

# DIGITAL GRADES & DIPLOMAS FILMING GUIDANCE: DRAMA



The following guide is designed to support candidates in filming their performance for their digital drama graded exam or diploma. Please watch the short video on the Trinity website which accompanies this for an introduction to filming.

## Before you begin

There are three important instructions to note before you start planning your filming:

1. All exams must be submitted as one continuous performance (this includes all performance pieces, supporting tests and reflection). If there is any evidence of editing then we will not be able to assess your exam.
2. You can be given assistance to film your performance and another person can be present as an accompanist or to operate your backing tracks. However, verbal or non-verbal entry cues are not allowed and if present will result in a syllabus infringement. If you are singing with accompaniment or backing tracks, audio and video must be recorded simultaneously and no pre- or post-production techniques should be applied.
3. You do not need to provide any information at the beginning of your performance – simply start the recording and begin when you are ready. Make sure your files are appropriately labelled (please see the syllabus specifications for information).

## Your filming environment

Here are a few considerations when choosing where to film your performance:

- ▶ Choose a quiet room without disruptions, and remember to put devices such as phones or tablets on 'silent'.
- ▶ Make sure the recording device has enough battery and storage capacity.
- ▶ Check light levels before recording to ensure you are clearly visible on screen and avoid standing in front of a light source to ensure you do not appear as a silhouette on screen.
- ▶ Check sound levels to ensure the recording device captures the range of your speaking voice clearly, without any distortion.

## Troubleshooting sound issues

The microphones in mobile devices vary in quality, so you might find that the audio on your recording is either cutting out or distorting. There may be some audio settings that you can change to help with this.

- ▶ Some devices have an 'automatic microphone compression' or similar function, which may cause the volume of your recording to change suddenly. Where possible, switch these off in your audio settings.
- ▶ If your audio is distorted and you have the option in your device settings, try reducing the microphone input level. If not, try moving your recording device further away.
- ▶ Your device may have a setting labelled 'suppress background noise', 'noise reduction' or similar. Try turning this function off if the option is available.
- ▶ Other problematic functions you may wish to disable include 'echo cancellation', 'sound correction' and 'audio stability'.

## Camera position

- ▶ An on-camera view is recommended. The camera should be placed at eye level where possible. Regarding your eye line, think of the recording device as if it were the examiner. The examiner should be treated as part of a wider audience and therefore you should treat the camera as part of this audience.
- ▶ Ensure that your performance space is large enough for any movement involved in your pieces and that the camera can capture the full range of the performance space that you will use.
- ▶ If your performance does include movement, make sure that your whole body is in view and you stay in shot for the entire performance.
- ▶ If you're using props or costumes, ensure that they don't obstruct your presentation unnecessarily.

## Musical theatre accompaniment

Before filming your full performance, make sure that you check the balance between your singing and the accompaniment (live or recorded). Backing tracks should be played through an external speaker rather than directly from a phone or tablet. You may need to move yourself or the speaker closer or further away from the camera and any microphone to achieve the perfect balance. Any accompaniment must be loud enough for you to hear it while you are performing, and for the examiner to hear it on the video.

## Health and safety

- ▶ Ensure that the body and voice are properly warmed up before performance.
- ▶ Performers should not undertake anything that is beyond their physical or vocal capabilities.
- ▶ Performers should make sure the performance space is free from hazards before they start recording.
- ▶ Any costumes or props should be tailored to the age and size of the performer and should not hinder movement unreasonably.
- ▶ Any props or stage furniture must be set up and removed by the candidates within the total time limit allowed for the performance element.