

# Guidance for candidates

1. Candidates are required to arrive at the exam centre 15 minutes before the scheduled time of their exam.
2. Where the syllabus offers an **EITHER/OR** option the choice is made by the candidate.
3. Performance pieces do not all have to be the same length. Candidates may combine shorter and longer pieces but must not exceed the overall time allowed. Approximate timings for prepared material are provided for each grade and these should not be significantly exceeded. The examiner may ask a candidate to curtail an excessively long performance piece in order to ensure that there is sufficient time to complete all remaining sections of the exam.
4. Candidates are awarded marks for the range of performance skills they display. When 'contrasting' scenes or extracts are required, candidates are encouraged to select pieces that provide them with opportunities to display as wide a range of skills as possible.
5. It is accepted that not all candidates will have equal facility in singing, dancing, choreography and acting. However, there is provision within the structure of the exams for candidates to 'play to their strength'. Candidates in Musical Theatre should never think of themselves as exclusively actors, dancers or singers; that is contrary to the whole spirit of these exams.
6. Musical Theatre exams are not intended to be concert performances of 'songs from the shows'. All musical numbers must be performed with an implicit dramatic context and there must be a clear understanding of the predicaments and motivations of the characters portrayed. Candidates performing a thematically linked programme may, if they wish, create their own scripted context to fulfil the acting requirement within which their song and dance items are integrated. During discussion some questions may be asked about the original contexts.
7. Candidates may perform their prepared pieces in any order they choose as long as this is made clear to the examiner at the beginning of the exam. Examiners may wish to discuss a particular piece immediately after the candidate finishes it before moving on to the next performance piece.
8. Candidates may use a live or recorded accompaniment for their exam. When live accompaniment is used, the accompanist must leave the exam room immediately after the prepared pieces have been performed. When recorded accompaniment is used, tape/CD equipment may be operated by an assistant who is not the candidate's parent, guardian or teacher. The assistant must leave the exam room immediately after the prepared pieces have been performed. The use of backing tracks with vocals is not allowed.
9. Candidates should dress to allow themselves maximum flexibility of movement. Although simple costuming is allowed it is vital that time is not taken up with elaborate changes of costume. Changes should be part of the flow of the programme.
10. For solo and pair exams, sheet music must be provided as well as texts of spoken pieces. The examiner may wish to refer to music and text in the discussion.
11. Space should be used imaginatively and creatively. The 'stage area' should be appropriate to the size of the room and assume the existence of an audience in a relatively intimate theatre space. The examiner is part of that audience.
12. Extracts from plays and musicals may be edited and subsidiary characters removed to create scenes suitable for performance as long as the overall structure, sense and dramatic development remain clear. Individual candidates are dissuaded from attempting to play a single character in a scene in which dramatic development depends largely on verbal interaction with one or more other characters who remain – in the context of a solo performance – invisible and inaudible. Candidates should not normally attempt to play multiple characters within a scene, unless this is specifically related to the style and content of the play.
13. Where a thematically linked programme is required, the candidate should be prepared to cover the transitions from one piece to another in an appropriate and creative manner.

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14. Stimuli for improvisation tasks will usually be based on the content and/or context of one of the prepared pieces. Lack of understanding of the context may make the task difficult to fulfill satisfactorily. A document giving further guidance on examiner expectations for improvisation tasks, along with examples of the types of stimuli that the examiner will provide and a full set of attainment descriptors may be downloaded from our website [www.trinitycollege.co.uk](http://www.trinitycollege.co.uk)
15. In all individual and pair exams, candidates are given the opportunity to display their knowledge and understanding of the performed pieces and aspects of performance skills in conversation/discussion with the examiner. In some exams reference is made to specific subjects. Candidates will not necessarily be asked questions on all the listed subjects.
16. Discussion about writers/composers should focus on the nature of their work and the candidate's personal response to it rather than on memorised lists of biographical facts and dates.
17. If desired, candidates may be accompanied by a prompter for the performance elements of the exam. The prompter may **not** be the candidate's teacher, parent or guardian. Excessive reliance on prompts in performance may be indicative of inadequate preparation and this will be taken into account when awarding marks.
18. In pair exams, dramatic sequences must be shared equally between both candidates and have some degree of interaction between them.
19. The timings given for pair exams refer to the duration of the practical exam/performance. Additional time is required between each exam for the examiner to write up the two report forms. When scheduling pair exams, centres must allow an additional 5 minutes for Grades 1-5 and 8 minutes for Grades 6-8.
20. It may be possible for a live audience to be present for some group performances and Foundation, Intermediate and Advanced Performance Certificates, as long as their presence does not impede the running of the exam session. Please contact Trinity's London office for further information on this.
21. Further guidance is regularly posted at [www.trinitycollege.co.uk](http://www.trinitycollege.co.uk)

## Additional guidance for Performance Arts

1. Candidates for Performance Arts should refer to the guidance for Musical Theatre candidates.
2. Before the exam candidates must make it clear to the examiner which performance and contributory skills are being offered for assessment in each performance item. Ideally a written list should be provided.
3. The candidate's or candidates' teacher, supervisor or mentor must provide a signed statement that any contributory skills offered for assessment such as set or lighting design or musical composition are the result of the candidate's or candidates' own work.
4. In pair exams each candidate must display the relevant number of skills required for the grade.
5. In group exams each individual group member is not required to display every skill. However, the group as a whole must display the relevant number of skills required for the grade.