

THE URTAs

Acting
Directing
Design &
Technology
Stage Management
Arts Leadership

URTA AUDITIONS & INTERVIEWS: GRADUATE SCHOOL CANDIDATE HANDBOOK

2024-2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|-------|
| Welcome | 1-2 |
| Candidate Awards | 3-4 |
| URTA Acting Auditions | 5-12 |
| Guest Auditions | 10-12 |
| Design/Technology Interviews | 13-18 |
| Directing/Stage Management/Arts Leadership Interviews | 19-22 |
| Additional Information & Event Policies | 23-31 |
| Walk-In/Day-of Registrations | 23 |
| After the URTAs | 23 |
| International Candidates | 23 |
| Code of Professional Conduct | 24-25 |
| URTA Interview/Callback Guidelines | 26-27 |
| Offer/Acceptance Policy | 28-29 |
| Applicant/Participant Agreement | 30-31 |

University Resident Theatre Association
1560 Broadway, Suite 1103, New York, NY 10036
212-221-1130
URTA.com ▪ theurtas@urta.com
#theURTAs



WELCOME!

We're delighted that you're taking part in the URТА Auditions & Interviews! The "URTAs" have been helping prospective students find placements in top MFA theatre programs for more than fifty years, and are the most accessible, cost-effective way for theatre artists to pursue graduate training. At the URTAs, you have access to dozens of professional training programs in numerous disciplines. The programs vary widely in vision, approach, and curriculum. If you haven't already begun researching programs, our [Membership Directory](#) and [Guest Catalog](#) are great places to start. Be sure to contact schools directly for the most current information on their various programs and recruiting cycles. Not all schools accept a class in all disciplines every year so please refer to the Attendees list on the [URТА website](#) for the latest list of schools registered to recruit in each discipline and event location/city. This list will be updated as schools register throughout the fall, so check back often.

In this handbook, you will find discipline specific information, recommendations, and policies that will help guide you in your URТА audition and interview journey. This is your one-stop shop for all things URТА, but if there is any information you cannot find, please email us at theurtas@urta.com.

This year, we are excited to continue to offer hybrid events, with both in-person and live-virtual registration options for most disciplines. Please be sure to review the pertinent information based on the event-type you select during registration.

We wish you the very best in this process and look forward to seeing you at the 2025 URTAs!

GENERAL INFORMATION

REGISTRATION & DEADLINES

Registration for the URTAs is through "Acceptd"; a platform that allows you to easily upload files that can be reviewed by the recruiting schools. We highly encourage you to provide as much material as possible (portfolios/work samples, video auditions, websites, statements of purpose/artistic statements, etc.) through Acceptd as many recruiters review these materials in advance of the URTAs with their colleagues. For some disciplines, your Acceptd materials are the ONLY information recruiters use to make their interview requests (please review discipline-specific sections of this handbook for more details). More information on Acceptd, and access to the 2025 URTAs registration for all disciplines can be found at: <https://app.getacceptd.com/urta>.

Once your registration is fully submitted, you will receive an URТА scheduling message through Acceptd letting you know the date of your audition or interview. Candidates are scheduled to attend one day of the URTAs, and your day will be very busy! The URTAs are a full-day commitment, and we recommend that you keep that entire day clear of other appointments to avoid any scheduling conflicts. If you are an actor who has added the Guest Auditions (an optional second-day of in-person auditions attended by non-member acting programs) to your registration, and/or you have applied in more than one discipline (for instance, Acting and Design), you will be scheduled to attend the URTAs on multiple days. Please be sure to read your Acceptd messages carefully so you are properly prepared for each event.

All registrations for the 2025 URTAs are due on Acceptd by **December 27, 2024 at 11:59 pm (Eastern)**. We are unable to accept late registrations. Candidates are encouraged to register early to ensure a spot at the URTAs, increase their exposure to schools, and receive early-bird pricing (before Nov. 24). Review the [URТА website](#) and the URТА registration page on [Acceptd](#) for more details. Though space is limited, we do accept walk-in/same-day registrations at some, but not all, events. Please refer to page 23 in this handbook for information on walk-in registrations.

COMMUNICATIONS

Staying connected with URTA in advance of the event is vital, as URTA shares important event details, updates, and schedules with participants in advance. URTA communicates with candidates through Acceptd messages and via email (at the email address provided in your Acceptd registration). Please be sure to log into Acceptd regularly to check your Acceptd messages and add theurtas@urta.com to your email contacts so that you don't miss important information from us!

WORKSHOPS, INFO SESSIONS, AND SEMINARS

As part of URTA's Continuing Education program, a series of free workshops, info sessions, and seminars are available to candidates at the URTAs. Led by industry professionals, faculty, and URTA staff, there are sessions covering all areas of theatre. Some are hands-on, active workshops, while others are discussion oriented. You can indicate interest in attending these sessions through Acceptd when filling out your URTA registration. Information on specific sessions will be available as they are confirmed. This information will be messaged to candidates and included on the URTA website.

EXPANDING CAREER PATHS

When considering possible careers, it's important to look beyond immediate work on theatrical stages. As the entertainment industry continues to grow, career opportunities also continue to grow. Obtaining an MFA in any specific area can also prepare you for a career outside of traditional theatre. Below, we've listed a few career paths that may help you find varied employment.

- Lighting: Concerts, Museum Exhibits, Master Electrician, Animation, Architectural Lighting
- Scenic: Live Events, Interior Design, Production Manager for Film or Television, Museum Exhibits
- Costume: Fashion Design, Wardrobe Supervisor for Film or Television, Wardrobe Stylist for Print, Museum Conservation
- Sound: Audio Engineer, Installation Audio Designer, Audio System/Equipment Consultant
- Projection/Media: Concert Video Designer, Post-Production Film Editor
- Arts Leadership: Producer, Development Director, Marketing Specialist

EVENT POLICIES

Providing a safe and positive environment for both candidates and recruiters is of the utmost importance to URTA. As such, URTA has established a Code of Professional Conduct, which all URTA participants (candidates and recruiters) must abide by, as well as Interview/Callback Guidelines. The Code of Conduct and the Interview/Callback Guidelines, along with all other URTA event policies, are included in this handbook - please be sure to familiarize yourself with them prior to the event. Persons finding themselves in a situation where they feel their safety is at risk or who become aware of an attendee not in compliance with these policies should contact an URTA staff member as soon as possible. A complaint may also be made at any time prior, during, or after an URTA event via email to theurtas@urta.com, so that the matter can be handled in an expeditious manner. Please also review the Offer/Acceptance policy (included in this handbook) so you are prepared for what to expect after the URTAs end.

CANDIDATE AWARDS

URTA Candidate Awards provide free registration to qualified candidates for the URTA Auditions and Interviews. Full details on URTA's Candidate Awards can be found online at <https://urta.com/awards/>. For the 2025 URTAs, Candidate Awards are offered in several ways:

SOUND DESIGN

Recognizing the important growth in the field of sound design and the goal of introducing graduate study to students with backgrounds outside traditional theater, URTA offers a Candidate Award to all candidates in Sound Design.

ARTS LEADERSHIP

URTA is committed to supporting the education and training of the future leaders of the arts and entertainment industry. For those seeking training in areas including arts administration, theatre management, producing and arts entrepreneurship, URTA offers a Candidate Award to all candidates in Arts Leadership.

KENNEDY CENTER AMERICAN COLLEGE THEATER FESTIVAL

For 50 years, the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival has served as a catalyst in improving the quality of college theater in the United States. KCACTF is a natural partner with URTA and to underscore our overlapping missions, URTA provides Candidate Awards to the following qualified national KCACTF participants from the past two years:

- National Finalists for the Irene Ryan Acting Scholarship
- SDC Directing Initiative Fellows
- National Finalists for Design Excellence (Scenic, Costume, Lighting, Sound, Projection Design)
- National Stage Management Fellows
- ASPIRE Arts Leadership Fellows
- National Finalists for Allied Design and Technology

PAY-IT-FORWARD CANDIDATE AWARDS

Each year, within their Accepted registration, candidates may opt to donate as little as \$1 to the Pay-it-Forward fund, which supports awards for future URTA candidates based on personal hardship and other considerations.

Candidates wishing to apply for a Pay-It-Forward award for the current URTA registration cycle should review the application requirements on our website at urta.com/awards. A limited number of awards are open to eligible candidates who demonstrate need for a registration fee waiver. Candidates should first fully complete their URTA registration on Accepted up to the point of payment, then stop and save. Then, complete the award application form on our website, in which they will submit a short personal essay outlining their need for the support, and why they are seeking a graduate degree at this time, as well as provide a letter of recommendation from a colleague, mentor, employer, or teacher, speaking to the candidate's need and deservedness of the award. These materials must be submitted via the online submission form by November 1, 2024 for review by the URTA Awards committee. After the committee makes their selections, award recipients will be notified of the decisions by November 18, 2024. Recipients will then have three days to redeem their award and submit their URTA registration on Accepted. Those that do not complete their registration in that time will forfeit their award, which will be returned to the Pay-It-Forward award fund for use by future recipients. We are unable to consider any award applications after the Nov. 1 deadline. Previous recipients of the Pay-It-Forward award are not eligible to receive the award again.

URTA EXCELLENCE AWARDS IN UNDERGRADUATE TRAINING

Established to recognize undergraduate instructors, coaches, mentors and their respective institutions for excellence in the training and preparation of undergraduate theatre artists, URTA will recognize one coach/mentor in each discipline annually, and will recognize two overall institutions – one in acting and one in design and technology. Recipients are selected by teams of adjudicators, based on a review of

candidates' materials and preparedness at the URTAs. The two overall institutions each receive a Candidate Award for a student attending the following year's URTA Auditions and Interviews. For more information, visit urta.com/awards.

URTA ACTING AUDITIONS

The URTA Acting Auditions are your opportunity to be seen in front of the URTA Member schools recruiting in 2025. A full list of these schools can be found on our [website](#) and the Attendees list will be updated as schools register throughout the fall, so check back often.

REGISTRATION

For the 2025 URTAs, actors have the option to register for one of the following events:

- Philadelphia, PA: Jan. 10-12, 2025
 - In-Person Auditions at Sonesta Philadelphia Rittenhouse Square
- Fullerton, CA: Jan 18 & 19, 2025
 - Hybrid Auditions: candidates in-person at California State University, Fullerton (“CSU Fullerton”); recruiters remote (live-online)
- Chicago, IL: Jan. 26-29, 2025
 - In-Person Auditions at Palmer House Hilton
- Virtual Auditions: Feb. 2, 2025
 - Live-Virtual Auditions: candidates and recruiters remote (live-online)

An actor must select and submit the registration for their chosen event type/location on [Acceptd](#). A candidate may only register for one 2025 URTA recruiting event in a discipline (for example – an actor may NOT register to audition at both the in-person and live-virtual URTA Acting auditions).

- Uploading Documents
 - When completing your registration, you will be asked to upload documents such as your resume, headshot, and portfolio materials. Follow the simple directions in Acceptd to upload your files.
 - Candidates will be asked to upload creative materials in the second stage of the Acceptd registration. This allows you more time to prepare your materials, but please pay attention to the instructions and deadlines in Acceptd, as you will not be scheduled until all uploads and stages of your URTA registration have been submitted.
 - You may also upload additional materials on Acceptd that you feel may help the recruiters get to know you, such as a recording of you doing movement work, a personal/artistic statement, a letter of recommendation, or materials showcasing other talents.
 - We strongly encourage all candidates to provide a way to access examples of their work online, whether through a website, or digital platform such as Instagram, Pinterest, etc., or by uploading ‘additional media files’ directly within your Acceptd application.
- Pre-Recorded Auditions
 - Uploading a self-taped audition to Acceptd is optional, but we strongly encourage you to upload a 2-minute audition, which can be the same or different from your in-person audition. This material will be accessed by recruiters both before and after the URTAs.

PREPARING YOUR AUDITION

We encourage acting candidates to work with a coach on their audition to provide an objective eye. They can be invaluable in helping you select your material and making sure you have a solid understanding of your character’s given circumstances, intentions, and relationships. Perform your audition for faculty members or fellow students, both for critical feedback and for practice auditioning for an audience.

- You will have two (2) minutes for your URTA audition. You may do whatever you wish in the 2-minute time, but most recruiters prefer to see two (2) contrasting monologues. The pieces do not have to be of equal length. A typical choice is a contemporary piece paired with a piece in verse. However, contrast can be demonstrated in other ways as well. Look for selections with contrasts in mood, rhythm, emotional level, etc. Be aware that if you don’t perform a classical piece in your

audition, you may be asked for one at a callback interview, so it's a good idea to have one prepared.

- Don't focus your performance directly to any of the recruiters. For in-person auditions, play toward an empty seat in the audience, to the back of the room, or above the audience. For virtual or hybrid, direct your performance as if the camera is the other character to whom you are speaking. For all auditions, avoid placing your imaginary scene partner on the floor or far off-stage to either side, as both can obscure your face from the audience.
- For in-person auditions, stage your audition simply. You should be able to perform your audition in the limited area available. Stage yourself $\frac{3}{4}$ to full front, as recruiters wish to see your facial expressions. A chair will be available if needed. Please don't bring any other props or costumes.
- For live-virtual auditions, set up your space well in advance of your audition. You want to be sure you know where your camera will be, where you will stand (set a mark for yourself), what your sound will be like, etc. Since the camera is at a fixed point, you will want to avoid extraneous movements, which may take you out of frame. You should arrange the camera to frame approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of your body (roughly, knees up). Please avoid the use of props or costumes. Test out your virtual set-up in advance, perhaps Zoom with a trusted friend, so they can advise on your framing and sound quality. It's wise to brush up on any extra material you have in your audition repertoire, as some schools will give you the opportunity to present additional pieces during a callback.
- Prepare your Slate. A "slate" is your introduction; telling the recruiters your name and what piece(s) you'll be performing. This slate is not part of your two-minutes. You will slate when you enter the audition space, either in-person or virtually. If you provide a pre-recorded audition, you should introduce yourself and your pieces as the beginning of the recording.

Audition Material Selection

Poor selection of material is one of the most common pitfalls in an audition. Selections should be self-explanatory with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Also, be sure to select pieces that are active—where you need something from the person you are speaking to.

Avoid:

- Pieces that require extreme climactic depth or intensity of emotion, or dull, passive pieces which dwell on character or plot exposition.
- Pieces that do not connect to the person you are speaking with, or are inactive.
- Offensive material. Your choice of material says something about you as an artist, so be sure to put a good deal of thought into your selections, as offensive material may work against you.

Audition Tips from Recruiters

- Don't rush moments of transition. The way in which you "shift gears" from one part of the audition to the next is important. If you ignore these moments, the audition tends to blur into 2 general minutes of non-specific performing. Transitions also give you a chance to catch your breath and stay grounded during your audition.
- Don't be thrown or concerned by a lack of response from the recruiters. They tend to remain neutral or slightly detached during auditions to maintain their objectivity.

Recruiters know there is no way to demonstrate all your talent, skill, and experience in a single 2-minute audition. This is simply a brief introduction to your talent, personality and basic performance skills. Most of the recruiters are actors themselves, and have been in your shoes. They appreciate how restricted and intense auditioning can be. Above all, they are on your side and are rooting for you.

DAY-OF INFORMATION (URTAs)

This is to give you an idea of how the URTA audition day runs (Guest auditions differ). Times are subject to change - complete daily schedules will be shared in your Accepted scheduling message(s).

The URTAs are a full-day commitment. The day will begin at approximately 8:00 am (local time) for in-person and hybrid auditions, and approximately 10:00 am (Eastern Time) for live-virtual auditions. Exact arrival times will be included in your scheduling message on Accepted. In all cases, your day begins with a mandatory orientation and will run until the end of your last callback, which may be late in the evening. Please do not schedule any other appointments or book travel on the day of your URTA Auditions, to avoid potential conflicts.

- Top of Day – Check-In and Mandatory Orientation

- All candidates will check-in with URTA staff upon arrival in the morning, and will be directed to their holding room for orientation.
- During the mandatory orientation, you will meet your stage manager, learn how the day will run, receive any important updates, and be able to ask questions you may have.
- After orientation, you may step away - you will not need to stay in the holding room all day, however candidates must return to the holding room and be ready to go at least 40 minutes before their scheduled audition time, as we often run ahead of schedule.

- Audition Space

- For the in-person and hybrid auditions, there will be a brief time in the morning during candidate check-in and before orientation for candidates to preview the audition space, test the acoustics, and walk the stage.
 - The space will typically be in a hotel ballroom with a small riser/platform for a stage.
 - There will be a chair available upstage for your use if you need, and we ask that you return the chair upstage after you finish your audition.
 - For the hybrid auditions, URTA will provide the camera and technology set-up to live-stream the candidates' auditions.
- For live-virtual auditions, additional instructions will be sent to registered candidates in the weeks prior to the URTAs regarding how to enter and navigate the virtual Accepted AuditionRoom, as well as tips for setting up your audition space.
 - It is important to consider both sound and lighting, as well as ensuring you have ample space to perform comfortably.
 - Please avoid the use of props, scenery, and costumes in your audition. The focus of your audition should be on you, and your audition space contributes to that focus.
 - A simple chair should be the only prop/piece of scenery utilized in your audition if necessary.
 - If you will be using a phone for the live-virtual audition, please double check the positioning of your device to ensure the view does not toggle between portrait and landscape during your audition.

- The Audition

- When it is your time to audition, the stage manager will announce your name to the recruiters as you enter the audition room. When you step on stage, you should also introduce yourself (Slate) – stating your name, as well as the piece or pieces you will be presenting. If you are presenting more than one (1) piece, you should introduce both pieces during your initial slate/introduction. Ex: "Hello, my name is [insert name]. My first piece is [character name] from [play title], and my second piece is [character name] from [play title]."
- You have 2 minutes for your audition. The timing of your audition starts when you begin your first piece (it does not include your slate/introduction). For example, if your piece involves movement or activity before the first line, the timing will start as you begin to act (whether speaking or not). Please note: the time does not stop between your pieces.
- When you've finished your audition, you may say "Thank you" to the recruiters and leave the audition room. If your audition runs over the 2-minute time, the person timing the

audition will offer a polite but firm "Thank you" to let you know you've reached the end of your allotted time. Please respond, by acknowledging the timer with a "thank you" and exit the audition room.

- Keep in mind that none of the URTA acting programs currently recruit for musical theater. However, you may choose to sing within your 2-minute audition. If you choose to sing, we recommend you bring a battery-operated device (or smart phone, etc.) ready for accompaniment, cued up and with the volume set. Alternatively, you may choose to sing acapella or bring an acoustic instrument for accompaniment. Please note that electrical cords are not permitted, and your two-minute audition time will not be paused while you set-up a device or tune an instrument. If you choose to sing within your two-minutes, you should enter the audition space prepared to make that transition smoothly.
 - For live-virtual auditions, please be aware of your Zoom volume settings and environment setting as they could disrupt the audio on Zoom. Cue up your selection and set the volume before entering the audition room. If the device fails, please don't take time to fuss with it. Simply say "thank you" and conclude.
- After the Audition
 - After you've auditioned, you're free to leave the holding room, but please be sure you know when/where you need to be to receive callback information.
 - In this downtime, we encourage you to prepare for your possible callbacks and research the recruiting programs using [URTA Directory](#), and check out the various information sessions and continuing education workshops that may be available.
 - Please be sure you are back promptly at the scheduled time/place to receive your callback interview schedule, as callbacks will begin immediately following the schedule distribution.
 - Your day at the URTA Auditions ends after your last scheduled callback is complete.
 - Be sure to have copies of your headshot and resume available, should you need them for your afternoon callbacks. We recommend bringing 15-20 copies for your URTA audition (if you will be doing Guest auditions, you should double this number). While you may not need all of these, on-site printing at hotels can be expensive and the quality uncertain, so having extra is recommended.
- For actors attending the Hybrid auditions at CSU Fullerton:
 - Candidates will audition in-person in front of a camera live-streaming their audition to recruiters who are remote, off-site.
 - There will be NO on-site/in-person callbacks at CSU Fullerton. However, URTA member programs will have the option to conduct Zoom callbacks on the same afternoon/evening of your URTA Audition. You CANNOT do your Zoom callbacks on-site at CSU Fullerton, and we understand travel to your home/accommodations may make it impossible for you to participate in same-day Zoom callbacks. If you are NOT available for same-day Zoom callbacks, schools will request "Contact Later" appointments with you, and your callback will take place at a later date, which you will arrange directly with the school recruiter.
 - ALL Guest (non-member) schools will conduct "Contact Later" callbacks only. There will be NO same-day Guest callbacks during the Hybrid URTAs at CSU Fullerton.
 - Within the CSU Fullerton URTA Acting application on Acceptd, you will have the opportunity to indicate if you will be available to participate in same-day Zoom callbacks with URTA members or not. Please only answer "Yes" you are available if you will be able to be somewhere quiet and with a stable internet connection in order to participate in Zoom callbacks within 2 hours of the auditions ending, and you will be available for the full evening.
- For actors attending the Live-Virtual auditions:
 - Participants in the live-virtual URTAs Auditions & Interviews will need to have access to a stable internet connection and a device with video and audio capabilities on the day they are scheduled for the live-virtual URTAs.
 - Virtual auditions will take place live in Acceptd's AuditionRoom – essentially this is a Zoom

meeting connected to the Acceptd platform. Recruiters from both the URTA member schools and Guest (non-member) schools will be in the Zoom watching your audition live, online. Information on how to access AuditionRoom will be provided in your Acceptd scheduling message.

- URTA member schools may conduct callback via Zoom on the same evening of the virtual auditions. Guest (non-member) schools will only request “contact later” appointments with you, which you will schedule at a later date directly with the school.
- Participants will be required to download and utilize a variety of free virtual event technologies and communication systems, including but not limited to, Zoom, Acceptd (application system) and AuditionRoom (virtual auditions) – more information will be provided to participants on where/how to access and make use of these technologies for the event. Those with questions or concerns should email URTA at theurtas@urta.com.

PREPARING FOR A CALLBACK INTERVIEW

- Research the various programs in advance of the URTAs, using the URTA Membership Directory and list of recruiting schools at the 2025 URTAs found on our [website](#). If you’re also participating in the Guest Auditions in Philadelphia or Chicago, refer to the [URTA Guest Catalog](#) and our website for information on the programs recruiting. Guest Auditions are combined with the URTAs at the hybrid and virtual auditions, so candidates attending these events should refer to our website for the list of all programs recruiting. Don’t wait until the interview to find out what type of training each program offers. Take initiative and do your research in advance so you can make the most of your time during your callback interview.
- Callback interviews are 15 minutes, so be prepared and on time! Your callback schedule is computer generated by URTA based on the recruiters’ request lists and cannot be changed. Every callback interview is different. Some recruiters want to find out more about you, some want to discuss their programs, while others may work with you on one of your pieces, or ask if you have any other pieces to share. Callbacks may be done individually, in pairs, or in groups. Callback room locations or Zoom access instructions will be included on your schedule.
- Recruiters are not only interested in your talent or potential, but in who you are as a person. Remember that you should be interviewing them as much as they are you. Be prepared to answer specific questions regarding your training needs and career goals. Most importantly, be yourself.

TIPS FOR VIDEO AUDITIONS

Some things to keep in mind, both for self-taping an audition for upload, and for the live-virtual auditions:

- Your recording device should be on a firm and steady surface. Use a tripod or simply place it on a stable surface at the correct height for your face to be seen straight-on.
- Consider your space. What’s in the background? Try to avoid including anything in the frame which might distract from your performance.
- Lighting. Is there enough light for you to be seen? You should be well lit without casting large shadows on your face or body.
- Sound. Can you be heard and understood? If your piece calls for loud shouting, take that into consideration when placing your camera or microphone.
- Is your face in focus? For the live-virtual audition, you should arrange your camera to capture about $\frac{3}{4}$ of your body (knees up). For your pre-recorded audition, it’s ideal to include a “slate” which shows your full body, while your actual audition may be framed closer (from about waist up).

AFTER THE URTA AUDITIONS

What happens next? Be sure to read URTA’s Offer and Acceptance Policy provided in this handbook, but keep in mind that every school has different procedures. After your callback or interview, a school may reach out to you with next steps or you may need to reach out to them. It’s up to you to make sure you understand these next steps – and it’s a great question to ask in your callback or interview!

GUEST AUDITIONS

The Guest Auditions (formerly called Satellite Auditions) are acting auditions attended by training programs that are not currently URTA members. Guest programs range from MFA programs to MA programs to conservatories/certificate programs, giving you the opportunity to expand the number of programs seeing your audition and diversify the types of continued training programs you may consider. Guest programs recruit together with URTA programs at the virtual and hybrid auditions. While in Philadelphia and Chicago, Guest Auditions are an optional second day of auditions that candidates may add to their registration in Acceptd. If a candidate adds Guest Auditions in Philadelphia or Chicago, they will be scheduled for a separate second day of auditions, typically the day before or after their URTA audition. Guest Auditions will run very similarly to the URTA Auditions, with the primary difference being the way callbacks are scheduled.

The same rules governing the URTAs, like the Code of Conduct and the Offer/Acceptance Policy (both found in this Handbook) govern the Guest Auditions. Please be sure you are familiar with these policies prior to the event.

REGISTRATION

For the 2025 URTAs, actors have the option to register for one of the following events:

- Philadelphia, PA: Jan. 10-12, 2025
 - In-Person Auditions
 - Guest Auditions may be added to registration (optional second-day of auditions)
 - Fullerton, CA: Jan 18 & 19, 2025
 - Hybrid Auditions: candidates in-person at California State University, Fullerton (“CSU Fullerton”); recruiters remote (live-online)
 - Guest Auditions are combined in the URTA Audition, no separate registration or second-day required
 - Chicago, IL: Jan. 26-29, 2025
 - In-Person Auditions
 - Guest Auditions may be added to registration (optional second-day of auditions)
 - Virtual Auditions: Feb. 2, 2025
 - Live-Virtual Auditions: candidates and recruiters remote (live-online)
 - Guest Auditions are combined in the URTA Audition, no separate registration or second-day required
-
- Please review the Attendees list on the URTA website to see which programs (URTAs & Guests) are registered to recruit in each event/city.
 - Candidates registered for Guest Auditions in either Philadelphia or Chicago will receive two (2) scheduling messages through Acceptd, one with the date and time for your URTA Audition and one for your Guest Audition; please be sure to take note of which audition is on which day so that you are properly prepared.
 - Candidates participating in the hybrid URTA auditions at CSU Fullerton or the Live-Virtual URTA auditions will automatically be seen by both the URTA and Guest programs registered to recruit at those events - no additional Guest registration or second day of auditions is necessary. Guest programs recruiting at the Hybrid and Live-Virtual URTA auditions will NOT hold callbacks on the day of auditions. All Guest programs at these auditions will share ‘contact-later’ lists, which will contain the names of candidates they are interested in meeting with virtually on a later date.

DAY-OF INFORMATION (Guests – Philadelphia & Chicago)

This is to give you an idea of how the Guest audition day runs (URTA auditions differ). Times are subject to change - complete daily schedules will be shared in your Acceptd scheduling message(s).

The Guest Auditions are a full-day commitment and cannot take place on the same day as your URTA Audition. The day will begin at approximately 8:30 am (local time) for in-person auditions in Philadelphia and Chicago. Exact arrival times will be included in your scheduling message on Accepted. Your day begins with a mandatory orientation and will run until the end of your last callback, which may be late in the evening. Please do not schedule any other appointments or book travel on the day of your Guest Auditions, to avoid potential conflicts.

- Top of Day – Check-In and Mandatory Orientation
 - All candidates will check-in with URTA staff upon arrival in the morning, and will be directed to their holding room for orientation.
 - During the mandatory orientation, you will meet your stage manager, learn how the day will run, receive any important updates, and be able to ask questions you may have.
 - After orientation, you may step away - you will not need to stay in the holding room all day, however candidates must return to the holding room and be ready to go at least 40 minutes before their scheduled audition time, as we often run ahead of schedule.
- Audition Space
 - For the in-person Guest auditions, there will be a brief time in the morning during candidate check-in and before orientation for candidates to preview the audition space, test the acoustics, and walk the stage.
 - The space will typically be in a hotel ballroom with a small riser/platform for a stage.
 - There will be a chair available upstage for your use if you need, and we ask that you return the chair upstage after you finish your audition.
- The Audition
 - The Guest Audition works the same as the URTA Audition: when it is your turn to audition, the stage manager will announce your name to the recruiters as you enter the audition room. When you step on stage, you should also introduce yourself (Slate) – stating your name, as well as the piece or pieces you will be presenting.
 - You have 2 minutes for your audition. The timing of your audition starts when you begin your first piece (it does not include your slate/introduction). For example, if your piece involves movement or activity before the first line, the timing will start as you begin to act (whether speaking or not). Please note: the time does not stop between your pieces.
 - When you've finished your audition, you may say "Thank you" to the recruiters and leave the audition room. If your audition runs over the 2-minute time, the person timing the audition will offer a polite but firm "Thank you" to let you know you've reached the end of your allotted time. Please respond, by acknowledging the timer with a "thank you" and exit the audition room.
 - You may present the same two-minute audition material as the URTA auditions, as the recruiters in the room will all be different.
- After the Audition
 - After you have auditioned, you are free to leave the holding room, but please be sure you know when/where you need to be to receive callback information. In this downtime, we encourage you to prepare for your possible callbacks and research the recruiting programs using the [Guest Catalog](#), and check out the various information sessions and continuing education workshops that may be available.
 - Please be sure you are back promptly at the scheduled time to view the callback lists.
 - If a program requests to see you, you will sign up for an appointment time to meet them later that day. You manage your afternoon callback schedule, which is different than the URTA's. Specifics on sign-up details and callback locations/access will be provided during the mandatory orientation on the day of the event.
 - Be sure to have copies of your headshot and resume available, should you need them for your afternoon callbacks. We recommend bringing 20-25 copies for your Guest audition. While you may not need all of these, on-site printing at hotels can be expensive and the

- quality uncertain, so having extra is recommended.
- Your day at the Guest Auditions ends after your last scheduled callback ends.

DAY-OF INFORMATION (Guests – CSU Fullerton & Live-Virtual)

As a reminder, there are NO separate Guest Auditions at the hybrid auditions in CSU Fullerton or at the Live-Virtual auditions. Guest programs recruiting at these events will attend the URTA auditions (see the URTA Auditions section above for ‘Day-Of Information’ and other details).

When Guest Auditions are combined with the URTAs at the hybrid and live-virtual auditions, there will be NO same-day Guest callbacks. Guest programs will submit a “contact-later” list that will indicate which candidates they would like to speak with at a later date. These “contact-later” lists will be posted online for candidates to view and reach out to the programs directly to set a time to speak on a later date.

AFTER THE GUEST AUDITIONS

What happens next? Be sure to read URTA’s Offer and Acceptance Policy provided in this handbook, but keep in mind that every school has different procedures. After your callback or interview, a school may reach out to you with next steps or you may need to reach out to them. It’s up to you to make sure you understand these next steps – and it’s a great question to ask in your callback or interview!

DESIGN/TECHNOLOGY INTERVIEWS

The URTAs provide you the opportunity to share your work with all of the recruiting programs in attendance in a single registration. Candidates can register for the following Design/Tech focuses: Costumes, Lighting, Projection/Media, Props, Scenic, Sound, and Technical Direction.

REGISTRATION

For the 2025 URTAs, candidates have the option to register in-person in Chicago OR online at the live-virtual interviews. Candidates may NOT register to attend both-in person and live-virtual Design/Tech interviews. Please note: not all focus areas recruit on all days, see the schedule below.

- Design/Tech (Virtual) : Jan. 15, 2025
 - Live-Virtual Interviews: candidates and recruiters remote (live-online)
 - ALL Focus areas: Costumes, Lighting, Projection/Media, Props, Scenic, Sound, and Technical Direction.
- Design/Tech (Chicago, IL): Jan. 24 & 25, 2025
 - In-Person Interviews at Palmer House Hilton
 - Jan. 24 focus areas: Costume, Lighting, Projection/Media, Scenic
 - Jan. 25 focus areas: Costume, Lighting, Props, Scenic, Technical Direction
 - Note: there is NO sound recruiting in Chicago. Sound recruiting takes place on the Virtual day only.

A Design/Tech candidate must select and submit the application for their chosen event type/location on [Acceptd](#). Focus on your strengths. Don't register for an area of design in which you are not seriously interested. You may register in a maximum of two (2) design focus areas.

- Uploading Documents
 - When completing your registration, you will be asked to upload documents such as your resume, headshot, and portfolio materials. Follow the simple directions in Acceptd to upload your files.
 - You MUST upload digital portfolio materials and/or provide a link to materials on the internet, in your Acceptd application. This is incredibly important, as recruiters will be reviewing your digital portfolio materials in advance to create their interview requests.
 - Candidates will be asked to upload materials in the second stage of the Acceptd registration. This allows you more time to prepare your materials, but please pay attention to the instructions and deadlines in Acceptd, as you will not be scheduled until all required uploads and stages of your URTA registration are submitted.
 - In addition to the required digital portfolio, you may also upload additional/optional materials on Acceptd that you feel may help the recruiters get to know you, such as a personal/artistic statement, a letter of recommendation, or materials showcasing other artistic talents.

PREPARING YOUR PORTFOLIO

Be selective in preparing your portfolio materials; recruiters are looking for quality, not quantity. Portfolios should include the best examples of your work and design capabilities. It is important to include both your process, as well as the final product. Recruiters want to see your skills & abilities in design more than they want to see how well you can set up a nice portfolio display.

- Portfolio materials should be clean and presented to their best advantage (e.g., matted, mounted for in-person display). Practice set-up and organization of your display table before you attend in-person. While it is not necessary to bring three-dimensional objects, a well-built set model, costume, prop or related craft work is always an asset.
- Identify work as a class project or realized production with title, producer (organization or class), and date. Include documentation of your process work as well. Recruiters are interested in getting to know your whole process, not just the final product.

- Document the evolution of a complex technical project through a series of photographs. Use photos that are not repetitive and show your work clearly. At least one full stage shot of a setting and full figure shots of characters in costume are expected. We suggest not using photos of productions on which you served as "assistant designer." You may take credit as "assistant designer" on your resume, or provide applicable paperwork (drafting, lighting plot, etc.).
- It is a good idea to have examples of non-theater work reflecting your taste and abilities (e.g., graphic arts projects, life drawings, photography).
- Have copies of your resume and unofficial transcripts ready during the interviews, in case you are asked to share them. For live-virtual participants, be ready to screen-share or email these if requested.

PREPARING FOR THE URTA INTERVIEWS

- Once we have received your full registration on Acceptd (stages 1 and 2), you will be sent a scheduling message through Acceptd with your date to attend the URTAs, your station number, and other essential information for the URTAs. You will be scheduled to attend the URTAs on one day only.
- All design/tech interviews will be pre-scheduled based on the recruiters' review of the material you upload in Acceptd, so your digital portfolio in Acceptd is extremely important.
- Interviews at the URTAs are 15 minutes, so be prepared! Every interview is conducted differently, but all recruiters want to find out more about you, discuss their programs, and review and discuss your work. Recruiters are not only interested in your talent or potential, but in who you are as a person. Remember that you should be interviewing them as much as they are you. Be prepared to answer specific questions regarding your training needs and career goals. Most importantly, be yourself.
- Use the [URTA Membership Directory](#) to research which institutions have applicable programs, and in what years they recruit. Refer to the Attendees list on our [website](#) to see which programs are registered to recruit at the 2025 URTAs. Contact the programs directly for additional information about their recruiting cycle, since they do not recruit for all disciplines every year. Don't wait until the interview to find out what type of training each program offers. Take initiative and do your research in advance to make the most of your 15-minute interview time.
- Once your full registration is received on Acceptd, recruiter will begin reviewing your materials. Some recruiters may reach out to you in advance to start pre-conversations or ask to see additional work/materials. While recruiters may reach out to you directly, you are also strongly encourage to research the specific programs that will be recruiting at the URTAs and reach out to them directly yourself with any questions or to introduce yourself and express your interest in their program. Starting correspondence with programs in advance of the URTAs is a great way for you to learn more about the program, connect with recruiters, and gauge if the program is a good fit for you, and will help you make the most of your interviews.

DAY-OF INFORMATION (CHICAGO)

This is to give you an idea of how the URTA Design/Tech day runs. Times are subject to change - complete daily schedules will be shared in your Acceptd scheduling message.

The URTAs are a full-day commitment. The day will begin at approximately 7:00 am (Central Time) for in-person interviews in Chicago. The day will begin with a mandatory candidate orientation and will run until the end of your last interview, which may be late in the evening. Please do not set any other appointments or book travel on the day of your URTA interviews, to avoid potential conflicts.

- Top of Day – Check-In and Mandatory Orientation
 - All candidates will check-in with URTA staff upon arrival in the morning, and will be directed to the design hall for mandatory candidate orientation.
 - During the mandatory candidate orientation, you will learn how the day will run, receive

any important updates, and be able to ask any questions you may have.

- Station Set up and Recruiter Walk-Through

- After orientation, you will have an hour to set up your station, after which the recruiters will be given time to do a final walk-through of the design hall and they may add interviews to your existing schedule. During that walk-through, candidates will exit the hall and attend an informational session.
- Each in-person design/tech station consists of:
 - One (1) table approximately 6' long x 30" wide (precise dimensions may vary)
 - Your entire display must be contained on the table, and if necessary, on the floor space immediately surrounding the table. There will NOT be a wall behind your table.
 - Candidates may utilize their own free-standing display boards if desired, but you are responsible for set up and removal.
 - Two (2) chairs.
 - Your display should be set up facing the chairs so recruiters can sit and look at your work.
 - Power is available, but multiple stations will be sharing power, so candidates should pack their own extension cords to ensure they can reach the shared power source.
 - You should bring any additional materials for constructing your portfolio display including tape, screwdriver, pins, etc.
 - There will NOT be Wi-Fi available in the design hall, so be sure to have any digital displays downloaded to your device and set up to run automatically on repeat.
 - If there are sound elements to any digital displays, be sure to have headphones set-up (candidates may not play sound aloud in the space).
- You may bring someone to assist in setting up your design hall station, but all candidates and set-up assistants must leave the design hall prior to the recruiter walk-through.
- You should have approximately 40 copies of your resume on your table.

- Interviews

- Candidates will receive a copy of their personal Chicago interview schedule via email (to the email listed in their Accepted registration) by January 18, 2025.
- All interviews will occur on the single day that you are scheduled to attend the URTAs
- Each interview is 15 minutes long, and will take place at the candidate's portfolio station, with recruiters rotating from station to station at their scheduled times.
- Candidates should be prepared to present and discuss their portfolio materials during the interview if requested, and should be prepared with questions for the specific programs.
- Once your last scheduled interview ends, you are done for the day. Quietly pack your portfolio display materials, clean the area around your table, leaving only your station number.
- Note: recruiters may write-in additional interviews into your schedule during their morning walk-through in Chicago, so your day may run longer than originally indicated on your interview schedule.
- Reminder: not all focus areas recruit on all days in Chicago (please refer to the Registration section at the beginning of this Design/Technology portion of the handbook). Recruiters will only be in attendance on the days that their specific focus area(s) are recruiting, so if you are unavailable on the specific day that your focus area is recruiting, please consider registering for the Live-Virtual Design/Tech event instead. If you have questions, please email theurtas@urta.com.
- Your day at the URTAs can be a very long one. There will be breaks within the schedule, but please be sure you have water, a snack, and a way to take notes during/after the interviews.
- Please be sure you are on time for all of your appointments, as you will not be able to go longer than the scheduled end time of the interview if you are late.

- Interviews will be done individually, meaning you will be the only candidate in your interview. However, candidates should be aware that many programs choose to interview in recruiting teams, so do not be surprised if there are multiple faculty members from the same school in your interview. This is particularly important for candidates applying in more than one design focus area, as a school can only interview you once during the URTAs. If you applied in both scenic and lighting design, for example, the recruiters from both of those areas will be interviewing you at the same time.
- There may be downtime between your scheduled interviews. In this time you are free to step away from your station, but be sure to return on time for your next scheduled appointment. In your downtime, we encourage you to use the time to continue researching the recruiting programs using the [URTA Directory](#). There will also be Design/Tech companies with displays in the design hall, and we encourage candidates to visit with these companies in their downtime to learn about advances in the industry and pick-up some swag.

DAY-OF INFORMATION (LIVE-VIRTUAL)

This is to give you an idea of how the URTA Design/Tech day runs. Times are subject to change - complete daily schedules will be shared in your Accepted scheduling message.

The URTAs are a full-day commitment. The day will begin at approximately 10:00 am (Eastern Time) for live-virtual interviews. The day will begin with a mandatory candidate orientation and will run until the end of your last interview, which may be late in the evening. Please do not set any other appointments or book travel on the day of your URTA interview, to avoid potential conflicts.

- Top of Day – Check-In and Mandatory Orientation
 - During the mandatory candidate orientation, which will take place in Zoom, you will learn how the day will run, receive any important updates, and be able to ask any questions you may have. During this time, URTA staff will also be checking you in for the day.
- Station Set up (Live-Virtual)
 - There will be no design hall portfolio display for the live-virtual event – all interviews will be pre-scheduled based solely on the recruiters’ review of the materials you uploaded in Accepted, so your digital portfolio in Accepted is extremely important.
 - The live-virtual interviews will take place in Zoom
 - Candidates should be prepared to screen-share portfolio materials and/or their website with recruiters during the interview. You should have all relevant materials downloaded and ready to share to avoid wasting time during the interview while things load/buffer.
 - Candidates may also wish to have physical materials set-up in their space, to show/share in the Zoom
 - Virtual Event Technology: Participants in the live-virtual URTAs Auditions & Interviews will need to have access to a stable internet connection and a device with video and audio capabilities on the day they are scheduled for the live-virtual URTAs. In addition, participants will be required to download and utilize a variety of free virtual event technologies and communication systems, including but not limited to, Zoom and Accepted (application systems) – more information will be provided to participants on where/how to access and make use of these technologies for the event. The extent of these technology needs will be dependent on the participant’s selected application area. Those with questions or concerns should email URTA at theurtas@urta.com.
- Interviews
 - Candidates will receive a copy of their Live-Virtual interview schedule via email (to the email listed in their Accepted registration) by January 9, 2025.
 - The Virtual Design/Tech schedule will be hosted in Eastern Time. If you will be joining from a different time zone, please be sure you properly convert the times on your schedule so you do not miss an interview.

- The interview schedule will include necessary instructions to access the Design/Tech Zoom.
- There is no recruiter walk-through, so there will be no additional interviews added to your schedule on the day of the event.
- All interviews are 15 minutes long and will take place at the candidate's Zoom station, with recruiters rotating from station to station.
- Be sure you are set up someplace quiet, with strong/stable internet connection, have chargers you may need, as well as any physical or digital work samples/materials that you might want to share on camera during the interview.
- Once your last scheduled interview ends, you are done for the day and may leave the Zoom.
- Your day at the URTAs can be a very long one. There will be breaks within the schedule, but please be sure you have water, a snack, and a way to take notes during/after the interviews.
- Please be sure you are on time for all of your appointments, as you will not be able to go longer than the scheduled end time of the interview if you are late.
- Interviews will be done individually, meaning you will be the only candidate in your interview. However, candidates should be aware that many programs choose to interview in recruiting teams, so do not be surprised if there are multiple faculty members from the same school in your interview. This is particularly important for candidates applying in more than one design focus area, as a school can only interview you once during the URTAs. If you applied in both scenic and lighting design, for example, the recruiters from both of those areas will be interviewing you at the same time.
- There may be downtime between your scheduled interviews. In this time you are free to step away from your station, but be sure to return on time for your next scheduled appointment. In your downtime, we encourage you to use the time to continue researching the recruiting programs using the [URTA Directory](#).

INFORMATION FOR SOUND DESIGNERS

- In 2025, Sound Design will only recruit at the live-virtual design/tech day (Jan. 15). There will be NO in-person Sound Design recruiting in Chicago.
- Candidates registering only in the Sound category are eligible for a Candidate Award, which provides FREE registration for the URTAs. Sound Designers should follow the instructions in the Design/Tech (Virtual) registration on Acceptd to redeem their award.
- Some tips from recruiters to consider when preparing your Sound Design portfolio:
 - Prepare a 5-7 minute recording with brief examples of your best work. Place a vocal identifier at the beginning of each example stating the play title, the producer (organization or class), and date, or other appropriate information if the example is not from the sound score of a play.
 - Present samples of live/Foley sound effects.
 - You can also create a video portfolio of your sound design, highlighting your sound effects and music including images of the production that directly relate to your sound design. The video should include the title of the play, the producer (organization or class), date, and other appropriate information. Please limit non-original/commercial music segments to 10 seconds and your overall sound design video portfolio to 5-7 minutes.
 - Pre-set volume at the level you'd like your cues heard and/or provide a master volume control. Make sure the audio is playing back properly and is repeating automatically or has clear user controls.
 - Create a concept statement for each production you are presenting. Explain how your work supports the show's narrative, and your collaborative process with the director and production team. Discussing relevant research strategies and materials can help provide context.
 - Present your sound design paperwork, including but not limited to a cue sheet, speaker

- plot, and line diagram. If applicable, include your a1 prompt/pickup script.
- Display detailed images of any practical equipment used, or unique installation challenges. If the show is a musical, include photographs or drawings of mic placement.
- Display examples of your sound design show files (e.g. QLab Workspace, SFX) and sound editing (e.g. ProTools session, Logic Project).

AFTER THE URTAS

What happens next? Be sure to read URTA's Offer and Acceptance Policy provided in this handbook, but keep in mind that every school has different procedures. After your callback or interview, a school may reach out to you with next steps or you may need to reach out to them. It's up to you to make sure you understand these next steps – and it's a great question to ask in your callback or interview!

DIRECTING, STAGE MANAGEMENT, AND ARTS LEADERSHIP INTERVIEWS

The URTAs provide you the opportunity to share your work with all of the recruiting programs in attendance with a single registration.

Arts Leadership Candidates: In 2025, Arts Leadership is a Candidate Award discipline. All candidates are eligible for the Candidate Award, which provides FREE registration for the URTAs in the area of Arts Leadership. Registration fees will be waived automatically in your Accepted Arts Leadership registration. Please visit urta.com/awards for more information on URTA Candidate Awards.

REGISTRATION

All Directing, Stage Management, and Arts Leadership interviews will be Live-Virtual at the 2025 URTAs – there will be NO in-person interviews. When you register for one of these areas, you will be asked to upload a “Common Packet” to Accepted. **All “Common Packet” materials are due by the URTA registration deadline, 11:59 pm (Eastern Time) on December 27, 2024.** These areas of study are extremely competitive, and schools accept only a small number of candidates. To be given full consideration, your common packet must be received in Accepted on time. We are unable to accept late registrations.

For the 2025 URTAs, candidates have the option to register the following live-virtual events (candidates and recruiters are all remote):

- Arts Leadership
 - Virtual Interviews: Feb. 1, 2025
- Directing
 - Virtual Interviews: Jan. 31 & Feb. 1, 2025
 - You will be scheduled for one day only.
- Stage Management
 - Virtual Interviews: Jan. 31 & Feb. 1, 2025
 - You will be scheduled for one day only.

Common Packet Contents

All materials should be uploaded in Accepted as part of the URTA registration process:

- Resume of experience
- Unofficial academic transcripts
- Three letters of recommendation (candidates will list their recommenders’ email addresses in Accepted, and the recommenders will receive a link from Accepted to upload their recommendation letter directly to your URTA registration)
- Statement of professional goals
- (Optional) Any additional materials you would like to share with recruiters (may include work samples, media materials, personal/artistic statements, recordings/photos reflecting special skills or artistic interest, etc.)

Directing candidates should ALSO include:

- Statement of directorial philosophy
- Directing portfolio/work samples – this can be provided either by providing a link to your digital portfolio (on a personal website, social media platform, or digital gallery), OR you may directly upload portfolio materials in Accepted (PowerPoint, pdf, photos, videos, etc.)

Stage Management candidates should ALSO include:

- Work Samples / Production Paperwork either directly uploaded to Acceptd (pdf, PowerPoint, photos, etc.) OR by providing a link to your personal website showcasing portfolio materials (this can be a website, a social media platform, or a digital gallery)

Arts Leadership candidates should ALSO include:

- Two (2) writing samples
- (Optional) Personal website or upload of work samples/portfolio materials

All 'Common Packet' uploads will be asked for in the second stage of the Acceptd registration. This allows you more time to prepare your materials, but please pay attention to the instructions and deadlines in Acceptd, as you will not be scheduled until all required uploads and stages of your URTA registration are submitted.

Please note: you will need to provide your 3 recommenders' emails in stage one of the Acceptd registration. As soon as you submit stage one, Acceptd will send your recommenders an email with the link to upload their letters directly to your registration. This is included in stage one to give you recommenders additional time to upload their letters, but please be sure you follow-up with your recommenders to ensure they upload their letters of recommendation by the URTA registration deadline.

Both stages of your URTA registration, including all 'Common Packet' materials listed above must be received before recruiters can see your registration and consider you for their program. . **Your uploaded materials are extremely important, as recruiters will be reviewing these materials in advance of the URTAs to make their interview requests.** We encourage you to upload any additional materials and work samples that you feel will help give the school recruiters a chance to know you, your experience, your interests, your reasons for pursuing graduate training, and more. Please be sure to include both process-materials as well as final-materials, as recruiters are interested in seeing your process from start to finish.

IMPORTANT: Recruiters will be determining whether or not they wish to interview you based solely on the materials you provide in Acceptd. While candidates will be scheduled for a particular day to participate in the URTAs, that does NOT guarantee they will receive interviews from schools.

PREPARING FOR THE URTA INTERVIEWS

- After you submit your full registration, you will be scheduled for a day to attend the live-virtual URTAs. You will receive the date via Acceptd message, along with other important event details.
- Schools will begin reviewing your common packet materials on Acceptd as soon as your registration is submitted. Many recruiters will also reach out to candidates in advance (via the email address you list in your application) to start a conversation ahead of the URTAs. These recruiters may ask you to submit additional materials for consideration, and they may ask that you prepare particular materials for the URTAs interview (ex – Directors may be asked to prepare a directorial approach to a specific play).
- While the recruiters may reach out to you directly, you are also strongly encourage to research the specific programs that will be recruiting at the URTAs and reach out to them directly yourself with any questions or to introduce yourself and express your interest in their program. Starting correspondence with programs in advance of the URTAs is a great way for you to learn more about the program, connect with recruiters, and gauge if the program is a good fit for you, and will help you make the most of your interviews.
- Following the registration deadline on December 27, schools will have some final time to review all candidate materials and they will then provide URTA with a list of candidates that they wish to interview during the URTAs.
- URTA will schedule these interviews and candidates will receive a copy of their interview schedule from URTA via email by January 23, 2025. These interview schedules will contain the

Zoom information needed to join the interviews. These schedules are computer generated and cannot be changed.

- Participants in the live-virtual URTAs Auditions & Interviews will need to have access to a stable internet connection and a device with video and audio capabilities on the day they are scheduled for the live-virtual URTAs. In addition, participants will be required to download and utilize a variety of free virtual event technologies and communication systems, including but not limited to, Zoom and Acceptd (application system) – more information will be provided to participants on where/how to access and make use of these technologies for the event. The extent of these technology needs will be dependent on the participant’s selected application area. Those with questions or concerns should email URTA at theurtas@urta.com.
- Please note: Registering and being scheduled for a date for the URTAs does NOT guarantee that you will receive interview requests.

DAY-OF INFORMATION

This is to give you an idea of how the URTA Directing, Stage Management, and Arts Leadership Live-Virtual day runs. Times are subject to change - complete daily schedules will be shared in your Acceptd scheduling message.

The URTAs are a full-day commitment. The day will begin at approximately 10:00 am (Eastern Time) on Zoom with a mandatory candidate orientation. The day will run until the end of your last scheduled interview, which may be in the evening. Please do not schedule any other appointments or book travel on the day of your URTA interviews, to avoid potential conflicts.

- Top of Day – Check-In and Mandatory Orientation
 - Your day at the URTAs will begin with a mandatory candidate orientation on Zoom at 10 am (Eastern). During the orientation, you will learn how the day will run, receive any important updates, and be able to ask any questions you may have. During this time, URTA staff will also be checking you in for the day to let the faculty know you are present.
- Interviews
 - After orientation, interviews will begin according to your personal interview schedule (emailed to you by Jan 23).
 - The virtual interview schedules will be hosted in Eastern Time. If you will be joining from a different time zone, please be sure you properly convert the times on your schedule so you do not miss an interview.
 - All interviews are scheduled for 25 minutes and will take place in Zoom meetings set by the schools.
 - Please be sure you are on time for all of your appointments, as you will NOT be able to go longer than the scheduled end time of the interview if you are late.
 - Each interview will be a bit different, but candidates should be prepared to discuss their portfolio materials and experience, as well as their career goals and reason for pursuing graduate school.
 - Directors should also be prepared to discuss their directorial approach to a play.
 - Schools may request candidates prepare additional specific materials for the interview – if necessary; these requests will be communicated directly to the candidate by the school recruiter in advance of the URTAs.
 - You are encouraged to have your digital portfolio ready to screen-share during your interview, and to have a digital version of your resume and transcript ready to share with the recruiters in Zoom if requested. Please have all items downloaded and ready prior to the interview, so you do not waste time waiting for portfolios to load/buffer.
 - Most programs will interview candidates individually, however some may interview candidates in groups or pairs.
 - Once you have completed all of your scheduled interviews, you are done for the day and may log out of Zoom.

AFTER THE URTAS

What happens next? Be sure to read URTA's Offer and Acceptance Policy provided in this handbook, but keep in mind that every school has different procedures. After your callback or interview, a school may reach out to you with next steps or you may need to reach out to them. It's up to you to make sure you understand these next steps – and it's a great question to ask in your callback or interview!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WALK-IN/DAY OF REGISTRATIONS: will only be accepted pending availability (space is limited) at the in-person & hybrid events (Acting – Chicago, CSU Fullerton, Philadelphia; and Design/Tech – Chicago). Candidates are strongly encouraged to register in advance on [Acceptd](#), prior to the Dec. 27th deadline, to guarantee their space. Those interested in applying as a walk-in at an in-person or hybrid recruiting event should arrive in the morning and come to the candidate check-in desk before the mandatory orientation. Email theurtas@urta.com for more information. There will be NO walk-in/day-of registrations accepted at Virtual URTA events.

AFTER THE URTAs: What happens next? Be sure to read URTA's Offer and Acceptance Policy provided in this handbook, but keep in mind that every school has different procedures. After your callback or interview, a school may reach out to you with next steps or you may need to reach out to them. It's up to you to make sure you understand these next steps – and it's a great question to ask in your callback or interview!

INTERNATIONAL CANDIDATES

The URTAs are open to international candidates, however all GPAs reported on the URTA registration must be in the U.S., 4.0 scale. It is the responsibility of the candidate to convert and report their GPA appropriately on the URTA registration. While URTA accepts unofficial transcripts and GPA conversion for the URTA registration, many programs will require official transcripts and grade reports. Candidates should reach out to programs of interest directly on any additional requirements they may have for international applicants, by using the contact information provided in the [URTA Membership Directory](#).

If registering for the live-virtual URTAs, it is the responsibility of the candidate to be aware of the digital technology needs to participate in the live-virtual URTAs and ensure that these technologies are accessible where they are located. These technologies include, but are not limited to: an internet-connected device capable of both video and audio communication, a stable and reliable internet connection, a Zoom account (basic, free version), and an Acceptd account (for URTA application and AuditionRoom for virtual auditions). More information about these technologies is available in the previous sections of this handbook, and will be communicated to candidates in advance of the URTAs. Additionally, the live-virtual URTAs will be scheduled in U.S. Eastern Time (as the URTA office is located in New York), and international candidates are responsible for ensuring they are able to participate at their corresponding local time.

For international candidates that choose to register for the in-person URTAs, all events take place in the United States and it is the responsibility of the candidate to obtain visitor visas and any other permissions or documentation that may be required for admittance into the United States. If requested, URTA will be happy to write a letter of invitation in support of a visa application for candidates who have successfully completed registration for the URTAs and provided the necessary details, however URTA is NOT able to petition for a visa on behalf of a candidate. Candidates should refer to the [U.S. Department of State website](#) for the latest rules, regulations, and processes. Please keep in mind that the process of obtaining a visa can be time consuming, and URTA is unable to issue refunds (outside of our standard cancellation policy) for any candidates that are unable to obtain a visa in time for the event, so we encourage you to begin early. Please send any requests for letters of invitation to theurtas@urta.com.

Please be aware that some programs may invite students for in-person callback interviews at a later date. As these are solely at the discretion of the individual programs, please inquire directly with them regarding necessary U.S. travel documentation. URTA is unable to provide letters of support for any visas or other travel documentation required for in-person callback interviews, or subsequent program enrollment.

URTA CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

All participants at URTA events, both in-person and virtual, (including URTA staff, members, non-members, candidates, vendors, panelists, and others) are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner both in their public behavior and personal interaction, displaying common courtesy to all, and respect for private property. Harassing or offensive behavior will not be tolerated.

Conduct found to be in violation of these policies and may result in an individual's expulsion from the event and/or disciplinary action against the program, institution, or business they represent.

URTA recognizes that personalities and working styles may differ but, notwithstanding these differences, all are accountable for their own behavior and the impact it may have on others.

What is Unacceptable Behavior?

Unacceptable behavior (including bullying and harassment) may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people.

URTA defines unacceptable behavior as:

- It is unwanted by the recipient.
- It has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, and
- Having regard to all the circumstances, including the recipient's perception, it was reasonable for the behavior to have such an effect.

Unacceptable behavior need not be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as written, telephone or email communications or through social media.

Some examples of unacceptable behavior are:

- Unwanted physical contact. URTA recommends no physical contact unless the professional purpose of the contact has been explained, permission has been sought, and permission has been given.
- Aggressive or abusive behavior, such as shouting or personal insults.
- Spreading malicious rumors or gossip about, or insulting, either an individual or other participating institution.
- Discrimination or harassment related to an individual's race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, age, religion, gender, gender identity, disability, or other similar personal characteristic.
- Offensive comments/jokes or body language.
- Coercion, such as pressure to subscribe to a particular political or religious belief. Recruiters must be mindful that, for the candidate, this pressure may be unspoken. Candidates, in their eagerness to succeed, may not feel empowered to say "no." It is unethical for recruiters to take advantage of their positions of power to pressure a candidate to participate in techniques or engage in interview questions that cause distress.

It is important to note that behavior considered acceptable by one person may be considered offensive to another. Therefore, everyone has an obligation to be proactively and judiciously cognizant of how their words or actions may reasonably create a hostile environment for others.

A recruitment process naturally involves legitimate, constructive, and fair feedback of a candidate's work. Although these sentiments may be difficult for the candidate to hear, they should never be given in a demoralizing or insulting tone. Ethical behavior extends to all forms of actor and character communication. This includes a principled use of acting methods and personalization techniques during text coaching, improvisation, and actor/character inquiries and explorations.

Isolated incidents of behavior such as abruptness, sharpness or rudeness, which will hopefully be avoided, will generally not be considered to amount to bullying.

Persons finding themselves in a situation where they feel their safety is at risk or who become aware of an attendee not in compliance with this policy should contact an URTA staff member as soon as possible. A complaint may also be made at any time prior, during, or after an URTA event via email to theurtas@urta.com, so that the matter can be handled in an expeditious manner.

All URTAs participants are also reminded to review the URTA policies governing offers of admission.

URTA INTERVIEW/CALLBACK GUIDELINES

Providing a safe and positive environment for both candidates and recruiters is of the utmost importance to URTA. As such, URTA has established a Code of Conduct, included in this packet, which all candidates and recruiters must abide by, as well as guidelines for conducting callback interviews at the URTAs, found below.

These guidelines provide guidance for recruiters when making their arrangements for callbacks/interviews at the URTAs, and so that candidates know what to expect when going into their callback interviews at the URTAs. As stipulated in the URTA Code of Conduct, persons finding themselves in a situation where they feel their safety is at risk or who become aware of an attendee not in compliance with these guidelines, should contact an URTA staff member as soon as possible. A complaint may be made at any time prior, during, or after an URTA event via email to theurtas@urta.com, so that the matter can be handled in an expeditious manner.

For all in-person Acting callbacks - Recruiters may opt to utilize the URTA “Public Space” to conduct their interviews. This public space will be in a large conference room, set up with rows of tables and chairs (similar to a college fair) which recruiters may utilize to conduct individual or small group interviews. Given the public nature and close proximity to other recruitment interviews, this location may not be conducive to working performance pieces, and we ask that all parties consider this and are respectful of their colleagues and neighbors.

If a program prefers not to utilize the Public Space, the following options are available:

- In Philadelphia, recruiters may make their own arrangements for alternate callback locations at the URTA hotel, such as private meeting conference rooms or a suite. Callbacks may NOT be held in a hotel sleeping room.
 - URTA will permit the use of suites for callbacks in Philadelphia as long as the bedroom space is completely closed off by a door from the working area in which callbacks will take place. In addition, the working area where callbacks will take place must be empty of any personal belongings, and maintain a professional, meeting room atmosphere. Recruiters will also be required to post callback and code of conduct signage (provided by URTA) on the exterior door, to make clear to participants the location of the callbacks.
- In Chicago, URTA is holding a floor of meeting rooms which programs may reserve through URTA to hold their callbacks. NO callbacks will be permitted in suites or guest rooms in Chicago.

In all locations, if a program chooses to make use of a private callback interview location, they are required to have two people physically present at all times when candidates are in the room. This could be two recruiters, or a recruiter and another representative of the program, such as an alum, additional instructor, etc. In addition, URTA strongly suggests that these interview teams be of mixed gender, and that programs consider interviewing candidates in pairs or groups. URTA also asks all programs to hang identification signage and the code of conduct on the door to clearly identify the callback location for candidates if it is being held in a private room location. URTA will provide these signs for programs on site in each city.

For all in-person interviews in Design/Technology – Recruiters will conduct interviews solely in the public design exhibition hall at the candidates’ stations according to the assigned schedule created by URTA and emailed out in advance of the event.

For all live-virtual interviews in any discipline – Interviews will take place online through Zoom. Since you will be communicating via video conferencing, we do not require that programs have two persons in the interview room.

However. We strongly encourage programs to still have two individuals from their institution taking part in the live, online interview; whether both people are viewed on a single camera, or logging in from different places. As ever, they need not both be faculty members. Alumni, current students, and other representatives of the program are welcome.

Recruiting faculty at virtual events (excluding Design/Technology) will be responsible for setting up their own Zoom room for callback interviews, and providing the room links to URTA in advance of the event.

URTA POLICY ON OFFERS AND ACCEPTANCE

URTA recruiting events support an equitable offer process between schools and candidates. It is the responsibility of all parties to communicate honestly, quickly, and professionally. The following policy applies to all participants at URTA recruiting events, including URTA members, non-members, guest institutions, and candidates in all areas.

Recruiting programs may not extend formal offers until the conclusion of URTA recruiting in their discipline. The first/earliest dates that offers may be extended for each recruiting discipline are:

- Acting: February 10, 2025 (12:00 am eastern time)
- Design & Technology: February 3, 2025 (12:00 am eastern time)
- Directing/Stage Management/Arts Leadership: February 10, 2025 (12:00 am eastern time)

All offers must be made in writing. A verbal offer must be followed by an official offer in writing.

Offers must include the specifics of any financial commitments made by the organization, such as tuition waivers, stipends, housing, travel and assistantships.

Candidates must email a verification they have received the offer in a timely fashion.

The dates above indicate the earliest date that any program may extend an offer, however programs are not required to make offers on these dates. Programs have different internal timelines, and offers may be made on any date after those listed above.

Candidates cannot be required to accept or decline an offer for two (2) weeks from the above dates. The first/earliest dates that programs may require a candidate to provide a formal decision on the offer are:

- Acting: February 24, 2025 (12:00 am eastern time)
- Design & Technology: February 17, 2025 (12:00 am eastern time)
- Directing/Stage Management/Arts Leadership: February 24, 2025 (12:00 am eastern time)

Candidates are free to accept or decline an offer prior to these dates, if they wish.

After this 2-week period, recruiters may rescind their offer if a candidate has not formally responded. Additionally, after this date, offers may be made and responses required on a timeline of the program's choosing, though it is essential that the recruiting programs make these deadlines clear to candidates in writing and provide reasonable time for a candidate to receive and respond to correspondence.

In advance of the offer/acceptance period, recruiters should clearly communicate their specific application process, including the procedure and costs. They should also reiterate the date by which an answer is required, and advise whether a university application, campus visit, or other requirements will impact the candidate's prospects for a formal offer.

Wait list policies must be clearly articulated. If a candidate is to be put on a wait list, there should be a date agreed upon when the candidate will be informed of an opening.

At the time that a candidate accepts an offer, the recruiter must positively inquire as to whether the candidate has previously accepted an offer from another institution subject to this policy and, if so, whether they have informed that program of their change of intent.

Candidates are free to accept or reject an offer at any time during the 2-week offer/acceptance period (see dates above). Should a candidate accept an offer and then change their mind during this period, they must immediately email this decision to the recruiter, and they will be released.

If the candidate changes their mind after the 2-week period, they must immediately request a written release from the recruiter, and should not be admitted to another program until this step is completed.

In late spring, URTA will send recruiters an offer/acceptance survey to complete. You are required to complete this survey, as providing this data allows us to retain records of success or challenges faced in the process and to track trends in MFA admittance. URTA is constantly adapting to changes in the field, in order to best serve our constituents. Your input is a vital part of this process. URTA maintains strict confidentiality of this information.

RECRUITING FOR SUBSEQUENT YEARS

A school recruiting at the URTAs for the academic year beginning in the fall, but who formally offers a candidate a place in the following, or subsequent year's class, must guarantee that offer until the date in the next year (designated by URTA) when candidates may be asked to respond to offers made in that year's cycle of recruiting.

A candidate is free not to respond to such an offer until the referenced date. A candidate is free to accept the offer but may change their mind over the course of the intervening year. The candidate must advise the school of any change in their plans. A school making such an offer must inform a candidate of their rights regarding the offer and provide them a copy of the related URTA memo on the policy. To avoid confusion, the offer should be memorialized in writing.

APPLICATIONS AND PROCESSING FEES

A primary intention of the URTA Auditions and Interviews is to provide candidates with a financially fair and equitable means of pursuing graduate training. However, some school administrations require a potential candidate to submit an application and pay a related application fee prior to allowing a department to consider the candidate for a position. URTA strongly urges member programs operating under such strictures to act responsibly and ethically in identifying candidates of serious interest to them before encouraging candidates to submit applications and pay application or processing fees in advance of program reviews and/or formal offers.

URTA PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

The undersigned voluntarily agrees to participate in the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** program sponsored by **The University Resident Theatre Association** from any date between January 10 – February 2, 2025.

The participant recognizes that **The University Resident Theatre Association** has not undertaken any duty or responsibility for their safety and the undersigned agrees to assume the full responsibility for all risk of bodily injury, death, disability, and property damage as a result of participating in the **URTA Auditions & Interviews**. The participant recognizes that some risk be assumed in participation.

The participant hereby states the following: I understand the risks involved in participating in the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** and willingly and voluntarily accept these risks including all risks related to exposure to COVID-19; I hereby surrender any right to seek reimbursement from **The University Resident Theatre Association** and its directors, officers, employees, volunteers and other agents for injury sustained and liability incurred during my participation in the activity described above; I warrant that I am not relying on any oral representations, statements or inducement apart from the statements made on this form.

Notice of Photography/Videography:

Photographs and/or video recordings may be taken at the **URTA Auditions & Interviews**. By taking part in this event, you grant the event organizers full rights to use the images resulting from the photography/video recording/screen captures, and any reproductions or adaptations of the images for fundraising, publicity, educational programming, or other purposes to help achieve the group's aims. This might include (but is not limited to), the right to use them in their printed and online publicity, social media, press releases and funding applications. If you do not wish to be photographed or filmed please inform an event organizer.

Virtual Event Technology:

Participants in the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** will be required to download and utilize a variety of free virtual event technologies and communication systems, including but not limited to, Zoom, Acceptd (application system) and AuditionRoom (virtual auditions), and have access to stable internet, and a device with video/audio capabilities. The extent of these technology needs will be dependent on the participant's selected application area. Those with questions or concerns should reach out to an event organizer.

Data/Info Waiver:

By taking part in the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** you agree to your application materials, including your contact information, being shared with recruiting institutions participating in URTA, partners/sponsors of URTA, and for URTA's educational programming purposes. These organizations must make known their association with URTA when first making contact with you, and must provide an opt-out option for you to select for any future communication from their organization.

Health & Safety – COVID Protocols:

All in-person participants at the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** agree to adhere to masking and other health mitigation policies to be set by URTA, local governing authorities, and hosting venues. In addition, **URTA requests that all participants at in-person URTA Auditions & Interviews be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.** For individuals who are not vaccinated, please consider participating in the live-virtual URTA recruiting events.

URTA retains the right to shift the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** to a fully live-virtual event if URTA determines that health and safety concerns will prohibit an in-person gathering.

Force Majeure:

The University Resident Theatre Association (URTA) will not be held liable for loss or damages due to any delay or default in the delivery of and participation in the URTA Auditions & Interviews program, if such delay or default is caused by conditions beyond the control of URTA including, but not limited to, acts of God (such as severe inclement weather), fire, pandemic, wars, acts of terrorism, insurrections, labor union strikes, Government restrictions (including the denial or cancellation of necessary licenses, permits, exports, or other necessary documents), denial of travel, and/or any other causes beyond the reasonable control of URTA. Should any URTA program or event be canceled, postponed, or otherwise adversely impacted as a result of a force majeure event, URTA shall be under no obligation to refund payments already received. URTA will make all reasonable efforts to work with Clients to produce the program or event at a later date, in a different venue, and/or through a different delivery-method, subject to availability and feasibility to be determined by URTA. In the event of rescheduling, additional fees or requirements may be necessary and due to URTA and/or other event Vendors.

Candidate Changes/Cancellations:

Change Requests: Candidates are given the opportunity to provide schedule conflicts within the URTA application in order to avoid changes to their scheduled URTAs date. If a candidate should need to make a change to their scheduled URTAs date, requests should be made promptly in writing to theurtas@urta.com. While URTA makes best efforts to accommodate change requests, scheduling is based on availability, therefore not all requests can be accommodated. Any change requests received within 30 days of the start of the URTAs will incur a \$15 change fee. For the 2025 URTAs, this date is December 11, 2024.

Cancellation Policy: All cancellation requests must be made in writing to URTA at theurtas@urta.com. Cancellations made more than 30 days prior to the start of the URTAs will be refunded 100% of the amount paid, minus a \$32 cancellation fee. Cancellations made within 30 days of the start of the URTAs, or during the event (including no-shows) will not receive a refund. For the 2025 URTAs, 30 days prior occurs on December 11, 2024. All donations made to the Pay It Forward Candidate Award are non-refundable.

By registering for the URTAs, the participant confirms that they have read, understand, and consent to the terms of this participant agreement.