



Leeds Conservatoire

Audition Requirements

2022 Entry

MA Musical Theatre Company

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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 are proud to have removed all audition fees for our programmes at the conservatoire. If you have an interest in applying for our programmes, we don't want finances to be a barrier to you gaining access to our audition process.

If we are unable to proceed with the in-person elements of the audition, auditions and interviews will take place online.

FIRST STAGE: Online audition

We use an online system called Accept'd which you will need to use to upload your portfolio. Full details on how to access Accept'd will be sent to you following your application. Please include:

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.

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

- Select a song which best shows 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.

SECOND STAGE: In-Person Audition or Online Submission

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

You will be required to prepare the following for assessment:

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.

Singing:

Perform two contrasting songs, at least one of which should be from a musical.

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

Dance:

We welcome applicants with all levels of dance training.

For those attending an in-person audition, you will be led through a group dance audition on the day, which may include elements of jazz, ballet and contemporary styles.

For online submissions, 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.

Please dress safely and appropriately for your dance recording and ensure you have enough space to record your video.

Interview:

For in-person auditionees, 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.

For online submissions, you may be contacted by the programme leader to schedule a short interview following submission of the above items. 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.

FAQs:

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.

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 is it 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 MA programmes, we are unable to provide feedback for first stage applicants. At the second stage audition, applicants are able to discuss their suitability for the programme and feedback will be built into the interview.

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.

