

When is a student ready for their exam?

New Specifications

Solo Seal and free enchaînements





What does dance mean to you?

“Well... it's my life.”

Kate Swainston
RAD Registered Teacher
and Examiner

Royal
Academy
of Dance

[www.royalacademyofdance.org/
about/my-dance](http://www.royalacademyofdance.org/about/my-dance)



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Welcome

...to *Focus on Exams*, the RAD publication dedicated to all things exams-related!

In this issue:

- When is a student ready for their exam?
- New Specifications
- Solo Seal and free enchaînements

If you have any questions about anything in this issue, or any other feedback or queries for the Examinations department, contact us at exams@rad.org.uk

Let us know about your exams experience via our online survey at www.surveymonkey.com/r/examsfeedback

Would your exam candidates like to feature in *Focus on Exams*? We would love to share stories of exam success, perhaps against the odds or in unusual circumstances – or photos of students, maybe getting ready to enter the exam studio, or proudly displaying their certificates and/or medals. Visit www.royalacademyofdance.org/achieve/exams/more-information/news to find out more.

Thank you for your continued support for RAD exams.

Dr Andrew McBirnie
Director of Examinations



Revised Specifications

Revised Specification documentation is now available on the RAD website. As well as the English document, there are translations available in Simplified Chinese, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese, Thai and Turkish.

The *Specifications* is a key document, and gives important information on:

- registration and entry
- preparation and requirements
- the exam day
- results and certificates
- general information, e.g. uniform, exam timing, venue requirements, prerequisites, music, refunds and cancellations
- regulatory and policy information
- resources
- syllabus content, and
- marking criteria and how marks are awarded.

The *Specifications* are your first point of reference for understanding how exams 'work', what the requirements are, what your obligations are, and what you can expect from us. If you have a question about exams, the answer should be in there somewhere!

We are pleased to note that we have received positive feedback since launching the new single document format (with internal hyperlinks so you can find your way around more easily) in January. We hope that teachers, candidates, parents and exam administrators will find these new and revised documents even more useful. Please do let us know your thoughts and suggestions for future versions at exams@rad.org.uk

www.royalacademyofdance.org/achieve/exams/what-we-do/rules-regulations-and-specifications

Pianists for vocational graded exams in AECs

All vocational graded exams must take place with a pianist.

If teachers have difficulty engaging one, the local RAD office may be able to help, although it should be noted that any assistance is provided on a discretionary basis and a fee may apply.

If a pianist cannot be found, teachers can send their candidates to an RAV, or join with another school.

If a pianist engaged for examinations is suddenly unable to play, due to injury or illness, the local office should be contacted immediately. You will be asked to complete and return a form, stating all relevant circumstances and including the signature of the pianist unable to attend. This information will be logged by the RAD.

Usually, the exams will need to be rescheduled, but in exceptional circumstances they may be allowed to go ahead with the use of recorded music.



Photo: Marc Haegeman

Syllabus and music amendments

A reminder that any syllabus and sheet music publication amendments are summarised at www.rad.org.uk/syllabus-updates

Intermediate Foundation and Intermediate: new free enchaînement linking steps

Please note that from January 2019, the linking steps at both Intermediate Foundation and Intermediate level will be revised. All free enchaînements after this date should contain the following:

- At least **two** variations of **one** focal step.
- A selection of appropriate linking steps from the list provided.



Photo: Elliott Franks

Free enchaînement vocabulary		
	Intermediate Foundation	Intermediate
Focal steps	<p>Jetés ordinaires devant and derrière</p> <p>Assemblés devant, derrière, dessus and dessous</p> <p>Sissonnes fermées de côté, devant, derrière, dessus and dessous</p>	<p>Pas de basque sauté en avant and en arrière</p> <p>Assemblés</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemblé battu dessus • Assemblés devant, derrière, dessus and dessous • Assemblé porté de côté dessus <p>Sissonnes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sissonnes fermées de côté devant, derrière, dessus and dessous • Sissonnes fermées and ouvertes en avant and en arrière
Linking steps	<p>Pas de bourrées devant, derrière, dessus and dessous</p> <p>Changement, changement battu, relevé in 5th position</p> <p>Glissades devant, derrière, dessus and dessous</p> <p>Temps levé (not in a series)</p> <p>Petits assemblés devant and derrière</p> <p>Coupé chassé pas de bourrée</p>	<p>Pas de bourrées devant, derrière, dessus and dessous</p> <p>Changement, changement battu, entrechat quatre and relevé in 5th position</p> <p>Glissades devant, derrière, dessus and dessous</p> <p>Temps levé (not in a series)</p> <p>Petits assemblés devant and derrière</p> <p>Glissades devant, derrière, dessus and dessous</p> <p>Coupé chassé pas de bourrée</p>

Solo Seal

Virtuoso finale

The Solo Seal examination now includes a virtuoso finale to highlight grand allegro, batterie, and turning movements, including an opportunity to thank the pianist, judges and audience.

Below are some reminders and further advice about the music that should accompany the finale:

- If the candidate is using their own pianist, the music is selected by the teacher, candidate and/or pianist
- When using a pianist provided by the RAD, a copy of the sheet music to be used should be included with the application for the examination **or** the RAD pianist can provide appropriate music at the rehearsal
- The music should be 64 bars of a quick 2/4 (coda) with an additional 8 bar introduction (Icount = Ibar)
- A collaborative approach between candidate and pianist is encouraged, including the use of original or improvised music
- We discourage the use of music used in other RAD syllabi, or from well-known ballets, as these carry with them associations of particular choreography.

The virtuoso finale increases the amount of preparation and stamina required for the exam but it also provides candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate particular techniques and elements of vocabulary which may not be included in the selected variations.

Genée Port de Bras

Have you seen this 1979 clip of the Genée Port de Bras as taught by Sissie Smith and Sybil Spencer, danced by Pippa Vickers, with music composed and played by Ann Hogben?

www.royalacademyofdance.org/news/the-rads-digital-past

While it is important to follow the timing and detail shown on the current DVD, the dynamic values portrayed in this footage, with a gentle, effortless and understated style along with lower leg lines and effective use of epaulement, may help provide an insight into the particular movement quality required for this variation.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

In common with all organisations which operate within the European Union, the RAD is subject to new data protection laws known as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which came into effect in May 2018.

GDPR requires us to implement new procedures and safeguards surrounding the handling of examination data. Key forms, such as registration and entry forms, have been updated with privacy notices explaining the RAD's compliance with GDPR. The Examinations Privacy Policy gives more information, including an explanation of the legal basis under which the RAD processes examination data.

Teachers should be aware that under GDPR, they act as Data Controllers when they receive information from parents about candidates (names, dates of birth and gender) to pass to the RAD in order to enter them for exams. They should ensure that parents are aware of this via a Privacy Policy or Privacy Notices of their own. The ones issued by the RAD can be used as a guide.



RADius update

Rollout of RADius, the RAD's new IT system, has been continuing globally since the UK and New Zealand launch in January 2018.

All exam results processed through London HQ (about 80% of the global total) as well as those in New Zealand and South Africa are now being processed on RADius. In addition, all exam tours in South West England, London & Middlesex, UK Specials, and all UK RAV exams are being processed on RADius at point of entry (i.e. when teachers first send in their exam entries to their local office).

Volumes in the May–July period were challenging to deal with, leading to some delays, but the system is holding up well. We apologise if you had to wait longer than usual for your results and thank you for your patience and understanding. A limited trial with some teachers in South West England using the system externally was positive and we hope to expand this trial later in 2018.

The system was launched in the US and South Africa in April, and in Canada in June, with Australia as the final piece of the jigsaw due to go live in October. At the time of writing we anticipate that Canadian and Australian teachers, who have been entering exams online for some years, will be able to enter online via RADius from September 2018 and March 2019 respectively, although this depends on key system upgrades being completed in time.



Graded examinations website and sector report

Are you aware of www.gradedexaminations.com – the definitive online resource for graded examinations?

Hosted by the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre (CDMT) and drawing on the research and academic practices of 20 awarding organisations encompassing music, dance, drama and musical theatre, this website describes the history, distinctiveness and purpose of graded exams, particularly how they contribute to the development of performing artists of all ages and ability across the world.

Among many useful resources accessible from this website, the *Sector Report on Graded Exams* has just been updated. This report focuses on the factual context of graded exams and provides a selective, evidence-based account about their past and present relationship with educational and regulatory landscapes.

Visit the website and find out more about how RAD exams fit into the wider context of assessment across the performing arts.

Photo: Elliott Franks



When is a student ready for their exam?

by **Andrew McBirnie** (Director of Examinations)

Sometimes we're asked by teachers to clarify the 'rules' around who decides whether or not a candidate is 'ready' to take their exam. The answer to this must be the teacher. They are the professional, they are responsible for the preparation of students, and they are best placed to make the decision. Certainly, we're not going to dispute the right of any teacher to enter – or not to enter – a candidate (assuming they meet basic criteria, e.g. they are the right age, or they've taken and passed any previously required exams).

At the same time, we know that parents (and candidates themselves) can sometimes be very keen to take an exam when the teacher doesn't think it's appropriate for them to do so. Sometimes we get contacted by candidates and parents, who complain that 'my teacher won't enter me' or 'my teacher wants to withdraw me from my exam'. Again, our response can only be that it's the teacher's decision.

At the same time – and I'm speaking personally here – I sometimes worry that teachers are reluctant to enter candidates for the wrong reasons. Not every candidate needs to achieve a distinction – or even a merit. For some students – perhaps those who don't show obvious talent or ability, but nonetheless love dancing – a pass might be the most they can hope for. Surely what matters about any exam result is whether it's the right one *for that student*.

I sometimes get the impression that teachers are more worried about their personal exam record, or that of their school – particularly the 'distinction rate' – than about the students themselves. I realise that many teachers work in competitive environments, but it seems very sad to me that a student might be unable to take their exam because the record of a teacher or school is held to be more important. I'd have thought that whether students enjoy their classes and feel a sense that they are achieving their potential would be a more important factor in whether a school is successful or not.

I sometimes sense a belief that the RAD officially 'judges' teachers based on their students' exam results. We do not. Every RAD teacher is a professional by virtue of their qualifications and membership of the organisation, and we treat them all alike. Teachers work in different circumstances, and these circumstances can influence exam results as much as teaching itself does. If a teacher wishes to progress their career by applying to be a tutor, or a CBTS mentor, or an examiner, we won't take 'their' exam record (which means, of course, the results obtained by their students) into account. Applications for these positions are managed through fair and transparent processes with clearly stated criteria relevant to the position applied for.

Photo: Elliott Franks



I recently dealt with a situation where a candidate, who had been entered and had paid the fee for a vocational graded exam, complained to us that their teacher refused to give them the time of their exam. On investigation, it turned out that the school had withdrawn the candidate – but the candidate was unaware of this. There appeared to have been a breakdown in communication. We don't dispute the right of teachers to withdraw candidates from exams, but we would certainly encourage them to have very clear procedures in place so that candidates and parents understand why, when and how this might happen – and the circumstances under which fees will (or will not) be refunded.

What made me particularly sorry in this case was that the school stated the reason they withdrew the candidate was that they didn't want her exam result to affect their record and reputation. I would understand if the reason had been that they thought she would do worse than she expected, and would be distressed by the experience. But the candidate was clearly upset by what had happened, and I wonder whether the approach taken by the school did more damage to their reputation than if she had simply been allowed to take her exam.

I would encourage all teachers to focus on the individual potential of each student, and treat exams as a tool for developing and rewarding their achievement, rather than as marketing collateral for the school.



Photo: courtesy of Joyce Myroff

News

Following her decision to resign as Artistic Director for health reasons earlier this year, the RAD was keen to ensure that Paula Hunt's considerable experience, knowledge and skills could be kept within the RAD family. We are therefore pleased to announce that Paula has taken on a new role within the Examinations Department, as Panel of Examiners Consultant. She will report to the Director of Examinations, Andrew McBirnie, work closely with the Chief Examiner, Jennifer Hale, and will be based at her home in New Zealand. In addition, Paula will continue to work as an RAD examiner, Solo Seal and standardisation examiner and tutor.

RAD examiner, Joyce Myroff, was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal Academy of Dance at this year's Awards Day in recognition of her outstanding and exceptional service rendered over a substantial period of time, both to dance and to the Academy. The award was presented to Joyce on 9 August in Johannesburg, National Women's Day in South Africa. Many congratulations to Joyce on this very well-deserved achievement.

In memoriam

It is with great sadness that we note the passing of former examiners Alex Morrow and Florrie Sinclair. Full obituaries have been published in *Focus on Members*.

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome fifteen new examiners who successfully completed their training in Sydney and Johannesburg and joined the panel earlier in the year:

- Ana Rosa Crispino (Brazil)
- Sandra Esteves (Portugal)
- Katherine Fraser (Australia)
- Bonnie Hayman de Beer (South Africa)
- Julie-Anne Kerr (Australia)
- Vivian Kwok (Hong Kong)
- Rachael McGowan (Australia)
- Karen Perring (Australia)
- Massimo Solazzo (China)
- Beatriz Sarricolea (Spain)
- Karen Suttie (Australia)
- Cyn Dee Too (Malaysia)
- Bianca Trocino (Philippines)
- Josephine Wang (Singapore)
- Crystal Wong (Australia)

Future recruitment and training

A further training programme is planned for October/November 2018 at RAD headquarters in London, where eleven new examiners will be taken through a practical revision of the RAD syllabus and an in depth study of the assessment criteria and examination procedure, before shadowing an examining colleague on tour.

There are no current plans to recruit for further examiners following this training programme.

Any future recruitment campaigns, including details of the role of RAD examiner and the application process, will be advertised on the 'Work for us' page on the RAD website, via members' publications, and on the RAD's social media sites. For general queries about examiner recruitment, please contact exams@rad.org.uk

Successful Solo Seal candidates

The Solo Seal is the highest level of examination offered by the RAD. Candidates perform three solo variations and a virtuoso finale (choreographed by the candidate and/or their teacher) in front of an audience. This requires a high degree of technical and expressive artistry.

Candidates must achieve a minimum of 8 marks (out of 10) in every component in order to pass. In a typical year, no more than 20-30 candidates around the world achieve this prestigious award.

Congratulations to the following:

Canada

- Chihiro Abe (March 2018)
- Tali Elman (April 2018)
- Charis Leung (April 2018)
- London Mills (April 2018)
- Leighton Isabelle Shiveley (April 2018)
- Emily Sugianto (April 2018)
- Rebecca Sabrina Trockel (April 2018)

Cyprus

- Penelope Ioannou (March 2018)

Indonesia

- Soraya Nathasya Dwinandry (March 2018)

Mexico

- Karen Breidsprecher (March 2018)

UK

- Basil James (June 2018)

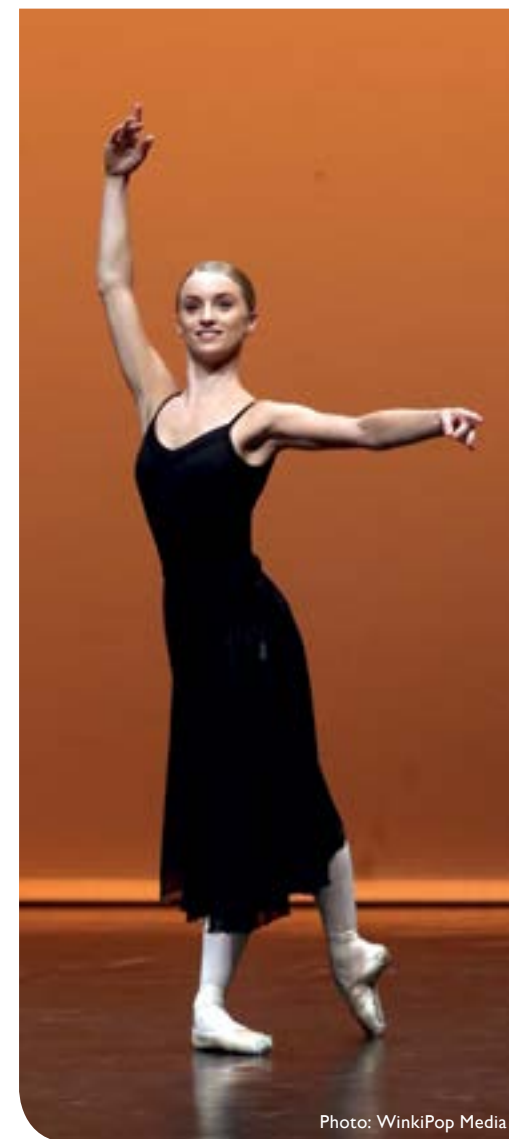


Photo: Winkipop Media

Examinations department at RAD HQ

In May, we said goodbye to Examinations Business and Customer Service Administrator **Katharine Christopher**. We are delighted that **Suzie Partridge**, who has worked for the RAD for the last few years as Syllabus Development Administrator, has stepped into Kat's role.

Congratulations to **Mark Rogers**, who has accepted a new role as Examinations Business Compliance Manager, focusing on IT, finance, legal and regulatory matters. At the time of writing recruitment had started to fill Mark's previous role of Examinations Results and Certification Manager.

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