

Running Waltz step explored

Class Awards –
choice of exercises...

Intermediate exam timing



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Welcome to *Focus on Exams*, the RAD publication dedicated to all things exam-related!

The new Advanced Foundation, Advanced 1 (female) and Advanced 2 (female) syllabi are now being examined. The new Advanced 1 (male) and Advanced 2 (male) work will be launched on 21 May, using a virtual format, allowing teachers and students all over the world to participate. The new male syllabi will ensure parity with the female syllabi, and will be examined from January 2016.

The new Advanced male work will include a solo by Robert Binet, commissioned choreographer for the Genée International Ballet competition 2013, called *Open Form*. During the launch, members will get an insight into the creation of the solo and the challenges that face young male dancers today, as well as information from the creative panel on the ethos, choreography and music.

The Genée International Ballet Competition will return home to London in 2015. London is where the forerunner of the RAD was founded in 1920 and where the first Genée was held in 1931. To enter, candidates must pass their Advanced 2 with Distinction – so good luck to all our potential Genée contestants with their Advanced 2 exam!

Please do let us know how we are doing via exams@rad.org.uk – we are always pleased to receive feedback about any aspect of RAD exams!

Dr Andrew McBirnie
Director of Examinations

We want your feedback! Please let us know what you think – about Focus on Exams, the syllabi, or any part of the Examinations Board's work – exams@rad.org.uk



Regulatory and External

Solo performance awards

RAD solo performance awards at Grades 1–5 are now recognised by Ofqual as regulated qualifications.

The new qualifications are on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) at Levels 1 and 2.

Solo performance awards are 'other general' qualifications, regulated by CCEA in Northern Ireland; this will allow the RAD to maintain recognition by this regulator.

Recognition is important because it means that RAD exams meet standards set by national regulators which report to parliament and Government; you can be assured that our exams and awards are of high quality, and are externally recognised.

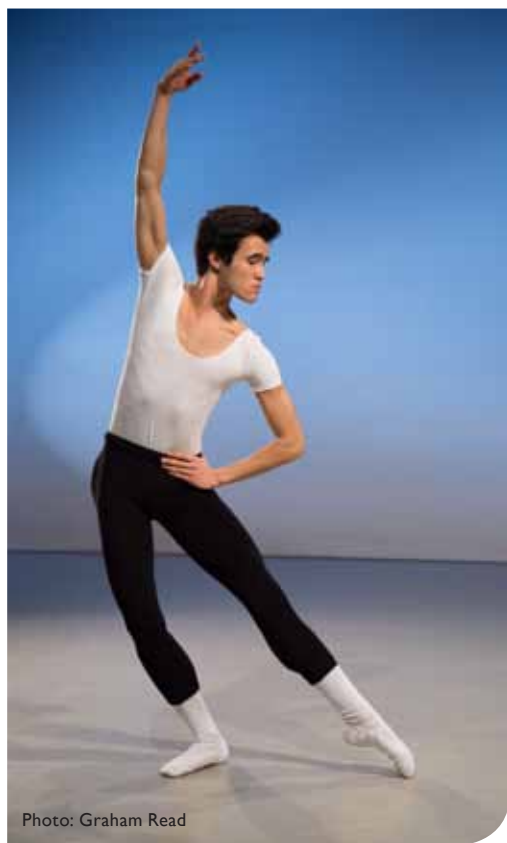


Photo: Graham Read

Specifications

Please note the following recent amendments to the current specifications (valid 1 January 2015). Updated versions are now online.

Pre-Primary in Dance and Primary in Dance Primary in Dance, Run and Leap

Class award: for 1–4 candidates the exercise is performed one by one to one diagonal only; for 5–8 candidates the exercise is performed two by two to one diagonal only. (page 8)

Examination: the exercise is performed one by one to both diagonals. (page 9)

Grades 1–3

Class awards: 'performed two at a time' added to the Dances in the content tables to ensure that this is clear (this information was already listed in the body text of the document). (pages 11, 12, 13)

Grades 4–5

Dance 'E' was missed out of the Class Award content tables – this is now included. (pages 10, 11)

Intermediate Foundation / Intermediate

Exam content tables added for different exam sets (all male, all female and mixed). (pages 18 – 23)

Advanced Foundation, 1 and 2

Advanced 1 and 2 – male markschemes corrected. (pages 30, 32)

Examinations Information, Rules and Regulations

Amendment to 'Grade 8: additional guidelines' confirming when candidates enter and leave the exam studio. (page 44)

Syllabus publications

Amendments to the syllabus and sheet music publications can be found on our website:

www.rad.org.uk/achieve/exams/what-we-do/syllabus-updates

Class awards

We have introduced a choice of some exercises (either/or) in the Grades 1–5 class awards. Candidates no longer need to perform all the exercises in the syllabus.

This affects the Techniques 2, 3 and 4 sections. Details of the choices are included in the relevant Specification documents.

This change takes place with immediate effect. However, we realise that there will be a transition period where some candidates will still perform all exercises. Examiners are aware of this and will accept either the selection, or all exercises, during 2015.

Grade 4

If a tall candidate is performing Dance C ('cane dance') in a studio where the height of the ceiling will affect their movement – i.e. where arms and wrists cannot be stretched fully – please complete a Reasonable Adjustment form:

www.rad.org.uk/achieve/exams/teachers-entry-guide/reasonable-adjustment

This will ensure that the marks are not affected.

Grades 6–8

At the moment there are no plans to update the Grades 6, 7 and 8 syllabi – these will remain as they are for the foreseeable future.

Intermediate

The timing for Intermediate exams has been increased by 5 minutes for 3 and 4 candidates – i.e. it is now 75 minutes, not 70. Any exams already timetabled for 70 minutes will run to this schedule, but for future planning, please add an extra 5 minutes. See the **Timings and Sets** page on the website.



Photo: Elliott Franks

Solo Seal Award

From now on, where possible, we will be filming Solo Seal Awards. Candidates will be asked to complete a waiver form upon entry for the Award.

The footage will not be used by the examiner and judge, and will only be used internally for quality assurance, standardisation and training purposes. All footage will be held at headquarters.



Photo: David Tett

Numbers and colours

All candidates for any exam or award, in both AECs and RAVs, will now be numbered 1–4 (1–8 in the case of class awards and Grades 6–7 presentation classes). Numbers should be large and clear enough for the examiner to see, but the exact size may vary depending on the age of the candidates.

Candidates taking Graded Examinations (Primary in Dance – Grade 8) may still wear pink, blue, white and yellow badges or ribbons, but they must wear these in addition to their allocated numbers – or alternatively they could wear coloured numbers!

We have already received some feedback from teachers concerned about this change. Numbers have been used for many years for vocational graded exams, class awards, and more recently solo performance awards, so their use is not an innovation. Both numbers and colours, however devised, can be fixed to candidates' leotards or t-shirts using any convenient method such as safety pins, iron-on fabric, or fabric hook and loop fasteners. If there is a concern about fixing numbers to the back as well as the front, examiners will accept sets where the numbers are fixed only to the front.

This change was made in order to reduce confusion in organising candidates on an exam day, and we expect the benefits of the new policy will become more apparent as teachers take increasing advantage of the new 'dual tour' examination model and timetable different kinds of examinations and awards together. However, we will of course keep this policy change under review.

Music choice forms

These are now available online:

www.rad.org.uk/achieve/exams/more-information/forms

The use of these forms is optional, except where graded candidates are entering in an RAV, where their use will be necessary so that the pianist or CD operator knows which music options the candidates have selected.

Running Waltz step

The **Running Waltz step** is first seen in the Grade 2 Transfer of Weight exercise and continues to appear in subsequent levels.

Examiner feedback indicates that the detail and correct quality of movement is not always fully understood. Part of the difficulty with the step is possibly the way it is described when candidates are taught. Teachers sometimes put an emphasis on the words DOWN–UP–UP or DOWN-UP-DOWN. These words refer to the placing of the feet and if misunderstood can lead to an incorrect bobbing quality.

After the fully extended working leg begins the movement the foot is placed down, toe-heel with a bent leg. During the second step of the movement the heel is slightly off the floor still with a bent leg.

The third step is also taken with a bent leg, the heel slightly off the floor but will take a little weight towards the heel to allow the working leg and foot to fully extend to repeat the movement commencing with the other leg.

Summary of key points to achieve an accurate detail and quality in the **Running Waltz step**:

- natural turnout should be shown throughout
- prior to the first step the working leg and foot are fully extended
- all three steps are performed with the knees bent
- the quality of movement is smooth with a subtle, lyrical, **barely noticeable** rise and fall
- the steps are long and travelling
- the first step is the longest
- the second and third step also long but slightly shorter than the first.



Photo: Elliott Franks

Solo Seal Award – April 2014 to March 2015

Australia

Shannon Brooks
Tahlia Downey
Tia Hockey
Carina Roberts
Paige Rochester
Alicia Townsend

Mexico

Lucia Figueroa
Karla Reategui

New Zealand

Thealyssa Ng
Katherine Turner

South Africa

Darragh Hourrides
Kathleen Videira

USA

Genevieve Waldorf



Photo: Graham Read

Panel of Examiners

A warm welcome to the seven new examiners who have completed their training and recently joined the worldwide Panel of Examiners:

Karen Harris (UK)

Emily Koschyk (Germany)

Loretta Lachner (Canada)

Sophia Leong (Canada)

Nicola Mueller-Williams (Germany)

Maria Rowland (UK)

Rachael Tarchuk (Canada)

A fond farewell and sincere thanks to the nine examiners who submitted their retirements or resignations during the latter half of 2014 / early 2015. Goodbye and good luck to:

Jadwiga Antony (Luxembourg)

Janet Burgess (UK)

John Byrne (Australia)

Valerie Hitchen (UK)

Janet Palmer (UK)

Gillian Quinn (UK)

Elaine Rea (UK)

Patricia Saill (Australia)

Benita Whalley (Australia)

Examinations department at RAD HQ

In October 2014 we were pleased to welcome **Lillian Doleman** (Examinations Resources Administrator) and **Katharine Christopher** (Examinations Business and Customer Services Administrator) to the department.

Since February 2015, our International Officer role has been undertaken by **Kirsty Yeung** while **Joanna Pigeon** is on maternity leave, and our Examination Operations Administrator role is being filled by **Cecilia Matteucci** for the same period.

Examinations Operations and Communications Manager **Harriet Grant** will be on maternity leave from June 2015, and recruitment for the resulting maternity cover role is currently in progress.

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