

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 – that is, before your performance of each monologue, introduce yourself by saying your name, the name of the character(s) you will play, the title of the play, and the playwright(s).

2. How long should my audition performance be?

Your two contrasting monologues should be no more than two minutes each, not including your slate. We will not watch monologue performances that are longer than 2 minutes.

3. What are the parameters for monologue and song selection?

You must choose monologues (a sizeable chunk of dialogue for one character) from published plays. Avoid monologue books. We are assessing your ear and your facility with the various parts of your vocal instrument. Monologue books do not provide enough context and given circumstances for us to make that assessment.

Your song should be no more than 16 bars and should sit squarely in your vocal range. We are not looking for vocal acrobatics; instead, we are assessing your ability to hear and your facility with the parts of your vocal instrument.

4. Do I need to memorize my audition material?

Yes, we expect each candidate to have their audition materials fully memorized. If you forget a line, stay in character and keep going — how you recover demonstrates your self-management skills and resilience. Please note: the adjudicator wants to see your storytelling capabilities over how well you have committed each monologue to memory.

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

We recommend you wear comfortable clothing that allows you to move freely. The focus of the audition should be on your talent, so choose clothing that enables you to showcase your skills without distraction. It is okay to use clothing to help achieve character and storytelling clarity, but we do not require - nor do we recommend - using costumes and props in ways that undermine the demonstration of your artistic intelligence and ability.

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

Your performance should showcase realistic acting supported by your imagination.

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 (but there is no guarantee that a third monologue will be adjudicated).

Consider character, the events of change, and the given circumstances in your performance. Candidates who perform two monologues with no change in dramatization 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.

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

The callback consists of ensemble exercises, the monologue performance, singing 16 bars, and a short interview. After the monologue, you may be given direction to modify aspects of your performance and run it again. After the interview, the candidate will be allowed to ask the adjudicator up to two questions about the program due to time constraints.

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 will 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 for guidance.

8. 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.

9. 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 for Early Action/Decision candidates are held in early to mid-November. Callbacks for Regular Decision and Transfer student candidates are held in early to mid-February.

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

Choose material that you enjoy and want to share — a character you get a kick out of portraying, story events you understand how to dramatize. Be fully prepared, knowing not only your lines, but also the given circumstances for each piece, your objective, and playable actions. Confidence is key. Bring your vulnerability (authenticity). Be open to direction.

11. Can my accommodations be honored during the audition process?

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 a callback audition is offered to you. 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 about your performance as part of the audition process. The interview allows us to learn more about your performance preparation, to discuss your passion for the craft and to hear about your future goals. Speak honestly and clearly, and be yourself.

13. Can I receive feedback from the adjudicator about my audition?

Unfortunately, we are not able to offer individualized feedback on your pre-screen or callback audition. With a high volume of talented candidates and a faculty committed to giving every applicant the same fair, consistent standard of evaluation, providing personalized feedback to each candidate is not something we can sustain. We know this can be disappointing, especially after the work and vulnerability that goes into an audition, and we want you to know that every audition is reviewed with care and full attention, regardless of outcome.

A list of potential questions that may be asked about your performance during the interview portion of the callback audition

What characteristics define your character?

Where is your character and why does it matter to the story?

Who is your character talking to?

What is your character's relationship with that person?

What does your character want from the character you are talking to?

Why does your character want what they want from the character they are talking to?

What is the obstacle preventing your character from getting what they want?

What is at stake if your character doesn't get what they want?

What if your character were in different circumstances? How might you choose to perform the monologue differently?

A list of potential questions that may be asked about your future goals during the interview portion of the callback audition

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 Diasporic Theatre Canon Playwrights

Ama Ata Aidoo, Amiri Baraka, James Baldwin, Ifa Bayeza, Jocelyn Bioh, Ed Bullins, Guadalis Del Carmen, Christin Eve Cato, Alice Childress, Jordan E. Cooper, Kia Corthron, Pearl Cleage, Ossie Davis, Lydia R. Diamond, Charles Fuller, Marcus Gardley, Kirsten Greenidge, Danai Gurira, Katori Hall, Lorraine Hansberry, Jeremy O. Harris, Zora Howard, James Ijames, Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, John Kani, Nambi E. Kelley, Adrienne Kennedy, Donja Love, Tarell Alvin McCraney, Dominique Morisseau, Lynn Nottage, Suzan-Lori Parks, Winsome Pinnock, John Henry Redwood, Trevor Rhone, Nikkole Salter, Tori Sampson, Ntozake Shange, Keenan M. Scott II, Anna Deavere Smith, Efua Sutherland, Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott, Richard Wesley, Samm-Art Williams, August Wilson, George C. Wolfe

Classic and Modern American Theatre Canon

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

Western Classical and European Theatre Canon

Aristophanes, Samuel Beckett, Bertolt Brecht, Lope de Vega, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Anton Chekhov, Euripides, Federico García Lorca, Henrik Ibsen, Molière, Sophocles, Oscar Wilde, William Shakespeare