



## MA PROFESSIONAL VOICE PRACTICE: GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

### Completing our online application form

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You will need to create a username and password (four to eight characters) before you can apply online. You can work through the form at your own pace, saving as you go along. You will need to provide information on your previous and current education, employment and English language ability, as well as a personal statement and a referee. We recommend you write your personal statement offline and paste it into the application form.

### What should I include in my personal statement?

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Your personal statement should cover your interests, accomplishments and personal ambitions and your reasons for wishing to study on the MA Professional Voice Practice course. You should outline your previous experience of working with the voice (training and any professional experience), identify the main reasons why you are interested in further study, and outline what your research interests may be. You should also indicate how you intend to fund the course. You should also tell us whether you have applied to any other CDS Drama Schools and/or Universities (and if so, which ones) and whether you have applied to Birmingham School of Acting previously.

### How long should my personal statement be?

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Your personal statement should be about 500 words in length and written in essay style. You should give your personal statement the same amount of care and attention as your audition: be sure to cover all the elements requested above, proof-read it carefully and check your spelling before submitting it with your application.

### What does my reference need to include?

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Your referee should be someone who is not a family member. Your referee should focus on commenting on your stamina and character – in particular, your ability to sustain rigorous training. He or she should also comment on your suitability for study at postgraduate level and your suitability to pursue a specialised course in voice.

### Will I be auditioned/interviewed?

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Admission to the MA Professional Voice Practice course is via audition, followed by an interview. We will contact you to discuss the process and to arrange an audition after we have received and read your application.

If you are applying from overseas, you may audition via DVD, following the guidelines for candidates auditioning at BSA. Alternatively, you may [register for our auditions in the United States](#) (Jan/Feb).

Before completing your application you should ensure that you have read all of the guidance below and on our website regarding the audition process. In addition to the guidance below, you may wish to read [Auditions: Frequently Asked Questions](#).

If you are auditioning in person at BSA, you will need to pay the appropriate [audition fee](#).

## Auditioning/interviewing in person at BSA

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A [schedule of dates](#) is available on our website. We recognise that you will inevitably be nervous about your audition and interview; much rides upon the outcome. We work hard to ensure that your audition and interview are positive experiences. Members of both academic and admissions staff will be available to answer questions at all stages. Auditions are stewarded by full-time students who are there to support and guide you through the process.

If you wish us to take dyslexia or dyspraxia into account at your audition and interview you must bring with you a copy of your assessment/report confirming the condition and hand it to the Senior Administrator (Admissions and Enrolment), Marie Greene.

We will also email your referee for a general statement.

### **PUNCTUALITY**

You should make sure you arrive in plenty of time for your audition; if for any reason you will be late please let us know. Punctuality is essential during the course, as it is when working in the profession. We are aware that sometimes transport is delayed – however, we will expect you to have arranged your travel to arrive on time even if there is a reasonable delay. **Please note:** Street shoes and stilettos are not allowed in any of our studios, but jazz and character shoes are.

### **SPEECHES AND FEEDBACK**

You will be asked to present three speeches to a panel of staff and/or professional actors – normally two people, but on occasion more. You will have up to ten minutes with the panel who will provide verbal feedback on what you present, discuss your choice of speeches and possibly your motives for attending drama school.

You must prepare and present:

- a two-minute speech in verse from an Elizabethan/Jacobean play **OR** a musical theatre song (with accompaniment)
- a Shakespeare sonnet
- a piece of modern or contemporary verse

Your programme must not last more than five minutes and be suitable for your gender, age and experience (you may be stopped if a speech exceeds two minutes in length). **Please note:** If you plan to perform a song as part of your audition, you must let us know when you accept your invitation to audition so that we can arrange an accompanist.

All speeches should be from published plays. Excerpts from film script, television dramas and unpublished plays are not acceptable unless you can provide at audition, and leave with us, a copy of the actual and complete script with the speech used clearly marked.

You should have read the whole of the play from which a speech is taken and be able to provide the correct title, name of the author if relevant and translator. You may be asked questions about the play and your character's journey within it (i.e. their motives etc.).

It is preferred that the content of the speeches should be something to which you can relate and understand. It is not advised that you attempt an accent unless you are entirely confident of its accuracy and only if it is appropriate to the speech.

Any performance choices you make should be justifiable within the text. The performance should reveal an understanding of the scene and character and an ability to create and share appropriate emotions and atmosphere. Try to make sure that any vocal and physical interpretation you do is strictly relevant.

Although candidates may not be from an acting or performance background, you need to be able to demonstrate some sensitivity to and awareness of the demands of speaking text in a performance context.

#### Criteria for Speeches

- Energy
- Choice of speeches
- Spatial awareness
- Suitability of physicalisation
- Identification with character
- Achievement of contrast
- Creation of environment
- Use / handling of language
- Power to hold an audience
- Potential for development through training

The assessment of each candidate is based upon a set of criteria used consistently by staff, who comment on and mark the work shown.

#### **THE SONG**

Should you choose to perform a song, it will be performed alone to a senior singing tutor. As with your speech selections, your song should be a published work with piano accompaniment. We will provide a pianist but you must provide sheet music in a suitable format for the pianist to use.

We are interested to see how you interpret a song and its content. We appreciate that some candidates are not experienced singers but we do not believe that this stops anyone from expressing the style and content of a song. It is important that you choose a song suitable for your voice, gender and age.

#### Song Criteria

- Qualities: including speech, twang, falsetto
- Technique: including breathing, body alignment
- Story Telling: journey of the song

#### Your Interview

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You will be interviewed by the Course Director or his/her representative to gain a better understanding of you and your motives for wishing to attend a drama school.

A voice tutor may wish to see you individually to assess more fully your vocal potential. There will also be a group meeting with the Senior Administrator (Admissions and Enrolment), Marie Greene, for clarification of any funding or course queries you may have.

#### Auditioning in person in the USA

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We normally hold auditions in the USA during late January / early February, concurrent with the University/Resident Theatre Association (U/RTA) auditions. Please [register via our website](#) to secure your audition slot. If you are auditioning only for us, please follow the guidelines above for selecting repertoire. If you are auditioning for a number of U/RTA institutions, you may use the two audition pieces you have already prepared.

## Auditioning via DVD

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If you live outside the UK/EU you can undertake an initial audition via multi-regional format DVD. You should present your speeches (and song, if included) in English to camera and perform them as you would in a live audition, using the guidelines above.

Please ensure that we can see the whole of your body – it is not necessary to provide close-ups or produce an edited piece of television, but you should ensure that the sound quality is sufficient for us to make an accurate assessment of your voice. You should supply the title, author and, if relevant, translator details with your speeches.

You may also make a short statement of no more than three minutes about the pieces – a brief résumé of the plays and characters, and what happens immediately before and after the scenes presented.

You may also include a brief statement in support of your application. Please ensure that you write your name and the course applied for on your DVD.

## What happens next?

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### **DECISION ON AUDITION**

The assessment of each candidate is based upon a set of criteria used consistently by staff, who mark the work shown. The staff on the panel – guided by the Course Director – make the decision whether to offer a place. Within 10 working days of your Audition you should receive confirmation by email of the result. If you have not heard within 21 days please contact the Senior Administrator (Admissions and Enrolment), [Marie Greene](#). Decisions for international students applying via video/DVD may take longer, but you should hear within 30 days of our receipt of your application.

### **OFFER OF A PLACE**

Following an audition and/or interview, one of the following outcomes is possible:

- You are offered an unconditional place  
This means that you have a place on the course for which you applied. This offer is only for the year in which you apply.
- You are offered a conditional place  
This means that you will have a place on the course for which you applied if you attain the required academic qualifications. This offer is only for the year in which you apply.
- You are offered a reserve place on the course.  
This is the most common outcome. It indicates that you have reached an acceptable standard, but because applications and auditions/interviews happen throughout the year we cannot allocate all places on a course until the auditions/interviews have been completed.
- You are not offered a place on the course  
You cannot re-apply for a place on the same course in the same academic year.

### **APPEALING AGAINST AN UNSUCCESSFUL AUDITION**

If you wish to appeal against a decision you should contact the Senior Administrator (Admissions and Enrolment), [Marie Greene](#), within 14 days of notification to receive a copy of the Appeals Policy. An appeals panel, led by a senior member of staff who was not involved in your audition, will investigate thoroughly any grounds for appeal and will notify you of the outcome.

## Directions to Birmingham School of Acting at Millennium Point by Road

Millennium Point is clearly signposted from all main routes into the city – simply follow the brown tourist signs. Currently, there are major road works in the vicinity of Millennium Point and access routes may change on a regular basis. You may need to follow diversion routes where indicated.

### **From M6, Junction 6 (Aston Expressway)**

Follow signs to City Centre on the A38(M). After the first exit follow signs for Ring Road and Convention Centre. You immediately come to Dartmouth Circus roundabout. Take the first exit (Dartmouth Middleway, A4540). At the next roundabout take the third exit onto Jennens Road.

### **From M5, Junction 3 (Hagley Road)**

Follow the A456 into Birmingham for approximately 6 miles, through the tunnel at Five Ways, onto Broad Street. Follow signs for the A38 (Aston Expressway) onto Great Charles Queensway. Proceed under the tunnel at St Chad's Queensway. Indicate left as you exit and go down to the island at the bottom. Take the third exit onto James Watt Queensway. Continue onto Chapel Street, then turn left at the traffic lights onto Jennens Road. Go all the way round the next roundabout to return along Jennens Road.

### **From M42, Junction 6 (Coventry Road)**

Follow A45 City Centre for approximately 7 miles. You will then reach a large traffic roundabout (Bordesley Circus). Follow signs for the M6 into Watery Lane Middleway. At the first roundabout, follow signs for the M6. At the second roundabout, take the second exit into Lawley Middleway. At the third roundabout (Ashted Circus) take the first left onto Jennens Road.

## Car Parking at Millennium Point

The Car Park at the front of Millennium Point has closed due to the building of the Eastside City Park. Curzon Street is also currently closed due to building work in the area, including Phase 1 of Birmingham City University's new City Centre Campus.

There is a new multi-storey car park owned and managed by Birmingham City Council situated adjacent to Millennium Point. The car park entrance is on Howe Street off **Jennens Road**. If you are using a sat nav please use the postcode **B4 7AP**.

Charges at the time of writing are:

Up to 1hr - £1.00	Up to 3hrs - £2.80	Up to 6hrs - £4.00
Up to 2hrs - £1.90	Up to 4hrs - £3.50	Over 6hrs (up to 24hrs) - £5.00

Please retain your entry ticket on entering the Car Park. Payment is via machines located inside the car park building at the end of your visit. At present this car park only takes cash and does not accept card payments.

There is a cash machine available inside Millennium Point on Level 0.

## Walking from Birmingham New Street Station or Birmingham Moor Street Station

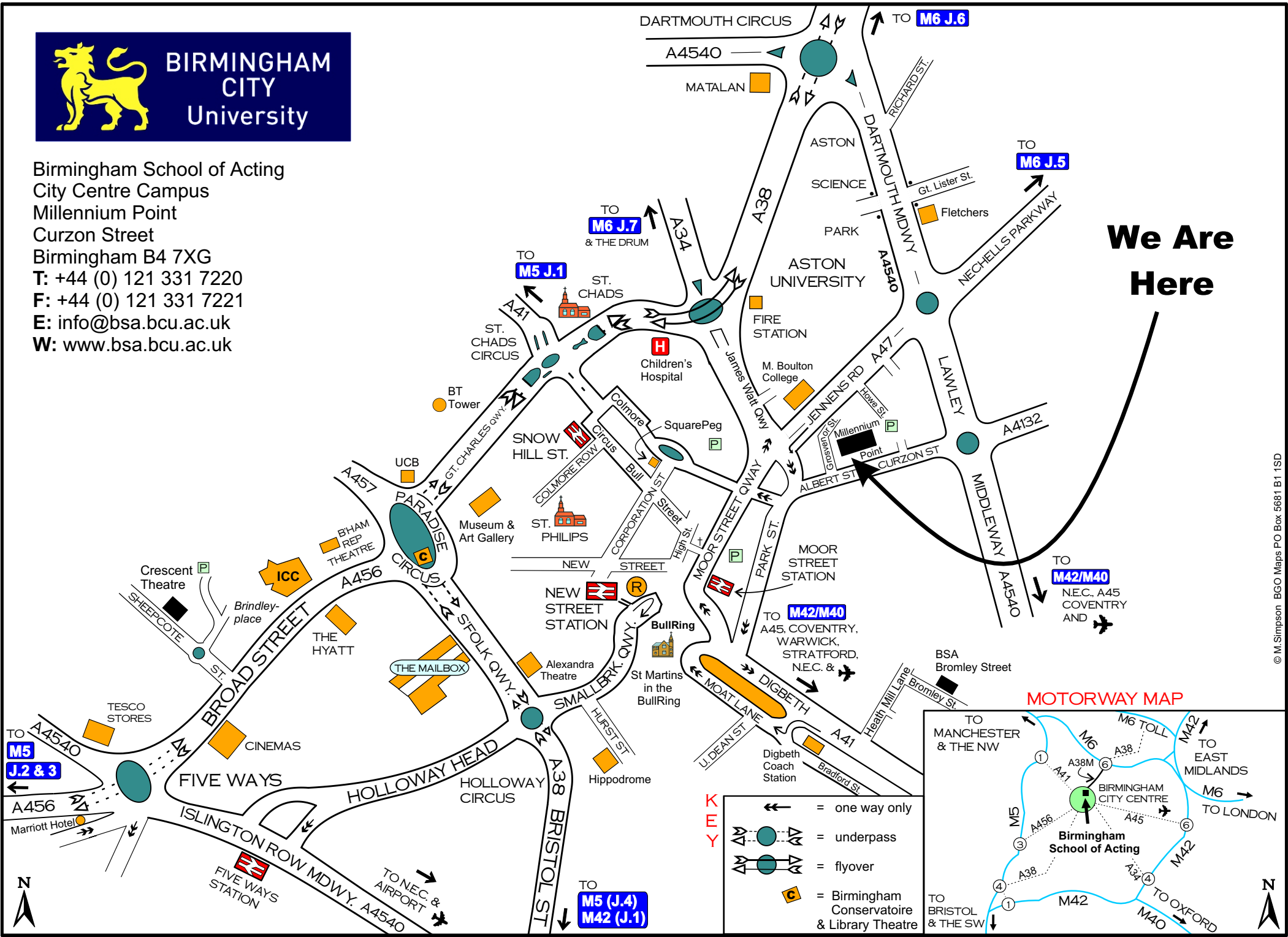
If you have arrived into Birmingham New Street, leave the station via the main entrance, exit to the left of the escalators and follow the path around to the Rotunda building and continue following the signs for Moor St Station. Moor Street Station is situated on Moor Street Ringway. (If you have arrived into Birmingham Moor Street, turn right out of the station and continue as follows.) Walk along Moor Street Ringway over the set of traffic lights; Birmingham Metropolitan College-Mathew Boulton Campus is on your left. After the traffic lights Moor Street Ringway becomes Jennens Road. Walk a further 400m and Millennium Point is located on your right.

Other directions, including directions from buses etc, are available on the [Millennium Point website](#).



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**We Are Here**



**KEY**

- ← = one way only
- ⤵ = underpass
- ⤴ = flyover
- 🏠 = Birmingham Conservatoire & Library Theatre

