

A stage with red curtains on either side. In the center, three spotlights shine down, creating a bright area on the floor. The background is a dark teal color.

Making the most
of your audition

...take the spotlight



“ I have found myself challenged and engaged every single day, on a level that is next to impossible to find in a university model of performer training.”

The purpose of the audition

The audition is a key part of applying to a conservatoire.

The audition process is designed to enable a conservatoire to find out about you – not just how accomplished you are, but what sort of person you are. They want to give you the chance to demonstrate your performance skills in support of your application.

This is also an opportunity for you to find out more about the conservatoire. Try to get a feel for the place to see if it fits with your learning style and personality. It's also important you gather as much information as possible about your chosen course.

What does the audition **involve?**

Each conservatoire conducts auditions in a slightly different way, but here's some general advice for the core disciplines.

Music applicants

Auditions usually include a practical element – where you will be asked to perform two or more contrasting pieces you've prepared in advance – and an interview, during which you will have an opportunity to ask questions. Detailed advice on what your audition will cover will be provided by the conservatoire once you've been invited to audition.

In some cases, an audition will have two parts, which are both held on the same day. In these circumstances, all candidates take part in round one, and then a number of candidates are selected to go forward to round two.

Composers and applicants in other non-performance areas are usually asked to submit a portfolio, video, or other evidence of their practical ability in lieu of an audition.

Dance and drama applicants

For dance and drama auditions, you may be asked to:

- prepare monologues,
- create a performance piece,
- participate in a dance class, sing, sight-read text, or improvise.

For drama production courses, you will be given set tasks prior to your interview and the interview will be an opportunity to discuss the tasks, your understanding of the course, and your career aspirations.

In some cases, an audition may include a recall, it's best to check with the conservatoire you're applying to.

When are auditions held?

Most music auditions take place between October and December. Sometimes a conservatoire will hold a second set of auditions for late applicants, however not all instruments and areas are offered at late auditions, as places can fill up quickly.

Dance and drama auditions are usually held at different times of the year to music auditions. Contact conservatoires directly to find out their audition dates.

Some conservatoires offer international applicants the chance to audition at an overseas audition centre. These auditions may be offered at a different time of year, so you should check with the conservatoire you're applying to.

How long will the audition last?

This varies from one conservatoire to another, but generally you can expect the audition to last 10 – 30 minutes. If an interview or additional tests form part of the process, these will add to the overall length.



“ The first day at the conservatoire is much like an opening night – there is suspense, drama and delight with just a sprinkling of mystery and excitement.”



“ I’m immersed in music and surrounded with likeminded people working towards a common goal.”

What will you be asked?

You will be asked to talk about your musical, dance, drama, screen, or production interests and activities, your artistic influences, what inspires you, your reasons for wanting to study at a conservatoire, and this conservatoire in particular, along with your career objectives.

- You may also be asked to talk about your non discipline specific interests.
- The interview may include discussion of the repertoire you’ve performed, in terms of preparation, challenges, technique, style, etc.
- You may be asked to analyse and assess your performance.
- Composers will be asked to present and discuss the portfolio they have submitted.
- The interview is also a chance for you to ask questions about the department and what life is like as a conservatoire student.

Preparing for your audition

There are many things you can do to prepare for your audition, so you feel confident and relaxed on the day.

- If you are a performer, practise the set piece or chosen pieces until you can perform them with confidence and authority.

- Take advantage of any opportunities to perform in public or in front of other performers, to gain confidence and experience in performing under pressure.
- For music applicants, practise with an accompanist as often as possible.
- Have a practice audition, or stage one with friends, family, or your teacher.
- Research the pieces you’ll be performing so you can talk about them in an informed way and answer any questions.
- Be prepared to talk about your interests and any live performances you have seen.
- Think about the questions you are likely to be asked, and make sure you are able to present your ideas confidently and coherently, and can show your initiative and commitment to what you do.
- Consider what you want to know about the conservatoire and make a list of questions to ask.
- Talk to your teacher.
- Practise relaxation and breathing techniques to help manage nerves.

Making the **most** of the day

Remember you are presenting yourself as a potential student. Arriving on time and being prepared will help you make a good impression.

Wear something smart but comfortable which will not restrict your movement when performing and will not distract from your performance or interview.

The audition panel will be looking for good technical control, accurate intonation, and rhythmic awareness. Overall, they will be judging your potential, rather than your ability to give a flawless performance. They will also be assessing your attitude and trying to form a picture of you as a person.

If your audition includes an interview, be honest about your aspirations and how you hope a conservatoire course will help you achieve your goals.

Try to use your time at the conservatoire to get an impression of what it would be like to study there. Take some time to look at the facilities available – some conservatoires offer tours of the facilities as part of the audition experience, but if not, try to attend an open day. This will give you the chance to speak to current students and course tutors.

“ I learnt a lot through doing each audition and interview that I still use in auditions and throughout situations in my life today.”



What happens after the **audition**

Most conservatoires will try to respond to you within three to four weeks of the audition, and will then give you information on what to do next.

It is very common to walk out of an audition or interview and immediately think of something you should have asked. If this happens, don't panic and don't be afraid to contact the conservatoire to ask those questions. Admissions offices are there to help you through the application process and will respond to your queries as soon as they can.

Remember...

- Preparing well in advance will help you stay relaxed on the day.
- The conservatoire wants you to succeed as much as you do, so stay positive and enjoy yourself.
- Prepare a few questions about the course or department you've applied to.
- Be yourself – your ability, attitude, and ambition are what count.



But most importantly...

enjoy your audition,
and **good luck!**

