

***The Code of Practice
for Auditions and Interviews
at CDET Accredited Schools***

January 2017

SCOPE OF THE CODE

This ***Code of Practice for Auditions and Interviews*** governs the conduct of auditions and interviews at CDET Accredited schools. It provides the framework within which potential students are auditioned and interviewed for places on professional training courses, and for funding awards in dance, drama and musical theatre. The Code was originally commissioned by the *Department for Education* as part of the Dance and Drama Awards (DaDA) but the Precepts are compulsory for all CDET Accredited schools whether they offer Dance and Drama Awards or not. Schools should be able to demonstrate that they follow the six precepts outlined in this Code in establishing their own audition and interview procedures.

The Guidance on Devising an Appeals Procedure provides a framework for policies and procedures which all CDET Accredited schools must have in place to enable students to appeal against decisions made in the award of a place at a CDET school, and/or of the award of funding at a CDET school.

The intention of this Code and Guidance is to assist schools in ensuring that their policies and procedures for interviewing and auditioning students are transparent, robust and fair. A formal mechanism for appeals protects the school as well as allowing student a formal method of challenging the allocation process.

Neither the ***Code*** nor the ***Guidance*** is intended to be prescriptive in its detail, but is intended as a foundation for auditioning and interviewing. Most schools' practice is over and above the requirements of the Code, but all CDET schools are required to implement policies and procedure in line with the precepts.

INTRODUCTION

The Code covers six elements of an application procedure, referred to as its 'precepts'. These precepts are the key principles underpinning a fair and transparent procedure. They were arrived at through a review of how auditions were conducted by a variety of schools auditioning candidates for courses in professional training in dance, acting, and musical theatre.

The code forms the basis for the fair and consistent treatment of candidates. Potential students are considered to be 'candidates' from the point at which they make an application to the school. The precepts cover the process of considering applications, selecting candidates for interview or audition, the conduct of the audition and interview, the decision-making process and how this is communicated to the candidate.

Each precept is underpinned by an explanation and benchmarks for judging good practice. Further examples of good practice in action have been drawn from the observation of auditions and interviews in a number of vocational dance and drama schools. These are included in an appendix at the end of the Code.

The Code is intended as a guide to help schools draft their own procedures and policies in line with an agreed industry standard. Schools may, of course, wish to exceed the basic requirements set out in the Code in their own standards of practice and many do. The Code has taken account of the relevant equal opportunities legislation and has been drafted to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Guidance on devising an appeals procedure

The Guidance offers advice on how a school should devise a fair and transparent procedure for reviewing decisions made at audition and interview. All CDET Accredited schools are **required** to have an appeals procedure in place. The Guidance advises on the grounds, method and suggested outcome of any appeal, with notes on approaches to drafting a procedure.

Access to vocational training

It should be noted that ensuring applicants are drawn from a wide spectrum of backgrounds is a concern of public funding agencies. Therefore, as well as operating a fair and robust audition and interview process, schools are urged to regularly review their policies on advertising courses and providing opportunities for talented students to enter into vocational training.

CODE OF PRACTICE

GOVERNING THE CONDUCT OF AUDITIONS AND INTERVIEWS

PRECEPT ONE : A school undertakes to consider all applications

All applications will be considered within a published timescale, against the same criteria. Not all applications will necessarily result in audition/interview. Equal Opportunity principles will be practised in the consideration of every application.

A school should:

- have clear written criteria for the initial assessment of students;
- ensure that initial selection criteria are used for all candidates;
- make provision for candidates with different access requirements at the application stage;
- ask students to disclose information that may have a bearing on their application or audition/interview.

PRECEPT TWO: A school undertakes to provide candidates with the necessary information before and at the selection process

Candidates will be in told in advance about the method of selection, eg audition, interview or a combination. Candidates will also be told how, where and when the audition and/or interview will take place.

NOTE: In cases of applications from candidates under 18 years on 1st September of year of entry, information about the audition will also be sent to the parent / guardian.

The candidate will be provided with:

- good notice of audition and/or interview dates;
- details of the cost of the audition/interview (Note: Schools offering DaDAs are **not permitted to charge more than £45 for an audition onto a course which attracts DaDA funding**. This is a REQUIREMENT of the DaDA scheme).
- information about the location of the school and physical access to the buildings;
- the timetable for the audition/interview, including, where applicable, stages at which candidates may not be invited to continue;
- information about where they can access details of the school's criteria for assessing applicants, and the school's policy on the composition of the audition/interview panels.

PRECEPT THREE: A school undertakes to provide information on the availability of and criteria for the allocation of public and other funding.

Candidates will be given information about all funding dispensed by the school and provided with clear guidelines on the school's policy for the ways in which these will be allocated and awarded, in line with the school's criteria for selection at audition and interview and in line with the requirements of the relevant scheme.

A school should provide:

- information for applicants about the relationships between being offered a place on a course, and any relevant available funding streams
- information about what criteria will be used for each funding stream where applicable;
- a published deadline for applications for each funding stream
- information about how funding criteria will be applied to applicants where relevant
- an indication, where possible, of what ratio of the intake is likely to receive an award or other funded place.

PRECEPT FOUR: A school undertakes to give candidates the opportunity to demonstrate their potential to fulfil the aims of the course.

Candidates selected for audition/interview will be given the opportunity to show their potential in relation to core elements of the course. Not all candidates will necessarily be invited to participate in the entire audition / interview process.

A school will:

- endeavour to create an appropriate and positive atmosphere;
- give candidates the opportunity and space to warm up appropriately;
- ensure that the audition / interview is relevant to the course;
- make provision for applicants with disabilities (ie visual impairment, dyslexia, illiteracy, mobility difficulties);
- give candidates sufficient time to rest/ change/take refreshment between different elements of the audition / interview process;
- refer to the importance of suitability for the training and specific demands of the course.

PRECEPT FIVE: A school undertakes to ensure that the decision making process is fair and transparent

The school will have clear criteria for making judgements and these will be used in reaching decisions on each individual candidate. The application process will be in keeping with the Equality Act 2010 and the Human Rights Act 1998. Those responsible for auditioning / interviewing will have comprehensive understanding of the criteria for assessment and refer to this in their observation and assessment of each candidate.

A school will:

- have devised clear, written criteria for the assessment of students, both for a place on the course and for the allocation of any funding;
- ensure that all criteria for assessment are in keeping with the aims and objectives of the course, which should in turn be relevant to industry requirements;
- ensure that objective assessment criteria are used;
- ensure that those responsible for auditioning / interviewing have the appropriate skills and expertise and are trained in audition / interview techniques;
- ensure, where possible, that the panel includes both male and female members and represents the diversity of the training at the school;
- ensure that those responsible for auditioning / interviewing, know the aims of the course and are able to assess potential in relation to those aims;
- ensure that those responsible for auditioning / interviewing use assessment forms alongside the criteria and keep clear, accurate and appropriate records of their findings;
- promote an inclusive decision making process. The auditioning / interviewing panel should discuss their observations and should all have an input into the decision making process.

PRECEPT SIX: A school undertakes to ensure that candidates are informed of the outcome of an audition / interview in a timely manner.

Candidates will be told how and when they will know if they are to be offered a place on a course, and /or whether they have been, or will be, offered an opportunity to apply for an award.

Successful candidates will be told of the obligations placed on a potential student, including how and when they must accept or decline the offer of a place and / or award.

(Note: Schools offering DaDAs are **not permitted to charge a registration fee** to any student applying for DaDA funding to hold a place open. **DaDA awards cannot be offered until AFTER 1st March in any year.** These are REQUIREMENTS of the DaDA scheme).

A school will:

- inform candidates of audition/interview outcomes in writing as soon as is practicable;
- have a policy on the provision of feedback and make this known to candidates;
- if feedback is provided, ensure that it is given sensitively, fairly and in relation to the criteria for assessment;
- allow access to audition records on request in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998). (Schools are permitted to charge a small administration fee of up to £10 for this). See <https://ico.org.uk/media/1065/subject-access-code-of-practice.pdf> for more information.

GUIDANCE ON DEVISING AN APPEALS PROCEDURE

All CDET Accredited schools are required to devise and implement an appeals procedure.

Introduction

All appeals guidance material must be

- clear;
- easily available in a form intended to reach all interested parties;
- compliant with Equal Opportunities legislation.

Information to be included in the written appeals procedure and guidance

Circumstances and procedures in schools may vary, but appeals guidance should be in written form and should include the following information:

1. Right of appeal

Unsuccessful candidates should be advised that they have the right of appeal. They should be informed of the appeals procedure on request.

2. Acceptable grounds for appeal

It should be made clear to unsuccessful candidates that appeals will only be considered where it is claimed that there were irregularities in the audition / interview procedure.

3. Recommended method of appeal

An appeals procedure should give details as to who can legitimately make an appeal, to whom the appeal should be addressed and how the appeal should be handled.

The procedure should state that:

- the appeal should be made in writing by the person who signed the original entry form (in the case of candidates under eighteen on 1st September of the year of entry, an appeal should be made by a parent / guardian);
- the appeal should be addressed to the relevant authority (such as the Principal, Director or Studies or Registrar);
- the grounds for appeal should be clearly stated and supported by supplementary evidence where applicable;
- appeals should be post marked at a specific date (e.g. within 14 days) following the access to the written appeals procedure;
- the receipt of all appeals should be acknowledged within a specified period (e.g. within 7 days);
- on receipt, the appeal should be passed immediately to the person designated as responsible for the appeals process.

4. The appeals procedure used

Details of how the appeal will be conducted should be given to the candidate or parent / guardian. As practice within each school may vary, basic information should be provided concerning the process used, to include the following:

- who is responsible for administering the appeals procedure;
- how the appeal is processed;
- how and when the outcome of the appeal will be communicated.

The person bringing the appeal should be advised to contact one named person responsible for the administration of the appeals procedure..

On receipt of the appeal the school should undertake a review of the auditions process to satisfy itself that legitimate grounds for an appeal have been established. In order to help ensure objectivity, measures should be taken to involve a senior member of staff or external representative who was not involved in the original awarding/auditioning process.

The school should satisfy itself that:

- the procedures outlined in the *Code of Practice for Auditions and Interviews* have been complied with, and no irregularities have occurred;
- that in the case of the awarding process, the procedures used conform with the specifications of the funding body;
- in the allocation of places and awards all candidates were treated equally.

As the decision making process can be quite complex, schools should be prepared to provide evidence of fair practice in the implementation of their procedures. In the event of a successful appeal, if the original audition did not conform to the Code, then a repeat audition must be offered.

5. The likely outcomes of the appeal

The person bringing the appeal should be informed that there are two possible outcomes of an appeal:

EITHER the appeal is upheld and the candidate is re-assessed at a fresh audition;

OR the appeal is denied.

6. The method of providing feedback

The person submitting the appeal should receive written confirmation of the result of their appeal within 7 days of an outcome being established.

7. Respect for confidentiality

The school must record of the details of the appeal, including the circumstances, nature of the complaint and the decision making process. The information should be kept in a secure place, compliant with the Data Protection Act.