



Acting Auditions and Interviews Code of Practice

Arts Educational Schools London (ArtsEd) follows the Code of Practice prepared by the Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET) and the National Council for Drama Training (NCDT), with assistance from the Conference of Drama Schools (CDS).

1: ArtsEd undertakes to consider all applications

- All candidates for Acting and Musical Theatre courses will be offered an audition, provided they meet the following criteria:
 - All candidates must complete an application form, including a written statement, a photograph, and payment of the required audition fee.
 - The candidate must meet the age requirements of their course at the start of their first year of study.
 - Applications must be received by the deadline; this is usually 31st March for a September intake, although this may be later for some courses.
- Candidates are invited to disclose any access or learning requirements on their application form, so that any reasonable adjustments to the audition or interview process can be made.
- In order to ensure that ArtsEd can offer as much support as possible, candidates are invited to disclose any long term health issues on their application form so that these may be discussed at the interview stage of the audition.
- ArtsEd does not discriminate on grounds of age, background, race, colour, disability, family circumstances, gender, nationality, political beliefs or party membership, religion, sexual orientation, trade union membership or on any other grounds deemed to be irrelevant to participation in the course.
- ArtsEd is committed to providing access to our courses to as wide a range of ethnic and social groups as possible. Auditions take place at ArtsEd from October to June, and our Outreach teams work with youth groups around the country to encourage talented candidates from under-represented groups to apply for auditions
- ArtsEd offers Foundation Courses for young people interested in preparing for a full-time training course in acting or musical theatre.

Successful students are offered a free audition for either the full-time Musical Theatre or Acting courses.

2: ArtsEd undertakes to provide candidates with the necessary information before and at the selection process

BEFORE THE AUDITION

- ArtsEd guarantees to write to candidates within a month of receiving their applications (although we aim to answer all applications within two to three weeks). The letter gives the following information, details of which are set out below:
 - audition date and time
 - audition requirements (what candidates will be asked to prepare)
 - details of the audition day
 - a weblink to the NCDT guidance to applicants on how to prepare for auditions
 - directions to the school
- Audition requirements:
 - ~ **Acting** candidates must prepare two short monologues, maximum two minutes each. The monologues must be contrasting in emotion and style, one must be from a classical play which uses heightened language (i.e. Shakespeare, Jacobean, Greek) and the other from a modern play, written after 1950.
 - ~ **Musical Theatre**
- Audition dates are filled up on a 'first come first served' basis, so candidates may receive the letter notifying them of their audition date several months in advance. We will never give less than a month's notice for audition dates unless specifically requested by the applicant. We do our best to accommodate students' wishes if they need to change their audition date, for example if they have exams, or are booked to audition at another school.
- **Experience, prior learning, audition and formal qualification**

ArtsEd, in common with other drama schools, accepts applicants who have followed unconventional academic pathways, applicants who have changed careers later in life, are unable any longer to suppress the need to act, and applicants who have little experience in acting or even of the humanities but who show great potential. The value added dimension of a vocational education for the latter group should not be underestimated. The implications of these factors are that:

 - There is no alternative to audition as a means of admitting students to the course.
 - The cultural and academic diversity of entrant groups of acting students is likely to be greater than is common in many other areas of arts education and training.

ENTRY CRITERIA

- **Formal Entry Qualifications**

While audition is the primary means of determining the applicant's suitability for entry, the School normally requires the following additional formal qualifications:

- Passes in two subjects at A-level or a BTEC ND
- Passes in three subjects at GCSE or equivalent
- Where English is a second language a TOEFL score of 6 or higher

When the School is satisfied that an applicant from an unconventional academic background without formal qualifications nevertheless fulfils the audition criteria (*see below*) it may waive these requirements.

- **Audition Criteria**

The aim of the audition is to provide the applicant with the opportunity to demonstrate the quality of his/her work and his/her potential to benefit from the course. Auditions are conducted by panels of teaching staff who look for reasonable evidence that the applicant:

- is able to portray convincingly a fictional character in a human and dramatic predicament
- is able to apply his/her intelligence to the understanding of text and the communication of meaning
- is capable of work of distinctive individuality
- is able to work effectively with others
- is flexible, industrious and receptive to suggestions
- possesses the vocal and physical potential to work as an actor
- possesses the determination, motivation and stamina to participate in and complete the course

Selection Process

- **Audition Day Procedure - Acting**

Applicants are invited to attend as part of a group of approximately 25 candidates. Applicants are asked to prepare one contemporary speech and one classical speech, which they must commit to memory. The audition begins at 2:00 p.m. and normally ends at 6:00 p.m. They are greeted by ex-students who act as their stewards and guides throughout the afternoon.

- It is ArtsEd policy that all auditions are conducted by tutors who teach core subjects on the course. Audition panels are usually made up of the Programme Leader, Heads of Year and senior tutors.
- Student helpers are on hand to answer any questions, and candidates are encouraged to ask as many questions as they can, in order to find out whether this is the right course, and the right school, for them.

- Audition candidates are welcomed to the school by the programme leader or other senior tutor, who introduces the tutors on the panel who will be conducting the auditions.
- The senior tutor then gives an explanation of the audition process and how the day will work.
- The Head of Acting conducts a short improvisation workshop.
- The audition candidates perform their speeches in front of different members of the panel, but not in front of each other.
- At this point a shortlist of applicants is drawn up for immediate recall. The other applicants will have completed their part of the audition process.
- The recalled applicants each perform their speeches again for the whole panel.
- At the end of the audition process, the panel meet the candidates as a group, to talk about the ArtsEd student experience, giving an overview of the following:
 - the course structure and content
 - funding systems
 - student accommodation
 - pastoral support
 - dyslexia and other learning support
 - how graduates are marketed to the profession in the 3rd year
 - graduate successes

Candidates are encouraged to ask questions at this meeting.

- Finally the shortlisted candidates are given a tour of the facilities by the student helpers, giving them another chance to ask questions. They are also shown a copy of the student timetable, setting out how a normal teaching week is organised.

- ***Audition Day Procedure – Musical Theatre***

There are two stages to the musical theatre audition:

Stage 1 consists of a jazz workshop, followed by a short singing audition. Candidates should prepare two songs in full. One should be a ballad written no later than 1965 (something like 'If I Loved You' from Carousel), and the other should be contrasting – something the candidate enjoys singing! For stage 1 candidates should prepare a section from each of the two songs, each lasting no longer than one minute. The audition panel will choose to hear one or both of these sections. Sheet music in the right key must be brought for both songs. Candidates are asked to avoid character songs, such as 'Adelaide's Lament' (Guys and Dolls) or 'My Girlfriend Who Lives in Canada' (Avenue Q). We need to hear YOUR voice – pretending you have a cold or

that you are the voice of a puppet will not be helpful! If you are invited to continue to Stage 2 you may be asked to perform the same two songs in full and two acting monologues.

Stage 2 Candidates will be selected to stay for this stage. Some may be required to dance again. All candidates will be asked to sing again using their songs as previously prepared for the first stage of the audition.

Candidates are also asked to prepare two contrasting monologues*, one from a play by Shakespeare and the other chosen from a play written after 1960. The modern piece must be from a play and not a musical and should not be in verse. Both pieces should be learnt off book and **MUST** not exceed 2 minutes each.

*Candidates are asked to avoid choosing any of the following speeches:

Puck – A Midsummer Night’s Dream
Ariel – Tempest
Launce – Two Gentlemen of Verona
Laughing Wild – Tuna Fish Monologue
Equus
Gut Girls
Alan Bennet – Talking Heads

Each candidate selected for Stage 2 will also have an interview with senior tutors and a possible orthopaedic examination by a qualified physiotherapist for which top and shorts should be worn.

3: ArtsEd undertakes to provide candidates with information on the availability of and criteria for the allocation of public funding

Dance and Drama Awards

Dependant upon the results of the Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review, fee support may be offered to a number of students through the government-backed Dance and Drama Awards. No student currently receiving an Award has to pay more than £1,250 per annum towards the fees. Award students with low-incomes support may also apply to the government’s Income Assessed Student Support Fund for further support towards the fee of £1,250 and for maintenance grants of up to £5,333.

For further information about the awards and eligibility, please visit the DaDA website:

<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/EducationAndLearning/14To19/MoneyToLearn/DanceandDrama>

If successful in gaining a place, the applicant will usually be told within a week of the audition, although we aim to inform students within three days. If they

wish to apply for a Dance and Drama Award (see above for details) they will be sent a Financial Details form for them and their parents to complete. The Awards are given to the students who are judged at the audition to have the most potential to succeed in the profession. Where applicants are judged to have equal potential, the Awards are allocated to those who are in greatest financial need.

ArtsEd do not operate separate award auditions. All members of the audition panel contribute to the decision of award allocations, although final decisions are always made by senior staff.

If not offered an Award the student must be absolutely certain they have enough funds for the fees and the considerable expense of living in London for one or three years, before accepting a place. It can be heart-breaking for a student to have to leave the course early.

We advise students to investigate further sources of funding by looking at the Conference of Drama Schools, National Council for Drama Training and Council for Dance Education and Training websites:

www.drama.ac.uk

www.ncdt.co.uk

www.cdet.org.uk

4: ArtsEd undertakes to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their potential to fulfil the aims of the course

- The day begins with an improvisation workshop. At this stage, candidates work together as a group. The purpose of this is not to test them on their improvisation skills, but to give them a chance to relax before they perform their prepared audition speech. This also gives candidates the opportunity to get to know the audition panel, and for the panel to see how candidates respond to direction, to assess their freedom of movement and imagination, and to see how they work as part of a group.
- Candidates are then asked to perform their speeches in front of different members of the panel - candidates do not audition in front of each other. Candidates perform their modern speech all the way through, and an extract from their classical speech. This gives them the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to connect with different texts, and to show a contrast in character as well as in style and period.
- After this first round of auditions the panels meet to discuss the students and make a shortlist of candidates they would like to recall for the final part of the audition process. The other candidates will have completed their part of the audition process.

- The shortlisted candidates then present their classical speech and an extract of their modern speech in front of the whole audition panel. At this point they may be asked to make adjustments to their speeches to explore their understanding of text and character, and their ability to connect with the text. The purpose of this is not to re-direct or improve the speech, but to explore alternative qualities and to assess the candidates' ability to be open and flexible to alternative ways of performing.

Precept 5: ArtsEd undertakes that the decision-making process is fair and transparent

The criteria for assessment is available to candidates in the school's prospectus and on the website, and informal guidance notes are available on request for teachers from schools, sixth form and FE colleges who wish to help their students prepare for the audition.

The audition panel, which is made up of heads of department, observe the entire audition as a group. They meet at stages throughout the day to discuss their observations. If there are any discrepancies of opinion amongst the panel, the candidates in question are auditioned further and extra time is allocated for this purpose.

Each member of the audition panel completes a detailed Audition Report form (copy attached) on which they record comments about each stage of the audition process, and give grades on a number of criteria, as detailed below:

Criteria for selection:

Improvisation Workshop:

- working with others
- adaptability
- energy
- spatial awareness
- presence

Audition speeches:

- variety
- inner life
- communication
- use of emotion
- use of text
- vocal quality
- physicality

Applicants are graded A to D, where

A = Excellent (some outstanding features)

B = Good (no major shortcomings)

C = Satisfactory (sound but unremarkable)

D = Poor (many shortcomings)

Precept 6: ArtsEd undertakes to ensure that candidates are informed of the outcome of an audition/interview

Every effort is made to ensure candidates feel at ease and are given opportunities to ask questions.

All candidates are informed in writing within a week of their audition, although we aim to inform them within three days.

Since different drama schools are looking for different qualities and skills in their candidates, ArtsEd does not give advice or feedback to unsuccessful candidates in case our advice is inappropriate for entry to other institutions. A detailed description of our audition process, and the qualities and skills we are looking for is available on request.