition and the adjustment required. RAD staff are not always able to interpret medical documents and decide what adjustment might be suitable without this supporting information and we rely on advice provided by the applicant in order to avoid possible misunderstandings or errors.
- 6.7 **Applications should be made by the closing date for examination entry, in order to enable the RAD to make any special arrangements that may be necessary to ensure that the candidate's particular requirements are met. Applications received later than this may not be accepted, and applications which are received less than two working days before the examination date will not be accepted under any circumstances.**
- 6.8 We will do our best to process requests for reasonable adjustments which are submitted after the closing date, but this may not always be possible and adjustments cannot be agreed with less than 2 working days notice. If the issue is simply one of examiner awareness, it might be easier for applicants to ask their local office to explain the nature of the application informally to the examiner. In such cases, an application form can be submitted retrospectively if the applicant wants the issue to be formally logged. Applications requesting adjustments to examination procedures may not be possible to process at short notice, particularly if other candidates are present in the group.
- 6.9 For issues which arise shortly before or at the time of the exam, it may not be possible or practical to put an adjustment in place, and a special consideration application (for a post-exam adjustment to the mark) might be more appropriate. Alternatively, the candidate can withdraw and the teacher can apply for a partial refund or (where available) carryover of the fee.

- 6.10 **Application forms should be completed in English** (the relevant national office can provide assistance, if needed).
- 6.11 In cases where the adjustment requested involves extra time to be allocated for one or more candidates, this should ideally be communicated to the relevant local office when submitting the exam entry. This is to enable RAD staff to allocate the appropriate amount of time for the exam when organising exam schedules. Applicants should clearly indicate how much extra time, and ideally when during the exam (e.g. between sets, etc.), the candidate/s may need, particularly if this is likely to be over 5 minutes.
- 6.12 **Under no circumstances should any forms and/or medical documents be given directly to the examiner**, as they may not be in a position to arrange for adjustments or be able to seek advice and approval from the relevant RAD office. This is also to enable the examiner solely to focus his/her attention on examining. Examiners are instructed to decline receiving such information and, in accordance with data protection law, to destroy and not pass on any such documentation received.
- 6.13 The RAD will determine whether or not to approve a request for a reasonable adjustment. This decision will depend on the nature of the adjustment requested, the reasons given, and the practicalities of its implementation, as considered against the criteria outlined in this policy. In this respect, the word 'reasonable' is important: adjustments which are judged to be *unreasonable* will not be approved.

7 Other information

- 7.1 Teachers, as part of their professional role, are responsible for deciding whether a student should be entered for an examination, on the basis of their ability to fulfil the required assessment criteria. As an alternative, the student may be entered for a class award or presentation class, which is led by the teacher.
- 7.2 Agreement to a request for a reasonable adjustment does not infer that a special consideration will be applied or that it may be appropriate to apply a special consideration. However, in some cases the same circumstance may be legitimate grounds for a candidate to apply for both a reasonable adjustment and for special consideration. In this event, two separate applications may be made.
- 7.3 Where adjustments and/or replacements to one or more of the syllabus components have been prepared due to injury or similar reasons, applicants are strongly recommended to seek the RAD's advice as to whether these are suitable, practical, and will not compromise the candidate's and fellow candidates' assessment, as far in advance of the examination as possible. Some adjustments / replacements of syllabus material may not be considered reasonable.

SECTION B: SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

1 Overview

- 1.1 **Special consideration is a post-examination adjustment to the mark of an assessment for a candidate who was prepared for and present at an examination but who may have been disadvantaged by temporary adverse circumstances that arose immediately before² or at the time of the examination.** Such circumstances could include illness or injury, or some other event outside of the candidate's control, which had, or was reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on that candidate's ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her level of attainment in an assessment.

² In this context, 'immediately before' may extend back to the closing date for entry, but not before.

- 1.2 **Special consideration cannot give the candidate an unfair advantage.**
Additionally, the application of special consideration must not cause the user of a certificate to be misled regarding a candidate's achievements. Examinations and assessments are a measure of what a candidate can do at one moment in time. Only minor adjustments can, therefore, be made to the mark awarded because to do more than this would jeopardise the integrity of the award.
- 1.3 A decision to award special consideration will be based on a number of factors, which may vary from candidate to candidate and from one examination to another. These factors may include the nature and severity of the circumstances and the date of the examination in relation to the circumstances. Each case is assessed and the outcome determined on an individual basis.
- 2 **Examples of circumstances which might qualify a candidate to receive a special consideration**
- 2.1 Special consideration may be given at the RAD's discretion to candidates when:
- 2.1.1 performance in an examination is considered to have been affected by circumstances beyond the control of the candidate or examiner; or
- 2.1.2 reasonable adjustments to the examination which were agreed in advance proved to be either inadequate or inappropriate.
- 2.2 The following are examples of circumstances which may lead to special consideration being applied, provided they are substantiated by medical documentation or other evidence as appropriate:
- 2.2.1 serious disturbance or disruption during the examination such as a fire alarm or power failure
- 2.2.2 temporary illness, injury, or indisposition either before or during the examination (but assuming that the candidate attempted to, or did, complete the examination, and did not elect to withdraw)
- 2.2.3 illness during the examination of the examiner, pianist, or music operator
- 2.2.4 recent bereavement or terminal illness of a member of the candidate's family, close friend, teacher, or pet

- 2.2.5 serious and disruptive domestic or personal crisis leading to acute anxiety and/or depression
- 2.3 In addition, where a complaint made in accordance with the policy on complaints, enquiries about results, and appeals about the conduct of the examiner or pianist, or any other matter for which the RAD has responsibility, is upheld, a special consideration may be offered as part of the resolution of the complaint.
- 2.4 **The following are examples of circumstances where special consideration would not apply:**
 - 2.4.1 disability or injury which was known before the closing date (*unless reasonable adjustments agreed in advance proved to be either inadequate or inappropriate*)
 - 2.4.2 minor disturbance in the examination room caused by another candidate, such as bad behaviour
 - 2.4.3 failing to attend the examination at the correct time
 - 2.4.4 where a candidate is entered for a class award, presentation class, demonstration class, or the Solo Seal.
- 2.5 **Special consideration will not normally be given in the following circumstances:**

- 2.5.1 where appropriate and up-to-date documentary evidence is not provided
- 2.5.2 in relation to the facilities, environment, and/or pianist provided at an AEC (Approved Examination Centre) as these are not the responsibility of the RAD.

3 How special consideration is applied

- 3.1 An application for special consideration may, dependent on the circumstances, result in one of the following:
 - 3.1.1 a slight adjustment to the marks (maximum 5). The amount of any adjustment to marks as a result of special consideration will be shown as a separate mark on the candidate's result form

- 3.1.2 a re-examination free of charge. (This is normally only offered in exceptional cases.)
- 3.2 The Academy will not enter into discussion with applicants and/or candidates/parents as to how much special consideration should be applied or whether a re-examination should be offered.
- 4 Application procedure**
- 4.1 A teacher, parent/guardian, or candidate (if over 18) may apply for special consideration using a special consideration form, available from RAD offices and websites.
- 4.2 A separate form should normally be used for each candidate; however, in cases where a group of candidates has been disadvantaged by one event, e.g. a fire alarm, one form may be used with a list of candidates who have been affected, along with their respective level and exam date/time.
- 4.3 All applications should be sent to RAD headquarters within five working days of the examination, and may be accompanied by evidence where this is required (as a separate attachment). The RAD reserves the right to reject applications received after this time. Application for special consideration will not normally be considered after results have been received, unless evidence comes to light which demonstrates that the candidate must have been affected at the time of the examination, even though the problem did not reveal itself until later.
- 4.4 Following the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018, the RAD has produced a GDPR-compliant form including a Privacy Notice. Only this form should be used regardless of the teacher/candidate location worldwide. Any applications sent on outdated non-GDPR compliant forms will have to be re-submitted. No application will be processed until a new form is received.
- 4.5 The completed form, together with any supporting medical documentation³, should be returned to RAD headquarters directly (to the email address on the form) or via the relevant RAD office.

³ Medical documentation may or may not be necessary/relevant depending on the basis of the application.

- 4.6 **Applications for special considerations, and any supporting medical evidence, must be submitted as separate documents.** This is because any medical evidence will be deleted as soon as a decision on special consideration has been reached. This is in accordance with best practice for data management. If applicants supply a form and medical evidence as one document, they may be asked to re-submit them separately.
- 4.7 No application will be processed until the documentation and forms are submitted as prescribed above. Should adjustments to or further clarification of the submission be required and no response received within 5 working days, the application may be rejected.
- 4.8 Applicants should clearly state on the form the basis of the application and not merely refer to supplementary documentation. RAD staff are not always able to interpret medical documents without supporting explanation and we rely on information provided by the applicant in order to avoid possible misunderstandings or errors.
- 4.9 **Application forms should be completed in English** (the relevant national office can provide assistance, if needed).
- 4.10 **Under no circumstances should any forms and/or medical documents be given directly to the examiner.** Examiners are instructed to decline receiving such information and, in accordance with data protection law, to destroy and not pass on any such documentation received.
- 4.11 The RAD will determine whether or not to approve a request for special consideration. This decision will depend on the reasons and evidence given, as considered against the criteria outlined in this policy.

5 Other information

- 5.1 Special consideration is not generally appropriate for candidates whose illness or injury was known about at the time of entry. In this event, a candidate would be expected to apply for a reasonable adjustment or to defer their entry to the following session.

- 5.2 If a candidate is unable to attend or complete an examination due to circumstances beyond their control, including illness, compassionate reasons e.g. family bereavement, serious adverse weather conditions, etc., they may elect to withdraw from the examination and apply for compensation as outlined in the Specifications. In this event, they will not be eligible to apply for special consideration and no result or certificate will be issued.
- 5.3 Special consideration cannot be given to candidates for parts of examinations not completed. This is because RAD examinations are unified performances given at one moment in time and candidates can only be assessed on the performance given during the entire examination. If a candidate is unable to complete an examination, marks for the missed sections cannot be awarded, nor can generic marks be awarded for performance and music when they relate to the missed sections. With the exception of Grade 8, Advanced 1, and Advanced 2 (where all sections must be passed in order to gain an overall pass), candidates may still be able to pass an incomplete examination provided that the total marks reach the minimum required.
- 5.4 Agreement to a request a reasonable adjustment does not infer that a special consideration will also be awarded. However, the same circumstance, if it arises after the examination entry has been submitted, may be legitimate grounds for a candidate to apply for both a reasonable adjustment and for special consideration. In this event, two separate applications should be made (at the discretion of the Examinations Customer Service Manager the need for a separate application might in some cases be waived).
- 5.5 The RAD may at its discretion apply special consideration to a candidate or candidates on the basis of evidence it receives independently that circumstances arose at the time of the examination which may have put those candidates at an unfair disadvantage. Such evidence may arise as a result of a complaint, enquiry about a result, a report from an examiner, or examination attendant, or by some other means. In this event the applicants who entered the candidates affected will be informed of the RAD's decision.

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Circulation:

- National Directors, National and Regional Managers, RAD Representatives
- RAD examiners
- RAD websites

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Stockdale', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

James Stockdale, Director of Examinations