



Leeds Conservatoire

Audition Requirements

2021 Entry

BA (Hons) Musical Theatre

Introduction

The audition process is your opportunity to demonstrate your skills as a storyteller and is also our opportunity to assess your skill and suitability for the programme.

We know that auditions can often be daunting affairs. We also know how hard applicants work in preparation for those auditions. So, we work incredibly hard to ensure our auditions are accessible to all, that applicants feel supported in advance, and that the work gone to prepare material feels valued.

We recognise that at this time, as some of our application process is via online submission, it is important we work hard to gain a full insight in to those who apply for us, and to make our application process as accessible as possible, that is why we are incredibly proud to not charge anybody to apply for our programmes.

If you attend any part of our audition process in person, a refund of audition travel costs may also be available for applicants from low income households. You can find out more about refunding audition travel on our website.

In order to allow for as many applications as possible, we will assess applicants in two/three stages.

First Stage Audition – Online Submission of One Song

YOUR SUBMISSION SHOULD CONSIST OF:

An introduction:

Please introduce yourself and give us a short context of who you are and why you are applying to Leeds Conservatoire followed by an introduction of your song, for example 'This is [SONG TITLE] from [MUSICAL] by [COMPOSER]' OR 'This is a song from [PRODUCTION/SOURCE]'.

Song:

Please present a performance of one song of any style from a published musical.

This should ideally be performed with piano accompaniment however a backing track is also acceptable.

Advice for first stage applicants:

Your videos are a virtual representation of the live audition experience, so set up should reflect this as much as possible.

- Select songs which best show YOUR voice.
- Try to avoid “character” voiced songs or songs from overdone or popular musicals.
- Please ensure your song choice allows you to tell a story through song
- Feel free to choose whether you direct your song to camera or perform as if you were performing on a stage, however be consistent in your choice.

Applicants who demonstrate required level of vocal and storytelling potential will be invited to further audition stages.

Second Stage Audition – Online Portfolio

YOUR PORTFOLIO SUBMISSION SHOULD CONSIST OF:

Monologues:

You should prepare one monologue that is no longer than two minutes in length.

Please begin each video by introducing the piece: 'This is a piece from [PLAY TITLE by PLAYWRIGHT] and I'll be reading the role of [CHARACTER]'.

- Your monologue should be performed in your own accent, regardless of setting. Again, we want to hear your voice. Ideally, you should have read the play your monologue is from.

Singing:

Please record two contrasting songs, at least one of which should be from a musical. These should ideally be performed with piano accompaniment however a backing track is also acceptable.

Please refer to the advice for first stage applicants regarding how to choose a song.

Please begin each song by introducing the piece clearly.

Dance:

You will be sent a video guide to a routine which contains a number of technical elements we need to assess. Please study, learn and submit a recording of a performance of this routine. Whilst the routine is a combination of technical elements, do place emphasis on the performance of your dance. We would like to see your energy and personality through movement.

- We welcome applicants with all levels of dance training. Please dress safely and appropriately for your dance recording and ensure you have enough space to record your video.

Interview:

Depending on the outcome of your video audition portfolio, you may be contacted by the programme leader to schedule a short interview where you will be asked a series of short questions exploring your interest, experience and knowledge of musical theatre as well as discussing your application and the programme.

FOLLOW UP:

Once we have reviewed your video portfolio you will receive notification of the outcome of your application. In some circumstances, we may arrange a short interview with you (via phone or Skype) before making a decision.

If possible your Second Stage Audition may be conducted in person, rather than online. If this is the case, you will be required to undertake the following instead of submitting an Online Portfolio:

Second Stage Audition – In Person Recall

Your audition will consist of four parts - dance, acting, solo songs and a short individual interview in front of a small panel.

The day will consist of a dance class in small groups, followed by a solo audition.

Dance

You will be led through a group dance audition, which may include elements of jazz, ballet and contemporary styles.

SOLO AUDITION:

For this solo audition, please prepare the following:

1. Monologue

You should prepare one monologue that is no longer than two minutes in length.

- Your monologue should be performed in your own accent, regardless of setting. Again, we want to hear your voice. Ideally, you should have read the play your monologue is from.

2. Songs

You should prepare two songs, at least one of which should be from a musical. Please bring sheet music with you for the piano accompanist.

- Please refer to the advice for first stage applicants regarding how to choose a song.

Interview

You will be asked a series of short questions exploring your interest, experience and knowledge of musical theatre as well as discussing your application and the programme. This is also your opportunity to ask any questions you have about Leeds Conservatoire and the Musical Theatre programme.

Advice for applicants:

- Select songs which best show YOUR voice. Your songs should contrast in either tempo (ballad, patter song, upbeat etc), vocal style (legit, contemporary, pop etc) or both. Try to avoid “character” songs or songs from overdone or popular musicals.
- We welcome applicants with all levels of dance training. Please dress appropriately in dance/ sports attire with either soft jazz shoes, bare feet or foot thongs. Jewellery should be removed for safety.

FAQs

Can I cut a longer speech?

Yes, it is expected that you would cut a longer speech to fit within the two-minute time frame. It is often simplest to make a cut to the beginning or the end of a speech. Any other edit should be done with care and be sympathetic to the story being told. Try and retain the through line of story and avoid bolting together the 'best bits' if it is unlikely the character would evolve so quickly.

How do I choose a speech?

When choosing audition material it is fundamental that you like the piece and enjoy performing it. So, take your time researching and choosing texts that excite you. Try and choose material that is easy for you to access, a role you can imagine yourself playing and a speech that demonstrates your skill.

The best way to discover speeches is to see plays, live at your local theatre or via a digital platform like NT Live or Digital Theatre.

Reading plays is the next best option and is great research for the aspiring actor. Even if a play doesn't have a speech for you, you may find a writer you love and can seek out other plays by them.

Speaking to performers, drama school graduates, teachers and youth theatre professionals in person or online is also a great way to get advice and ideas.

Finally, there are books of speeches available to buy or borrow from the library but remember these are very popular and read the advice about performing speeches from monologue books below.

Can the speech be from a monologue book?

It can be. However, if you chose a speech from a monologue book be sure to read the whole play. This will enable you understand the character's speech in the context of their whole journey.

Should I do an accent?

Unless an accent is excellent and so sounds native, or is essential to the speech, we would prefer work to be performed in your native accent. What we want to hear is your natural voice quality.

Do I need to know the speech by heart?

Yes. In order to communicate your story to your audience you need to be able to work script free. We understand that nerves do all sorts of things, so if on the day you forget a line or stumble that's okay, just be ready to take a pause, go back and start from the previous thought.

Everyone learns lines at different rates and in different ways, so ensure you give yourself enough time

for this preparatory work. Learning your speech thought by thought, exploring ways of communicating it, can often be more effective than line by line repetition. Whatever approach you take, the ultimate aim is to be able to deliver your speeches with the same familiarity as your own phone number.

Will I receive feedback?

Unfortunately, due to the number of applicants for the Musical Theatre programme, we are unable to provide feedback for first stage applicants, regardless of outcome.

Peer to peer feedback happens as a natural part of workshops and master-classes in the second stage. Applicants are also able to discuss their suitability to each programme. However, due to the volume of applications individual feedback is not provided after the date of audition.

It is useful to remember that performance is subjective. Different programmes have different criteria and often feedback from one source can undermine your confidence in auditioning for another so is not always helpful.

What does the interview entail?

The interview is a brief opportunity for the programme team to get to know the person behind the personal statement. It is a relaxed and informal discussion in which you will be asked questions about your interests, passions, experiences and you are given the opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the programme, team or life at Leeds Conservatoire. Try not to over think the interview or try to give the 'right' answer. The team genuinely just want to know who you are and why you think you would benefit from training here at Leeds.

Entry requirements

a. Academic

96 UCAS tariff points from level 3 studies or equivalent, which normally include an A Level or BTEC Extended Diploma in a Music / Dance / Acting related subject.

A minimum of three GCSEs including English Language at Grade C / Grade 4 or above or equivalent international qualification, eg IELTS 6.0 (5.5 in each component).

b. Audition

Applicants will be invited to submit audition materials and may attend a recall audition.