

LIVE VIDEO EXAMS: LVE@HOME

GETTING STARTED

OVERVIEW

Live Video Exams at Home are conducted by video conference between the candidate and the examiner based at another location. Backing tracks, confidential audio and visual materials are presented to the candidate via streams controlled by the examiner.

This guide provides a basic overview of the minimum requirements for exams. In order to be fully prepared, you will need to ensure your setup is correct and working. You will also need to have downloaded and installed the required software. This needs to be done ahead of the scheduled exam date. Candidates will not be able to take their exam if this has not been done in advance of the exam.

Our examiners need to be able to:

- see and hear the candidate's performance clearly
- hear all backing tracks clearly and balanced well against the performance
- communicate safely with candidates
- stream the Unseen Tests (eg. ear tests) securely
- share notation related to the Unseen Tests (eg. sight-reading) securely

EQUIPMENT:

Please note that these are minimum requirements for exams to be delivered successfully. Candidates who do not have the below setup will not be able to take their exam. For example, a laptop or desktop computer (PC or Mac) is required: a smartphone, tablet or Chromebook is not sufficient by itself.

1. Laptop / Desktop computer with screen, webcam and good internet connection.

You will need:

- Built-in or external Microphone to capture your performance and backing track
- Audio output to a separate speaker to hear audio streamed from the examiner
- To position the device so that the examiner can see both the candidate performing on their instrument and their face. This device will also be used to stream notation for the Unseen Tests.
 - For drummers and pianists, this view needs to be from the side in order to gain a view of the candidate's hands and feet (drums) and the whole keyboard (piano)
- **Drummer and Pianists** taking the Full Graded Exam will need a second device in order to view the Unseen Tests.



2. Software and Internet:

- Zoom meeting client downloaded and installed:
(https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting) Audio settings will need to be tested beforehand
- VLC Player downloaded and installed (<https://www.videolan.org/vlc/>)
- Internet running at minimum speed: 5Mbps download / 1 Mbps upload (as specified by provider). We strongly recommend connection via ethernet rather than Wi-Fi. We will ask you to run a speedtest before the exam
- Web browser (Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox)



3. A separate Speaker to play backing tracks and to hear streamed audio from the examiner.

The examiner will hear the blend of your instrument and the backing track from the speaker, picked up by the microphone.

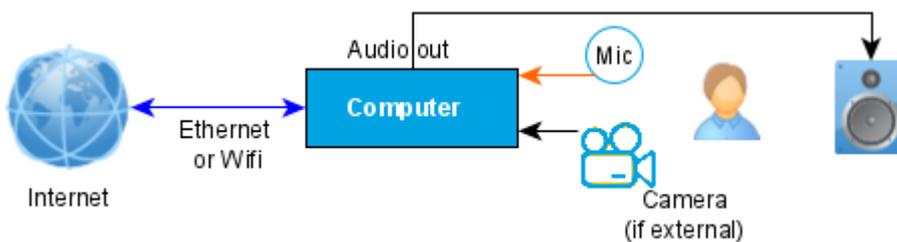
- For example: Monitor speakers, small PA speakers, HiFi speakers or a large Bluetooth speaker
- Laptop built-in speakers are not suitable
- The volume needs to be loud enough to be balanced with the volume of the instrument
- Speakers should be positioned to face the microphone (external or built-in).



ENVIRONMENT

- Quiet, private location in a walled room. This must NOT be the candidate's bedroom.
- Bright lighting (day light or artificial light), ideally illuminating the candidate and instrument from their front
- The room should not be highly reverberant

SET-UP (OVERVIEW)



Prior to the examination, candidates should work with their teacher and/or parent to ensure they have read, understood and prepared the more detailed guidance in the [Live Video Exam Guidance](#)



AHEAD OF THE EXAM DAY:

You will need to test your setup a minimum of 48 hours before your exam day:

- Test your internet speed via <https://rslawards.speedtestcustom.com>
- Download and install Zoom
 - Make a test call via <https://zoom.com/test>
 - Test that the microphone (external or built-in) is received by Zoom
 - In Zoom, ensure that “Original Sound” is activated
- Ensure that the separate speaker plays back sound from the computer with sufficient volume and without distortion
- Download and install VLC
- Test the click via <http://stream.rslawards.com/clicktest.html> in Chrome or Firefox
- Prepare the position of the computer

We will send you four pieces of information:

- Zoom meeting link and a time to connect
- An address to be used with VLC – the Steward will guide you through this on the exam day
- A link for the Unseen Test scores and metronome playback the metronome click controlled by the examiner
- A link to a chat window to ensure messages can be conveyed to you from the examiner or steward.

Free Choice Piece Sheet Music will need to have been sent to RSL at least three days before the exam.

ON THE EXAM DAY:

Please ensure you have undergone all pre-exam checks as indicated above and have set your equipment up as per our guidance.

- Open a separate browser and enter `https://tlk.io/<code>https://tlk.io/<code>` from RSL> . This is a backup for communication with the Steward, for example in case there are schedule delays.
- Connect to Zoom meeting. You will initially be in a waiting room until you will be admitted and greeted by the RSL Virtual Steward who will perform checks to ensure the setup is working.
- Grade 6 – 8 candidates will need to provide their ID
- The steward will take the candidate through a series of checks which are given in full in our guidance
- If the checks have been successful, the candidate will then be sent to a “warm up” breakout room to wait and warm up. At the allotted exam time and when they are ready, the examiner will ‘fetch’ you from the warm up room by transferring to another breakout room where the exam will take place
- If the checks are unsuccessful the exam will not go ahead and the candidate will be asked to leave the meeting. Please contact info@rslawards.com to discuss the options available for an alternative mode of exam or for rectifying the setup and rescheduling.



- During the exam, your internet connection should not be used for other video streaming or substantial downloading / uploading
- Please disable power saving / security locking which could lock the screen during the exam
- The device should be connected to the charger

THE EXAM:

- The exam will run in the same way as a live exam, as if the examiner was present in the room with the candidate via the Zoom Breakout Room
- The examiner will stream backing audio for performance pieces, technical exercises, sight reading/quick study pieces and ear tests via the VLC player
- Count-ins will be given using a standard count-in of 2 bars, or 8 clicks in 4/4 time (or 6 clicks in 3/4 time), for technical exercises and unseen tests. (In face-to-face exams we provide 4 clicks)
- For Vocals, the Technical Exercises groups A, B and C will be run with the metronome ON (ie. not optional for groups A and C as for face-to-face exams)
- For General Musicianship Questions, examiners will ask candidates to place the music in front of the camera (eg. by placing a music stand in front of the camera, and/or moving the position of the camera) so they can point to the music, and will refer to bar numbers etc. when answering questions
- At the end of the exam the examiner will thank the candidate and indicate the exam has finished in the normal way. The candidate should end the Zoom call and close all windows related to the exam

Please note:

- A parent / guardian or other nominated adult should be used to assist with setting up for the exam where required and remain available outside the room, with visibility of and access to the candidate (eg. via an open doorway) for the duration of the exam. The adult's role is to assist with any technical issues during the exam and to ensure the environment remains undisturbed during the exam. Unless requested by the examiner, e.g. playing backing tracks for free choice pieces (see below) or in case of an emergency, they should not take any active part in the exam
- Backing tracks for Free Choice Pieces need to be played back locally by the candidate. Candidates who are confident in operating playback for backing tracks are encouraged to do so themselves. This will enable them to set an appropriate sound level/balance. Where this is not possible, the parent/guardian or nominated adult may be present to perform this function *for this part of the exam only*. The adult should leave the exam room after Free Choice Pieces have been played
- Please note that in certain circumstances another examiner may join the conference call for training and moderation purposes