



Identity School of Acting Assessment Criteria and Level Descriptors

Criteria for Performance

Ownership of Space

Are you alive in the space, grounded and moving freely with your impulses? The ability to be physically present on stage, screen and in the studio; to maintain a sense of entitlement, the right to be there. To be clear in thinking and grounded energetically when performing. To stand and grow in stillness to propel the character to the next moment. The ability to change the colours, tension and drive a scene on entrance, events and exit.

Presence

Are you present in the moment, or are you focused on the fact that you're an actor performing a scene? To be focused and fully in your sense of self; unencumbered by internal or perceived judgements, or mental chatter that clutters your thinking. In the moment; not concerned with the past nor the future. The ability to work in 'second circle', grounded without undue pushing or holding back, with a focus on one's acting partner and an objective that engenders a potent connection between performers.

Connection

How connected are you to your scene partner and to your given circumstances?

Do you have an internal and external connection plus the ability to span between both? Can you allow your emotions to flow forth authentically and organically? Are you affected by the other characters in the push and pull of your needs and their needs? Are you connected to the character's given circumstances and allowing these to affect you in the moment?

Vocal Clarity

Can you be heard and understood, and are you using your voice effectively? Have you developed the correct physical mechanics that result in a clear voice, not compromised by anxiety, nor physical or inappropriate emotional tension. Have you developed a voice that communicates thought clearly and has the flexibility to allow actions/emotion to inform it? Do you speak, supported, with a strong spine and core, passion and feeling, from a body that is relaxed, alert and energised.

Embodiment of Character

Do we believe that this is a real person, or is it an actor showing us a character? Have you embodied the research required to bring to life, authentically and organically, the psychology and physicality of a fully rounded human being as laid out in a play/screen text? Have you made specific vocal and physical choices regarding objectives, actions, relationship, etc. that are appropriate to the scenic truth of the text, in keeping with the director's vision and responsive to the student's playing partner. Have you submitted to the character's actions without judgment, rather than imposing one's own persona and limits onto the performance? Have you employed imagination resulting in diversity of tactic, passion in play and embodied storytelling?

Using these criteria, you receive a grade based on the following.

1 – 2	The student is underperforming for their level.
3 – 4	The student is at a low level of skill in this area and needs to apply themselves rigorously.
5 – 6	The student is at an average standard for their level.
7 – 8	The student is at a good standard for their level.
9 - 10	The student is at an excellent standard for their level and if consistent across all criteria should be considered as a candidate for moving up a level.

Scores will be based on where your ability level is in relation to the tier level you are currently placed in, rather than in the context of the School as a whole. For example, a Foundation student could achieve a higher overall grade than a Professional student. This should be taken to indicate that the Foundation student has achieved highly within their tier level, rather than that they should be considered to be at a Professional level. We would expect that most students would achieve an 'average' score in most criteria.

Scores will be combined to give a final percentage score, and this will be used to determine the appropriate tier level that you should move into in the future. A guide to how this is applied is below.

The most important factor regarding your placement will be those from the panel on the day of your performance. This is to reflect the nature of the industry and the acting profession. However, if you consistently work well within class and rehearsals to develop a good process, the end result will improve and become more consistent and you will receive higher marks from the panel, so the two work together.

The decision of the panel is final and unless there has been an administrative error i.e. a numerical miscalculation, then students may not challenge their grades.

PLEASE NOTE

Whilst we appreciate that it may be disappointing for you to be moved down a level or for some of you even to stay at the same level, our decision is made for your benefit in order to secure and/or consolidate your progress. Remember it is a marathon not a race and many very successful actors have taken longer over their training- which in the long term has secured a sustained career, so this should not be seen as failure but as an opportunity for growth. Any students required to move down a level will receive a written explanation and clear guidance as to what they need to work on in order to progress.

Level Criterias

Tier 1

All of the criteria for Advanced are met but in addition, there is a flair and uniqueness about the performance, which results in a striking interpretation. There is artistry and panache and a varied range of actions, implemented in the moment, leading to the demonstration of a broad emotional range and an outstanding impact.

Advanced

Exceptional control in performance of storytelling, structure and suspense. Creative empathy creates theatrical truth, maintaining the suspension of disbelief but also creating striking impact and engaging the audience throughout. Vocal, facial, physical and spatial communication is nuanced, fully integrated, and spontaneous stemming from the inner thought process and connected to the text and the given circumstances. New thoughts are consistently imagined, portrayed and well timed, as are exchanges with scene partners (either real or imagined.) The world of the piece is imaginatively created and responded to in such a way as to enhance the piece and create meaning for the audience. The student demonstrates an advanced vocal and physical technique which enables them to fully communicate all of the above in a highly engaging manner.

Intermediate/Advanced

The student is meeting criteria in both the intermediate and advanced levels so is not ready to move to Advanced but needs to move from intermediate. Refer to both criterias.

Intermediate

A highly focused and sustained performance. Control of storytelling, structure and suspense is usually in place and potential moments of impact are usually communicated. New thoughts may be consistently or are usually imagined and portrayed and well timed, as are exchanges with scene partners (real or imagined.) Vocal, facial, physical and spatial communication is clear and usually integrated and spontaneous, with detail in response to the given circumstances. A vocally and physically accomplished performance, slightly lacking in creativity or inner belief may achieve marks in this band as would a well imagined, empathetic and creative performance that was lacking in technical ability. Alternatively, this may be a strong performance with a slight weakness in one specific area, such as being vocally impressive but slightly lacking in expression physically. However, overall this is an engaging and believable performance.

Foundation

A focused and sustained performance where there may be one or two moments of impact but perhaps others may be missed. New thoughts may be consistently or are usually imagined and portrayed and well timed, as are exchanges with scene partners (real or imagined.) However, there may be a sense of playing one strategy or emotion throughout, which in turn results in an even pace and/ or a lack of modulation or storytelling. However, there is little to distract from the suspension of disbelief and there is clear evidence of preparation which has resulted in a secure performance with secure phrasing and a generally convincing response to the given circumstances. Physical and vocal ability enable the audience to understand the meaning and storytelling within the piece but it may be lacking in detail or display a significant weakness in one area, where other areas are secure.

Assessed Out

There is little evidence of research or preparation and the student appears to make little effort to create impact. The work may be marred by a lack of words being memorised accurately or serious lapses in concentration. Alternatively, the student's own reality may be highly obvious, rather than that of the character, such as making inappropriate eye-contact with the audience, failing to engage with scene partners or demonstrating the visible effect of nerves to such an extent as to mar the piece. The performance may be unsustainable, seriously unimaginative, or so unvoiced or under energised that it makes it difficult for the audience to engage in the suspension of disbelief.