

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

SECTION A: REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

1 Overview

- 1.1 Candidates who feel unable to enter for an examination due to the presence of a barrier, such as a disability or condition, may wish to request for special arrangements or aids to be put in place to enable them to enter for and complete an examination. In these cases, the Royal Academy of Dance 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, all candidates will be assessed against the same criteria and no concessions will be made in this respect.

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 *Disability.* The RAD invites applications from candidates requesting reasonable adjustments on the grounds of disability. The term 'disabled', for the purposes of the RAD's examinations, encompasses any medically diagnosed physical, mental, learning, or behavioural impairment which is likely to affect the candidate's performance in the examination. Such conditions will normally be permanent or consistently recurring.

Dance, by its very nature, is a precise physical art concerned with shape, line, co-ordination, musical, and performance qualities. It is within these parameters that the RAD welcomes candidates with disabilities or conditions for graded and vocational graded examinations.

- 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 Examinations Board 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. 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 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 impairment which they feel is likely to affect the student's ability to take part in an examination. Where this is the case, they should also 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 includes the submission of such medical evidence.
- 6.2 An applicant who intends to enter a candidate with a disability or condition should complete a reasonable adjustment form, available from RAD headquarters, regional and national offices and RAD websites.
- 6.3 The completed form, together with supporting medical evidence, should be returned to the Examinations Customer Service Manager at RAD headquarters directly or via the relevant RAD office.
- 6.4 Applications should be made by the closing date for examination entry, to enable the RAD to make any special arrangements that may be necessary to ensure that the candidate's particular requirements are met.
- 6.5 In cases where the adjustment requested involves extra examination time to be allocated for one or more candidates, this should ideally be communicated to the relevant local office at the time of sending in the exam entry form. This is to enable RAD staff to allocate the appropriate amount of time for the exam when organising exam schedules.
- 6.6 In instances where a disability or condition is not known until after the closing date for entry, the Examinations Customer Service Manager or RAD office must be informed immediately, and

certainly no later than two working days before the examination. Requests received after this time may be considered at sole RAD's discretion.

6.7 Under no circumstances should any forms be given directly to the examiner on the day of the examination. The examiner 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.

6.8 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 should be made.

SECTION B: SPECIAL CONSIDERATION

I 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 prior to¹ 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.

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.

¹ In this context, 'immediately prior to' may extend back to the closing date for entry, but not before.

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 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 prior to 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 crisis leading to acute anxiety

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 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.
- 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 may apply for special consideration using a special consideration form, available from RAD offices and websites. A separate form should normally be used for each candidate; however, in cases where a group of candidates have been disadvantaged by one event, e.g. a fire alarm, one form may be used with a list of candidates who have been affected attached to the form. All applications must be accompanied by evidence, and sent to the Examinations Customer Service Manager at RAD headquarters within five working days of the examination.
- 4.2 Application for special consideration will not be accepted after results have been received except when 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.
- 4.3 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 and any decision made by the RAD is final.

5 Other information

- 5.1 Special consideration is not generally appropriate for candidates whose illness or injury extends back to a time before the closing date for 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 apply for compensation as outlined in the *Specifications*, pages 21-2. 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 graded and vocational graded 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 for 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.
- 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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- National Directors, National and Regional Managers, RAD Representatives
- RAD examiners
- RAD websites



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