

CHELTENHAM OPERATIC & DRAMATIC SOCIETY (CODS)

GUIDELINES FOR AUDITIONS - PLAYS

PRODUCTION TEAM PREPARATION FOR AUDITIONS

- The Stage Director should:
 - Prepare a synopsis of the show including their own thoughts, interpretation and vision
 - Provide character descriptions, playing ages and any significant attributes or characteristics that they are looking for
 - Prepare audition material that will allow them to cast against their requirements e.g. character scenes and dialogue
- The dialogue audition pieces, together with character sketches, must be made available at the first pre-audition rehearsal. If possible, they should also be made available to all members of the Society and other interested parties in advance by email/newsletter and publication on the Society's website.
- It is not mandatory for the selected audition material to be taken from the show being cast
- For occasions where a high volume of candidates are expected for a particular part, the Production Team may suggest a pre-audition round with the specific purpose of cutting the number of auditionees. This would typically be a reduced subset of the full audition piece, and full details would be communicated at pre-auditions.

PRE-AUDITION REHEARSALS

- Pre-Audition rehearsals will be held to allow prospective cast members to read through the play and prepare for their audition
- At these rehearsals the Stage Director will be available to answer questions on the play and audition pieces
- Details of Pre-Audition rehearsals will be communicated in advance of the first rehearsal

ENCOURAGEMENT TO ATTEND AUDITIONS

- All members and non-members should be encouraged to attend auditions
- Members of the Panel should ensure that appropriate language is used, such that no individual is under the illusion that they would have an advantage if auditioning for a certain part

RULES FOR AUDITIONEES

- Auditionees may apply to be considered for as many parts as they wish, but are limited to performing an audition for a maximum of two of them
- Auditionees should ensure that the parts actually auditioned for are equivalent to or larger than those for which they wish to be considered. The Audition Panel would not expect to allocate a large principal part to someone who had only auditioned for a smaller part

ADVICE TO AUDITIONEES

- Auditionees will be judged on their acting and portrayal of the character
- Auditionees are not required to learn the material but are encouraged to be familiar with the material to enable the strongest audition possible
- Props and costumes are permitted if they help an auditionee with characterisation

COMPOSITION OF THE AUDITION PANEL

The Panel will be composed of 3 members, as follows:

- **Chairman**
 - The Chairman of the Panel will be a member of the committee. This will often be the Chairman or the Vice-Chairman of the society.

- The role the Chairman is to ensure that auditions are fair and run in accordance with the guidelines laid out in this document
- **Stage Director**
 - The Stage Director will be expected to lead the selection process, with input from the other members of the production team
 - If there are joint directors, they both sit on the audition panel but will only have one vote
- **Member of the General Committee**
 - General committee members are there to ensure the interests of the society are represented, in accordance with the governing principles of the process

Note:

- Additional people may also be present, but will not be involved in discussions
- Composition of the panel should be carefully considered against likely auditionees, and care should be taken to avoid close relationships where practical
- People in the room for auditions and the decision-making process should be kept to a bare minimum

GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

The Panel seeks to:

- Select a cast that will provide the best quality show possible
- Select a cast that will work well with their peers and the production team
- Select a cast that is appropriately balanced
- Select a cast that is reliable and dependable

Whilst:

- Ensuring diversity of casting across the membership base
- Ensuring everyone who auditions has a fair opportunity to be cast
- Ensuring that roles are cast in as few audition rounds as possible

BASIS FOR DECISIONS

When deciding on parts for the show, decisions should be made on **artistic merit** and be based on:

- Clarity, projection and tempo of dialogue
- Ability to convey the essence of the character as required
- Suitability of general appearance for the character, especially when compared with other characters
- How the auditionee interacts with others, especially the characters with whom they are closely linked

The following criteria **may** also be taken into account:

- A history of unreliability e.g.:
 - Inability to remember lines or moves.
 - Insufficient commitment to previous rehearsal attendance.
- Significant holidays or commitments that affect rehearsal attendance
- Relationship difficulties with other members of the cast or production team

The following criteria **may not** be taken into account:

- Past history of not being able to make it through a full week of performances (e.g. voice breaking down, etc)
- Desire to reward a member of the Society for services/commitment to the Society
- Whether an auditionee is a member or non-member
- Whether an auditionee is willing to be in the chorus

It is the Chairman's responsibility to ensure that all decisions are made in accordance to these principles

DECISION MAKING

- The Audition Panel should aim to come to a consensus about all decisions
- Greater weight should be placed on the opinion of the Production Team, providing their reasoning is fair and in the spirit of the principles laid out in this document

- Casting should happen in as few rounds as possible. The Chairman of the Panel must be convinced that there are not suitable candidates before permitting re-auditions
- In the event that a consensus cannot be reached, the following options should be undertaken:

1) **More than one suitable auditionee**

- a. **The casting of votes:** The Stage Director, the Chairman and the committee member each cast one vote, with the Chairman having the final decision. Note that it is not acceptable to use one of the "criteria that may not be taken into account" to break a deadlock. Auditionees may be invited back in to repeat their audition piece if they are still available but it is not acceptable to ask for a re-audition of the part, since the candidates are deemed to be acceptable.

2) **No suitable auditionee**

- a. **Open re-audition:** The part is re-auditioned, and any previous auditionees for the part are allowed to re-audition. Feedback can be made available to any previous auditionees, but any decision to re-audition is theirs alone. Inviting other candidates to audition is permissible providing it is clear that the part is not theirs for the taking.
- b. **Invitation without audition:** If the above steps have proved unsuccessful, the part may be offered to a suitable candidate without audition. This option cannot be used as an excuse not to cast suitable auditionees from previous rounds.

Note: It is not acceptable to offer a part to an auditionee (or anyone else) who did not ask to be considered for the part before an open re-audition has taken place, even if their audition for a different part indicates that they might be suitable.

Note: Where a part is cast from the existing cast during an open re-audition, it is at the Stage Director's discretion whether to formally re-audition the vacated part, or offer the part directly to suitable candidates without audition in accordance with 2b above.

FEEDBACK

Failed auditionees may request feedback from the panel as to why they did not get a part. The Chairman of the audition panel is responsible for responding, ensuring that their views are a reflection of all members of the Panel. Auditionees will not be given any feedback unless they specifically ask for it.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The deliberations of the Audition Panel should be considered a "closed box". All conversations held by the audition panel, and all performances seen by the audition panel, must remain completely confidential. They are not to be communicated to anyone outside the audition panel, including the General Committee.