

General Recommendations for Auditions and Portfolio Reviews



Art

- Obtain portfolio requirements from each school. Some are fairly specific as to how they want your work presented, and what they want in the portfolio.
- Be ready if asked who your favorite artist is and why.
- In general, schools want to see a variety of work. The more studio areas represented, the better.
- Any 3-D work should be included in your portfolio.
- Be prepared to talk about your work, what it means to you, and why you did it. Technical skills and facility are important, but the work should also say something about you as an artist.
- Careful how you dress. Don't dress too "artsy." You want to convey seriousness of purpose and maturity. Let the work speak for your creative side.
- Large or fragile items should be represented with slides, photographs, or a DVD.



Dance



- Schools will either have you participate in a class, perform a solo, or both. For a solo, find out if it should be self-choreographed, or a work set on the applicant. In some cases, you may be asked to learn a routine, then perform it.
- Ask what type of class you will be auditioning with (ballet, jazz, tap, modern, etc.). Will the class include Pointe work?
- For a solo piece, ask if there will be an accompanist, or if you need to bring recorded music.
- If you perform an original, self-choreographed piece, be prepared to discuss the work. Also be ready to discuss your background and career goals.

Music

- Prepare a *Representative Repertoire* to leave with the department, if requested.
- Obtain well in advance the audition requirements for each school. Some are VERY SPECIFIC.
- Be prepared to sight read or sing. Also be prepared for questions about your music background, career goals, and reasons for wanting to pursue a music major.
- Ask if there will be any kind of music theory evaluation/test.
- Include a letter of recommendation from your primary instrument instructor.
- Be sure your sheet music is in the correct key.
- Jazz students should be prepared to improvise. Improvisation is a vital skill in jazz music.



Theatre

- Provide a quality headshot, along with an acting resume. A clear 4 x 6 school photo is acceptable. No hats, costumes, prom dresses, production shots, etc. Auditioners want the face. The picture is to help them recall the auditionee.
- Wear a *neutral* audition outfit which will flatter the body and allow for movement. Some schools may have a physical “warm-up” as a part of the audition, so be prepared.
- Research the audition requirements for each program extensively. Some can be very specific so review each multiple times and don’t hesitate to contact the school if you have questions.
- Rehearse your monologues in the clothes you will be wearing so you are comfortable and know if they restrict your movement in any way.
- DO NOT select pieces from a monologue book, or pieces intended for a speech and debate competition. Make sure you are familiar with the entire play, and be prepared to talk about your character’s overall role.
- For Musical Theatre majors, find out what the singing audition will consist of. Also, ask if an accompanist is provided, or if you need to bring recorded support.
- Play it straight. It’s true you are “auditioning” the moment you walk in the door, but be yourself, show a sense of maturity, and avoid being overly presentational during the time before your audition. The faculty conducting the audition are very turned off by those “acting” outside of the audition.



Film/Cinematography



- Is there a separate application or portfolio review to enter the film program?
- Do you start in the program as a freshman, or take general classes for two years, and then apply to get in?
- Find out what the requirements/guidelines are for portfolios, and follow them—especially the length.
- Be original and creative, with an easy-to-follow plotline.
- Don’t do a scene remake from a movie. It is neither original nor creative.
- Be careful with content that could be perceived as offensive, insensitive, or demeaning. There is a fine line between creativity and material that is inappropriate. Just because you see something in a certain way, doesn’t mean everyone else will.
- A brief (2-3 sentences) description about your audition reel can be useful to the review committee.
- Pay attention to lighting and sound—the two most overlooked production values in student work.
- The most important element of your submission may be an essay on why you want to be a filmmaker, or a critique of a classic film.

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