

Audition Procedures and Criteria for Selection

The audition process for the BA Acting for Film and Television at ArtsEd lasts for about 4 to 5 hours depending on the number of prospective students on the day. Usually the Head of Acting and two senior members of staff audition all the students that apply. They are helped by three current students who are on hand all afternoon to show the applicants where to go and answer any questions. If the applicants want to know anything about the student experience at ArtsEd, they will have the opportunity to ask questions during the afternoon.

Introduction

First of all the Head of Acting sits everyone down in a circle and introduces the panel and the student helpers. He then has a brief talk with the group. "Where have you come from?" "What have you been doing?" etc.

Criteria for selection:

We're not really looking at any particular quality at this point just an open and friendly attitude. Its purpose is really to help the applicants to relax and get to know each other a bit.

Improvisation Session

An Acting Tutor runs a games and improvisation session. The applicants play a couple of group warm-up games followed by a couple of imagination exercises in pairs. Then they do a simple improvisation in groups of 4 or 5. All groups work at the same time while members of the panel and the student helpers walk from group to group to watch their work.

Criteria for selection:

During all this we are looking for people who can follow instructions. We are also looking for people who work well with other members of the group, are pro-active without dominating and can make positive contributions while allowing others to have their say. A sense of fun is helpful. Their improvisation skills are not very important since they will be taught how to do that during the course!

We are looking for a positive attitude during these sessions, together with the ability to work as part of a group

Audition Speeches – First Round

Each student is asked to perform their modern speech all the way through, and then a small classical speech. They do not do this in front of the other applicants.

Criteria for selection:

We're really looking for potential rather than skill or ability. A spark that we can ignite.

- an inner belief in the character and the situation
- a sense that they are talking to someone and trying to communicate.
- interesting and varied use of the text
- interesting and varied changes of mood
- interesting and varied changes of rhythm and volume
 - that special something!!

- a contrast between the two speeches

After we have seen everyone perform their speeches, we then shortlist a certain amount of the applicants and ask them to stay on for the next stage. The rest have completed their audition.

Audition Speeches – Second Round

Each student is asked to perform either part of their modern or their classical speech again in front of a larger panel.

There then follows a “screen test” when each applicant performs a short dialogue scene which they have been asked to learn. This will be directed in a number of ways.

Criteria for selection:

We are looking for a positive response to direction, an enthusiastic attitude and the ability to keep focussed while incorporating director’s ‘notes’.

Question and Answer Session

After we have seen all these second speeches the panel, together with our student helpers, meet with the remaining applicants. The panel explain certain practical issues concerning funding, accommodation and academic issues. There is then an open question and answer session. This session is not only to give the applicants as much information as possible, it is also part of our audition process.

Criteria for selection:

We are interested in how the applicants respond in a more relaxed situation. They don’t have to ask questions if there is nothing they want to know, but it is important that they seem interested in the discussion. We are also trying to ascertain if they are the sort of people we want to spend three years with. This part of the audition day is as important as the other sessions. Anyone who seems bored, distracted or aloof during this last question and answer session can damage their chances of acceptance.

The panel thank the applicants for coming and the audition is over. As the applicants leave the student helpers show them our two theatres, the timetables and anything else they want to see (within reason).

Selection Process

During the afternoon the audition panel make notes about each applicant. At the end of the day the panel discusses each applicant and gives them a grade. Letters are sent out within the next few days. The applicants are accepted, rejected or put on a waiting list. There are no re-calls.