



**Digital Grades & Diplomas**  
**Filming and recording guidance: Music**

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The following guide is designed to support candidates in filming their performance for their digital music graded exam or diploma.

## Before you begin

There are five important instructions to note before you plan your filming:

1. All exams must be submitted as one, continuous performance (this includes all pieces or songs and technical work). If there is any evidence of editing, we will not be able to assess your exam.
2. Please read the instructions for your instrument carefully to ensure you have the correct filming angles, and consider the importance of setting up the shot to enable a smooth continuous performance. For the Classical & Jazz Technical Work pathway and Rock & Pop exams, this will enable the examiners to assess you according to the **'overall performance' criteria**.
3. You are allowed assistance with filming your performance: another person can be present as an accompanist or to operate your backing tracks. However, indications of pulse, verbal or non-verbal entry cues, or the playing of an additional instrument are not allowed and will result in a syllabus infringement referral. The exception to this is where candidates would prefer a verbal prompt when performing the technical work. Please see the technical work information documents available at [trinitycollege.com/digital-cj-grades](http://trinitycollege.com/digital-cj-grades) for further information for each instrument.
4. Do not provide any information at the beginning of your performance, such as your name or titles of the pieces – simply start the recording and begin your performance. Make sure your files are appropriately labelled: please see the **relevant syllabus** for information.
5. Your books or legally downloaded copies must be in shot when you film your performance. Please make sure they are visible to the examiner so that they can confirm that you are playing from a legal copy – even if you choose to perform from memory. If you have purchased a digital copy and are playing from a tablet or eReader, please show the copy on screen to the camera, ensuring that the watermark is clearly legible, so the examiner can confirm the purchase.

## Your filming environment

Here are a few considerations when choosing where to film your performance:

- ▶ Choose a quiet room without disruptions, and remember to put devices such as phones or tablets on silent.
- ▶ Make sure that your recording device has enough battery power and storage capacity.
- ▶ Check light levels before recording to ensure that you are clearly visible on screen. Avoid standing in front of a light source to ensure that you do not appear as a silhouette on screen.
- ▶ Check your device settings to ensure that your image is not back to front when recording – this may happen if using the front-facing camera on a phone or tablet. If it is inverted, you will need to rectify this before submitting to Trinity.
- ▶ Check sound levels to ensure that the recording device captures the range of the instrument clearly, without any distortion.

## Use of microphones and recording video and audio separately (optional)

Audio and video may be recorded using separate devices, as long as they are recorded simultaneously. A single external microphone may be used, multiple microphone setups are not permitted. This should be placed so as to pick up the sound in the room, rather than directly in front of the candidate. Please keep any additional microphones away from your instrument and out of shot to avoid unnecessary referral.

If audio and video have been recorded separately, editing software may be used to merge these elements together and create the final video. Similarly, editing software can be used to trim the beginning and end.

However:

- ▶ The audio and video must be recorded simultaneously
- ▶ The audio must be the same performance as that of the video and not a composite track

- ▶ The recorded audio must not be enhanced in any way and the following must not be applied to the recording in post-production:
  - EQ
  - Reverb
  - Compression
  - Pitch or timing correction
  - Tonal changes/effects
- ▶ The recorded breaks between pieces/songs should not be removed.

### Troubleshooting sound issues

The microphones in mobile devices are built for speech, so you might find that the audio on your recording cuts out or distorts. Check your audio settings to see if this problem can be avoided.

- ▶ Some devices use automatic microphone compression, or a similar function, which may cause the volume of your recording to fluctuate. Where possible, switch these off in your audio settings.
- ▶ If your audio is distorted and you have the option in your device settings, try reducing the microphone input level. If not, try moving your recording device further away.
- ▶ Your device may have a setting labelled 'suppress background noise', 'noise reduction' or similar. Try turning this function off if the option is available.
- ▶ Other problematic functions you may wish to disable include 'echo cancellation', 'sound correction' and 'audio stability'.

### Face masks and coverings

Candidates (for all instruments except Brass, Singing, Woodwind, Jazz Woodwind and Rock & Pop Vocals) may wear a face mask covering their nose and mouth should they wish, to reduce the spread of respiratory illness in line with government guidelines. Examiners still need to be able to assess focus and personal investment for the Overall Performance section of the exam even if the candidate is wearing a mask.

The important consideration is that the examiners can see the eyes and much of the face, so that they can assess focus and personal investment as part of the Overall Performance criteria. This is still possible if the nose and mouth are covered.

## Accompaniment

### Live accompaniments

Before filming your full performance, make sure that you check the balance between your instrument and your accompanist. You may need to move closer or further away from the camera and any microphone to achieve the perfect balance.

The accompanist does not need to be in shot during the filming of the performance.

### Recorded accompaniments/ backing tracks

If you are using a recorded accompaniment or backing track, this must be clearly audible on the submitted video. You may need to move the speaker closer or further away from your camera and microphone in order to find the correct balance. Tracks should be played through an external speaker rather than directly from a phone or tablet. The track must be loud enough for you to hear it while you are performing, and for the examiner to hear it on the video.

Before filming your full performance, make sure you run a soundcheck and adjust the balance between the track and your instrument or voice.

### Classical & Jazz

A list of [recorded accompaniments](#) published by Trinity is available on our [website](#).

### Rock & Pop (all) Classical & Jazz Drum Kit

These exams require backing tracks.

Backing tracks should be played without a click for all instruments, with the exception of specific cases in Drum Kit and Rock & Pop Drums exams. Rock & Pop exams must be performed with the official Trinity backing tracks, which are available to download from [soundwise.co.uk](https://www.soundwise.co.uk). Using unofficial tracks is a syllabus infringement and may result in mark deduction.



## Instrument specific guidance

These guidelines apply to candidates performing on either acoustic or electronic drum kits (in accordance with the syllabus).

### Classical & Jazz Drum Kit Rock & Pop Drums

There are two key factors to consider when filming your performance on drum kit – sight and sound.

#### Sight

- ▶ The camera should be placed at a right-angle from the candidate, looking through the Hi-Hat stand on a standard drum kit setup.
- ▶ Place the camera at the candidate's eye level to give the best view.
- ▶ The on-screen image must include the whole of the candidate. Hands, feet and face must be clearly visible, with no obstruction from hair or clothing. For this reason, we recommend that the candidate is filmed from the side, rather than from in front or behind. The full drum kit must also be in view – you may need to position the camera at some distance from the candidate to enable this.
- ▶ The music stand should be placed so the candidate can easily see it while they are performing. If this blocks the camera's line of sight, try moving the camera across slightly, ensuring the 'right-angle' view is still largely achieved.

Refer to our [video](#) for further guidance.

#### Sound

Both the Trinity Rock & Pop and the Trinity Classical & Jazz Drum Kit exams require candidates to perform with a recorded backing track. The candidate will need to hear the backing track while they are playing, and the backing track must be audible on the recording.

1. Your speaker must have enough volume to balance with your instrument, so the examiner can hear the backing track on your video. Laptop, mobile phone or table speakers will not be loud enough, so you will need to use an external speaker.
2. Experiment with speaker positioning to find the best balance between the backing track and the drum kit, for both the candidate and the recording device. If you are using an electronic drum kit, you may need to adjust the main volume setting of your instrument. Also, please be aware that for electronic kits, stick noise can over-power the drum sounds. To minimise this, experiment with camera placement and ensure you have sufficient output volume from the drum kit.
3. A single external microphone may be used, but multiple microphone set-ups are not permitted (see page 1). Before you record your full performance, run a soundcheck on one of the loudest sections of your exam. Listen back to your recording and make sure you can clearly hear both the drum kit and the backing track.
4. If so, you are ready to record. If not, try an alternative position for your speaker, repeating the soundcheck process until you have a clear sound.
5. Alternatively, a headphone splitter can be used, enabling the track to be routed to headphones for the candidate but also to be heard through an external speaker in the room.
6. Users of electronic drum kits may have the option to connect a playback device to the instrument module. This can then be used to balance the instrument and track through the same.

## Classical & Jazz Drum Kit

**Technical work:** headphones should be removed and no metronome or click is permitted. However music may be used.

**Unaccompanied pieces (Group B):** headphones should be removed, and no metronome or click is permitted.

## Classical & Jazz Percussion

Position your camera so that your face, hands and all of your instrument are in shot. You can change the camera angle between pieces if you are moving between instruments, but filming should be continuous. Position your music stand so that the view is not obscured.

### Percussion technical work

**Scales & arpeggios:** Before you begin your technical work, you must close your music and remove it from your music stand. You may use a list of the scales and arpeggios you are performing but no information other than their titles and hand parameters should be written here.

You must hold this list up to the camera before placing it on the music stand.

**Exercises, orchestral figures, studies and orchestral extracts:** Music may be used.

## Classical & Jazz Piano

### Electronic Keyboard and Organ

### Rock & Pop Keyboards

Film your performance from the side so that your face, both hands and all of the notes on the keyboard are visible.

Direct audio capture is permitted for grade exams only, for digital pianos (in accordance with the syllabus), electronic keyboards and digital organs. Headphones may not be worn except for Rock & Pop Keyboards exams.

### Piano pieces and technical work

If you are using a digital piano, please ensure that an acoustic piano voice is used, with no added effects such as reverb. Headphones may not be worn.

### Scales, triads, broken chords & arpeggios:

Before you begin this part of the technical work, you must close your music and remove it from

your music stand. You may use a list of the scales, triads, broken chords and arpeggios you are performing, but no information other than their titles, hand specification, range, dynamics and articulations should be written here.

You must hold this list up to the camera before placing it on the music stand.

**Exercises:** Music may be used.

### Electronic Keyboard technical work

**Keyboard exercise:** At Grades 1-5, music may be used. At Grades 6-8, before you perform your keyboard exercise, you must close your music and remove it from your music stand.

**Scales & chord knowledge:** Before you begin this part of the technical work, you must close your music and remove it from your music stand. You may have a list of the scales and chords you are performing, but no information other than their titles, hand specification and articulations should be written here.

You must hold this list up to the camera before placing it on the music stand.

**Exercises:** Music may be used.

### Rock & Pop Keyboards

Any tonal changes must be set and operated by the candidate, either on the instrument or on a multi-effects unit, visible to the examiner.

Tonal changes and effects must not be added in post-production or controlled by another person.

### Organ

Film your performance so that the whole of the console, your face, both hands and feet, and all of the keys and stops are visible.

## Classical & Jazz Singing

### Rock & Pop Vocals

You should film your performance from the front. You are not required to sing directly to the camera but do make sure that you remain visible with your hands, face, and most of your body in shot. Position your music stand so that the view is not obscured.

### Singing

For classical singing exams, any microphone should be placed so as to pick up the sound in

the room, and should not be visible directly in front of the candidate.

**Vocal exercises, Vaccai exercises or unaccompanied folk song:** Close your music and set the music stand aside before you begin your technical work.

### Rock & Pop Vocals

For digital R&P Vocals exams, the use of a microphone is optional.

A small amount of reverb and EQ may be used in pre-production, as per a live performance, but must not be added to the recorded track in post-production.

### Classical & Jazz Strings

Violin and Viola performances should be filmed from your bowing side to give a clear view of your bowing arm, and with your face, hands and all of the instrument in shot. Position the music stand so that the view is not obscured.

**Cello, Double Bass and Harp:** Position your camera so that your face, hands and all of your instrument are in shot, while ensuring that your music stand does not obscure the view.

A pickup may be used.

### Bowed Strings technical work

**Bowing exercise:** Before you perform your bowing exercise, you must close your music and remove it from your music stand.

**Scales, arpeggios & technical exercise(s):** When you perform this part of the technical work, your book must remain closed and set aside. You may use a list of the scales, arpeggios and technical exercises you are performing, but no information other than their titles and bowing articulations should be written here.

You must hold this list up to the camera before placing it on the music stand.

**Studies & orchestral extracts:** Music may be used for these items.

### Harp technical work

**Scales & arpeggios:** When you perform this part of the technical work, your book must remain closed and set aside. You may use a list of the scales and arpeggios you are performing, but no information other than their titles and requirements should be written here.

You must hold this list up to the camera before placing it on the music stand.

**Exercises, Studies and Orchestral Extracts:** Music may be used.

### Classical & Jazz Classical/Acoustic Guitar and Rock & Pop Guitar/Bass

Position the camera slightly to your picking-hand side so that your face, both of your hands and all of the instrument are visible. If you are using foot pedals, these should also be visible. Position your music stand so that the view is not obscured.

### Classical Guitar technical work

**Technical exercise:** Music may be used for this exercise.

**Scales and arpeggios:** Before you begin this part of the technical work, you must close your music and remove it from your music stand. You may use a list of the scales and arpeggios you are performing, but no information other than their titles and the required finger-strokes should be written here.

You must hold this list up to the camera before placing it on the music stand.

**Studies and concerto extracts:** Music may be used for these items.

### Acoustic Guitar technical work

**Scales, arpeggios, exercises, chord sequences, cadences and chord progressions:** Before you begin your technical work, you must close your book and remove it from your music stand. You may use a list of the scales, arpeggios, exercises, chord sequences, cadences and chord progressions you are performing, but no information other than their titles and dynamics should be written here.

You must hold this list up to the camera before placing it on the music stand.

**Exercises:** Music may be used.

### Rock & Pop Guitar and Bass

Tonal changes and effects must be set and operated by the candidate, either on an amp or with a footswitch or multi-effects unit, visible to the examiner.

Tonal changes and effects must not be added in post-production or controlled by another person.

## Classical & Jazz Woodwind/ Jazz Woodwind

Position your camera so that your face, hands, and all of your instrument are in shot while ensuring that your music stand does not obscure the view. A pickup may be used.

### Woodwind/Jazz Woodwind technical work

**Scales, arpeggios and triads:** Before you begin the technical work, you must close your music and remove it from your music stand.

You may use a list of the scales, arpeggios and triads you are performing, but no information other than their titles, articulation and dynamics should be written here.

You must hold this list up to the camera before placing it on the music stand.

**Exercises, orchestral extracts & studies:** Music may be used for these items.

## Classical & Jazz Brass

Position your camera so that your face, hands and all of your instrument are in shot while ensuring that your music stand does not obscure the view. For instruments such as trumpet, cornet, flugelhorn and trombone, this may be best achieved by filming from the right-hand side.

### Brass technical work

#### Lip flexibility exercise and chromatic scale:

When you perform your lip flexibility exercise (and chromatic scale at higher grades), you must close your music and remove it from your music stand.

**Scales & arpeggios:** when you perform this part of the technical work, your book must remain closed and set aside. You may use a list of the scales and arpeggios you are performing, but no information other than their titles, articulation and dynamics should be written here.

You must hold this list up to the camera before placing it on the music stand.

**Exercises, orchestral extracts and brass band extracts:** Music may be used for these items.

**Technical exercise (Initial):** Music may be used.