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SECTION 2 (PI and MI ASSESSED)

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION ROUTES

Why do you feel formal training in the performing arts is important? Why is understanding formal training routes important to you as a developing practitioner?

In my opinion, formal training in the performing arts is important as it ensures that an actor's skills are developed to a certain standard which is suitable within the industry. This is because the aim of training is to develop the pre-existing skills that a practitioner has in order to turn them into an accomplished performer. This, to me is very important, as formal training allows a practitioner to reach their full potential. Without formal training, a practitioner can have an excess of talent and potential but may not ever reach their full capabilities as they have not been developed in formal training. I also believe that formal training is important as it introduces developing practitioners, such as myself, to the rigorous, intense and competitive nature of the performing arts industry. This is because within the formal training structure the expectations of practitioner's are practically identical to those within the industry as a whole and consequently formal training will provide a practitioner with an experience akin to that of working within the industry. I feel that this is especially important considering the institutions from which prospective students may be coming. I myself am lucky to study at a college where there is a specialised performing arts centre, where the tutors have the ethos of and run the courses like that of a drama school. However, many prospective practitioner's may not be this lucky and could be studying the subject in an institution which is not run in the same way. These practitioners could be overwhelmed if they were to instantly be immersed within the industry. Due to this, I believe the similarities between formal training and the industry itself are crucial to practitioner development as it will allow them to become comfortable within a safer more supportive setting before entering into the industry itself fully prepared. Ultimately in my opinion formal training is the best route for a prospective professional practitioner to enter the performing arts industry. This is supported by the fact that 86% of actors working within the industry received professional training.

Understanding formal training routes is very important to developing practitioners as they are likely to be where we continue our development as performers. This is because, unless we already have an agent and/or are already involved directly within the industry and have regular acting work, the most plausible way for us to enter into performing arts is through formal training. This is why the understanding of it is so important. If we understand the training routes we will be able to make informed decisions about our future. The knowledge will help us pick where we will study, what we will study, what we need to do in order to prepare, what we should expect and how to deal with the training. Ultimately our understanding of formal training routes is essential to our future careers as it will guide the decisions we make and the paths we end up taking which could cause fundamental changes to what our careers will be.

DRAMA AND MUSICAL THEATRE TRAINING, WITH A FOCUS ON OUR LOCAL DRAMA SCHOOL – GUILDFORD SCHOOL OF ACTING.

Complete a brief research analysis of GSA.

- What courses they run, what their audition procedure is like, their teaching hours etc

At GSA, the teaching style is based off of 1 to 1 tuition, with a small staff to student ratio (1:15) allowing staff members to take an active approach in helping practitioners develop and spend more time working with each person individually. This teaching will take place in classes, of which there are four: Dance/Movement, Acting Theory, Stagecraft, and an individual project. The days will usually start with dance which takes up at least 4 hours a week of classes; and three afternoons a week are dedicated to the practitioner's projects. Lessons take place between the hours of 9am and 7pm, with a total of 35 hours a week, plus 10 to 15 hours of proactive work/homework. If a practitioner is late to one of these classes it is down to the teacher's discretion as to whether they are allowed to remain in the class, or even be let in. This fits in with the strict discipline policy at the school with students being dropped from their course if they are late three times with varying warnings at each of the times: the first time they will receive a letter from a senior faculty member and probation for the day (meaning they are not allowed into classes), the second time they receive a final warning and the third time they are out. This policy is designed to help prepare students for the reality of life within the industry where being late can lead to them being fired and losing their job. They are also strict regarding the clothing that students are wearing, with blacks being the only accepted attire for students in lessons.

In terms of courses available to those who study at GSA there are 16, plus extra courses that the school runs outside of their normal alumni. The most common form of course offered by GSA is a BA (Hons) which last 3 years. There are 8 Acting based courses: Foundation Acting, BA (Hons) Acting, BA (Hons) Actor Musician, BA (Hons) Theatre (which is an online conversion course), MA Acting, MA Theatre, MFA Acting, PhD Theatre; 5 Musical Theatre: Foundation MT, BA (Hons) Actor Musician, BA (Hons) Musical Theatre, MA Musical theatre, MFA Musical theatre; 2 Dance: BA (Hons) Dance, PhD Dance and 2 Technical Theatre: BA (Hons) Theatre production, MA Stage and production Management. Outside of these courses, GSA also offer additional courses including evening dance classes, pre-audition training and a summer conservatoire; all of which have limited places but no entry requirements. This is different for the application process for any of the 16 full time courses offered at GSA, which varies subject to subject.

The first thing that a practitioner will have to do is to submit an application form, no matter what course it is that they are applying for. Once this has been received and reviewed by GSA the practitioner will then receive their audition/interview date. The audition cost will vary dependant on what course is being applied for with BA and MA courses having a £55 audition fee and Foundation courses a £45 fee. The material that a practitioner is asked to bring to their audition will vary as well dependant on the course being applied for. All auditions are incredibly competitive with 1 in 15 applicants getting into the school. The breakdown of the auditions process and preparation needed for each course is as follows:

Acting Courses

Foundation = Prepare two monologues (modern and Shakespeare) and take part in a movement and acting workshop. The result will then be received by e-mail.

BA Actor Musician = Prepare one classical speech (preferably Shakespeare), take part in a movement workshop (wear suitable dance wear) and an Instrument/singing workshop (one song and one instrument piece) and complete a short interview.

BA/MA/MFA Acting = Prepare two monologues (classical/pre-1800 & contemporary/post-1950), take part in ensemble workshops with the possibility of a second round of auditions

Musical Theatre Courses

Foundation = Prepare two contrasting songs (pre 1965 legit & contemporary) and two monologues (classical and modern), take part in a dance class and be involved in an interview panel. This audition will last all day.

BA Musical Theatre = Auditions is split into two parts; the first audition is singing (one Musical Theatre song which must be published) and a dance workshop. If a practitioner succeeds in the first audition they will receive information of their second audition via email

MA/MFA Musical Theatre = A dance workshop, a singing audition (Prepare two contrasting songs => one Musical Theatre/not juke box show & one Musical Theatre or pop/rock) and an acting audition (one speech post 1900)

BA Theatre Production

Applicants are interviewed by programme leader or senior faculty member and they have to bring a portfolio if possible and they will get a tour to show the course.

If a practitioner is then accepted into the school they will then experience student life at the University of Surrey. This is because GSA is associated to the University and therefore a lot of student life is the same for GSA practitioners and regular students. The affiliation allows students to receive student loans via UCAS in order to pay their fees for their course (which are also capped at £9,500 in line with other degrees nationwide). This loan however will only cover tuition fees and although there are other grants and loans available through the University of Surrey, most students find a part time job in order to fund their everyday lives. In terms of accommodation, students have a range of choice. They can find some shared accommodation in or around Guildford (i.e. £1,200 per month for 4 students) or they can use the accommodation on the University campus as GSA being affiliated allows the students to access the halls onsite (prices below)

Couples and Family Accommodation - Staff and Students

Rent Band	Type of Property	Location of Property	No council tax included	75% of Council tax included	100% of Council tax included
Studio Flat	Couples Flat	Stag Hill Campus and Manor Park	£231.00	£250.25 (CT £19.25)	£256.85 (CT £24.00)
1 Bed	Couples Flat	Stag Hill Campus and Manor Park	£241.00	£261.30 (CT £20.30)	£268.75 (CT £27.75)
2 Bed	Family Flat/House	Stag Hill Campus, Hazel Farm, Manor Park and Beulienhof House	£300.00	£323.70 (CT £23.70)	£331.55 (CT £31.55)
3 Bed	Family House	Manor Park, Blackwell Farm Cottages, Chalk Pit Farm Cottages, Manor Farm Cottages & Varsity Cottages	£325.00	£350.00 (CT £25.00)	£358.35 (CT £33.35)

Prices above are per property per week, are for stays of more than 20 days, and apply to University of Surrey Students, University of Surrey Salary Payroll Staff and University of Surrey Unbump Staff only.

Family accommodation rents are shown at 3 levels as a charge for Council Tax may be added to the rent. Council Tax charges are dependent on who lives in the flat, see the examples below and our website for more information.

Single Bedrooms - Students Only

Rent Band	Type of Bedroom	Location of Bedroom	Students Only
Shared	Shared Bedrooms	Stag Hill Duplex	£72.00
A	Budget Bedrooms	Hazel Farm - Hamilton Drive	£74.50
B	Standard Single Bedrooms	Hazel Farm - Hamilton Close, Hamilton Place, Oregon Way	£87.00
C	Standard Single Bedrooms	Battersea, Cathedral, Stag Hill, Surrey, Twyford & University Courts	£99.90 to £108.00
D	Ensuite Single Bedrooms	Bellorby, International, Manor Park, Millennium, Twyford & University Court	£148.00 to £157.50
E	Enhanced Ensuite Single Bedrooms	Manor Park & Stag Hill Campus	£183.50 to £189.00
F	Self Contained Studio Flat	Manor Park Blocks MPR & P	£231.00
Stand1	Standard Single Bedroom in a two Bedroom Flat	Stag Hill Campus, Manor Park and Hazel Farm (share bathroom and lounge-kitchen with one other occupant)	£150.00

Prices above are per room per week, are for stays of more than 20 days, and apply to University of Surrey Students only.

When you apply for accommodation your application preferences are by rent band so you are unable to pick a specific court or campus. The price difference between and within the rent bands reflects the difference in facilities at each court.

How does this research make you feel about vocational training? (DI)

This personally makes me feel very positive about vocational training and I think I would respond very well to it. One key aspect of this research which makes me think this is the level of contact hours that a student at GSA will receive (35 hours in class + extra organised rehearsals and/or meetings), This made me realise that I would probably suit vocational training as I respond best to constant and in depth feedback when producing my best work. The low staff to student ratio, and the large amount of time spent with tutors means that practitioners will be able to receive large amounts of feedback on a regular basis. This would help my development hugely as I would constantly be able to refer to and receive feedback in order to develop my performances. Another personal response I had to this research was gladness at the increase in accessibility to vocational courses being provided. When researching GSA, I discovered that it had become affiliated to the University of Surrey which meant that students could receive a plethora of things which were not previously available to them. In terms of accessibility I think the key one is student loans. The student loans are available as due to the university affiliation; GSA applications are now taken through UCAS; meaning that tuition fees are capped at £9,250 and students can apply for and receive student loans in order to cover this. I was very happy to discover this as I feel it makes vocational training more accessible and can help it to escape the stereotype that all the students are middle-class and white. When vocational training institutions are private (as some still are and all of them used to be) students were expected to raise all of their own funds for their training (up to £18,000 p.a.). This meant that drama schools were only available to those who had the financial capability to do this. This is where the stereotype stems from as the majority of those people were white and middle class. Now with the majority of drama schools registered on UCAS, student loans are readily available and vocational training is now accessible to all. This is good, in my opinion, as at these institutions, entry is now almost solely based upon ability and the person themselves and will not be limited by a person's ability to pay the tuition as the student loan can cover this. This overall accessibility will hopefully allow drama schools to outgrow the white middle class students stereotype and become institutions which are viewed as accessible to all.

This research has also reinforced my opinion that vocational training is the best for a practitioner to prepare for entering the performing arts industry. This is not simply because that is the purpose of vocational training. This reinforcement comes from the clear ethos employed within training institutions to prepare their students for the unforgiving nature of the industry. This includes the discipline rules at GSA: 3 strikes and you're out and teacher's discretion regarding lateness. These sorts of rules teach students about what is expected of them within the industry and how ill-discipline will be treated. By following the norms of the industry itself, vocational training institutions prepare students extensively for the nature of the industry in a way academic institutions do not. I believe that those who come out of vocational training will be more likely to hit the ground running and become successful due to this ethos and the fact that the industry's practices will be normal to them.

AUDITIONING AND INTERVIEWING (The Council for Dance Education and Training and the National Council for Drama Training).

Complete a brief research analysis of advice on auditions and interviews

Before auditioning at drama school, a practitioner would need to work out which course it was that they wanted to study. In order to do this, they would have to do research into individual schools which they are interested in and what courses they run. This information can usually be found on a drama school's website and there they would also find all the qualifications that would be required to apply for the course. Additionally, the websites will include the prospectus which will help to outline what it is that they would cover within each of the courses that the institution are offering.

In order to inform this decision, there are multiple things a practitioner is able to do. These include going to watch showcases at schools they are considering to see what type of work is being produced and whether that would suit them; getting involved in short courses run by the school to gain an idea of the style of teaching being provided (i.e. summer courses, evening classes etc.); getting in contact with previous and current students and gaining their personal opinions and experience with the schools; conducting thorough research into the details of the course itself etc. If a practitioner does these things, they will be able to make an informed choice as to which course is best suited for them.

Once they have decided on a course an applicant must then apply for that school. This will either be through UCAS (for drama schools affiliated with universities) or privately (non-affiliated drama schools).

A practitioner should apply for auditions whenever they feel confident in their audition speeches and their ability to perform in the audition. This being said, it is usually advisable for a practitioner to make an application to their favoured institution sooner rather than later within the academic year. This is because each institution will have a different deadline (same for all UCAS but private schools is at their discretion), so a practitioner needs to ensure that their application arrives before then. Additionally, if a practitioner applies earlier they will have a set date for which they can prepare and plan (speeches, travel, accommodation etc.)

Applying for more than one course is useful to a professional practitioner for a few reasons. Firstly, it increases their chance of getting onto a course as they have more chances to succeed with more auditions. On top of this they will receive valuable audition experience which can help them to perform better in future auditions.

When filling out an application form a practitioner must be careful to only include the details requested. This is a consideration as different institutions may ask for different information and if a practitioner is not aware what they must provide, it is likely their application will be turned down as it does not meet the requirements. Things which can be required by Drama schools in

applications include prior education, experience in the industry, personal statement, medical history (including any specific needs the school will need to accommodate) and a photograph (full face shot or follow school guidelines). It is key that a practitioner does not exaggerate their experience as this will not benefit them in any way and may in fact negatively affect their application. This is because the tutors who will examine the application are focused on finding potential for a practitioner to develop. Therefore, they are not looking for a finished product, and consequentially prior experience is not a deciding factor within the success of an application. If the application is not accepted, it is good advice for a practitioner to ask the institution whether they could provide any feedback on how to improve. Although not all schools will do this, if received, this information can be very helpful for improving future applications and increasing the chances of being accepted to another school.

Alternatively, if a practitioner's application is successful they will be notified and will receive a specific audition date from the institution to which they applied. This will include specific details of where they are required to be and when, and what they need to bring with them for the audition. Most schools charge an audition fee for attending an audition which is on average £30 to £50 which must be paid before the audition itself. The cost of travel and accommodation (if required) must also be taken into account regarding an audition as they will affect how the practitioner plans the day and their preparation.

Preparation the day before an audition is key. An important aspect which can be overlooked when preparing for an audition is relaxation the night before. This is because, in order to perform at their best, a practitioner must be calm within the audition. By relaxing and not stressing over the performance the night before; a practitioner increases their chances of doing this in the audition. Another important action is a final rehearsal as this will refresh the knowledge of the performance for the practitioner and will help ensure that their performance feels natural as their rehearsal will have strengthened their muscle memory. A final important aspect is eating healthily the day before, as this will ensure that they are energised on the day of the audition as they physically will have all the chemical requirements they need in order to perform at their best.

Something which a practitioner must think about before an audition is what they need to wear as clothing can affect a performance (add meaning, limit or aid movement etc.). Usual clothing requirements for an audition is neutral clothing which can suit both of your prepared speeches and allow you to move freely. A practitioner may be sent specific guidelines on what they have to wear by the school (dance session = leotard, jazz shoes etc.). It is also advisable that an applicant wears clothes which they find comfortable as they will then be able to fully focus on their performance without worrying about their clothes. A practitioner will also be required to organise their own transport to the audition. It is advisable to plan to arrive at the school for the audition early so as to give oneself time to warm up and familiarise yourself with the school.

Therefore, a practitioner should plan their travel to the audition carefully so as to ensure that you have this time at the start of the day. This planning may include organising accommodation (Youth Hostel Association), researching local taxi companies (SCOOT) etc. Finally, a practitioner should think about what they need to take with them for the day itself. Important things to be taken to an audition include: the play from which your speeches are from (for reference whilst waiting), extra clothing and something to keep yourself engaged (during periods of long waiting), food and drink to keep your energy up as you will be there all day, money for things such as vending machines, buses and trains. As auditions can last all day it is important for a practitioner to keep their energy levels up by eating. The British Nutritional Foundation suggest that heavy meals should not be eaten directly before partaking in exercise. Due to this a practitioner should try to leave a considerable gap (around 2 hours) between eating a meal and their audition. However, in order to maintain energy, they should eat in small amounts regularly throughout the day. Foods which are good in this instance are Fresh fruit and vegetables (these provide varying levels of energy and will supply nutrients) and slow release carbohydrates such as rice and pasta etc. (these will provide a practitioner with a sustained supply of energy over time). Hydration is also key, so a bottle of water is essential. This is because dehydration will cause muscle fatigue, tiredness, Delayed Onset Muscle Soreness and other things which will be detrimental to a practitioner's ability to perform at their highest standard.

During an audition day you are usually given a tour, before your audition, by current students and this can be a useful time in which to ask them questions about life at the school and the course you are applying for.

For the audition practitioners are usually asked to prepare 2 speeches (one modern and one contemporary) which should be between 2 to 3 minutes long. Specific guidelines will vary between schools and a practitioner should ensure to check on the school's website for audition guidelines in order to confirm this. When picking a speech, it is best to avoid books of audition speeches and incredibly popular plays as these will be where many people will look to find their speeches. This is something to be avoided as, due to the competitive nature of the audition process, a practitioner must attempt to stand out by being unique, and if they are performing the same speech as many other people they will be unable to achieve this. After having decided on a speech it is a good idea for a practitioner to read the entirety of the play which it is from. Reading all of the play from which a speech is taken is important for a practitioner as it provides them with context on which to base their character development. Scenes prior to the speech could have shaped the character arc and therefore should be included in the development of the character. Additionally, a practitioner will probably be asked questions by the audition panel regarding their choice of speech and the play so they should be able to respond to this effectively.

A practitioner may also be asked to perform a song in the audition, if applying for a musical theatre course for example, and a practitioner should spend the same amount of time preparing this as they do their speeches. This is because the musical performance can be key to tipping the balance on whether a practitioner is offered a place or not and therefore should receive the same amount of focus. It holds such great influence as it displays a separate set of skills to those demonstrated within the speeches and therefore can show the panel the multiple dimensions which a practitioner has within their skill set and that can be developed.

A few do's and don'ts for an audition are: **DO** visualise you character's environment as this will make your performance more realistic, **DO** make it clear to the panel when you have finished (maybe a pause for a few seconds before relaxing), **DON'T** use direct address and direct the piece to the panel unless told to and **DON'T** bow.

A practitioner should also not attempt accents or dialects within their audition unless they are incredibly confident as they will take away from the performance if not executed perfectly. Additionally, they do not add anything to the performance if not perfect and therefore are best avoided.

AWARENESS OF THE BREADTH OF THE PERFORMING ARTS INDUSTRY

delete the grid that does not apply to you

	Job Title & Outline of role/responsibilities	Example of Employer	Training Route	Skills Required
PERFORMER	Theatre Actor	Royal Shakespeare Company	The website of this company outlines that the route for employment with the company will vary dependant on what is being applied for. There is not a specific training route outlined	During the application process the RSC ask practitioners to describe the skill set they are currently working with and why this makes them eligible for the role they are applying for. However there is also a focus on short and concise answer

(DI ASSESSED)

Based on this research –evaluate what you have learnt, what has surprised you – has this research changed your opinion about working in the performance industry? What can you be doing now to prepare for future auditions and interviews for vocational schools? (no more than one side of A4)

This research has taught a lot about the intricate workings of the audition and hiring processes within the industry. Something I found surprising was the level of preparation that a practitioner should take before an audition. I was already aware that you should conduct prep such as character research and reading the play for context, however I was unaware about the multitude of other things that a practitioner must consider regarding auditions. For example, I did not think that an actor would have to consider to such a large extent the food they consume and their nutritional intake as I thought there would be scheduled breaks in which practitioners could eat and replenish their energy levels. I feel that this may be a weakness of the audition process at many drama schools as although you want to test the performance stamina of prospective students, if they do not have enough available time in which they can replenish their energy this will in itself be counterproductive. How can a drama school expect a practitioner to be working at full intensity all day when they've only had one meal overall? This being said, things like this stress the organisation skills which are required to work within the industry. Practitioners need to meticulously plan their schedule, right down to when and what they are going to eat and therefore need to be very organised. This is something I think I need to work on in order to prepare for a future in the performing arts industry. I personally am quite organised and can organise myself, however I sometimes lack motivation to do this and can end up becoming very disorganised due to this. So that I am prepared for a future in which organisation is key I will need to work on this and begin planning things well in advance to a strict time schedule in order to improve my overall organisational skills. Another specific thing which I need to work on in order to prepare for future auditions and interviews is to read and watch more pieces of professional work. This will benefit my audition and interview process as a.) it will provide me with the possibility of finding new speeches to perform in monologues and provide me with the context of them within the play as a whole b.) it will expand my cultural knowledge of the industry and shows within it and c.) give me something to talk about within interviews and to engage the panel with regarding my favourite and most recent performances. Overall I think this is important for me as well as it can expand my knowledge of writing pieces of work; something that I am interested in and am attempting to do currently. Having a greater knowledge of a range of professional work should benefit me in this process greatly.

Another thing which I am going to do to prepare myself for future applications to vocational schools is to attend and watch showcases by schools I may be interested in. This will help to inform me whether their style of performance would suit me as I will be able to ask myself whether I can see myself performing as their students are. As well as supplying me with greater information with which to make my decisions regarding which school I would like to apply for, having watched showcases is something which can be an interesting source of conversation within an interview and could help to show the interviewer my level of interest in the institution and my commitment to study there.