

GSA 2024 APPLICANT GUIDE

Musical Theatre



I. Program Description

At GSA, Musical Theatre students study dancing, acting, and singing with GSA faculty and visiting artists. The Musical Theatre program is designed to provide students with intensive study in stage movement, jazz and tap dance, voice for sung and spoken text, energy work for relaxation and physical awareness, scene study and monologue work, script and character analysis, an overview of musical theatre history, research, and criticism of selected works from the musical theatre lexicon, and audition preparation. Students present a staged performance of solo and ensemble work on the final day of the program.

****[Click here](#) to view the Musical Theatre program photos from GSA 2023****

II. Preliminary Round Application Requirements (due January 14th @ 11:59 p.m. EST/10:59 p.m. CST)

*Submit the materials in this section through the online platform [Accepted](#) no later than **January 14th**.*

NOTE: *Applicants will be prompted to pay a \$35 application fee when submitting their materials (or \$50 if applying in two artforms). Students on free/reduced lunch may opt to have this fee waived when payment is requested.*

For the Preliminary Round, submit the following (see below for more detail):

- a. Two Recommendation Forms
- b. Personal Short Essay
- c. Personal Question Video
- d. Artform-Specific Questions
- e. Monologue & Songs Videos (one monologue, two songs; three total videos)

a. Two Recommendation Forms (do this first!)

Identify two people who will complete recommendation forms in support of your GSA application (*each person will complete the same form separately*):

NOTE: *previous GSA application cycles have required recommendations from a teacher and a school administrator. The recommendation guidelines have changed in recent years to broaden the scope of who may complete these forms. Please review the new guidelines below.*

The recommendation form includes questions about your artistic abilities/potential, how you contribute to your learning environment/community, and your overall fit for GSA. If you can select two recommenders who can speak to your artistic abilities, we encourage you to do so. However, we understand not every applicant will have one or two recommenders who have experienced the student's artistry. In this case, select recommenders who can speak to your character, accountability, and/or work ethic. Recommenders can be teachers (from inside or outside of your school and in any subject), school administrators (i.e., guidance counselor), mentors, or other people involved in your

personal or artistic development such as a coach, youth minister, or staff at an organization for which you volunteer.

You will enter the names and email addresses of each recommender in your online application, and those individuals will receive emails instructing them on how to complete the recommendation form, which will take about five minutes.

Before submitting your recommenders' information, we strongly encourage the following:

1. **Inform them you are applying for GSA and would like to list them as a recommender.** Tell them they will complete a short form via email, and that their responses are confidential (you will not have access to them). Ask if they have any questions about GSA and/or your desire to apply.
2. **Confirm what email address you should list for them;** double check that you have the correct spelling.

Submit your recommenders' information as soon as possible so they have plenty of time to complete the forms prior to January 14th. After you have submitted their information, we strongly encourage the following:

1. **Tell your recommenders to check their email.** The email will come from do-not-reply@getacceptd.com and be titled "Documentation Request from {{your name}} for Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts."
2. **Ask them to confirm with you when they have submitted the form** – and then tell them thank you! If they have not received the form, ask them to check their junk folder and ensure you entered their email address correctly in the application. Contact GSA if you need to correct an email address.

NOTE: Once you submit your recommenders' information, you will have to click back into your profile to access the remainder of the application; *Acceptd* will refer to this next section as **"Application Part 2."**

Additional information about recommendations:

- No letters of recommendation are needed, nor should you submit any. Recommenders simply need to complete the form they receive via email.
- Applicants are not able to review the contents of their recommendations.
- Applicants' parents/immediate family may not fill out their recommendation forms.
- While we encourage you to secure the best recommenders possible within the guidelines listed, know that we rely on your personal application materials (essays, artistic work, etc.) as the

primary tools to assess your fit for GSA. Recommenders have the option to choose “unknown” if they are not aware of the answer to a question, and this will not be held against you as an applicant.

- If you are applying for two artforms and using the same recommender(s), they must complete two forms (one for each artform), even if their answers are identical.

b. Personal Short Essay (250-word max)

Provide an answer to the following question in essay form:

How can/why should the artform you are applying in be of importance to your community or society as a whole? *Provide an answer that is specific to the artform you are applying for.*

- **Be open, honest, and authentic in your response – let us learn something about you.**
- **Upload this essay response as a document file;** type out the question at the top of your response, so the question and answer are both in the document (the question restatement does not count toward the word count limit).
- **When uploading your essay, title the file, “Personal Short Essay.”**

c. Personal Question Video (90-second max)

Provide an answer to the following question in video form:

Why is the artform you are applying in important to you? What are your goals for yourself as an artist in this artform? *Provide an answer that is specific to the artform you are applying for.*

- **Be open, honest, and authentic in your response – let us learn something about you.** While you are encouraged to prepare your thoughts before shooting the video and you may consult notes as you speak, please do not just read off a transcript. We want to get a sense of your personality.
- **Begin your video by stating “Hello, my name is (first/last name).”** Record your answer in an interior space that is free from interruptions, noise, etc. Do not edit or splice the video. You do not need to include an introductory frame or any effects such as fades, etc.
- **Shoot straight on, leaving the camera in one location.** Review the video to ensure you can be seen AND heard. Ensure the video plays all the way to the end.
- **When uploading your Personal Question Video, title the file, "Personal Question Video."**

d. Artform-Specific Questions

Applicants will be asked questions about their specific interests in their artform and their level of access to training/classes/lessons in their artform. Applicants can review the specific questions for their

artform once they have submitted their recommender information. There are no right or wrong answers for these questions, nor are we looking for one profile of a student over another – rather, we ask these questions to understand the applicant in the fullest context possible.

e. Monologue & Song Videos (3 videos; one minute each)

INTRODUCTION

As a reminder, begin all videos by stating, “Hello, my name is *(first/last name)*.” Then clearly state:

- **your monologue** (the character and the title of the play, and the playwright, i.e., “My name is *(first/last name)*, and I will be performing *(character name)*’s monologue from *(play title)* by *(playwright)*”), **OR**
- **your song** (for each song, the title of the song and the show it is from, i.e., “My name is *(first/last name)*, and I will be performing *(song title)* from *(show title)*”).

MONOLOGUE VIDEO (60 SECONDS MAX)

After your introduction, transition into your monologue performance. Your monologue:

- should not exceed 60 seconds (it is okay if your introduction makes the video last a couple of seconds longer than one minute)
- must be memorized
- should be from a scripted contemporary play (no period pieces or Shakespeare, please) and **not a musical theatre work**.
- needs to be suitable for family viewing
- should be from a character relatively close to your age or similar to your life-experience
- is **NOT** a portrayal of a character of middle or advanced age, or a character speaking with a dialect. We suggest you not select a monologue that focuses on a life experience you cannot relate to with honesty.
- should not rely on props, costumes, make-up, or any other technical elements. A simple straight chair can be used if needed but is not recommended
- can portray a character of any gender identity as long as the guidelines above are followed

Avoid using monologues from the following works that are generally considered to be “overdone” in auditions: *Promedy*, *Butterflies Are Free*, *Our Town*, *Quilters*, *Fantasticks*, *The Star-Spangled Girl*, *You’re a Good Man Charlie Brown*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

SONG VIDEOS (TWO VIDEOS, EACH WITH AN INTRODCUTION, A DIFFERENT SONG, AND EACH 60 SECONDS MAX)

After your introduction, transition into your song performance. Perform at least 21 bars of each song, but do not exceed 32 bars; each selection must be a complete musical thought. Long verses or repeated choruses are not recommended.

Your two songs:

- must be memorized
- need to be suitable for family viewing
- should come from musical theatre works
- should **not** be from the same musical
- one must be a ballad and one up-tempo, each from a different era:
 - **One song should come from a contemporary musical, 1970 or later**— e.g. *A Little Night Music*, *Song and Dance*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Secret Garden*, etc. These are just a few examples and not recommendations. Avoid songs from Broadway musicals that have been written/premiered in the past two years (excluding revivals), as these are often overdone.
 - **One song should come from a standard musical, written before 1970s**— e.g. *Guys and Dolls*, *South Pacific*, *Oklahoma*, *Bye, Bye Birdie*, etc. These are just a few examples and not recommendations.
 - It does not matter which era is an up-tempo and which is a ballad.

SONG ACCOMPANIMENT

Record your song videos with live piano accompaniment if possible. If it is not possible to work with a live accompanist, you may use pre-recorded piano accompaniment (no synthesized orchestra tracks), self-accompany, or sing a cappella (without accompaniment), although singing a cappella should be a last resort.

Consider if you can ask a pianist to record an audio track for you to sing along to in your video. If you do not have access to or know an accompanist, ask for suggestions from teachers, houses of worship, arts/culture organizations, or family/friends in your community (or contact GSA and we will try to connect you with an accompanist who can record a track for you). You can also research programs that provide pre-recorded accompaniment, such as ***Appcompanionist*** and ***Acapella Maker***.

Additional Video Requirements

- Record in an interior space that is free from interruptions, background noise, etc.
- Ensure you can be seen and heard as best as possible in the recording. Make sure the volume of the accompaniment does not overpower or obscure the sound of the voice but rather supports it.
- After uploading, ensure that the video image is upright (not sideways), and that the recording plays through to the end.
- In the description text box beneath each video upload, please type out your name, and either (1) the character name/play title for your monologue, or (2) the song title and show it is from (i.e. *"John Smith, Character Name, Play Title"* or *"John Smith, Song Title, Musical it is from"*)

**Videos should not be from performance or competition, i.e., vocal recital, show, forensics competition. **

III. Final Round Requirements

*Some applicants will be invited to participate in the Final Round of GSA Auditions/Reviews, which will consist of the elements described below. All applicants will be notified on February 16th of whether they are invited to the Final Round. **The final round auditions/reviews for Musical Theatre on March 15th and 16th will be in-person at the University of Kentucky.***

The Final Round for Musical Theatre will include:

- a. Pre-Audition Questionnaire
- b. Monologue & Song Performance
- c. Group Audition (Short Movement Exercise & Interview)

a. Pre-Audition Questionnaire (due via *Accepted*)

Applicants who advance to the final round will be forwarded to a new section of their application in *Accepted* (called “**Application Part 3**” in *Accepted*). This new part of the application will include a short questionnaire. This questionnaire may cover a range of topics, including your previous experience in your artform, your favorite artists, and/or your college and career goals. The questionnaire is not a quiz and is not scored, but it is a way for adjudicators to get to know you. The questionnaire may be used to customize questions in your interview.

b. Monologue & Song Performance (in-person on March 15th or 16th)

You will perform the same monologue and adjudicators will select one of the two songs you presented in the Preliminary Round. The adjudicators will ask you to sing a 21 – 32 bar selection of the song they select but may ask to hear part of the other song as well. However, be prepared to sing the complete song if requested. Even though these will be the same selections you performed in the Preliminary Round, please introduce yourself, your monologue, and your songs at the top of the audition.

Song Accompaniment

At the Final Round Audition, an accompanist will be provided.

- You must use the provided accompanist, and you must provide a copy of the music (with clear piano accompaniment and in the correct key) for the accompanist. Pre-recorded accompaniment and accompanying oneself is not allowed.
- All audition music must be two-sided copies, three-hole punched, and placed in a three-ring binder. Make sure that the entire accompaniment is clearly copied to the page and all cuts are clearly marked. Music may be placed in non-glare protective sleeves if you choose. When giving your music to the accompanist at the audition, provide them with direction on your desired tempo, and make them aware of any cuts, added markings, etc. in the music.

Finalists will receive the time/date for their monologue & song performance. This will be sent through Acceptd's messaging system.

c. Group Audition (Short Movement Exercise & Interview)

After performing your monologue and songs you will participate in a group dance audition which will be a short movement exercise. Musical Theatre Finalists will receive a video teaching the choreography for the short movement exercise approximately 10 days before the audition via *Acceptd* messaging. There will also be a short interview with the adjudicators.

*The Musical Theatre Final Round will be recorded for use by the faculty in the final selection process **only** and will not be reproduced for other viewing.*

IV. Criteria

The work of each student will be given an objective review by the adjudicators as to how they fulfill each of the following criteria:

Vocal Health & Range

An ideal candidate sings and talks with flow and control of breath and with relaxed larynx and physical stance. Tone is resonant, balanced, and the voice moves smoothly from register to register.

Connection of Voice & Text

An ideal applicant articulates clearly and changes vocal quality in response to the text, mood, and musical transitions. They utilize these techniques to inform character development, story arc, etc.

Text/Script Analysis and Truthfulness to Character

An ideal applicant performs with an understanding of and commitment to the goal of their character, truthfully demonstrating the arc of the monologue/song. Vocal choices are connected to the use of action/movement, all of which are specific, intentional, and reinforce the character's objective.

Dedication to Artform, Growth, and Community

An ideal applicant demonstrates a commitment to and passion for their artform, as well as a desire and ability to grow as an artist. The applicant can thoughtfully and authentically explain why they want to attend GSA and how they are uniquely qualified to contribute to a robust, diverse community of artists.

Musical Theatre Dance Concepts & Techniques (Final Round only)

An ideal applicant replicates choreography with body alignment and sustains energy. They also express

characterization with their body movement; moving in synchronization with others while demonstrating spatial awareness with physical expressiveness.

V. Tips

These tips are suggestions. They are NOT eligibility requirements for admittance to GSA.

- Choose music that **best highlights the strengths of your voice.**
- When choosing your songs, try to find **songs that provide contrast in rhythm, style, characterization, and approach.**
- Be sure to **understand the context** of your songs. Understand the words and range of emotion needed for the characters of your songs.
- Select a monologue that is age-appropriate from a full-length contemporary play and most importantly, one which **provides you with a sense of connection to the material.**
- Be sure to **read the entire play** (not just your selected monologue) and develop your intellectual understanding of the words, syntax, and meaning of your monologue.
- **Memorize accurately and thoroughly.** Rehearse the monologue and songs until you feel absolutely confident to perform them easily.
- **Develop your physical and facial expressiveness** as a reflection of the character, as well as speaking voice.
- **Pay close attention to the adjudication criteria.** While GSA students are accepted based on their holistic identity as a young artist, the criteria are the foundation of how your materials are being scored.
- **Remember the adjudicators are very excited to see your work and they want you to do well!** We know it takes hard work to submit this application, and that it can be scary to “put yourself out there.” We have faith in you, so put your best foot forward and don’t be afraid to show us the wonderful artist you are. You prove a level of dedication just by submitting your application, and you should be proud of yourself.

VI. Application Timeline/Deadlines

January 14th, 2024 - GSA Application Due

All applicant materials must be submitted via *Accepted* by **11:59 p.m. EST/10:59 p.m. CST**. We encourage you to submit early and not to wait until the last minute, as the application portal runs slowly when many people try to upload at once.

February 16th, 2024 – GSA Finalists Announced

All applicants will be notified of whether they have advanced to the final round of adjudication. Those

who've advanced to the final round will also be given instructions on how to complete "Application Part 3" via *Acceptd*.

March 15th & 16th, 2024 – Final Round Auditions/Reviews

All Finalists will attend an audition/review. Some artforms will hold their auditions & reviews in-person at the University of Kentucky, while others will be held virtually. Friday and Saturday auditions/reviews run from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST.

Friday, April 12th, 2024 – Announcement of GSA 2024 Accepted Students and Alternates

All Finalists will be notified of whether they have been accepted into the summer program. Alternates will also be listed. In addition, accepted students will be sent their assigned summer session.

Sunday, June 9th, 2024, to Saturday, June 29th, 2024 – Session One of GSA Summer Program

- *Design* will be held in Session One only

Sunday, July 7th, 2024, to Saturday, July 27th, 2024 – Session Two of GSA Summer Program

- *Dance* will be held in Session Two only
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For technical support with the application, contact *Acceptd*:

***Acceptd* Email:** support@getacceptd.com

***Acceptd* Phone:** 1(888) 725-2122, *press 2*

For questions about the content and/or requirements of the application, please contact GSA:

GSA Office Hours – Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST

GSA Info Box (Email) – gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org

GSA Helpline (Phone) – (502) 566-5192