



ROYAL
BIRMINGHAM
CONSERVATOIRE

MA ACTING: GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS (FEMALE)

Your Audition

PUNCTUALITY

You should make sure you arrive in plenty of time for your audition; if for any reason you will be late please let us know. Punctuality is essential during the course, as it is when working in the profession. We are aware that sometimes transport is delayed – however, we will expect you to have arranged your travel to arrive on time even if there is a reasonable delay.

WARM-UP SESSION

At the audition you will be given a short vocal and movement warm up with one of our current students. These warm ups do not form part of the audition process they are just an opportunity for you to prepare yourself. **Please note:** Street shoes and stilettos are not allowed in any of our studios, but jazz and character shoes are.

SPEECHES

You must prepare and memorise two contrasting speeches from different plays, one of which must have been written in the last 20 years and one of which must be from an Elizabethan / Jacobean play.

Each selection should be **no more than two minutes in length** and suitable for your gender, age and experience (you may be stopped if a speech exceeds two minutes in length).

All speeches should be from published plays. Excerpts from film script, television dramas and unpublished plays are not acceptable unless you can provide at audition, and leave with us, a copy of the actual and complete script with the speech used clearly marked.

You should have read the whole of the play from which a speech is taken and be able to provide the correct title, name of the author if relevant and translator. You may be asked questions about the play and your character's journey within it (i.e. their motives etc.).

It is preferred that the content of the speeches should be something to which you can relate and understand. It is not advised that you attempt an accent unless you are entirely confident of its accuracy and only if it is appropriate to the speech.

Any performance choices you make should be justifiable within the text. The performance should reveal an understanding of the scene and character and an ability to create and share appropriate emotions and atmosphere. Try to make sure that any vocal and physical interpretation you do is strictly relevant.

Criteria for Speeches

- Energy Achievement of contrast
- Choice of speeches
- Creation of environment
- Spatial awareness
- Use / handling of language
- Suitability of physicalisation
- Power to hold an audience
- Identification with character
- Potential for development through training

THE SONG

Your song will be performed alone to a senior singing tutor. As with your acting selections, your song should be a published work with piano accompaniment. We will provide a pianist but you must provide sheet music in a suitable format for the pianist to use.

We are interested to see how you interpret a song and its content. We appreciate that some candidates are not experienced singers but we do not believe that this stops anyone from expressing the style and content of a song. It is important that you choose a song suitable for your voice, gender and age.

Song Criteria

- Qualities
- Technique: including breathing, body alignment
- Story Telling: journey of the song

SIGHTREADING

You will be asked to sight read a short selection, which you will be given upon your arrival on the audition day.

INTERVIEW / MEETING

In certain instances, the Course Director or his/her representative may interview you, to gain a better understanding of you and your motives for wishing to attend a drama school.

A voice tutor may wish to see you individually to assess more fully your vocal potential.

CRITERIA FOR AUDITION ASSESSMENT

The assessment of each candidate is based upon a set of criteria used consistently by staff, who comment on and mark the work shown.

Speeches to Avoid

There is plenty of advice available on how to select speeches for your Drama School Audition. To assist in that process, we would like to give you a short list of speeches which for various reasons we would prefer you to avoid when coming to audition at Birmingham School of Acting. These pieces are:

Shakespeare

- Lady Macbeth
- Queen Margaret (Henry VI Part III & Richard III)
- Phoebe (As You Like It)
- Juliet (Romeo and Juliet)
- Tamora (Titus Andronicus)

Contemporary

Plays for one person are generally not a good idea; we advise you to avoid extended monologues by:

- Victoria Wood
- Alan Bennett
- Claire Dowie
- Eric Bogosian

We strongly recommend that you avoid speeches from plays by:

- John Godber
- Sarah Kane
- Samuel Beckett
- Harold Pinter
- Steven Berkoff

Individual speeches which we ask you to avoid are:

- Angela from Like a Virgin
- Presley from Pitchfork Disney

Finally, may we remind you that the contemporary speech **should have been written within the last 20 years**; 'Road', by Jim Cartwright, was written in 1986. The idea is for you to be able to demonstrate your knowledge of contemporary repertoire.

What happens next?

OFFER OF A PLACE

Following an audition and/or interview, one of the following outcomes is possible:

- You are offered an unconditional place
This means that you have a place on the course for which you applied. This offer is only for the year in which you apply.
- You are offered a conditional place
This means that you will have a place on the course for which you applied if you attain the required academic qualifications. This offer is only for the year in which you apply.
- You are offered a reserve place on the course.
This is the most common outcome. It indicates that you have reached an acceptable standard, but because applications and auditions/interviews happen throughout the year we cannot allocate all places on a course until the auditions/interviews have been completed.

- You are not offered a place on the course

You cannot re-apply for a place on the same course in the same academic year.

APPEALING AGAINST AN UNSUCCESSFUL AUDITION

If you wish to appeal against a decision you should contact the Admissions team at acting.admissions@bcu.ac.uk within 14 days of notification to receive a copy of the Appeals Policy. An appeals panel, led by a senior member of staff who was not involved in your audition, will investigate thoroughly any grounds for appeal and will notify you of the outcome.