

Candidate Handbook

Performance Diploma

Level 4 DipRSL

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Section 1

General Information

Overview

The following information is a guide for candidates who have already registered for the Performance Diploma Level 4. Although aiming to guide and clarify each element required for this Diploma it should not be seen as the definitive course book and it is highly advised that candidates use it in association with the Syllabus Guide which can be found at www.rslawards.com.

For additional assistance in the preparation of the Diploma, candidates may use the Recommended Resources section to research and prepare as fully as possible. This can be found at the end of this Handbook.

Exam Dates and running the day

On the day of the exam it is crucial that candidates arrive with enough time to fully prepare themselves for the performance. They will need to take responsibility for any changes to the standard room set-up and give themselves enough time to sound check and prepare the equipment to their needs. The examiner will be aware that the candidate will be in control of all of this and will only make adjustments to things should they be requested to do so. They will also not be able to offer any advice on sound levels or on the candidate's set-up.

An outline of what will happen during the exam itself can be found in the syllabus guide at the appropriate levels on www.rslawards.com/music/diplomas/performance-diploma

Learning Outcomes (LOs) and Criteria

The Learning Outcomes (LOs) within the Performance Diploma are entitled and contain marked criteria as follows:

- 1.1 Demonstrate own skills in Performance**
 - Evidence of Advanced Technical skills
 - Evidence of Advanced Development skills
 - Evidence of Advanced Soloing skills
 - Range and depth of stylistic understanding
 - Memory and Communication
 - Programme Timekeeping
 - Self reliance - equipment and audio management
- 1.2 Understand how to Promote as a Performer**
 - Understanding of Target Audience
 - Relevance and Range of submitted material
 - Effectiveness and quality of communication
- 1.3 Viva Voce – Self Development and Performance Planning**
 - Own evaluation of the performance
 - Justification of programme theme/objectives
 - Ability to understand and articulate Level 4 music
 - Health and Safety knowledge
 - Contract knowledge
 - Liabilities and insurance knowledge

Classification Breakdown and Grading

Performance Diploma candidates can achieve the following possible classifications:

- Distinction
- Merit
- Pass
- Unclassified

Within each LO, there will be a number of criteria, each receiving a mark between 0-7 as follows:

- 0-1 = Unclassified
- 2-3 = Pass
- 4-5 = Merit
- 6-7 = Distinction

The marking formula is mathematical, and takes the average of the marks given to each criterion within each Learning Outcome. Each threshold needs to be reached, with no rounding up or down. Therefore, an average score of '1.9' is Unclassified, whereas '2' is a Pass.

The Performance Diplomas also have differing weightings for each section or Learning Outcome as follows:

- 1.1 Demonstrate own skills in Performance – 55%
- 1.2 Understand how to Promote as a Performer – 22.5%
- 1.3 Viva Voce – Self Development and Performance Planning – 22.5%

To gain the final result an overall percentage is calculated and then changed back to a number from 0-7 matching the final classification awarded.

The full mathematical calculations for the qualification can be forwarded on request.

Each Learning Outcome must receive a Pass overall in order for the qualification to be awarded, therefore if any of the three Learning Outcomes results in overall Unclassified, the whole qualification is Unclassified.

Unclassifieds and Re-sits

The Performance Diploma is a one Unit qualification; therefore if a candidate wishes to re-sit for the exam they must re-take the whole of the Diploma again. They are however allowed to re-use the same programme or submitted materials if these achieved a pass mark or higher on their initial attempt.

Translator and Interpreter Requirements

Candidates should refer to the Interpreter and Translator policy available from RSL representatives in their territory.

Section 2

Exam Guidance

Demonstrate own skills in Performance (LO 1.1)

At Diploma Level 4 candidates should be looking to take their first steps towards becoming a live performer in their own right. Candidates should be aware therefore that the standard and maturity expected in selecting, developing and performing the programme for the exam is a significant step up from Grade 8. Although some elements have had to be tweaked to allow for comprehensive assessment in an exam situation, the overall aim is for candidates to prepare the exam as if they were preparing for a live performance.

Choosing a theme and programme pieces

The theme can encompass anything and does not have to be specifically discipline orientated (e.g. funk bass) as long as the programme chosen clearly reflects a concept. Be careful when choosing pieces to reflect your theme and make sure it is clear to the audience why they would be incorporated into your programme. You will need to be able to explain this to the examiner and clearly demonstrate it within the images and presentation of your promotional materials.

Detailed technical criteria for each specific discipline in the RSL range can be found on the website under <http://www.rslawards.com/music/diplomas/performance-diploma/level-four> It is essential candidates read through this before choosing their programme.

The wide variety of technical elements that candidates can choose to incorporate within their programmes is deliberate and due to the large range of different genres/styles in contemporary performance. Candidates therefore need to thoroughly understand the stylistic techniques both physical and expressive that apply to their chosen genres/styles.

It needs to be clear to the examiner that what the candidate is presenting is stylistically appropriate to the piece or to the candidate's interpretation of the piece. For example if the candidate chooses to take a standard pop piece but develop it with a funk twist they must clearly showcase those high level technical elements pertinent to the funk style.

Candidates are also welcome to use their own compositions as long as they comply with the repertoire criteria. Backing tracks and full score will still need to be provided in this case.

In order to fully showcase a candidate's ability and to present a full Level 4 standard programme a mix of styles may be needed in the programme. In line with this candidates may choose to incorporate additional shorter 'seg' or 'filler' pieces at a lower level to enable the programme to run fluently and to a more professional standard. Consider the need for variety and balance in the programme though, remember you are playing for an audience that does not know you as an artist.

Play to your strengths and select pieces that best demonstrate your abilities and strengths. It's fine to choose pieces you like but remember your skills are what are being assessed.

As part of the assessment, in the Viva Voce following the performance, candidates will be expected to fully understand the Level 4 elements they have chosen to incorporate into their programme. Candidates will need to be able to articulate this clearly to the examiner, with references back to their programme to illustrate.

Incorporating communication, memory, timekeeping and self-reliance

In line with the expectation of a professional attitude at Diploma level, the timekeeping, communication, organisation of equipment (including instruments where applicable), and backing tracks will all be left to the candidate to arrange. During the performance candidates should treat the examiner as an observer only, taking responsibility for all elements of the performance and preparation/set-up prior to beginning.

Candidates should consider carefully if they are using more than one piece of equipment during the performance, and keep in mind how this might affect things such as time for changing between equipment or the flow of the programme. Innovative ways to deal with these issues will be credited, however similarly they will be penalised if the examiner judges the performance to have been negatively affected by them.

Communication is expected so short introductions to pieces or similar are encouraged as well as general playing communication. Don't go over the top though; think about the suitability of the communication and the size of your "venue".

Candidates are expected to perform their whole programme from memory but they will need to have provided full score or drum sheet for the examiner. Development and solo sections must be clearly indicated on the scores, though they do not need to be notated.

Understand how to Promote as a Performer (LO 1.2)

All elements of the Performance Diploma are designed to be symbiotic and reflective of the essential basic requirements for a standard live performance, whether solo or with a group. For the promotional portfolio therefore the candidate should prepare by themselves everything they or their group would usually produce for a live performance. Although RSL are aware that certain group members might normally be charged with creating this promotional material and others not, for the purposes of the assessment the candidate must take responsibility for producing everything to the best of their ability and not commission assistance in the creation of the materials from any other party.

If certain promotional elements, such as the creation of a website or similar specialist task are used, then the candidate should clearly credit the appropriate person with their work and also define where their own input to this element has come and what it involved.

Promotional material should clearly show the examiner what the key selling points of the live performance are and include specific information such as the theme, venue, date, time, entry price, and artist/band name. Design should be clear and eye-catching, and have a clear representation of the performer and the theme running through all material.

Consider a font that works well for the format used, a font that works well digitally doesn't always work well in print. What are the key colours, do they represent the theme? Consider font size; will the text be readable for the utility of the material i.e. a poster will need bigger text than a flyer, but also probably contain less text overall.

Candidates should also reflect on how they convey their artistic image through their promotional materials. Is the image reflective of what the candidate wants to convey to the audience and how has this been achieved?

The candidate should particularly consider their target audience: who are they; what images/designs will work best to reach those people; are there any age sensitivities to consider; how would the audience be reached etc.

Promotional material should be produced to as high a standard as possible, and clearly be indicative of a paid event. Candidates will not be credited for having more expensive materials than others but will be assessed on the professional quality of the materials produced along with the practical application of their use e.g. if a flyer is made of very thin paper and the candidate is planning to place them in an external environment these will not have good practical value.

Candidates should remember that the examiner will need to take their promotional portfolio with them at the end of the exam so should factor this into their portfolio preparation. This is particularly pertinent to any web based promotion, and candidates are encouraged to include printed screen shots or a USB stick with digital screen shots. Any screen shots should be presented in a clear and logical manner, with information as to their purpose, outcome, or potential for continued promotion, being fully explained below each shot.

For the purposes of assessment anything designated as merchandise will not be considered as promotional material. Any merchandise submitted will be considered as a secondary submission to the main promotional portfolio however credit may be given in rare circumstances where merchandise is particularly reflective or pertinent to the specific performance. General items such as artist t-shirts, keyrings, hoodies, badges etc. will be considered null and void when considering the portfolio for assessment.

Viva Voce – Self Development and Performance Planning (LO 1.3)

Although set up as an interview in terms of the assessment, in order to gain the best marks possible candidates should be prepared to lead the conversation after the examiner has introduced each initial topic. Candidates are welcome to bring any supplementary material they may have produced or that they already use for their own live performances to illustrate and provide visual reference to their discussion.

Own evaluation

Examiners will be looking for a balanced assessment of the candidate's own performance and programme presentation. Candidates should try and present a selection of positive and critical aspects across the performances as a whole. Candidates should remember this will include not only the actual performance but whether the programme worked well in its delivered format and any external influences that may have affected the overall presentation.

Justification of Level 4 and programme themes

Candidates will be asked to take the examiner through how their chosen programme reflected the required Level 4 elements and identify to the examiner where in the programme these appeared. The candidate will also be asked to expand upon how they chose their programme, how the pieces fitted with their theme and what reasoning they had for putting the pieces together in the performed order.

Candidates should find the Repertoire criteria and assessment criteria available on the RSL website of great value for this part of the exam. Candidates will need to deliver a cohesive and concise explanation referencing these criteria noting the Level 4 elements they have incorporated into each piece of their performance, or for places where they have not incorporated these elements, explaining the purpose of such within their programme.

Set questions will be asked about the candidate's promotional portfolio and the candidate should be prepared to discuss how the portfolio has promoted the gig satisfactorily, how it is appropriate for the target audience and how it reflects the programme they have created. Candidates should remember that it should be clear to the examiner how this would attract the anticipated audience and how it is communicating the theme of the programme.

Health and Safety/Contracts/Liability & Insurance Knowledge

Along with performance skills and promotional ability it is key that every professional performer is aware of certain practical aspects in order to protect themselves and their audiences. In this section of the Viva Voce candidates should be prepared to elaborate on what health and safety issues affect a live performance and performing/practising in general as well as any potential issues surrounding the wider aspects of health and safety in a live venue.

Candidates will need to demonstrate that they have both an awareness of the issues as well as solutions and strategies for approaching these issues when preparing for a live performance.

Contracts, liability and insurance knowledge are other crucial issues surrounding live performance, and in particular affecting self-employed performers. Candidates should have a clear idea on how they can protect

their professional interests in this environment and be able to explain to the examiner what a standard performance contract would contain, what type of liability insurance they would expect to be in place for themselves and for the venue and how they might proceed should this not be in place. In addition they should be able to take the examiner through what they would include in any performance contract and with whom they would make such contracts. Candidates should also have a basic knowledge of the potential recourse they would have should said contract be broken, and their own liability should they be the ones to break it.

Section 3

Recommended Resources

Below are some recommended texts and websites that seek to give guidance, direction and ideas on all aspects of the Performance Diplomas. Candidates are advised that this should not be considered a complete or definitive list and are more than encouraged to read and look at any material they have access to on the subject.

RSL does not receive any financial gain from any of the products listed below and these are purely recommended as easily available, and in some cases free, reference points.

Programme creation

- <http://blog.sonicbids.com/how-to-create-compelling-setlist>
- <http://diymusician.cdbaby.com/musician-tips/the-art-of-the-set-list-choosing-the-right-songs-in-the-right-order/>

Promotion

- http://www.amazon.co.uk/Music-Business-Dummies-Loren-Weisman-ebook/dp/B00TWK3U38/ref=sr_1_fkmr1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1443622486&sr=8-1-fkmr1&keywords=promoting+contemporary+music+performance
- http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B00TOVOLYW/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1443622535&sr=8-2&keywords=promoting++music+performance
- http://www.amazon.co.uk/Music-Marketing-Promotion-Distribution-Retail/dp/087639098X/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1443622619&sr=8-1&keywords=music+promotion
- http://www.amazon.co.uk/Guerrilla-Music-Marketing-Online-Strategies/dp/0971483876/ref=pd_sim_14_2?ie=UTF8&refRID=1P13HQ68PWBFCMD2CRXD&dpID=51ByBC8f3KL&dpSrc=sims&preST=_AC_UL200_SR133%2C200_
- http://www.amazon.co.uk/Social-Media-Promotion-For-Musicians/dp/0988839113/ref=pd_bxgy_14_img_3?ie=UTF8&refRID=1A21MNXPFQYC6MN8AWXB
- <http://www.howdesign.com/design-creativity/idea-generating-tips/gigposter-tips/>

Development and Planning

- http://www.amazon.co.uk/Music-Business-Essential-Guide-Deals/dp/0753539586/ref=pd_sim_14_13?ie=UTF8&refRID=1DVJTNTQ46T2S9GJP9R6
- http://www.amazon.co.uk/Music-Law-Your-Bands-Business-ebook/dp/B0153VIEJY/ref=sr_1_8?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1443623004&sr=1-8&keywords=music+contracts
- http://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/0876391390/ref=dp_ob_title_bk
- <https://www.docracy.com/5972/band-performance-contract#>
- <http://www.musicbizacademy.com/articles/perfcontracts.htm>
- <https://www.prsformusic.com/users/businessesandliveevents/musicforbusinesses/Documents/MusicMakeoverleaflet.pdf>
- http://www.amazon.co.uk/Music-Management-Bible-Managers-Forum/dp/1844920259/ref=pd_sim_14_9?ie=UTF8&refRID=0T7V8RH61F5CG8BFXGTE