

How To Film Learner Performances

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Key information

Video evidence

In many externally assessed units, a key part of the assessment evidence is video of a live performance. In order to ensure fairness and consistency in how these videos are graded, you need to ensure that the image and audio are of good quality and the learners are clearly identifiable in the video. The guidance in here is also applicable to any video footage that is being used as evidence in internally assessed units.

Related guides

[How to Conduct External Assessment](#)

[How to Conduct Internal Assessment \(in the VQ Quality Handbook\)](#)

Additional support

Please direct any queries about filming learner performances to vocational@rslawards.com

How to record a live performance

Basic considerations

Ensure that there is enough battery charge and storage on the filming device for the full length of the performance. With many devices such as mobile phones it is useful to have a memory card installed if the device offers this as a feature to extend storage. The app used for making the recording would typically have its settings adjusted to set the card as the destination for recordings. In order to gauge the amount of storage required, a short 1-minute test recording could be made and then inspected for its size. This size would need to be multiplied with the number of minutes taken up by the exam.

Framing guide

We need to be able to identify each learner who is being assessed in the performance, so ensure that all learners are clearly visible throughout the performance. Please also see the guide [How To: Conduct External Assessment](#) for guidance on ways to identify learners in a performance.

Lighting

If possible, use either good quality photographic or stage lighting, or film in a space with good natural light. Filming in very dark environments can affect the video quality and make it harder to identify learners.

Tripods and camera mounts

Please use a tripod or another kind of camera mount in order to keep the footage steady. If you do need someone to hold a camera or phone, ensure you keep the video as stable as possible.

How to capture high quality audio

Following these simple guidelines should help you create videos with reasonable audio:

1. Don't set your volume too loudly when using amplifiers or PA speakers
Mobile phones and video cameras record sound fairly well most of the time, but struggle with high volume sound sources.

2. Avoid recording your exam in a space that is very reverberant or where there is likely to be significant background noise

3. Don't mix or produce the audio post-recording, or add any further effects or processing
This could obscure the assessor's ability to make a valid assessment of the performance, which may in turn impact negatively on the marking.

4. Consider the use of devices and apps that can improve the audio quality of your recording
Please see the final section of this guide (Recommended audio/video devices and apps) for a list of devices and apps that RSL recommend.

How to format video evidence

What frame size should I set my equipment to use?

Use either 720HD video (often referred to as 720i or 720P) or 1080HD (FHD) to ensure the picture quality is good while keeping the file size manageable. While 4k video can look fantastic, the file sizes are large and can cause some compatibility issues too. The image below shows how each frame size relates to each other. This explains why 4k is so detailed, but why the file sizes are so big.

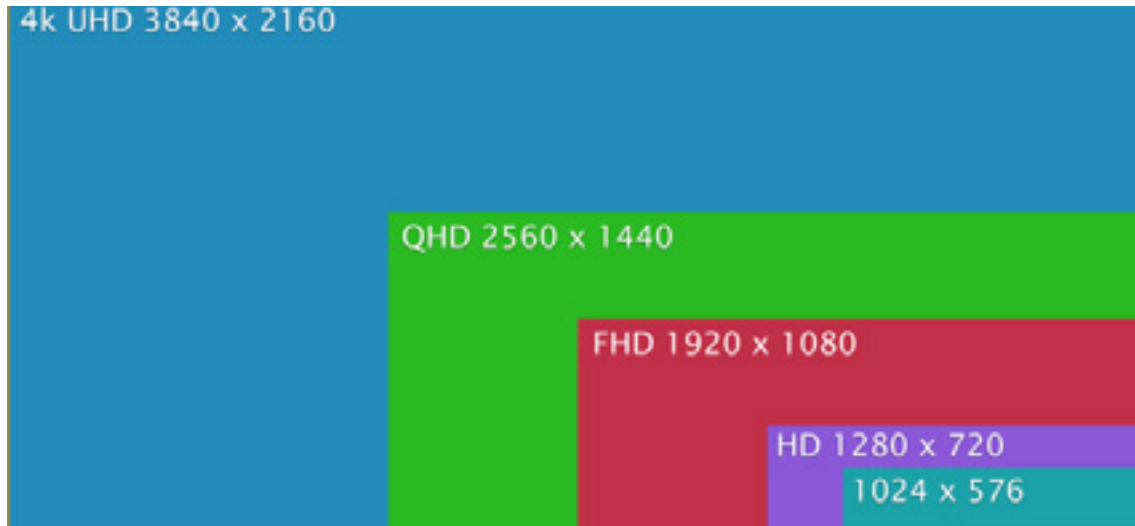


Figure 1: Frame size comparison

What frame rate should I use?

Set your frame rate to somewhere between 24 frames per second (24 fps) and 30 frames per second (30 fps). Typically this will be a choice between 25 fps and 30 fps, depending on the hardware. This will generate video that is smooth while keeping the file size manageable.

What video format should I use?

We recommend using MP4 (MPEG-4) format where possible, to ensure a good sound and image are retained, while keeping the file size manageable and minimising the risk of any compatibility issues. Please don't upload video files as .zip files as they can't be streamed on the RSL Administration Site and there is a greater risk of the file being corrupted.

What file sizes should my video evidence be

Please keep video evidence to 1gb or less. Guidance on compressing video files to reduce file size can be found in the next section: How to encode video files.

How to encode video files

As a video camera's main concern is video quality output, exported video files tend to be extremely large in size. To reduce this file size in order to successfully upload it to the RSL Administration Site, you will need to encode the video. Using the instructions below, a 1GB video around 10 minutes in length can potentially be reduced in size by 90%. Generally, a high-quality video around 10 minutes in length will take 3 minutes to encode. Please keep this in mind if you have a large cohort of videos to upload.

We recommend using the free video encoding software 'Handbrake' (available for both Windows & Mac) to complete this. This can be downloaded via: handbrake.fr

Steps to encoding a video:

1. Open Handbrake

2. Select the video file you wish to reduce in size

3. Select **Presets, General** and then **Very Fast 480p**

4. Set the encoded video to export as an MP4 file type

5. In the bottom right corner of the program, select **browse**

6. Select the folder you wish the encoded video to be exported to and enter a name for the video file

7. Select **Start Encode** at the top of the program

Once the video file has been encoded, please play it to ensure the file has not become corrupted and that the quality is of a sufficient standard (learners to be assessed are clearly identifiable and the learners' performances are captured effectively through both video and sound).

Steps to encoding videos in bulk:

1. Save all videos to be encoded in one folder

2. Create a separate folder where you wish the encoded videos to be exported to

3. Open Handbrake

4. Select **Tools** and then **Preferences**

5. Select **Output**

6. Tick **Automatically name output files**

7. Return to the Handbrake window

8. Select **Open Source** and then **Folder (Batch Scan)**

9. Select the folder that contains all saved videos

10. Select **Add to Queue** then **Add all**

11. Follow the steps to encode the videos as described in 'Steps to encoding a video' on the previous page

12. Check all videos before uploading to the RSL Administration Site

Recommended audio/video devices and apps

Microphones for use with mobile phones (check for handset compatibility)

- Zoom iQ7
- Shure MV88
- RØDE iXY
- RØDE VideoMic

Video apps that allow manual control of audio

- FV-5 (supported Android devices)
- Filmic Pro (IOS devices and some supported Android devices)

Dedicated video cameras for recording high quality audio

- Zoom Q4
- Zoom Q2n