

Delivering practical examinations – additional considerations for centre representatives in light of COVID-19

From August 2021 (last updated January 2022)

Overview

The health and safety of all Trinity candidates, examiners and staff remains our priority.

As we move out of lockdown and COVID-19 restrictions in the UK and Ireland we are taking a proportionate approach to the safe running of face-to-face exams, in line with national and local government guidance.

As the ongoing COVID-19 situation remains fluid and unpredictable, we may still be required to postpone your exam session at short notice. In this situation your Trinity contact will be in touch to discuss your options, which will be either:

- Re-entry for a Digital exam alternative
- Postponement to a new date
- Request a refund

Please ensure that you have read and understand these considerations prior to your exam session, and that you have alerted candidates to your individual setting's arrangements and requirements. You may find [Trinity's digital assessment options](#) (for music/drama) or our [digital English Language assessments](#), or [online Arts Award moderation](#) more suitable for your needs – your Trinity contact will be happy to advise you on the options available.

Your existing centre contract and accompanying policies and guidance continue to apply and should be read in conjunction with these additional considerations. It is the responsibility of the centre representative to ensure that these considerations and any other legal obligations are followed. Please note that we are no longer able to run any exams in private homes.

Guidance for Centre Representatives arranging and running Trinity exams and/or moderations (all subject areas)

1. Centres should ensure that the exam room and any warm-up or waiting rooms are adequately ventilated with openable doors and/or windows and/or fresh air feed mechanical ventilation. Guidance on ventilation can be [found on the UK government's website](#).
 - a. Please note that all exam/moderation rooms should be fully ventilated in all breaks
2. For non-school settings we require that face coverings be worn by anyone aged 11+ (unless exempt) when individuals are likely to come into close contact with others they are not usually in contact with.
 - a. For schools or formal education settings please continue to follow government guidance and your own safety and/or face covering protocols.

Please note that for all settings we require candidates aged 11+ (unless exempt) to wear face coverings when entering and exiting the exam room, and face coverings should only be removed when the candidate is ready for the exam to begin. Accompanists who feel happy to continue wearing their face covering during the exam should continue to do so

3. Where possible, candidates and anyone accompanying them to an exam venue should take a Lateral Flow Test prior to attending their exam. If your venue/setting requires this please ensure that this is communicated to candidates at the earliest opportunity.
4. Candidates and accompanists should be a minimum of 2m from the examiner while performing exam pieces, and this distance should be marked on the floor, with pianos positioned at least 2m from the examiner's table. The examiner may move closer to the candidate for a short while to administer supporting tests.
 - a. For brass, woodwind and singing exams (Classical & Jazz and Rock & Pop) candidates should be a minimum of 2m from the examiner and at a suitable angle, so that the airflow leaving the instrument is not directed towards the examiner or accompanist. Centres may want to mark this on the floor.
 - b. For Rock & Pop Vocal exams we **strongly encourage** candidates to bring their own microphone. If they do not, a **dynamic mic** (not condenser or other) should be provided for candidates and sanitised between each candidate (please [see guidance](#) for cleaning mics to ensure safe handling). A pop shield can be provided for additional protection.
 - c. Backing tracks and live accompaniments for singers should be played at a reduced volume to ensure that no loud singing is necessary.
 - d. Rock & Pop: Candidates who are performing an Own Choice song should provide their own backing track on a USB, or CD, depending on available equipment. Candidates must place the USB in **a tray provided by the centre** on the examiners table and examiners will be required to sanitise their hands after handling it each time. Examiners will leave the USB stick in the tray after the exam for the candidate to collect.

- e. In the case of piano duets, the primo and secondo parts must be able to be performed on separate instruments, if required by the candidate. If you are unable to provide a second piano in these instances please inform your candidates at the earliest opportunity.
 - f. For group exams candidates should follow their usual distancing measures (for example bubbles) but all candidates should keep at least 2m distance from the examiner at all times.
 - g. Personal props and costume – must arrive and leave with the candidates. If they are shared with other candidates during the day, the teacher/steward must take responsibility for sanitisation between exams.
5. Candidates and accompanists should replace face coverings as soon as their exam is concluded, and be prepared to let themselves out of the exam room at the end of the exam.
6. Cleaning of high contact surfaces (such as door handles, music stands, pianos and piano stool handles/adjusters, presentation equipment, furniture etc) should take place in all exam breaks.
7. Cleaning products (hand sanitizer and antibacterial surface cleaner) should be provided in the exam room and any warm-up rooms, and hand sanitizer should be available in any waiting areas. Candidates can be invited to clean any pianos or equipment prior to their exam should they wish.
8. Centres should consider candidate flow around their venue to ensure the minimum amount of contact with other individuals, and should consider the appropriate size and capacity of any waiting areas.
9. Where possible, Drum Kit and Percussion exams should all be timetabled together in order to avoid rearranging equipment between exams.
10. Examiners are not able or permitted to assist with room set up or moving instruments. The centre must take responsibility for accurate room set up and must leave enough time to make adjustments at the beginning of the examining day if required by the examiner.
11. Where an exam requires playback equipment operated by the examiner (i.e. all R&P, drum kit, etc.), the controls must be able to be operated by the examiner from their chair, and not require them to walk around the room.
12. For FTCLs which require two examiners: each examiner must be provided with a separate chair and table and must be seated at least 2m apart.
13. Only one accompanist is allowed in the exam room.
14. Brass players may need to empty their valves onto the floor during their exam. This must be thoroughly cleaned between candidates. Centres may wish to provide a receptacle for valves to be emptied into, but must be aware that young candidates, particularly those playing lower brass instruments, may find this difficult to manage.

15. Written paper exams or exams delivered over VC requiring computer stations should be set up to ensure a 2m distance between candidates.
16. For **Arts Award moderations** requiring more than one moderator please ensure that the moderation room is spacious enough to maintain a 2m distance between moderators.
 - a. Young people will not be required to be present at Arts Award moderations at the current time. Please do not arrange for young people to meet with your moderator.
17. For English Language exams, it will still be necessary for centres to check a candidate's ID. Consideration should be given to how best to adhere to local governmental guidance with regards to hand sanitisation and social distancing

Updates and edits

Any changes to this documentation will be listed below, with the date of the change and key things to note:

Date of Change	Highlight of Key changes
3 August 2021	Updated version of guidance to reflect considerations required following Step 4 of the government's roadmap. Please read complete document.
13 September 2021	Distancing reduced from 2m to 1.5m if possible for practical and written exams Touch points to be cleaned in break times, only if possible
15 December 2021	Updates to reflect the increased risks from the Omicron variant Please also refer to our Candidate Guidance for information on how supporting tests will be conducted
10 January 2022	Updated distancing to be 2m throughout Stronger guidance on the use of lateral flow tests and face coverings Updated information for group and drama exams Requirement to provide a tray for examiners to use in Rock & Pop exams Updated guidance on checking of candidate ID for English Language exams