

RSL Levels 1, 2 and 3 Qualifications in Creative and Performing Arts

(Non-Performance Tables)

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Syllabus design and development

Syllabus authors: Patrick Healy, Daniel Latham, Tim Bennett-Hart, Anna Cook and Michelle Jones

Syllabus advisors and reviewers: Jono Harrison and Abbie Thomas

Syllabus director

Dr Fern-Chantele Carter

Executive producers

Tim Bennett-Hart and Norton York

Contact

RSL

Harlequin House

Ground Floor

7 High Street

Teddington

Middlesex

TW11 8EE

rslawards.com

+44 (0)345 460 4747

info@rslawards.com

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Introduction

The value of RSL qualifications

RSL advocates an open access approach to qualifications, providing a range of syllabuses, designed to accommodate a wide variety of candidates of different ages, experience and levels of achievement. RSL qualifications are listed on the Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF) in England and Northern Ireland by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), in Wales by Qualifications Wales and in Scotland by the Scottish Qualifications Authority. RSL is committed to maintaining and improving its reputation for excellence by providing high quality education and training through its qualifications, examinations and resources.

RSL Levels 1, 2 and 3 Qualifications in Creative and Performing Arts

Purpose of this syllabus specification

This specification guide serves the following purposes:

- To provide regulatory information surrounding the qualifications
- To provide an overview of qualification structure and content
- To provide content and assessment specification relevant to the qualifications

Period of operation

This syllabus specification covers qualifications from September 2020

Qualifications covered by this syllabus specification

RSL Level 1 Qualifications in Creative and Performing Arts

- RSL Level 1 Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 1 Extended Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts

RSL Level 2 Qualifications in Creative and Performing Arts

- RSL Level 2 Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 2 Extended Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 2 Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts

RSL Level 3 Qualifications in Creative and Performing Arts

- RSL Level 3 Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 3 Extended Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 3 Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts

For detailed information on all aspects of RSL qualifications visit [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com).

Qualifications at a glance

Qualification structures and titles

Creative and Performing Arts qualifications at Levels 1, 2 and 3			
Qualification titles	Guided Learning Hours (GLH)	Total Qualification Time (TQT)	Core units
Level 1			
Level 1 Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts	120	200	1
Level 1 Extended Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts	180	300	1
Level 2			
Level 2 Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts	120	200	1
Level 2 Extended Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts	180	300	1
Level 2 Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts	360	600	2
Level 3			
Level 3 Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts	120	200	1
Level 3 Extended Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts	180	300	1
Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts	360	600	1
Level 3 Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts	570	950	2
Level 3 Extended Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts	1050	1750	3

Assessment

Form of assessment	All assessment is conducted internally (i.e. staff in centres provide assessment opportunities for, and assess the work produced by, learners).
Unit format	Unit specifications contain the title, unit code, level, GLH and TQT value, unit aim, learning outcomes (what has to be learnt), assessment criteria (evidence on which the learner is assessed), grading criteria (how the evidence will be graded), summative assessment strategies (containing suggestions as to how assessment could take place and appropriate forms of learner evidence), unit content, suggested delivery ideas, suggested activity ideas and links with other units in the qualification suite.
Assessment bands	There are three bands of assessment (Pass, Merit and Distinction) as well as an Unclassified band for each unit. Overall grades for the qualifications are banded Pass, Merit, Distinction, Distinction* and Unclassified. In order to achieve the minimum of a Pass grade learners must pass every individual assessment criterion within every unit taken.
External quality assurance (EQA)	External quality assurance of internally assessed units ensures that all assessments are carried out to the same standard by objective sampling of learners' work. External Quality Assurers (EQAs) are appointed, trained and standardised by RSL.

1. Qualification summary

1.1 Qualification aim and broad objectives

Qualification aim

The aim is to provide a flexible, vocationally-relevant suite of qualifications which will equip learners with the skills to develop realistic employment opportunities in the creative and performing arts or to progress to higher education.

Qualification objectives

The broad objectives of this suite of qualifications are:

- To focus delivery and assessment on practical performance, technical and business skills through learner-centred activity
- To make the qualifications as flexible as possible
- To make the qualifications relevant to a wide variety of applications from FE provision through to schools, Creative Apprenticeships and e-learning, while ensuring appropriate academic options are available for certain types of HE progression
- To embed transferable skills and functional skills in the qualifications

1.2 Qualification rationale

This suite of qualifications has been designed to equip learners with the skills, knowledge and understanding for entry to employment in the creative and performing arts industries or progression to further study at a higher level. The qualifications aim to offer practical structured learning with the flexibility to specialise in different disciplines directly relevant to employment within the creative and performing arts industries, including performing and non-performing fields. The qualifications focus upon the recognition of achievement through performing and creative skills, business skills and technical skills, as well as offering flexibility of unit combination.

1.3 Levels and final awards available

Levels available

The qualifications range from Level 1 to Level 3, with two pathways at each level. The qualification will be awarded upon successful completion of a specified number of guided learning hours (GLH) at each level.

Level 1 final awards:

- Certificate
- Extended Certificate

Level 2 final awards:

- Certificate
- Extended Certificate
- Diploma

Level 3 final awards:

- Certificate
- Extended Certificate
- Subsidiary Diploma
- Diploma
- Extended Diploma

Qualification flexibility

The suite of qualifications has been designed so learners can move between qualifications at each level. For example, a learner who has completed the units required for a Level 1 Certificate can build on this to work towards a Level 1 Extended Certificate (by completing an additional optional unit). Similarly, learners working towards a Level 2 Diploma may subsequently decide to discontinue their studies after having achieved sufficient units to be awarded an Extended Certificate or Certificate. These changes can be made by completing a 'change of registration' form, available from the RSL website or directly from the Vocational team at vocational@rslawards.com.

1.4 Certification titles

The qualification will be shown on the certificate as one of the following:

- RSL Level 1 Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 1 Extended Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 2 Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 2 Extended Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 2 Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 3 Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 3 Extended Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 3 Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts
- RSL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts

2. Qualification structure

This section should be read in conjunction with the unit selection tables in Section 3.

2.1 Qualification pathways

Choice of pathway

Learners taking a Creative and Performing Arts qualification at Level 3 select one pathway from the following:

- Performing and Creating
- Performing Arts Business and Production

Learners taking a Creative and Performing Arts qualification at Levels 1 and 2 must undertake the following pathway:

- Performing and Creating

Each pathway embodies a specific profile of study and this informs the core unit choices, which you are guided to make. The profile of each pathway at each level is described in more detail below. Learners will be led by centres when choosing the pathway options available to them, and the units within their chosen pathway. The profile of each pathway is described in more detail in Section 2.2.

Pathway rationale

The aim of the two pathways is to equip learners with various industry relevant skills, ranging from basic knowledge at Level 1 through to nearing professional capacity at Level 3. Those on the Performing and Creating pathway will have opportunities to demonstrate their acting, musical theatre and dancing skills. Those on the Performing Arts Business and Production pathway will have opportunities to demonstrate their skills in wider areas of the creative arts industry (e.g. marketing, PR, artist development, publishing, set design, lighting, set construction, sound and wardrobe).

2.2 Pathway profiles

The pathways offer the opportunity to undertake specialised learning that can be accurately matched to specific career sectors in the creative and performing arts industries. Occupational areas these qualifications can lead on to included:

Performing and Creating Pathway

- Actor / Presenter / Entertainer / Comedian / Acting Teacher
- Choreographer / Dancer / Dance Teacher
- Musical Theatre Performer / Singer / Songwriter / Recording Artist / Musical Theatre Teacher

Performing Arts Business and Production Pathway

- Promotion / Management / Agent / Advertising / Arts Administrator
- Costume Designer / Lighting Technician / Make-up Artist / Prop Maker / Scriptwriter / Set Designer / Stage Manager / Director / Wardrobe Assistant
- Live Music Producer / Audio-visual Technician / Broadcaster Engineer / Cinematographer / Sound Engineer / Video Editor

2.3 Types of unit

RSL Creative and Performing Arts qualifications consist of two types of unit:

- Core (mandatory) units, chosen for their relevance to the overall qualification
- Optional units (including skill units and borrowed units at Level 3)

All of the units in this qualification suite are internally assessed – staff in centres provide assessment opportunities for, and assess the work produced by, learners.

2.4 Core units

All learners must take between one and three core units (the number is determined by their selected qualification) from their chosen pathway (Section 3). Core units have been chosen for their relevance to the overall qualification pathway, and as such these units are a mandatory part of the qualifications.

For each pathway, core units are tagged with the word 'Core' in the unit selection tables (Section 3). The core units for each qualification size and pathway are as follows:

Performing and Creating Pathway:

Level 1

- **Certificate and Extended Certificate**
CAPA 101 Live Performance

Level 2

- **Certificate and Extended Certificate**
CAPA 201 Live Performance
- **Diploma**
CAPA 204 Final Production
CAPA 205 Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts

Level 3

- **Certificate, Extended Certificate and Subsidiary Diploma**
CAPA 301 Live Performance
- **Diploma**
CAPA 304 Performance Preparation
CAPA 306 Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts

- **Extended Diploma**
CAPA 304 Performance Preparation
CAPA 305 Final Production
CAPA 306 Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts

Performing Arts Business and Production Pathway

Level 3

- **Certificate, Extended Certificate and Subsidiary Diploma**
CAPA 302 Technical Production
OR
CAPA 303 Events Management
- **Diploma**
CAPA 304 Performance Preparation
CAPA 306 Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts
- **Extended Diploma**
CAPA 304 Performance Preparation
CAPA 305 Final Production
CAPA 306 Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts

2.5 Optional units

Selecting optional units

In addition to the mandatory core units, learners can select from a number of optional units, which are open to all pathways. The number of optional units selected will depend on the chosen type of final award. These units are tagged with the word 'Optional' in the unit selection tables (Section 3). Learners can also take additional 'Core' units, from any of the pathways or qualification sizes, which will be considered as optional units within the qualification.

Skill units (Level 3 only)

Skill units are adaptations of regular optional units. An optional skill unit will not contain the same planning/preproduction elements as the full optional unit and as such gives learners the opportunity to engage with the practical elements of the unit sooner. Optional skill units require learners to complete learning outcomes 2 and 3 only. Optional skill units carry 2/3 of the GLH value of the full optional unit and are identified in the tables in Section 3. Core units may not be conducted as optional skill units.

Borrowed units (Level 3 only)

On the Subsidiary Diploma, Diploma and Extended Diploma learners may also borrow units from outside of the Creative and Performing Arts qualification suite to help form the full qualification size. The borrowed units can be taken from elsewhere in RSL's Level 3 creative qualifications (Creative Music Industry and Creative Digital Media).

The maximum number of borrowed units permitted for each qualification size is below:

Qualification	Max number of borrowed units
Level 3 Subsidiary Diploma	1
Level 3 Diploma	2
Level 3 Extended Diploma	4

2.6 Unit selection

Core units are worth between 60 and 180 GLH. Optional units from the Creative and Performing Arts qualification suite all have a GLH value of 60, skill units have a GLH value of 40 (2/3 of 60) and borrowed units from other qualification suites can be between 30 and 120 GLH. For each type of qualification learners must complete a minimum number of GLH, as listed below:

Certificate (120 GLH)

- One core unit, specific to the chosen pathway (60 GLH)
- Further optional units (minimum of 60 GLH in total)

Extended Certificate (180 GLH)

- One core unit, specific to the chosen pathway (60 GLH)
- Further optional units (minimum of 120 GLH in total)

Diploma: Level 2 (360 GLH)

- Two core units, specific to the chosen pathway (180 GLH)
- Further optional units (minimum of 180 GLH in total)

Subsidiary Diploma: Level 3 (360 GLH)

- One core unit, specific to the chosen pathway (60 GLH)
- Further optional units (minimum of 300 GLH in total)

Diploma: Level 3 (570 GLH)

- Two core units, specific to the chosen pathway (270 GLH)
- Further optional units (minimum of 300 GLH in total)

Extended Diploma (1050 GLH)

- Three core units, specific to the chosen pathway (450 GLH)
- Further optional units (minimum of 600 GLH in total)

2.7 Examples of unit selection

Learners may choose to focus on one particular area of specialism within their pathway. For example, units could be chosen with a specific focus on:

- Dance
- Acting
- Musical Theatre

- Technical Theatre*
- Business*
- Events Management*

*Not available at Levels 1 and 2

It is also possible to use optional units to create programmes of study which incorporate elements of both pathways (although a specific certification title will need to be selected). For example, units could be selected to allow learners to focus on:

- Performing AND Technical Production
- Performing AND Performing Arts Business
- Performance AND Production for Screen

Below are some examples of what units learners might choose to take for different qualifications:

RSL Level 1 Certificate in Creative and Performing Arts (Performing and Creating)

A learner working towards a Level 1 Certificate on the Performing and Creating pathway could take:

- **Core unit:**
Live Performance
- **Optional units:**
Musical Theatre Performance

RSL Level 2 Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts (Performing and Creating)

A learner working towards a Level 2 Diploma on the Performing and Creating pathway could take:

- **Core units:**
Final Production
Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts
- **Optional units:**
Musical Theatre Performance
Voice Over Acting
Choreography
Dance Technique and Performance 1

RSL Level 3 Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts (Performing and Creating)

A learner working towards a Level 3 Diploma on the Performing and Creating pathway could take:

- **Core units:**
Performance Preparation
Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts
- **Optional units:**
Dance Techniques and Performance 1
Leading Dance
Dance in the Community
Drama in the Community
Seeking Representation

RSL Level 3 Extended Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts (Performing Arts Business and Production)

A learner working towards a Level 3 Extended Diploma on the Performing Arts Business and Production pathway could take:

- **Core units:**
Performance Preparation
Final Production
Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts
- **Optional units:**
Backstage / On Set Safety
Cinematography
Costume Design
Film Direction
Film Editing
Lighting Design
Script Writing
Set Design
Sound Effects and Special Effects
Creative Response to a Brief

2.8 Entry requirements and progression

Entry requirements

These qualifications are available for all learners with the exception of Level 3 qualifications which are open to learners aged 16 and older. There are no prerequisites needed for learners entering for any of these qualifications.

Switching pathways

On any particular size qualification, learners accumulate Guided Learning Hours (GLH) within their chosen pathway to work towards a qualification title. It is possible for learners to switch qualification pathways only if the core units of the new pathway can still be delivered and assessed and if all the GLH requirements are met.

Progression routes

The qualifications equip learners wishing to progress to further or higher education with the necessary skills to progress. Learners completing a Level 1 qualification can progress to Level 2 and learners completing Level 2 to Level 3. Learners completing a Level 3 qualification will have the skills to progress straight into a role within the creative and performing arts industries. Alternatively, they can progress to higher education courses such as degrees in Performing Arts, Music, Music Technology, Musical Theatre, Drama and Theatre Studies, Acting, Theatre Production, Film Studies, Dance, Dance Teaching, Arts Management, Marketing, Film/TV Production, Events Management, Stage Management, Costume Design and Visual Production.

2.9 The wider curriculum

RSL's Creative and Performing Arts qualifications provide opportunities for learners to develop their understanding of spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, economic and cultural issues, as well as sustainable development, health and safety considerations, and European developments, consistent with international agreements.

Spiritual, moral, ethical, social, legislative, economic and cultural issues

By its nature, involvement in performing arts encourages learners to reflect on their achievement, explore spiritual issues, creative abilities and personal insights. It also encourages them to recognise and understand their own and others' worth. They may also explore moral values and attitudes and express their personal views about socially accepted codes of behaviour. There are opportunities to explore notions of community and society and their impact on individuals or groups.

Performers can explore creative performances from cultures other than their own, understand group identity and how cultural issues affect creative expression.

Consideration of issues relating to working in creative industries will inevitably help learners understand their rights, responsibilities, legal and democratic institutions and processes, roles of other bodies, economic development and environmental skills.

Sustainable development, health and safety considerations and European developments consistent with international agreements

Learners can be given the opportunity to become more sustainability literate through developing understanding of the interaction between economic, social and environmental systems. For instance, some courses of action can have positive impacts on building human and social capital, but have negative environmental and social impacts.

Since these are practical qualifications, issues relating to health and safety are encountered in many units as well as being squarely addressed through the health and safety criteria found within the assessment criteria of the units.

Much of the content of qualifications is applicable throughout Europe due to the equivalence of standards, technological advancements and industry processes.

3. Unit selection tables

3.1 Core units (Performing and Creating pathway)

Level 1

Core unit				Qualification	
Code	Unit title	GLH	TQT	Certificate	Extended Certificate
101	Live Performance	60	100	Core	Core

Level 2

Core units				Qualification		
Code	Unit title	GLH	TQT	Certificate	Extended Certificate	Diploma
201	Live Performance	60	100	Core	Core	Optional
204	Final Production	120	200	Optional	Optional	Core
205	Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts	60	150	Optional	Optional	Core

Level 3

Core units				Qualification				
Code	Unit title	GLH	TQT	Certificate	Extended Certificate	Subsidiary Diploma	Diploma	Extended Diploma
301	Live Performance	60	100	Core	Core	Core	Optional	Optional
304	Performance Prep	180	300	Optional	Optional	Optional	Core	Core
305	Final Production	180	300	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Core
306	Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts	90	150	Optional	Optional	Optional	Core	Core

3.2 Core units (Performing Arts Business and Production pathway - Level 3 only)

Level 3

Core units				Qualification				
Code	Unit title	GLH	TQT	Certificate	Extended Certificate	Subsidiary Diploma	Diploma	Extended Diploma
302 OR 303	Technical Production OR Events Management	60	100	Core	Core	Core	Optional	Optional
304	Performance Prep	180	300	Optional	Optional	Optional	Core	Core
305	Final Production	180	300	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Core
306	Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts	90	150	Optional	Optional	Optional	Core	Core

3.3 Optional units

All optional units from within the Creative and Performing Arts qualification suite are 60 GLH / 100 TQT, with the exception of Level 3 skill units which have a GLH value of 40. Additional core units selected as optional units range between 60 and 180 GLH. Learners can select optional units from either pathway (at level 3), for example learners on the Performing and Creating pathway can take optional units from the Performing Arts Business and Production pathway and vice versa. **Please note that there is no Business and Production pathway at Levels 1 and 2.**

Level 1

Performing and Creating pathway	
Acting	
108	Reading for Performance
110	The Work of a Specified Playwright
112	Working with Masks or Puppetry
140	Improvisation (Acting)
Dance	
115	Dance Technique and Performance 1
117	Ensemble Dance Performance
Music and Musical Theatre	
105	Musical Theatre Performance
124	Ensemble Music Performance
Creative	
102	Technical Production
128	Branding, Marketing and Promotion
133	Backstage Safety

Level 2

Performing and Creating pathway	
Acting	
206 Acting for the Camera	
207 Acting Workshop	
210 Elizabethan or Jacobean Theatre	
212 Performing Text	
215 Site Specific Drama	
216 Solo Performance	
218 The Work of a Specified Playwright	
219 Voice Over Acting	
220 Working with Masks or Puppetry	
280 Improvisation (Acting)	
287 Theatre in Education	
Dance	
222 Choreography	
223 Context and Influences of a Key Choreographer	
227 Dance Technique and Performance 1	
228 Dance Technique and Performance 2	
229 Ensemble Dance Performance	
232 Repertory Dance Performance	
Music and Musical Theatre	
211 Musical Theatre Performance	
238 Digital Music and Sequencing	
239 Ensemble Music Performance	
240 Introduction to Music for Film and TV	
245 Solo Music Performance	
285 Introduction to the History of Musical Theatre	
Creative	
269 Make up and Prosthetics	

Level 3

Performing and Creating pathway	Skill unit?	Performing Arts Business and Production pathway	Skill unit?
Acting		Business	
307 Acting for the Camera	No	354 Advertising, Marketing and Promotion	No
308 Acting Workshop	No	355 Artist Development	No
309 Ancient Greek and Roman Theatre	Yes	356 Branding	No
310 Approaches to Acting	No	362 Funding, Finance and Investment	No
311 Audition Techniques (Acting)	No	365 Legislation and Frameworks in the Arts	No
312 Comedy Drama in Performance	Yes	367 Merchandising	No
313 Contemporary Theatre	No	3107 Preparing for Freelance Work	No
314 Drama in the Community	No	3108 Seeking Representation	No
315 Elizabethan or Jacobean Theatre	No	Technical	
317 Physical Theatre	Yes	372 Backstage / On Set Safety	No
318 Theatre in Education	No	373 Cinematography	No
319 Theatre Spaces and Audiences	Yes	374 Costume Design	Yes
320 Voice Over Acting	No	375 Film Direction	Yes
321 Workings with Masks or Puppetry	Yes	376 Film Editing	No
393 Devising	Yes	378 Lighting Design	No
394 Improvisation (Acting)	Yes	379 Lighting Technician Skills	Yes
395 Movement for Actors	No	380 Make up and prosthetics	Yes
396 Stage Combat	No	381 Properties Management	Yes
397 Theatre Genres	Yes	382 Script Writing	No
398 Vocal Technique and Performance (Acting)	No	384 Set Design	Yes
3110 Creating a Theatre Company	No	386 Sound Effects and Special Effects	Yes
Dance		387 Sound Technician Skills	No
322 Applying Safe Dance Practice	No	388 Stage Direction	No
323 Ballroom	Yes	389 Stage Management	No
324 Choreography	No	3111 Creative Response to a Brief	No
325 Collaborative Cross Arts Performance	No		
326 Dance Fitness	Yes		
327 Dance in Health	No		
328 Dance in the Community	No		
329 Dance Technique and Performance 1	Yes		
330 Dance Technique and Performance 2	Yes		
331 Ensemble Dance Performance	Yes		
332 Global Dance Styles	Yes		
333 International Dance Touring	No		
334 Leading Dance	No		
335 Repertory Dance Performance	No		
336 Rhythm and Tap	No		
337 Social Dance through the Ages	Yes		

3100 Dance Audition Preparation	Yes
3101 Dance on Camera	Yes
3102 Jazz Dance for Musical Theatre	No
3109 Creating a Dance Company	No
Music and Musical Theatre	
316 Musical Theatre Performance	Yes
342 Ensemble Music Performance	Yes
344 Music in Theatre and Dance	No
351 Solo Music Performance	No
352 Songwriting	No
353 Vocal Techniques (Music)	No
399 Acting Through Song	Yes
3103 History of Musical Theatre	No
3104 Musical Theatre Audition Preparation	Yes
3106 Music Theory for Vocalists	No

4. Assessment information

4.1 Assessment methodology

Assessment philosophy

The underlying philosophy for assessment is that learners should receive credit for achievement, and that everyone should be encouraged to reach their full potential in all aspects of the course. Learners at Level 1 will be supported by a high degree of tutor guidance, with tasks being clearly outlined, and prescribed to a high degree. Through Level 2 to Level 3, learners will be encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their own learning process. Tasks will become increasingly learner led, with an expectation of a higher level of initiative and self-motivation from the learner.

4.2 Internal assessment

Centres are encouraged to find creative and engaging ways to assess their learners. Assessment may involve various activities or types of evidence, and must be conducted in a way that ensures that all learners can access the assessment. It is important that each individual learner's achievement is well documented, however, the method used can be based on the needs and skills of the individual. There are no word or time limits for any of the tasks, but the evidence supplied must be sufficiently long enough to allow learners to achieve the criteria.

Types of evidence

In general, the types of evidence required from learners may include:

- Participation in public performance events
(organiser and/or performer/technician)
- Written assignments
- Presentations
- Rehearsal logs (either written or recorded)
- Video evidence of rehearsals/discussion/performances
- Tutor observation
- Interactive web-based elements
(such as blogs, vlogs and websites)
- Reports identifying specific skill development
- Business plans
- Risk Assessments
- Unit specific documents (CV, application forms etc)
- Diagrams/graphs
- Illustrations/screenshots/images
- Simulation
- Witness statement

4.3 Grading criteria

Summary

Grading criteria are specific to each unit and a detailed document accompanies each unit, outlining what is expected to achieve each grade (Unclassified, Pass, Merit and Distinction). In order to achieve the minimum of a Pass grade, learners must pass every individual assessment criterion within every learning outcome.

How grades are awarded

All assessment is criterion referenced, with the grade for each learning outcome being based on the achievement of specified assessment criteria (ACs). If the work submitted is not all of an equal standard, the assessor team will select the grade corresponding to the majority of the work submitted for that learning outcome – for example, if the learner achieves a Merit for two of the assessment criteria and a Distinction for the third, the grade awarded will be a Merit. Where there is no majority grade, for example if two Passes and two Merits are awarded, the grade for the learning outcome will be the higher of the grades, in this case a Merit.

Unclassified grades

If work pertaining to one of the assessment criteria is Unclassified, the grade for the learning outcome is also Unclassified, regardless of the grades awarded for the other assessment criteria.

Examples of possible combinations

Assessment Criteria (AC)			Learning Outcome Grade
AC1	AC2	AC3	
Merit	Distinction		Distinction
Pass	Distinction	Merit	Merit
Unclassified	Merit	Pass	Unclassified
Pass	Pass	Merit	Pass

Unit grades

The overall unit grade is based on the achievement of specified learning outcomes (LOs). If the work submitted is not all of an equal standard, the assessor team will select the grade corresponding to the majority of the work submitted for that unit – for example, if the learner achieves a Merit for two of the learning outcomes and a Distinction for the third, the grade awarded for the unit will be a Merit. Where there is no majority grade, for example if two Passes and two Merits are awarded, the grade for the unit will be the higher of the grades, in this case a Merit. However, if grades stretch across Pass, Merit and Distinction then an average should be provided. Further details on this can be found in the RSL How To guide '[Conducting Internal Assessment](#)' Appendix 1.

Examples of possible combinations

Learning Outcome (LO)			Unit Grade
LO1	LO2	LO3	
Pass	Pass	Merit	Pass
Pass	Merit	Distinction	Merit
Unclassified	Pass	Pass	Unclassified
Distinction	Distinction	Pass	Distinction

4.4 Unit grade bands

The assessor teams are to apply the detailed grading criteria laid down in each unit as required. The grading criteria are 'banded' into the following categories:

Distinction

A Distinction grade will be awarded where a learner has excelled in all of the tasks contained within the unit. They will use a highly developed and extensive range of skills and be able to produce very convincing and memorable work. They will be capable of producing highly original material/ideas and of presenting them in a very effective way. They will show acute understanding of concepts, including relationships between areas of knowledge, select and successfully use a range of techniques/processes/skills and manipulate them as appropriate. They communicate ideas well and reflect on and review their work insightfully.

Merit

A Merit grade will be awarded where a learner has produced effective work in all of the tasks contained within the unit. They will produce original work and will be able to present this in an effective way. They will apply detailed knowledge appropriately in various contexts, use a wide range of sound techniques/processes/skills and know how to adapt these to suit their purposes. They review their work effectively and in detail.

Pass

A Pass grade will be awarded where a learner has demonstrated all assessment criteria within the unit. They will be able to produce work that is structured and have some grasp of a core range of methods of presentation. They will demonstrate key areas of knowledge well and use basic techniques/process/skills appropriate to the learning outcome. They can make a clear but basic review of their own work.

Unclassified

An Unclassified grade will be awarded where the learner has failed to demonstrate every assessment criteria within the unit.

Grading Descriptors

For a learner to be awarded a Pass in a task, they must provide evidence that they have fulfilled all of the assessment criteria. Grade descriptors are used to differentiate the level of achievement required for a learner who has passed the task to be awarded a Merit or Distinction grade. Grade descriptors describe the key features and characteristics of Merit and Distinction submissions, enabling centres to grade learners' work with confidence and providing clear guidance to External Quality Assurers to ensure that achievement is consistently and fairly awarded across different centres.

The tables below illustrate the primary grading descriptors which will appear in the unit specifications at each level and an extended definition of what the terms mean in relation to the specified level. This list is not exhaustive, but is intended to illustrate the nature and depth of approach that is required at each level.

Level 1: Primary grading descriptors

Planning / Reviewing tasks	
Distinction	Clear and detailed Evidence is presented with clarity and precision, with additional relevant details
Merit	Clear Evidence is presented with clarity and precision

Developing / Creating / Rehearsing tasks	
Distinction	Highly effective The evidence provided shows certain engagement and/or improvement
Merit	Effective The evidence provided shows signs of engagement and/or improvement

Performing tasks	
Distinction	Accomplished The evidence provided demonstrates clear engagement, application of relevant technical skills and confidence
Merit	Well-developed The evidence provided demonstrates engagement, application of some relevant technical skills and some confidence

Level 2: Primary grading descriptors

Planning / Reviewing tasks	
Distinction	Comprehensive Evidence is presented with additional details that are linked to the points made, fully establishing their relevance and accuracy

Merit	Clear and detailed Evidence is presented with clarity and precision, with additional relevant details
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Developing / Creating / Rehearsing tasks	
Distinction	Highly effective, well-structured and accomplished The evidence provided shows consistent engagement and/or improvement, careful and deliberate control of material, independent application of relevant skills and confidence in the execution of the task, and is presented in a highly organised and clear way
Merit	Effective and well-developed The evidence provided shows engagement and/or improvement, some control of material, application of skills and some confidence in the execution of the task

Performing tasks	
Distinction	Accomplished The evidence provided demonstrates consistent engagement, thorough application of relevant technical skills and consistent confidence
Merit	Well-developed The evidence provided demonstrates engagement, application of relevant technical skills and some confidence

Level 3: Primary grading descriptors

Planning / Reviewing tasks	
Distinction	Comprehensive and insightful Evidence shows careful consideration of multiple approaches, drawing upon research and feedback, is presented with clarity and precision, and contains extensive relevant and accurate details that are linked convincingly to the points made; approaches are practical, achievable and directly applicable to real industry scenarios
Merit	Clear, detailed and coherent Evidence is presented with clarity and precision, and contains extensive additional details that are clearly linked to the points made, establishing their relevance and accuracy

Developing / Researching tasks	
Distinction	Comprehensive, insightful, rigorous Evidence shows careful consideration of multiple approaches, drawing upon research and feedback, is presented with clarity and precision, containing extensive relevant and accurate details that are linked convincingly to the points made and demonstrating a perceptive and deep understanding of the subject and a logical and systematic approach to solving problems

Merit	Thorough, well-founded The evidence demonstrates a careful and detailed approach to problem solving, resulting in outcomes which are based on sound reasoning and supported by evidence
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Creating / Rehearsing tasks	
Distinction	Highly effective and accomplished The evidence shows consistent confidence and control of material, executing the task in a highly skilled manner and demonstrating a consistently secure and detailed understanding of the subject and its conventions
Merit	Effective and well-developed The evidence provided shows consistent engagement and/or improvement, careful and deliberate control of material, application of relevant skills and confidence in the execution of the task and shows an understanding of the subject and its conventions

Performing tasks	
Distinction	Accomplished The evidence provided demonstrates highly consistent engagement, thorough application of a range of technical skills, careful and deliberate control of material, significant awareness of the performance space and audience, and consistent confidence
Merit	Well-developed The evidence provided demonstrates clear engagement, application of appropriate technical skills, good control of material, awareness of the performance space and audience appropriate confidence

4.5 Qualification grade

The process for formulating an overall grade is given in the following section. The pass bands for the qualifications are as follows:

Grading bands (Levels 1 and 2)

- 86%–100% Distinction
- 65%–85% Merit
- 50%–64% Pass

Grading bands (Level 3)

- 94%–100% Distinction*
- 87%–93% Distinction
- 63%–86% Merit
- 50%–62% Pass

Distinction* (Level 3 only)

A Distinction* grade is an aggregated one for the whole qualification based on consistently high achievement across the full range of units within the Level 3 qualification. Learners achieving a Distinction* grade will be consistently working at Distinction level as outlined in the individual unit grading criteria. Their work will display a depth of insight, analysis and initiative and a breadth of understanding in each of the units they are working on. Those gaining a Distinction* will have applied their knowledge and displayed skills at an advanced level in all, or the vast majority, of their work.

4.6 How the qualification grade is formulated

The grades given by tutors for each unit will be stored on the **rslawards.com** website which will then formulate an overall qualification grade. Points are allocated for each unit achieved, based on the unit size (GLH/TQT) and pass band (Pass/Merit/Distinction). In cases where the number of GLH achieved exceeds the number of GLH required to gain the qualification, those units carrying the least value will be disregarded, with the exception of core units which cannot be disregarded.

Calculating the points achieved per unit

Points are dependent on unit size. The following table indicates the points awarded for a pass, merit or distinction for each unit size.

Unit size	Pass band		
	Pass	Merit	Distinction
60 GLH	4	6	8
90 GLH	6	9	12
120 GLH	8	12	16
180 GLH	12	18	24

For example, an Extended Certificate is usually comprised of three 60 GLH units. If a learner achieved a Merit in all three units the learner would have achieved a total of 18 points.

Calculating the overall grade

To calculate the overall grade, the total points achieved are divided by the maximum points available. An example is given below:

RSL Level 3 Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts (Performing and Creating)

- Core units:**
 - Performance Prep (180 GLH)
 - Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts (90 GLH)
- Optional units:**

Dance Techniques and Performance (60 GLH)
 Leading Dance (60 GLH)
 Dance in the Community (60 GLH)
 Drama in the Community (60 GLH)
 Seeking Representation (60 GLH)

Unit	GLH	Grade	Points
Performance Prep	180	Distinction	24
Planning for a Career in the Creative and Performing Arts	90	Merit	9
Dance Techniques and Performance	60	Distinction	8
Leading Dance	60	Merit	6
Dance in the Community	60	Merit	6
Drama in the Community	60	Distinction	8
Seeking Representation	60	Pass	4

In this example, the maximum number of points available is 76. As the learner has achieved a score of 65 points out of a maximum of 76, their overall percentage is 86%, therefore their overall grade is **Merit** (see the grading band table in Section 4.5)

- $(65 \div 76) \times 100 = 86$

Implementing optional skill units

In instances where skill units have been utilised, the overall grade is calculated in the same way as outlined above, with the points awarded for a skill unit being 2/3 of the equivalent full-sized unit.

4.7 Formative assessment

Centres are to ensure that work is assessed on a regular basis. A record of any formative assessment should be kept by the centre, which all relevant tutors and centre managers should have access to. If this is not possible then records of formative assessment should be kept organised and ready for external quality assurers to view should the need arise. External quality assurers will expect to see evidence of formative assessment having taken place, integrated with regular feedback to learners about their progress. This is to ensure that students are able to check their understanding during the learning process and for teaching and learning to be adjusted accordingly. This evidence could take the form of two or three of the following methods:

- **Observations**
 (with notes taken during lessons reflecting on specific aspects of their learning and progress towards reaching the learning outcome, using spreadsheets/forms to record observations)

- **Discussion**
 (enabling assessors to determine the extent to which learners are understanding concepts through open-ended questions and encouragement of creative and reflective thinking)
- **Exit slips**
 (written responses to questions at the end of a session to assess understanding of key concepts enabling the assessor to identify students needing further help)
- **Learning logs**
 (for students to make their own reflections on the material they are learning, the processes they undertake and any concepts requiring clarification)
- **Peer assessment**
 (enabling learners to check the quality of work against the assessment criteria, helping them to think about their own learning, articulate what they understand and what they still have to learn)
- **Practice projects/presentations**
 (allowing them to improve their skills at the same time as enabling the assessor to gauge level of understanding)
- **Visual representations**
 (i.e. learners use graphic means such as mind maps to represent concepts, allowing assessors to assess depth of learning)

4.8 Retaking internally assessed learning outcomes

On receipt of summative assessment results, learners are permitted one further attempt at any or all learning outcomes within any internally assessed unit. This should be uncapped (learners can be awarded any pass band on retaking the assessment) and is available to any learner, regardless of the original grade awarded.

4.9 External quality assurance (EQA)

EQA Process

A sample of the units which have been assessed internally by each centre is quality assured by an external team, appointed, trained and standardised by RSL. External quality assurance ensures that all assessments are carried out to the same standard by objective sampling of learners' work. Centres will be notified of the external quality assurance processes on approval and thereafter at the beginning of each new academic year.

The main functions of external quality assurance are to:

- Sample learner evidence, to ensure that centres' assessment decisions are valid, reliable, fair and consistent with the national standards for the qualification

- Provide feedback to RSL and centres on the outcome of the quality assurance activities
- Provide support and guidance for centres offering the RSL qualifications for creative music industry

Action plans

In cases where certain issues arise during the quality assurance process, RSL will advise the centres what issues need to be addressed and make recommendations of how this may happen. Checks will be made to ensure that these plans are being followed and that the centre is supported in their ongoing improvement.

4.10 Archiving learner work

Each centre should create an archive of learner work for each of the Creative and Performing Arts qualifications they offer. The archive should be kept a minimum of five years or for as long as the units remain valid. The purpose of archiving is to provide a record of learner work over time and to give external quality assurance teams a range of exemplars, which cover the full spread of learner abilities within each unit.

The archive should cover the following, where possible:

- 20% of all learner work, including a sample of each grade category, where available
- All externally quality assured work
- Examples of each type of assessment method in each unit
- Examples covering each tutor in each unit

4.11 Authenticity of work

Tutors are expected to take all necessary steps to ensure that learners' work is authentic and original. It is accepted that tutors will supervise and guide learners who are undertaking work, which is internally assessed. However, for all internally assessed work, tutors must:

- Exercise continuing supervision of work in order to monitor progress and to prevent plagiarism
- Be able to supply evidence of their continuing supervision and authenticate all work submitted for assessment
- Ensure that the work is completed in accordance with the programme requirements and can be assessed using the specified grading criteria and procedures
- Be satisfied that the work produced by the learner is their own
- Ensure that any material used which is not the learner's own creation is acknowledged

4.12 Presentation of work for submission

It is the centre's responsibility to ensure that all learner work is available for assessment and sampling. All work must be suitably labelled with the learner's name, unit code, unit title and centre name.

4.13 Submission of grades

Centres will access a secure registration and assessment website (rslawards.com), in which the grades will be entered. Centres are encouraged to update this on a regular basis to avoid heavy workload at the end of the academic year. The final deadline for the completion of the database will be indicated in the key dates calendar for that academic year (this can also be found on the website).

RSL will use data provided on the database for achievement reporting and benchmarking purposes.

4.14 Results and certification

Centres will be able to check their learners' provisional results online upon completion of the assessment of their units. Results will be verified after the completion of the external quality assurance process and information on the verified results will be available online. All certificates will be issued after the formal completion of all quality assurance processes.

4.15 Accessing data and information

Centres will be able to review the progress of their learners' grades through the learner registrations. These are learner specific and can be accessed through a personal password system, which will allow a centre to look at their learners' records of unit registration and achievement. Centres will be able to view the information relating to all learners enrolled on each qualification at that centre through the operation of the same website and password system.

5. Programme delivery models

Centres are free to offer these qualifications using any mode of delivery that meets the needs of their learners. It may be offered through traditional classroom teaching, open learning, distance learning or a combination of these. Whatever the mode of delivery, centres must ensure that learners have appropriate access to the resources required for high quality delivery of the course, and subject specialist staff. Centres will not necessarily be able to provide learners with access to industry standard resources in all areas, however, it is essential that learners have the opportunity to develop skills and techniques, which reflect as closely as possible those used in the music industry.

Further information on delivery can be found in the VQ Centre Handbook: rslawards.com/vocational/deliver-qualifications.

6. Centre approval

6.1 Centre approval application procedures

Centres must apply for approval by RSL prior to enrolling learners. All approval documentation can be found on the RSL website. Centres seeking approval should consult the VQ Centre Handbook for full details on the approval process and the documentation they are required to submit.

6.2 Approval criteria

In order to gain approval to offer any or all of the RSL qualifications, the following criteria must be met:

- **Management systems**
There are appropriate systems for managing the effective delivery of the qualifications (for example, regular team meetings and clear lines of responsibility)
- **Access to assessment**
The centre has a clear commitment to equal opportunities
- **Assuring standards of assessment**
There are arrangements for managing assessment which will ensure consistent standards across the centre
- **Assuring course quality**
The centre's teaching team have the commitment and the expertise to deliver the programme according to the learning schedules established by RSL
- **Induction and learning programme**
There is a commitment to providing effective induction and learning support for learner
- **Staff resources**
There is an appropriate staff development plan and appropriate provision to allow this to be implemented
- **Physical resources**
Each centre needs to have appropriate resources for the qualifications which they wish to offer to learners

7. Learner access and registration

7.1 Access and registration

This suite of qualifications will:

- Be available to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standards (at Level 3, to those aged 16 or over at the time of registration)
- Be free from any barriers that restrict access and progression
- Offer equal opportunities for all wishing to access the qualifications

At the point of application and/or interview, centres will ensure that all learners are fully informed about the requirements and demands of the qualification. Centres will take appropriate steps to assess each applicant's potential, and make a professional judgement about their ability to successfully complete the programme and achieve the qualification. This evaluation will need to take account of the support available to the learner within the centre during their programme of study, and any specific support which may be necessary to allow the learner to access the assessment for the qualification. RSL advise the use of initial assessment testing to verify the level of support needed by individual learners.

7.2 Recommended prior learning

When reviewing the combinations of qualifications and/or experience held by applicants when applying for a Level 1 or Level 2 course, the following may be taken into account:

- Related Entry Level, Level 1 or Level 2 qualifications
- Related performing arts experience
- Portfolio of performing arts activity, which will support Level 1 or 2 work

Centres will need to review the combinations of qualifications and/or experience held by applicants progressing on to a Level 3 course.

The experience/qualification profile of applicants wishing to study a Level 3 qualification may include one of the following:

- Related Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications
- Related performing arts experience
- Portfolio of performing arts activity, which will support Level 3 work

These are suggestions, which may help with the selection process. However, it should be remembered that in some cases, commitment and dedication may supersede a lack

of experience or any obvious academic qualifications. RSL support the notion of open access to these courses, with appropriate guidance being given to the learner at all times throughout the application process.

7.3 Recognised prior learning (RPL)

RSL encourage centres to recognise learners' previous achievement and experience through recognised prior learning (RPL). Learners may have evidence that has been generated during previous study or in their previous or current employment or whilst undertaking voluntary work that relates to one or more of the units in the qualification.

RPL is the process of recognising a learner's previous achievement or learning experiences. It is of particular value to learners without formal qualifications who are either in employment, preparing to enter, or returning to employment. It may apply to, for example:

- RSL Grades
- BTEC qualifications
- UAL qualifications
- GCSEs in vocational subjects
- VCEs
- Key Skills
- NVQs

Approved centres will ensure that they have appropriate RPL advisory processes and personnel in place.

All evidence presented for RPL must be mapped against RSL's assessment criteria. RPL must adhere to the assessment and internal verification processes of the centre and must be documented in order for RSL to moderate.

8. Complaints and appeals

RSL's Appeals and Complaints policies can be found on the website: [rslawards.com](https://www.rslawards.com)

9. Policies

The following policies and procedures can be obtained from the RSL website:

- Complaints and Appeals
- Equal Opportunities
- Sanctions
- Malpractice
- Centre Withdrawal
- Reasonable Adjustments and Special Considerations*

* Note that reasonable adjustment applications are the responsibility of the centre and will not be managed by RSL. Special consideration applications should be submitted directly to RSL.

10. Support, guidance and training

Centres wishing to provide these qualifications can obtain support and guidance from RSL through the following means:

- **Telephone support**
0345 460 4747
- **Email support**
vocational@rslawards.com
- **Syllabus document and unit specifications**
- **Ongoing curriculum, delivery and assessment support**
- **Help and support available on the RSL website (webinars, training videos, exemplars)**

11. Contacts

All email correspondence about these qualifications should be directed to:

vocational@rslawards.com

RSL
Harlequin House
7 High Street
Teddington
Middlesex
TW11 8EE

rslawards.com
+44 (0)345 460 4747