

FAQs for the Audition Process into the Acting Program

1. What should I prepare for my audition?

Your initial audition is an online self-tape audition. Prepare two contrasting monologues from published plays (classical/contemporary or drama/comedy – no poetry, original material, or film scripts) and 16 bars of a song sung a cappella. Remember to slate -- introduce yourself by saying your name, the character names, the title of the plays, and the playwrights for your online self-tape submission. You may slate right before your audition pieces or take a separate video for your slate.

2. How long should my audition performance be?

Your two contrasting monologues should be no more than two minutes each. You are strongly encouraged to choose monologues (a sizeable chunk of text for one character) from a published play. Avoid monologue books. Monologue books do not provide enough context and given circumstances for you to play and embody. Your song should be no more than 16 bars.

3. Do I need to memorize my audition material?

Yes, we expect each candidate to have their audition materials fully memorized. Memorization allows you to focus on your performance, feel an emotional connection to the piece, and play with ease without relying on the script. If you forget a line, breathe and start again. The adjudicator wants to see your storytelling capabilities over how well you have committed each monologue to memory.

4. What type of attire is appropriate for the audition?

We recommend you wear comfortable clothing that allows you to move freely. Avoid flashy or distracting outfits. The focus of the audition should be on your talent, so choose clothing that enables you to showcase your skills without distraction.

5. Is there a specific style of performance or genre that the program looks for?

Your performance should showcase realistic or naturalistic acting supported by your imaginative interpretation of the work. There is no specific preference for material, other than that the pieces should contrast, come from published plays, and resonate with you. You may submit a third monologue of an original piece as supplemental material. Candidates who perform two monologues with the same delivery (no change from one character to another) are generally not called back. Your monologue does not need to be from our suggested list of playwrights for you to gain admission into the Acting program.

6. Are there any additional components to the callback audition besides performance?

The callback audition consists of ensemble exercises, the monologue portion, the 16 bars, and a short interview. After the interview, the candidate will be allowed to ask the adjudicator up to

two questions about the program due to time constraints. Then the callback audition is concluded, and the candidate will be dismissed. Typically, student volunteers assist during the callbacks and are available to answer any questions you may have about the program. No shows or early dismissals may not be given another chance to complete a callback audition. Late arrivals or candidates who cannot make either callback date should contact the CABCOFA Center for Student Success.

7. How long will I have to wait for a final decision after my callback audition?

Admissions questions should be directed to the Office of Admissions. Even if a candidate is accepted into the Acting program, the Office of Admissions determines acceptance into Howard University.

8. Can I audition virtually if I am unable to attend the callback audition in person?

Yes, if selected for a callback, you may choose a virtual or in person option. Virtual and in person callback audition dates will be provided after you have been selected for a callback. Callbacks are held in the Fall and Spring.

9. How can I stand out in my initial online self-tape audition and callback audition?

Choose material that you enjoy and want to share. Be fully prepared, knowing not only your lines but also the circumstances for each piece, your objective, and playable actions. Confidence is key. Bring your vulnerability (authenticity). Be open to direction.

11. Are there any special accommodations for auditioning students?

Yes, we are committed to providing equal access and opportunity for all students. If you require any special accommodation during the audition process, such as extended time, physical adjustments, or assistance with communication, please let us know as soon as possible. We encourage you to contact the Admissions Office or the CABCOFA Center for Student Success to discuss your needs. We will work with you to ensure you have the support to participate fully in the audition process.

12. Is there an interview during the audition process?

Yes. Most acting programs include an interview as part of the audition process. The interview allows us to learn more about you as an individual and to discuss your passion for the craft and future goals. The interview is not weighed as heavily as the performance portion of your audition. Speak honestly and be yourself.

A list of potential questions that may be asked during the audition.

Who are you? ("you" meaning the character that you are playing)

Where are you?

What do you want?
Why do you want what you want?
What is the obstacle to getting what you want?
What is at stake if you don't get what you want?
What do you want the other character to say or do?
Can you remember a time when...?
What does it look like, sound like, feel like to...?
Can you imagine that...?
Why did you choose the piece?
Why did you apply to the Howard University Acting program?
What brought you to the craft of acting?

Suggested Playwrights for Audition Monologues

African-American/Black Theatre Canon

Alice Childress
Lorraine Hansberry
Adrienne Kennedy
August Wilson
Ed Bullins
Amiri Baraka
Kia Corthron
Dominique Morriseau
Jordan E. Cooper
Marcus Gardley
Suzanne Lori-Parks
James Baldwin
Donja Love
Katori Hall
Tarell Alvin McCraney
James Ijames
Nikkole Salter
Ossie Davis
George C. Wolfe
Lynn Nottage
Anna Deavere Smith
Tori Sampson
Lydia R. Diamond
Pearl Cleage
Jocelyn Bioh
Dael Orlandersmith
Danai Gurira
Keenan M. Scott II

Samm Art-Williams
Charles Fuller
Jeremy O'Harris
Richard Wesley
Wole Soyinka

Classic and Modern American Theatre Canon

Tennessee Williams
Eugene O'Neill
Arthur Miller
David Mamet
Edward Albee
Stephen Adly Guirgis
Aaron Posner
Lillian Hellman
Tony Kushner
Sam Shepard
Tracy Letts
Neil LaBute
Paula Vogel
Thornton Wilder
Matthew López
Monet Hurst-Mendoza

Western Classical and European Theatre Canon

Shakespeare
Molière
Sophocles
Euripides
Aristophanes
Anton Chekov
Henrik Ibsen
Oscar Wilde
Samuel Beckett
Federico García Lorca
Lope de Vega
Pedro Calderón de la Barca