

Voice for Life Chorister Awards

Online Exams 2022 onwards

This is a short guide to preparing and taking our online awards examinations using the 2021 syllabus.

Introduction

Online examinations are currently available for Bronze, Silver and Gold level awards. Dates of forthcoming exam sessions (both online and in-person) are advertised on the [Events](#) page of the RSCM website.

Candidates are very much at the forefront of our thinking through this process, and our aim is to make the environment safe and secure whilst also allowing the examiner team to be able accurately to assess the candidates' abilities and strengths. Doubtless, the experience of taking an online exam will be different to past experiences, but it is our hope that these will remain as a stepping-stone to more confident performance and self-assurance for candidates.

We have tried to keep as much as possible of the exams exactly the same as would normally be the case in live person-to-person exams but, inevitably, a few small details have had to be changed to make things work.

General points

1. Facilities/equipment needed

- a. Candidates will need a quiet location where interruption is unlikely.
- b. A good, reliable internet connection is essential.
- c. A computer, tablet or mobile phone which is capable of running Zoom (please make sure you have installed the latest version of the Zoom app.) Devices with larger screens are preferable as some parts of the test will rely on candidates answering questions to be shown on the screen.
- d. Please enable ORIGINAL SOUND on Zoom. For instructions on how to do this, [follow this link](#).
- e. A suitable way of supporting the device (a small stand, table etc) so that the view and audibility of the candidate is guaranteed.
- f. Candidates have the choice of performing either with headphones or earphones (in which case the candidate might prefer to sing leaving one ear uncovered), or using the speakers on the device. Whichever route is chosen, it is advisable for the candidate to take time to try it out well in advance and be confident in controlling volume levels.
- g. An accompanist **or pre-recorded accompaniment**.
- h. Either a piano or electronic keyboard, **or a means of playing back a pre-recorded accompaniment over a loudspeaker**. The accompaniment should be a little further away from the Zoom call device than the candidate.

2. The exam experience

- a. Exams will be conducted using Zoom.
 - b. Exam appointments will be booked by the RSCM and the exams will be monitored and recorded to ensure safeguarding at all times.
 - c. The order of the exam will run in a strict order as outlined in the tables which follow. Areas of the exam which are different from face-to-face exams are marked in **red text**.
 - d. The examiner will have a keyboard instrument in order to deliver the aural tests and to give chords and notes for the sight-reading elements. Details for all these sections are given below.
 - e. All the usual terms and conditions otherwise apply in the normal way.
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ALL LEVELS – STARTING THE ONLINE EXAM

Pre-exam 1	Candidates should join the Zoom meeting about 5 minutes ahead of their allotted time. When the examiner is ready, the candidate will be admitted from the waiting room and their identity and programme confirmed.
Pre-exam 2	Before the exam itself starts, examiners will ask candidates and their accompanists to try the beginning of their hymn, partly as a warm up for the candidate, and partly to ensure that Zoom is well set up for audio on their microphone and listening devices. This is also an opportunity to check that a good balance is heard between candidate and accompanist.

BRONZE AWARD – ONLINE VERSION

1	Hymn	Exactly as per face-to-face
2	Unaccompanied Item	Exactly as per face-to-face
3	Psalm	Exactly as per face-to-face
4	Anthem	Exactly as per face-to-face
5	Sight singing	<p>Tests will consist of the same three elements [4 notes – clapping the rhythm – singing the melody using the same rhythm] as before, though the melody will be sung unaccompanied.</p> <p>A test will be shared online via a screen-share on Zoom. Notes will be given where necessary, but the test will be otherwise unaccompanied.</p> <p>All other aspects of this test will be delivered as normal, including extra time where it has been allowed.</p>
6	Technical Questions	<p>Candidates will be shown passages of music via Zoom as a screen share and will be asked the usual range of questions about keys, pitches, note lengths, time signatures, Italian terms etc.</p>
7	Aural Tests	<p>Tests will consist of the same three elements [clapping a rhythm - singing three phrases as echoes – singing notes and identifying intervals].</p> <p>All tests will be delivered in the normal way from the examiner to the candidate via Zoom.</p> <p>Examiners will be aware that there will be a slight pause between elements of the echo test, owing to latency, and will warn the candidates about this.</p>
8	Choir in Context	<p>Questions will be asked in the normal way via Zoom.</p> <p>The examiner will show a church plan via a screen share in Zoom and ask questions about the location of church furnishings.</p>

SILVER AWARD – ONLINE VERSION

1	Hymn	Exactly as per face-to-face
2	Unaccompanied item	Exactly as per face-to-face
3	Psalm	Exactly as per face-to-face
4	Early styles	Exactly as per face-to-face
5	Later styles	Exactly as per face-to-face
6	Sight singing	<p>Tests will consist of the same three elements [clapping the rhythm – saying the words in rhythm - singing the melody] as before, though the melody will be sung unaccompanied.</p> <p><i>A test will be shared online via a screen-share on Zoom. Notes will be given where necessary, but the test will be otherwise unaccompanied.</i></p> <p>All other aspects of this test will be delivered as normal, including extra time where it has been allowed.</p>
7	Technical Questions	<i>Candidates will be shown passages of music via Zoom as a screen share</i> and will be asked the usual range of questions about keys, pitches, note lengths, time signatures, Italian terms etc.
8	Aural Tests	<p>Tests will consist of the same four elements [clapping the pulse - singing two phrases as echoes –triads –singing intervals]which will be delivered in the normal way from the examiner to the candidate via Zoom.</p> <p><i>Examiners will be aware that there will be a slight pause between elements of the echo test, owing to latency, and will warn the candidates about this.</i></p>
9	Choir in Context	<p>Questions will be asked in the normal way via Zoom.</p> <p><i>Reading aloud at sight will be presented via a screen-share on Zoom</i></p>

GOLD AWARD – ONLINE VERSION

1	Hymn	Exactly as per face-to-face
2	Psalm to Anglican chant	Exactly as per face-to-face
3	Psalm to plainsong	Exactly as per face-to-face
4	16-17 C style	Exactly as per face-to-face
5	Late 17-19 C style	Exactly as per face-to-face
6	20-21 C style	Exactly as per face-to-face
7	Practical Skills	<p>A test will be shared online via a screen-share on Zoom. Notes will be given where necessary, but the test will be otherwise unaccompanied.</p> <p>Supplementary technical questions will be asked from another screen share.</p> <p>All other aspects of this test will be delivered as normal, including extra time where it has been allowed.</p>
9	Choir in Context	<p>Questions will be asked in the normal way via Zoom.</p> <p>Reading aloud at sight will be presented via a screen-share on Zoom</p>