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Digital Audition Guidelines - MA Theatre Lab September 2026 entry

Self-tape Guidance

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Please read the following information carefully to help you record your self-tape audition. We recommend that you prepare and rehearse your material before recording.

Setting up for your speeches

The most important thing is that we can see and hear you clearly. You don't need any specialist equipment - just film where you're most comfortable using your phone, keeping it steady by propping it against furniture or books.

If possible, film in front of a plain, light-coloured wall to keep the focus on you rather than any background distractions. If your background is busy, you could hang a sheet behind you.

If you're using your phone to record, ensure that the camera is **not** in 'High Efficiency' mode. You can check this in your phone's camera settings. For iPhones, switch to 'Most Compatible' mode.

We can only accept **one** file, so if you record different elements separately, please combine them before uploading.

Lighting

Use a room with natural daylight if possible, ensuring the window is behind your camera, not behind you (otherwise we won't see you). If filming in low light, place a lamp behind the camera to keep yourself well-lit.

Sound

Find a quiet space to avoid background noise. Bathrooms tend to create echoes due to hard surfaces, whereas rooms with soft furnishings (such as a bedroom) help with sound clarity.

Framing

- **Shoot in landscape** (horizontal) so that your self-tape fills the screen - think TV, not TikTok.
- Film one speech in a **long shot**, making certain your full body can be seen with some space above your head.
- The other can be a **mid-shot or close-up**, framing yourself from the waist up, again leaving some space at the top.

Try not to look directly into the camera when performing. Instead, look slightly to the side (e.g. the edge of your phone) as if speaking to another character in your scene. If helpful, have someone stand beside the camera so you can direct your speech to them.

Set up your shot, test a few lines, and watch it back to ensure you're happy with the setup before recording fully.

Although we ask for one of the speeches to be filmed in a long shot – showing your full body with some space above your head and filmed in landscape format, we understand that not all applicants have access to large or ideal filming spaces. If it's not possible to maintain a plain background while capturing the full body within the frame, that's absolutely fine. Please just do your best with the space available to you.

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Self-tape submission

You should submit one **single file** containing the following three elements:

1. Audition speeches and personal statement.
2. A purely physical performance.
3. A creative piece of your own making, possibly responding to one of the given stimuli.

1. A single recording comprising (A) two speeches and (B) your statement

(A) Speeches – Maximum 5 minutes total

- Prepare **two speeches** of no more than 20 lines each, in English, and learnt by heart.
- One speech should be from a play text written in poetic or heightened language (not prose). This could be from Shakespeare, Ancient Greek drama or more contemporary performance writing with heightened language.
- The second speech should contrast with the first - for example, more natural, direct, or every day in style. This could be prose but not necessarily.

At least one piece should be filmed in a **long shot** (full body visible). For the other speech, you may explore different framing (mid shot, close-up), ensuring you remain clearly visible. **Please trust your instinct in interpreting the above.**

Ensure each speech is no longer than 2 minutes 30 seconds.

Before performing, introduce yourself by stating:

- Your name
- The character, play title, and author of each speech

After your speeches, in the same file, please do the following:

(B) Personal Statement – Maximum 2.5 minutes total

In **mid-shot**, tell us:

- About your acting/performance experience so far
- How you created your submitted work and what you might have done differently
- Why you are interested in the MA Theatre Lab course (what compels you to apply)

In addition to the submission of your speeches, we would also like you to create two short pieces of original performance made in whatever space you have available to you. For these submissions, you can be much freer with the technical parameters. However, we are a mainly live performance/theatre course so in the cutting and editing still prioritise the embodied performance and not too many other elements, landscapes, interiors, random images, etc.

MA Theatre Lab is designed to train and support emerging independent actor/performer theatre 'makers', as well as 'interpreters' of more conventional text-based theatre. Graduates will be comfortable in collaborating on both existing play texts and devising unique performance, alike. Either as a solo artist or within an ensemble. Elements 2 and 3 share with us your potential for creating your own work.

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2. Physical Piece (around 2 minutes)

Create a purely physical performance from the following list of verbs. Choose 5 – 6 actions from this list (in no given order and you may repeat them). And remember actions can be both fully physical and/or expressive - in whatever way you wish to define this - and/or more subtle.

In this task, you are not limited to staying in the frame.

As you improvise in creating your repeatable physical performance, let the actions lead you to an

Look outwards // Look inwards // Rise // Reach // Descend // Try to leave // Turn // Scan // Remember something that makes you laugh or cry, but don't do either // Touch // Push // Pull // Move as fast as you can // Move as slow as you can

imaginative engagement. How do the actions develop/choose their own order through improvising?

Suggested **Performance Qualities** - how you might improvise/interpret the actions:

- Play with tempo and/or rhythm – take less or more time with each action.
- Use more or less energy or weight.
- Expand or contract size: bigger or smaller.
- Only do a percentage of the full action.
- Repeat an action.
- Distort an action.
- Use the whole body or only a segment (the hand, head, eyes, feet, etc.).

Most importantly, invite yourself to enjoy the task.

There's no need to tell a story, trust your body to tell something, to reveal something through your exploration. If that looks like a story or feels like you're living a story, so be it! Go through several structures of the verbs above, trying different orders and different performance qualities, see where they take you. Let your imagination kick in through the body. What does this mean? Get into a flow, let yourself play and explore through your body - imagination and the score of verbs we've given you.

And remember you don't have to tell a story, that would be too illustrative! Improvise and create a precise, repeatable sequence you can use to explore your imagination through 'doing'.

Music and Sound in the Original Physical Piece

You are welcome to include music or sound in your original physical piece if you feel it supports your work. There is no requirement for the piece to be performed in silence.

What We Mean by 'Repeatable Physical Performance'

The term 'repeatable physical performance' refers to a piece that has been thoughtfully crafted and can be performed more than once in a consistent way. This means it should not be a purely improvised piece thrown together on the spot. Instead, we're looking for a level of structure, clarity, and intention behind the work.

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3. Creative piece (around 3-4 minutes)

Choose one of the following four **stimuli** as the starting point for a short creative piece.

This can be in **any style** - with or without text, telling a story, sharing an idea, or something more abstract. Consider the impact of your work: **What do you want to convey?** You may perform in the same space as your speeches or somewhere else. Music is optional.

Stimulus 1:

Through a short act of performance express/explore something you've encountered/experienced over the last couple of years.

Remember it's important that when exploring material personal to us that we are mindful of the choices. We have freedom regarding what we explore in creating original work of our own making and, hence, should be mindful of our own needs, boundaries and the impact of the work on others and ourselves.

Stimulus 2:

Read the following short extract of text from and use it as the basis for your piece:

Mirror by Sylvia Plath

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful,
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me,
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles or the moon.
I see her back and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish.

Stimulus 3:

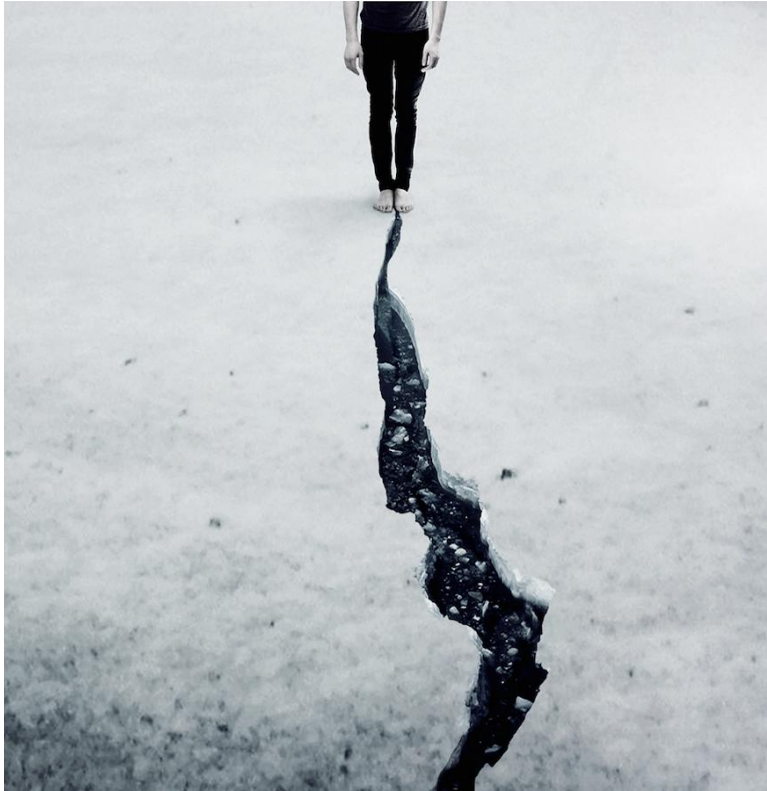
Use the following music as a starting point - **you don't have to dance**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knsUhdvu1HU&list=OLAK5uy_kw8VI7axkUxRAo0i2BFQD7mU4b_lh60pl&index=2

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Stimulus 4:

Use the following image as a stimulus:



Submitting your self-tape audition

- Record your material and then watch back. Notice if you need to change where you move so that you are in the frame when you want to be.
- Have a break then do it again. We recommend that you bear in mind that it is important not to overthink this – we recommend you commit to recording each element a maximum of 3 times.
- When you are happy, submit your file using the link we have provided via e-mail.
- **Upload the 3 submissions in one file only:**
 1. Your speeches and 'About Yourself' statement
 2. Your Physical Piece
 3. Your Creative Piece

Ensure your name is included in the file name.

Before submitting, double-check that you are uploading the correct version.

If you experience any issues with the upload, please contact admissions@rada.ac.uk as soon as possible.