PODCASTING

SYLLABUS SPECIFICATION

2020 Edition

creative
Qualifications

PODCASTING

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PREFACE

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the RSL Awards 2020 syllabus in Podcasting
This syllabus guide is designed to give teachers, learners and candidates practical information on the graded qualifications run by RSL Awards.

This syllabus guide covers the following qualifications
▪ Graded qualifications: Debut to Grade 8

Period of operation
This syllabus specification covers graded qualifications in Podcasting from 2020.

THE VALUE OF RSL QUALIFICATIONS

A reputation for excellence
RSL is committed to maintaining and improving its reputation for excellence by providing high quality education and training through its syllabuses, examinations, music and resources. 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).

RSL and UCAS
For students applying for work or university, many potential employers see graded exams in a very positive way. Recognised qualifications demonstrate an ability to dedicate commitment to extracurricular activities, providing evidence of versatility which many students find beneficial within UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) applications and for university entrance interviews. These qualifications are currently undergoing review by UCAS to determine their status and suitability for UCAS points. We expect this to be clarified by autumn 2021. Please check the website for details: rslawards.com/about-us/ucas-points

Information and support
The RSL Awards website rslawards.com has detailed information on all aspects of RSL examinations, including examination regulations, detailed marking schemes and assessment criteria as well as examples to help you prepare for our qualifications.

QUALIFICATIONS AT A GLANCE

Qualification titles and sizes

Qualification title	QAN	Total number of units	Guided learning hours (GLH)	Credit	Total qualification time (TQT)
RSL Entry Level Award in Digital Communication Skills – Debut (Entry 3)	603/6634/5	1	8	4	40
RSL Level 1 Award in Digital Communication Skills – Grade 1	603/6635/7	1	10	5	50
RSL Level 1 Award in Digital Communication Skills – Grade 2	603/6636/9	1	15	8	80
RSL Level 1 Award in Digital Communication Skills – Grade 3	603/6637/0	1	16	11	110
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Digital Communication Skills – Grade 4	603/6637/0	1	21	13	130
RSL Level 2 Certificate in Digital Communication Skills – Grade 5	603/6638/2	1	21	16	160
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Digital Communication Skills – Grade 6	603/664/0/0	1	32	20	200
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Digital Communication Skills – Grade 7	603/6641/2	1	42	25	250
RSL Level 3 Certificate in Digital Communication Skills – Grade 8	603/6642/4	1	50	30	300

Assessment overview

Assessment	
Form of assessment	All assessments are carried out by external examiners online. Candidates are required to carry out a combination of practical tasks and underpinning theoretical assessment.
Assessment bands	There are four bands of assessment (Distinction, Merit, Pass and Unclassified) for the qualification as a whole.
Quality assurance	Quality assurance ensures that all assessments are carried out to the same standard by objective sampling and reassessment of candidates' work. A team of external examiners is appointed, trained and standardised by RSL.

QUALIFICATION SUMMARY

Aims and broad objectives

The aim of podcasting qualifications is to provide a flexible, progressive mastery approach to the knowledge, skills and understanding required for podcasting productions. RSL's graded qualifications motivate and encourage candidates of all ages and levels through a system of progressive mastery, enabling candidates to develop and enhance skills, knowledge and understanding in a safe and consistent way. The qualifications are beneficial for candidates wishing to progress at their own pace through smaller steps of achievement.

Expectations of knowledge, skills and understanding

The graded examination system is one based on the principle of 'progressive mastery'; each step in the exam chain demonstrates learning, progression and skills in incremental steps. Successful learning is characterised by a mastery of the fundamentals of the skills demanded in each grade.

Qualification structure

A graded qualification consists of a range of both practical and knowledge based elements which are based on detailed requirements outlined in the relevant syllabus. Therefore, requirements for each grade will be set out in detail in the unit specifications (pages 15 to 36) and the learning outcomes and assessment criteria for each unit will require knowledge, skills and understanding of these syllabus requirements to be demonstrated at the grade entered.

Quality assurance

All RSL graded qualifications are standardised according to the processes and procedures laid down by RSL.

ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

Assessment summary

Learners will be able to complete a set of practical tasks and be tested on their underpinning knowledge (the complexity and variety of tasks are determined by which qualification is being attempted), which allows them to demonstrate media production knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to the grade. These technical skills set a firm platform for further technical and creative development by the learner. Learners will complete a coursework task and be tested on their underpinning knowledge (the complexity and variety of tasks are determined by which qualification is being attempted), allowing them to demonstrate podcasting production knowledge, skills and understanding relevant to the grade. These technical skills set a firm platform for further technical and creative development by the learner.

Assessment methodology

Graded examinations in podcasting are assessed via online coursework submission. All assessment of these is external and is undertaken by RSL Examiners. The assessment is divided into the following sections:

- **Part A Coursework (90%)**
  Candidates will utilise technical and presentation skills to create a piece of practical work. This work is uploaded directly to examiners for marking through a secure portal.

- **Part B Evaluation (10%)**
  Candidates will evaluate the work created in Part A by responding to set questions. These responses can be written or recorded audio or video. The responses are to be saved digitally and uploaded with the coursework task.

CANDIDATE ACCESS AND REGISTRATION

Access and registration
The qualifications will:
- Be available to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standards
- Be free from any barriers that restrict access and progression
- Offer equal opportunities for all wishing to access the qualifications

Entry requirements
These qualifications are open to everyone who is capable of reaching the required standard; there are no entry requirements. However, candidates should be aware that the content at the higher grades will require a level of knowledge and understanding covered in previous qualifications. At the point of application, RSL will ensure that all candidates are fully informed about the requirements and demands of the qualification.

Age groups
These qualifications are suitable for candidates in the Under 16, 16+, 16–18 and 19+ age groups.

Recommended prior learning (RPL)
Learners are not required to have any prior learning for these qualifications. However, learners should ensure that they are aware of the requirements and expectations of each grade prior to entering for an assessment.

Exam entry
Candidates may enter online at any time of the year. Coursework can be submitted through our website and will be marked within three weeks of submission. For further details on exam dates and fees, and to enter for a podcasting graded qualification visit the RSL website at: rslawards.com.

Progression
Graded qualifications provide a flexible progression route for candidates. They are a positive means of determining progress and enable candidates to learn the necessary techniques to gain entry to further education (FE) and higher education (HE) courses. Graded qualifications operate according to a well-established methodology of 'progressive mastery'. They allow candidates to be tested in discrete stages in the development of a wide range of skills. They tend to be more rigorous than other types of exams. Due to this, industry is confident that achievement at the highest level gained by candidates of graded qualifications will have the skills necessary to work in other areas of the business.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT

Complaints and appeals
All procedural complaints and appeals, including malpractice and requests for reasonable adjustments / special considerations, can be made through the RSL website: rslawards.com.

Equal opportunities
RSL's Equal Opportunities policy can be found on the RSL website: rslawards.com.

Contacts for help and support
All correspondence should be directed to:

RSL
Harlequin House
7 High Street
Teddington
Middlesex
TW11 8EE

Or info@rslawards.com

GRADE DESCRIPTORS AND GRADING CRITERIA

GRADE DESCRIPTORS

Debut to Grade 3	**Technical and audio quality** At these grades the presented audio should reflect a reasonable recorded and produced standard. All audio should be free of distortion and or distracting artefacts. A basic understanding of volume control should be demonstrated. **Presentation and production** Candidates will demonstrate a basic understanding of how to start a podcast and how to commence a broadcast. **Communication** Candidates will show a basic understanding of story while presenting, demonstrating a structural outline with their podcasts. Some thought to voice control will be demonstrated, with the basics of breathing, phrasing and expression well managed. Any interviews should reflect the ability to maintain an interesting conversation with the interviewee.
Grades 4 and 5	**Technical and audio quality** At these grades the presented audio should reflect a high level of recorded and produced standard. An awareness of contemporary production techniques should be demonstrated and there should be a high level of audio mixing between all audio elements. **Presentation and production** Candidates will demonstrate a good understanding of the principles of sonic branding in relation to podcasting, a high level of presenting and storytelling skills, together with clear musical mixing of all elements. **Communication** Candidates will demonstrate a high level of communication skills while presenting, and these are used effectively throughout the presented audio. Interaction with any interviewees is well managed and ensures a good level of demonstrable personality and audience interest.
Grades 6 to 8	**Technical and audio quality** At these grades the presented audio should be of a consistently very high quality. There will be excellent use of music/effects to accompany and, where appropriate, to reinforce the narrative/storyline. Very good voice recording is demonstrated, with an accomplished and balanced mix of all appropriate sonic elements and contemporary production techniques. **Presentation and production** Candidates will demonstrate an excellent sense of storytelling structure and plot development, and very competent presenting, narrating and interviewing techniques. Excellent musical production will be demonstrated, using appropriate sonic branding elements, and musical mixing and production techniques. **Communication** Candidates will demonstrate excellent communication skills while presenting, and these are used effectively and convincingly throughout the presented audio. Interaction with any interviewees is very strong and ensures a high level of demonstrable personality and audience interest.

LEARNING OUTCOMES (ALL GRADES)

Learning outcome	Assessment criteria (appropriate to the grade)	Weighting

1. **Coursework**
Learners will:
Create a media production using techniques, skills and knowledge appropriate to the level
	Demonstrate an understanding of:
	a. Producing a media product using:
	  ▪ Media production equipment
	  ▪ Media production techniques
	  ▪ Industry standard formats and protocols
	b. Conceptualising and developing new content
	c. Using appropriate communication techniques
		90 marks out of 100 (90%)

2. **Evaluation** Learners will: Critically evaluate a media production	Reflect on the media production, identifying techniques used, areas of strength and areas to improve	10 marks out of 100 (10%)

ATTAINMENT BANDS

Learning outcome 1.
Learners will create a media production using techniques, skills and knowledge appropriate to the level.

Assessment criteria	Attainment band and mark range				
	Distinction (27–30)	Merit (23–26)	Pass (18–22)	Below Pass 1 (8–17)	Below Pass 2 (0–7)
Producing a media product (30 marks)	Consistently excellent use of media production techniques appropriate to the grade	Mostly good use of media production techniques appropriate to the grade	Some good media production techniques used appropriate to the grade	Rarely using appropriate media production techniques appropriate to the grade	No attempt and/or incomplete
Conceptualising and developing new content (30 marks)	Excellent new content created for the entire work, with a response developed to the stimulus	Mostly good new content created for the majority of the work, with a response developed to the stimulus	Some new content created for the work, with a response developed to the stimulus some of the time	Some elements of new content created for the work, with a response partially developed to the stimulus	No attempt and/or incomplete
Using appropriate communication techniques (30 marks)	Ideas are communicated consistently well with techniques appropriate to the grade	Ideas are communicated most of the time with techniques mostly appropriate to the grade	Ideas are communicated some of the time with techniques sometimes appropriate to the grade	Ideas are rarely communicated well with few techniques appropriate to the grade	No attempt and/or incomplete

GRADE DESCRIPTORS AND GRADING CRITERIA

Learning outcome 2.
Learners will critically evaluate a media production

Assessment Criteria	Attainment band and mark range				
	Distinction (9–10)	**Merit (7–8)**	**Pass (6)**	**Below Pass 1 (3–5)**	**Below Pass 2 (0–2)**
Reflection on the media production (10 marks)	All questions are responded to with answers consistently appropriate to the grade	Mainly questions are responded to with answers mostly appropriate to the grade	Some questions are responded to with answers sometimes appropriate to the grade	Very few questions are responded to with answers that are rarely appropriate to the grade	No attempt and/ or incomplete

Grade Boundaries

Distinction = 90% +
Merit = 75%-89%
Pass = 60%-74%
Unclassified = 59% or less

DEBUT

The Debut Podcasting exam is typically for candidates who have been learning for a short amount of time. It is intended as a first introduction to podcasting. It is expected that candidates are competent in the basics of podcasting prior to entering the qualification.

At Debut the coursework submission will centre around basic podcast creation and recording of voice using software or hardware. Content covered in the grade will include subject areas such as identifying recording hardware, analogue connectivity, basic computer and digital technology, DAW basics, microphones, podcasting basics and podcast startup basics.

Candidates will be expected to be able to use basic exercises to warm up their voice and to be able to identify the different basic sections of story structure.

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

Part A: Coursework (90%)
Candidates will utilise technical and presentation skills to create a piece of practical work. This work is uploaded directly to examiners for marking through a secure portal.

Part B: Evaluation (10%)
Candidates will evaluate the work created in Part A by responding to set questions. These responses can be written or recorded audio or video. The responses are to be saved digitally and uploaded with the coursework task.

QUALIFICATION ELEMENTS

COURSEWORK

Candidates are to choose a subject and present a podcast on it lasting approximately 45 seconds. The podcast should consist of voice, and intro and outro backing music.

Example:
The following subject and content should be considered as indicative to the required grade standard, and should be used as a guide and reference only:

Subject: Favourite TV* shows
(*including Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, Disney+ etc)

Content: The candidate should present a podcast which is between 45- and 50- seconds in duration, and which introduces and provides a basic overview of the show under discussion.

The podcast content might include a welcoming introduction from the candidate, an outline of the concept of the TV show, and why they enjoy watching the show.

The included music should not be taken from the television show, but is rather a representation of the personality of the candidate or the style of the show.

File format
Candidates must bounce the resulting mix to a new stereo audio file. MP3, WAV and AIFF formats are all acceptable.

EVALUATION

Candidates will answer the following questions regarding the coursework task.

Questions
- What were the important skills you used to create your podcast?
- How did you make sure the listener stayed interested in your podcast?
- Why did you create this narration/story?
- How did you choose the subject for your podcast?

Responses
Answers can be written or audio/video recordings of the candidate answering the questions. The total word count of all of the responses together should be a maximum of 250 words or 3 minutes of audio/video.

GRADE 1

The Grade 1 Podcasting exam is for candidates who have mastered the key basic Debut level skills and have developed a basic understanding of the concepts and theory of podcasting.

At Grade 1 the coursework submission will centre around podcast creation and basic recording of voice using software or hardware. Content covered will include subject areas such as identifying studio hardware, physical audio formats, analogue connectivity, computer and digital technology, DAW basics, microphones, podcasting basics, basic audio technology and the fundamentals of mono and stereo sound, and podcast startup basics.

Candidates will be expected to be able to use basic exercises to warm up their voice and body, and be able to identify different basic sections of story structure from written examples.

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

Part A: Coursework (90%)
Candidates will utilise technical and presentation skills to create a piece of practical work. This work is uploaded directly to examiners for marking through a secure portal.

Part B: Evaluation (10%)
Candidates will evaluate the work created in Part A by responding to set questions. These responses can be written or recorded audio or video. The responses are to be saved digitally and uploaded with the coursework task.

QUALIFICATION ELEMENTS

COURSEWORK

Candidates are to choose a subject and present a podcast on it lasting approximately 1 minute. The podcast should consist of voice and backing music. Candidates can choose if the music is just at the intro or outro stage or runs throughout the podcast.

Example:
The following subject and content should be considered as indicative to the required grade standard and should be used as a guide and reference only.

Subject: Favourite TV* shows (*including Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, Disney+ etc)

Content: The candidate should present a 1-min podcast, which introduces and provides a basic overview of the show under discussion. The podcast content might include a welcoming introduction from the candidate, and an outline of the concept of the TV show, including an explanation of their favourite character, and why. The included music should not be taken from the television show, but is rather a representation of the personality of the candidate or the style of the show.

File format
Candidates must bounce the resulting mix to a new stereo audio file. MP3, WAV and AIFF formats are all acceptable.

EVALUATION

Candidates will answer the following questions regarding the coursework task.

Questions
- What were the important skills you used to create your podcast?
- How did you make sure the listener stayed interested in your podcast?
- How did you choose the subject for your podcast?

Responses
Answers can be written or audio/video recordings of the candidate answering the questions. The total word count of all of the responses together should be a maximum of 250 words or 3 minutes of audio/video.

GRADE 2

The Grade 2 Podcasting exam is for candidates who have mastered the key basic skills up to Grade 1 and are developing a good understanding of the concepts and theory of podcasting.

At Grade 2 the coursework submission will centre around podcast creation and basic recording of voice using software or hardware. Content covered will include subject areas such as identifying podcast studio hardware, connectivity, software and hardware components, DAW / hardware recorder concepts and capabilities, microphones, editing concepts, EQ controls and hearing physiology, basic podcast distribution and branding.

Candidates will be expected to be able to identify the different methodologies of story structure and be able to contrast examples of story structure used in current popular podcasts. They should be able to identify the best place to take a breath when reading and understand the importance of good posture when narrating a podcast.

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

Part A: Coursework (90%)
Candidates will utilise technical and presentation skills to create a piece of practical work. This work is uploaded directly to examiners for marking through a secure portal.

Part B: Evaluation (10%)
Candidates will evaluate the work created in Part A by responding to set questions. These responses can be written or recorded audio or video. The responses are to be saved digitally and uploaded with the coursework task.

QUALIFICATION ELEMENTS

COURSEWORK

Candidates are to choose a subject and create two podcasts on it.

Podcast 1
This podcast should last approximately 2 minutes. It should consist of voice and backing music. Candidates can choose if the music is just at the intro or outro stage or runs throughout the podcast.

Podcast 2
This should be a follow-up to the first podcast. The podcast should last approximately 2 minutes. It should contain similar audio branding (backing music) to the first podcast.

Example:
The following subject and content should be considered as indicative to the required grade standard, and should be used as a guide and reference only:

Subject: Favourite TV* shows (*including Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, Disney+ etc)

Content: The candidate should present 2 x 2-min podcasts, which might introduce and provide a basic, but developing, description of the show under discussion.
The first podcast content might include a welcoming introduction from the candidate, and an outline of the concept of the TV show, including an explanation of their favourite character, a description of why they are the candidate's favourite character, and a description of one of the major storylines for this character.
The second podcast might focus on a second character from the show, who may or may not be related to the first character. An explanation might be provided on why this character was chosen for the podcast, and how this character differs from their favourite character described in the first podcast. The included music should not be taken from the television show, but is rather a representation of the personality of the candidate or the style of the show.

File format
Candidates must bounce the resulting mixes to new stereo audio files. MP3, WAV and AIFF formats are all acceptable.

EVALUATION

Candidates will answer the following questions regarding the coursework task.

Questions
- What were the important skills you used to create your podcasts?
- How did you make sure the listener stayed interested in your podcasts?
- How did you choose the subject that you used in your podcasts?
- How did you ensure that the two podcasts created linked to each other?

Responses
Answers can be written or audio/video recordings of the candidate answering the questions. The total word count of all of the responses together should be a maximum of 300 words or 4 minutes of audio/video.

GRADE 3

The Grade 3 Podcasting exam is for candidates who have mastered the key skills required at Grade 2 and have developed a good understanding of the concepts and theory of podcasting.

At Grade 3 the coursework submission will centre around podcast creation and recording of voice and use of audio branding using software or hardware. Content covered will include subject areas such as interpreting the functions of podcast studio hardware, digital protocols, analogue connectivity, computer memory and storage, microphones, using sonic branding, dynamic processing, podcast frequency, podcast distribution and branding.

Candidates will be expected to be able to identify different methodologies of story structure, understand examples of story structure used in current popular podcasts, and use breathing exercises which can help with their narration.

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

Part A: Coursework (90%)
Candidates will utilise technical and presentation skills to create a piece of practical work. This work is uploaded directly to examiners for marking through a secure portal.

Part B: Evaluation (10%)
Candidates will evaluate the work created in Part A by responding to set questions. These responses can be written or recorded audio or video. The responses are to be saved digitally and uploaded with the coursework task.

QUALIFICATION ELEMENTS

COURSEWORK

Candidates are to choose a subject and create two podcasts on it.

Podcast 1
This podcast should last approximately 2 minutes. It should consist of voice and backing music, and include two dedicated audio 'stings'. Candidates can choose how and when/where to use the backing music.

Podcast 2
This should be a follow-up to the first podcast. It should last approximately 2 to 3 minutes. This podcast must include an interview (minimum 1 minute long) with a guest, relevant to the chosen podcast genre. Audio branding throughout the two podcasts should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

Example:
The following subject and content should be considered as indicative to the required grade standard, and should be used as a guide and reference only:

Subject: Favourite TV* shows (*including Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, Disney+ etc)

Content: The candidate should present 2 podcasts, which might introduce and provide a basic, but developing, description of the show under review.

The first podcast should be 2 - 3 minutes in duration, and the content might include an welcoming introduction from the candidate, and an outline of the concept of the TV show, including an explanation of their favourite character, a description of why they are the candidate's favourite character, and a description of one of the major storylines for this character. A minimum of two audio stings should be included, which may be used to enhance the dramatic narrative of the description, and highlight basic emotive states.
The second podcast should be 2 - 3 minutes in duration, and the content might include a welcoming introduction from the candidate, an outline of the concept of the TV show, and an explanation of their favourite character. The compulsory interview should be a minimum of 1-minute in duration, and should be held in person with a friend, colleague, or family member, discussing their thoughts on specific areas of the show, with questions written and presented by the candidate.
Audio branding throughout the two vlogs should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

File format
Candidates must bounce the resulting mixes to new stereo audio files. MP3, WAV and AIFF formats are all acceptable.

EVALUATION

Candidates will answer the following questions regarding the coursework task.

Questions

- What were the important skills you used to create your podcasts?
- How did you make sure the listener stayed interested in your podcasts?
- How did you choose the subject that you used in your podcasts?
- How did you devise your interview questions?
- What methods did you use to ensure your guest relaxed in the interview?

Responses

Answers can be written or audio/video recordings of the candidate answering the questions. The total word count of all of the responses together should be a maximum of 350 words or 4 minutes of audio/video.

GRADE 4

The Grade 4 Podcasting exam is for candidates who have mastered the key skills and understanding up to Grade 3. Grade 4 is intended for candidates who have a detailed understanding of podcasting and able to demonstrate skills and understand content at a depth associated with GCSE, iGCSE and Level 2 Vocational Qualification Units.

At Grade 4 the coursework submission will centre around use of equalisation (EQ) for corrective /creative purposes. Content covered will include subject areas such as describing equipment controls, wireless connectivity, podcast editing, software fx plugins, sidechaining, using sonic branding, dynamic processing, remote interview techniques, story development, voice management, podcast frequency, and understanding of what is popular in contemporary podcast culture.

Candidates will be expected to be able to analyse different story forms used by contrasting podcasts in the podcast charts, be able to use a microphone to control vocal dynamics and ensure consistent vocal tone.

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

Part A: Coursework (90%)
Candidates will utilise technical and presentation skills to create a piece of practical work. This work is uploaded directly to examiners for marking through a secure portal.

Part B: Evaluation (10%)
Candidates will evaluate the work created in Part A by responding to set questions. These responses can be written or recorded audio or video. The responses are to be saved digitally and uploaded with the coursework task.

QUALIFICATION ELEMENTS

COURSEWORK

Candidates are to choose a subject and create two podcasts on it.

Podcast 1
This podcast should last approximately 3 minutes. It should consist of voice and backing music, and include two dedicated audio 'stings'. Candidates can choose how and when/where to use the backing music.

Podcast 2
This should be a follow-up to the first podcast. It should last approximately 3 to 4 minutes. This podcast must include an interview (approximately 2 minutes long) with a guest, relevant to the chosen podcast genre. The interview should be conducted remotely via software/app (Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom, FaceTime or similar) or via telephone. Candidates should use EQ to balance the remote (guest) voice to best match the host/narrator's voice. In post-production, candidates should remove unwanted noise from the recording using appropriate techniques such as manual editing, gating, crossfades. Audio branding throughout the two podcasts should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

Example:
The following subject and content should be considered as indicative to the required grade standard and should be used as a guide and reference only:

Subject: Favourite TV* shows (*including Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, Disney+ etc)

Content: The candidate should present 2 podcasts, which might introduce and provide a reasonably accomplished description of the show under discussion, which goes beyond the basic overview of the show content which might be more appropriate for previous grades.
The first podcast should be 3 minutes in duration, and the content might include a welcoming introduction from the candidate, a detailed outline of the concept of the show, including some history of his inception, a description of their favourite character, and how this show might compare and contrast with another show from a similar genre. A minimum of two audio stings should be included, which may be used to enhance the dramatic narrative of the description, and highlight basic emotive states.
The second podcast should be 3-4 minutes in duration, and should be thematically connected to the content of the first podcast. The required remote interview (via software/app (Skype, WhatsApp, Zoom, Facetime, or equivalent) should be a minimum of two minutes in duration, and should be with a guest who is relevant to the content of the podcast. This might be a fellow fan, who could be interviewed on their thoughts regarding specific aspects of the chosen show, as determined by the candidate.
Audio branding throughout the two podcasts should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

File format

Candidates must bounce the resulting mixes to new stereo audio files. MP3, WAV and AIFF formats are all acceptable.

EVALUATION

Candidates will answer the following questions regarding the coursework task.

Questions
- What were the important skills you used to create your podcasts?
- How did you make sure the listener stayed interested in your podcasts?
- How did you choose the subject that you used in your podcasts?
- How did you devise your interview questions?
- How did you find the guest you interviewed?

Responses

Answers can be written or audio/video recordings of the candidate answering the questions. The total word count of all of the responses together should be a maximum of 400 words or 5 minutes of audio/video.

GRADE 5

The Grade 5 Podcasting exam is for candidates who have mastered the key skills up to Grade 4 and understand, in detail, the concepts associated with the process of producing high quality podcasts.

At Grade 5 the coursework submission will centre around session management and organisation such as story and character development, podcast miniseries formats, location and equipment planning. Content covered will include subject areas such as signal routing, networking, file and session sharing, outside broadcasting, audio controllers, story/plot/character development, voice control, use of vocal fx, and podcast marketing elements like frequency, platforms, rss and aggregation.

Candidates will be expected to be able to analyse different story forms used by contrasting podcasts in the podcast charts, to understand how they would prevent straining during prolonged use of louder dynamics using exercises that can help develop control over dynamics, and to be able to use their articulators (mouth/lips/tongue/teeth/jaw) to modify a bright 'ee' sound to produce a less bright tone. They should also be able to prepare a suite of audio branding for their own podcasts (e.g. core brand music, introductions, audio strings) and explain the sonic branding reasons for choosing them.

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

Part A: Coursework (90%)
Candidates will utilise technical and presentation skills to create a piece of practical work. This work is uploaded directly to examiners for marking through a secure portal.

Part B: Evaluation (10%)
Candidates will evaluate the work created in Part A by responding to set questions. These responses can be written or recorded audio or video. The responses are to be saved digitally and uploaded with the coursework task.

QUALIFICATION ELEMENTS

COURSEWORK

Candidates are to create two podcasts in different genres. The genres of the podcasts are to be chosen from the lists below. The genre of the first podcast is to be chosen from Group A; the genre of the second podcast from Group B.

Group A genres
- Business
- Comedy
- Current affairs / topical stories
- Games and hobbies
- History
- Music

Group B genres
- Crime
- Environment / science
- Interview cast
- Popular culture
- Sports
- Technology

Podcast 1
This podcast (genre chosen from Group A) will last approximately 3 minutes. This podcast will be narrated by the candidate and should feature an interview. It should consist of voice, backing music and include two dedicated audio 'stings'. Candidate can choose how and when/where to use the backing music and stings.

Podcast 2
This podcast (genre chosen from Group B) will last between 4 and 5 minutes. This podcast will be narrated by the candidate and should feature story, plot and character development. The use of character actors and ambient or spot fx is encouraged, where appropriate. Audio branding throughout the two podcasts should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

Example:
The following selected subject and content should be considered as indicative to the required grade standard and should be used as a guide and reference only.
Subject: History
Content: The candidate should present two contrasting podcasts from two genre groups, which might introduce and provide a reasonably accomplished description of the topic under discussion, which would go beyond a basic overview of the topic which might be more appropriate for previous grades.

The first podcast should be 3 minutes in duration, and be chosen from genre selection group A. Narrated by the candidate, this podcast could include a welcoming introduction from the candidate, a detailed outline of the chosen historical period, its main societal features, and how this period might compare and contrast with previous periods of history. The podcast should feature narration, an interview, backing music and two audio stings. The interview could be undertaken with a teacher or a subject expert to give their viewpoints on key elements from the chosen historical period. The chosen backing music and musical stings might be used to enhance the dramatic narrative of the description, using sonic representations which are characteristic to that particular era of history, as well as highlighting basic emotive states.

Subject: Crime

Content: The second podcast should be 4-5 minutes in duration, and should be chosen from genre selection group B. Narrated by the candidate, this podcast could focus on a particular, famous crime. The feature story, plotline and character development should be detailed and expressive - using the appropriate narrative tools to capture the essence and drama of the chosen story. Character actors, ambient or spot sfx could be included to add appropriate dimension to the storyline. The chosen backing music and audio stings might be used to enhance the dramatic narrative of the description, using sonic representations which are characteristic to that storyline, as well as highlighting basic emotive states.

Audio branding throughout the two podcasts should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

File format
Candidates must bounce the resulting mixes to new stereo audio files. MP3, WAV and AIFF formats are all acceptable.

EVALUATION

Candidates will answer the following questions regarding the coursework task.

Questions
- What were the important skills your used to create your podcasts?
- How did you make sure the listener stayed interested in your podcasts?
- How did you choose the subjects that you used in your podcasts?

Responses
Answers can be written or audio/video recordings of the candidate answering the questions. The total word count of all of the responses together should be a maximum of 450 words or 5 minutes of audio/video.

GRADE 6

The Grade 6 Podcasting exam is for candidates with an advanced level of skill and conceptual understanding. It is intended for candidates who have mastered a range of techniques of podcasting and can use creativity to enhance their productions.

At Grade 6 the coursework submission will centre around session management and organisation, such as story and character development, podcast miniseries formats, location and equipment planning and use. Content covered will include subject areas such as signal routing, networking, file and session sharing, outside broadcasting, audio controllers, story development and planning, voice control, use of vocal fx and podcast marketing elements through trailer creation.

Candidates will be expected to be able to understand different methods of pre-production planning, execution and post-production and how they work with a sense of story, scripting and use of audio/sonic branding mechanisms. They should be able to Identify story mechanisms by which a podcast series could evolve over several episodes, maintaining audience interest and developing format, and be able to identify which exercises might be safe to perform when their voice is tired or they have a sore throat. The should also understand the difference between chest and head voice and how they can balance their voice (on microphone) when switching between them.

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

Part A: Coursework (90%)
Candidates will utilise technical and presentation skills to create a piece of practical work. This work is uploaded directly to examiners for marking through a secure portal.

Part B: Evaluation (10%)
Candidates will evaluate the work created in Part A by responding to set questions. These responses can be written or recorded audio or video. The responses are to be saved digitally and uploaded with the coursework task.

QUALIFICATION ELEMENTS

COURSEWORK

Candidates are to create a three-part podcast series based on one of the genres listed below.

Genres
- Business
- Comedy
- Crime
- Current affairs / topical stories
- Environment / science
- Games and hobbies
- History
- Interview cast
- Music
- Popular culture
- Sports
- Technology

Podcast series
Each podcast should last approximately 3 minutes and be narrated by the candidate. Audio branding throughout the series should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

Each podcast should contain either an interview or a recording of a character (or characters), depending on the nature of the genre.

Consideration should be shown for the thematic connection between the podcasts, and the series should reveal either a growth and understanding to development of plot/story/characters, or consistent brand values if subject matter varies.

Character actors, ambient or spot fx could be included to add appropriate dimension to the storyline. The chosen backing music and audio stings might be used to enhance the dramatic narrative of the description, using sonic representations which are characteristic to that storyline, as well as highlighting more complex emotive states.

Example:
The following subject and content should be considered as indicative to the required grade standard, and should be used as a guide and reference only:

Subject: Comedy

Content: Candidates should create a mini three-part podcast series - each podcast to be approximately 3 minutes in duration.

These podcasts might focus on three separate comedians from a specific time period, or three distinguishing comedy styles, and how these are demonstrated in performances by different comedians, or a trilogy series depicting the career development of a chosen, profiled, professional comedian (e.g.: Bill Hicks, Benny Hill, Bob Monkhouse, etc.). At the heart of this podcast series, should be the development of characterisation and plotline, which should remain fundamental to the narrative entwined throughout. Consideration should be shown for the thematic connection (as suggested above) between the three podcasts, and should demonstrate advanced descriptions and deductions, which exceed the content expectations of the previous grades. Each podcast should contain either an interview or recording of character/s - depending on the nature of the genre. This might be with professional comedians, hobbyists, or fans of the particular comedian or style.

Narrated by the candidate, the second 3-minute podcast should reveal either a growth and understanding to development of plot/story/characters, or consistent brand values if subject matter varies. The featured story, plotline and character development should be detailed and expressive - using the appropriate narrative tools to capture the essence and drama of the chosen story. Character actors, ambient or spot sfx could be included to add appropriate dimension to the storyline. The chosen backing music and audio stings might be used to enhance the dramatic narrative of the description, using sonic representations which are characteristic to that storyline, as well as highlighting more complex emotive states.

Using the same principles as the first two podcasts in this series, the candidate should create a third episode to conclude their mini-podcast series. This podcast should also last approximately 3 minutes.
Audio branding throughout the three podcasts should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

File format
Candidates must bounce the resulting mixes to new stereo audio files. MP3, WAV and AIFF formats are all acceptable.

EVALUATION

Candidates will answer the following questions regarding the coursework task.

Questions
- What were the important skills you used to create your podcasts?
- How did you ensure the podcasts were produced with a professional approach?
- How did you choose the subject for your podcast series?
- What creative devices did you use to connect your podcasts?

Responses
Answers can be written or audio/video recordings of the candidate answering the questions. The total word count of all of the responses together should be a maximum of 500 words or 6 minutes of audio/video.

GRADE 7

The Grade 7 Podcasting exam is for candidates who are working at an advanced level of skill and an in-depth understanding of the concepts and theory associated with podcasting. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 6 and are capable of overcoming challenging situations.

At Grade 7 the coursework submission will centre around session management and organisation such as story and character development, podcast miniseries formats, location and equipment planning and use. Content covered will include subject areas such as working around equipment faults, connectivity faults, latency, phase, signal noise, sound design, story/plot development and planning, legal issues, creative thinking, voice management, use of vocal fx, mastering techniques and podcast marketing.

Candidates will be expected to be able to identify story mechanisms by which a podcast could evolve over two series, maintaining audience interest and developing format. They should also be able to identify examples of vocal effects they might employ while narrating.

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

Part A: Coursework (90%)
Candidates will utilise technical and presentation skills to create a piece of practical work. This work is uploaded directly to examiners for marking through a secure portal.

Part B: Evaluation (10%)
Candidates will evaluate the work created in Part A by responding to set questions. These responses can be written or recorded audio or video. The responses are to be saved digitally and uploaded with the coursework task.

QUALIFICATION ELEMENTS

COURSEWORK

Candidates are to create a four-part podcast series within a genre of their own choosing.

Podcast series
Each podcast should last approximately 4 minutes and be narrated by the candidate. Audio branding throughout the series should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

At least two of the podcasts should contain either an interview or a recording of a character (or characters), depending on the nature of the genre.
The podcasts should demonstrate advanced descriptions and deductions, which exceed the content expectations of the previous grades.

Consideration should be shown for the thematic connection between the podcasts, and the series should reveal either a growth and understanding to development of plot/story/characters, or consistent brand values if subject matter varies. At the heart of the series should be the development of characterisation and plotline, which should remain fundamental to the narrative throughout.

Character actors, ambient or spot fx could be included to add appropriate dimension to the storyline. The chosen backing music and audio stings might be used to enhance the dramatic narrative of the description, using sonic representations which are characteristic to that storyline, as well as highlighting more complex emotive states.

Example:
The following subject and content should be considered as indicative to the required grade standard, and should be used as a guide and reference only:

Subject: Comedy

Content: Candidates should create a mini four-part podcast series - each podcast to be approximately 4 minutes in duration.
These podcasts might focus on four separate comedians from a specific time period, or four distinguishing comedy styles, and how these are demonstrated in performances by different comedians, or a four-part series depicting the career development of a chosen, profiled, professional comedian (e.g.: Bill Hicks, Benny Hill, Bob Monkhouse, etc.). At the heart of this podcast series, should be the development of characterisation and plotline, which should remain fundamental to the narrative entwined throughout. Consideration should be shown for the thematic connection (as suggested above) between the four podcasts, and should demonstrate advanced descriptions and deductions, which exceed the content expectations of the previous grades. Each podcast should contain either an interview or recording of character/s - depending on the nature of the genre. This might be with professional comedians, hobbyists, or fans of the particular comedian or style.

Narrated by the candidate, the second 4-minute podcast should reveal either a growth and understanding to development of plot/story/characters, or consistent brand values if subject matter varies. The featured story, plotline and character development should be detailed and expressive - using the appropriate narrative tools to capture the essence and drama of the chosen story. Character actors, ambient or spot sfx could be included to add appropriate dimension to the storyline. The chosen backing music and audio stings might be used to enhance the dramatic narrative of the description, using sonic representations which are characteristic to that storyline, as well as highlighting more complex emotive states.

Using the same principles as the first two podcasts in this series, the candidate should create two more episodes to conclude their mini-podcast series. These podcasts should also last approximately 4 minutes each. Audio branding throughout the four podcasts should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

File format
Candidates must bounce the resulting mixes to new stereo audio files. MP3, WAV and AIFF formats are all acceptable.

EVALUATION

Candidates will answer the following questions regarding the coursework task.

Questions
- What were the important skills you used to create your podcasts?
- How did you ensure the podcasts were produced with a professional approach?
- How did you choose the subject for your podcast series?
- What creative devices did you use to connect your podcasts?

Responses
Answers can be written or audio/video recordings of the candidate answering the questions. The total word count of all of the responses together should be a maximum of 600 words or 7 minutes of audio/video.

GRADE 8

The Grade 8 Podcasting exam is for candidates who have now consolidated their skills to a high level and have an in-depth understanding of the concepts and theory associated with podcasting. They have mastered the key skills up to Grade 7 are capable of achieving a professional finish to their productions.

At Grade 8 the coursework submission will centre around short series management and organisation such as story and character development, location and equipment planning and use. Content covered will include subject areas such as comparing studio hardware/software, audio mastering techniques, microphone technique choice, vocal technique, acoustic room design, sound design, story/plot development and planning, legal issues, creative thinking, voice management, use of vocal fx and podcast marketing.

Candidates will be expected to be able to identify story mechanisms by which a podcast series could evolve over multiple series, maintaining audience interest and developing format. They will be able to demonstrate a thorough understanding of how to communicate their story (or brand) through contemporary podcast marketing techniques, to analyse the storytelling mechanisms used in the construction of their own podcast trailers, and have an understanding of how to further build audience through targeting different cultures and other areas of interest.

QUALIFICATION OVERVIEW

Part A: Coursework (90%)
Candidates will utilise technical and presentation skills to create a piece of practical work. This work is uploaded directly to examiners for marking through a secure portal.

Part B: Evaluation (10%)
Candidates will evaluate the work created in Part A by responding to set questions. These responses can be written or recorded audio or video. The responses are to be saved digitally and uploaded with the coursework task.

QUALIFICATION ELEMENTS

COURSEWORK

Candidates are to create a five-part podcast series within a genre of their own choosing.

Podcast series
Each podcast should last approximately 5 minutes and be narrated by the candidate. Audio branding throughout the series should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

At least three of the podcasts should contain either an interview or a recording of a character (or characters), depending on the nature of the genre.

The podcasts should demonstrate advanced descriptions and deductions, which exceed the content expectations of the previous grades.

Consideration should be shown for the thematic connection between the podcasts, and the series should reveal either a growth and understanding to development of plot/story/characters, or consistent brand values if subject matter varies. At the heart of the series should be the development of characterisation and plotline, which should remain fundamental to the narrative throughout.

Character actors, ambient or spot fx could be included to add appropriate dimension to the storyline. The chosen backing music and audio stings might be used to enhance the dramatic narrative of the description, using sonic representations which are characteristic to that storyline, as well as highlighting more complex emotive states.

Example:
The following subject and content should be considered as indicative to the required grade standard, and should be used as a guide and reference only:

Subject: Comedy

Content: Candidates should create a mini five-part podcast series - each podcast to be approximately 5 minutes in duration.
These podcasts might focus on five separate comedians from a specific time period, or five distinguishing comedy styles, and how these are demonstrated in performances by different comedians, or a five-part series depicting the career development of a chosen, profiled, professional comedian (e.g.: Bill Hicks, Benny Hill, Bob Monkhouse, etc.).

At the heart of this podcast series, should be the development of characterisation and plotline, which should remain fundamental to the narrative entwined throughout. Consideration should be shown for the thematic connection (as suggested above) between the five podcasts, and should demonstrate advanced descriptions and deductions, which exceed the content expectations of the previous grades. Each podcast should contain either an interview or recording of character/s - depending on the nature of the genre. This might be with professional comedians, hobbyists, or fans of the particular comedian or style.

Narrated by the candidate, the second 5-minute podcast should reveal either a growth and understanding to development of plot/story/characters, or consistent brand values if subject matter varies. The featured story, plotline and character development should be detailed and expressive - using the appropriate narrative tools to capture the essence and drama of the chosen story. Character actors, ambient or spot sfx could be included to add appropriate dimension to the storyline. The chosen backing music and audio stings might be used to enhance the dramatic narrative of the description, using sonic representations which are characteristic to that storyline, as well as highlighting more complex emotive states.

Using the same principles as the first three podcasts in this series, the candidate should create three more episodes to conclude their mini-podcast series. These podcasts should also last approximately 5 minutes each. Audio branding throughout the five podcasts should be consistent. This might be achieved through the use of backing music, sound quality, and audio stings.

File format
Candidates must bounce the resulting mixes to new stereo audio files. MP3, WAV and AIFF formats are all acceptable.

EVALUATION

Candidates will answer the following questions regarding the coursework task.

Questions
- What were the important skills you used to create your podcasts?
- How did you ensure the podcasts were produced with a professional approach?
- How did you choose the subject for your podcast series?
- What creative devices did you use to connect your podcasts?

Responses
Answers can be written or audio/video recordings of the candidate answering the questions. The total word count of all of the responses together should be a maximum of 700 words or 8 minutes of audio/video.