

OPERATIONS MANUAL: INDIVIDUAL EVENTS DIVISION

DUTIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL EVENTS CHAIR (SECONDARY AND ADULT)

1. Maintain the guidelines for the Individual Events festivals for use on the website and the manual.
2. Work with the Secondary and Community Theatre divisions to increase awareness and interest in individual events.
3. Determine the best events for competition for each division.
4. Handle all judging recruitment.
5. Determine and communicate reasonable deadlines.
6. Announce and present the Individual Event awards at the appropriate Awards Ceremony.
7. Respond to e-mails from the President and the Executive Director in a timely manner.
8. Review festival materials as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
9. Prepare and submit a division report to the board following the state festival.
10. Provide content for newsletters, blog posts, and social media as requested by the President and the Executive Director.
11. Attend all board meetings and develop ideas to make the division stronger; propose these ideas to the board.
12. Review the division guidelines in the MTA handbook and edit so that they remain up-to-date. Submit handbook changes to the MTA secretary two weeks prior to a board meeting.
13. Attend meetings (such as the Secondary Workshop, Town Hall Meetings, Arts on the Capitol Day, etc.) when requested by the President and the Executive Director.
14. Stay mindful that this position means that sometimes the IEF Chair and Vice Chair will have to miss performances, be back stage, or do work at the festival that separates them from the main festival events. Bear in mind that these positions are to better the organization and not the individual interest of the Chair or Vice Chair.
15. Update and maintain any websites or public forum created for Individual Events.

SECONDARY INDIVIDUAL EVENTS GUIDELINES

Institutional Eligibility

- A participating school or organization (henceforth referred to as a *school*) must be a registered organizational member of MTA.
- A school may enter ten (10) students or teams in each main event.
 - a. Example: South Central High School may enter 10 students in Acting Male, 10 students in Acting Female, 10 students in Acting Duet, etc.
 - b. Pilot events may have different entry allotments; these limits will be defined in the pilot guidelines for new events.
- In addition to the institutional registration fee, a participating school must pay a registration fee for each event.
 - c. Solo event registration is \$10 per entry.
 - d. Duet event registration is \$20 per entry.
 - e. Group event registration is \$30 per entry regardless of the number of students participating in the entry.
- School must provide two (2) designated adults to act as door guards and/or timekeepers.

Individual Eligibility

1. Every student that participates in the MTA Individual Events Festival must be a member of MTA either through a participating school that is an organizational member of MTA, or, in the case that the student is homeschooled, that student must be an individual member of MTA.
2. Each participant must be enrolled in grades 9-12.
3. Each participant may enter up to five (5) events. (Example: Beth Ann Franklin may enter Acting Solo: 9th and 10th

Grade, Acting Duet, Musical Group, Original Scene, and Costume Design.)

4. Any violation of these rules will automatically disqualify the school's entry.

Eligibility Requirements for All Students

- Each school that participates must fill out the MTA festival registration form with complete individual event registration.
 - a. Additional information may be required from participating school.
 - b. Directors will be contacted by the Secondary IEs Chair or Vice Chair as additional information is needed.
- The Secondary IEs Chair should be contacted if a school needs to make a substitution; requests for substitutions will be considered on an individual basis.
- Incomplete registrations will not be accepted.
- Winners will be announced at the Secondary Awards Ceremony.
- **Dropped events received after the festival registration deadline remain subject to the registration fee.**

Adjudication

1. Each round will have two (2) to three (3) qualified judges.
2. No oral adjudication will be given; written adjudication will be a part of the evaluation process.
3. All main events will have a second, deciding round.
 - a. FINAL ROUND scores will determine ranks and outcomes.
 - b. First round scores will be used to break ties.
 - c. Final rounds in events with fewer than thirty (30) entries will include the top half of entries by first round score.
 - d. Final rounds in events with more than thirty (30) entries will include the top fifteen (15) entries by first round score.
 - e. In the event of a first round tie for performers in the #15 slot, all tied entries will be accepted to the final round.
4. Individual entry scores will be recorded on ballots and returned to entrants, but tabulation spreadsheets will not be shared with participants or the public.
5. Adjudication sheets will be available for directors to pick up following the awards ceremony.

Awards

1. Medals will be given to the **top three (3) finalists** in each main event.
2. In the event of a tie, each winner in the category will receive recognition/medal (these medals may have to be mailed).
3. In duet and group categories, each participant will receive a medal.

Timekeeper Responsibilities

1. Each school must provide one teacher to serve as a timekeeper. Parents are not allowed to serve as timekeepers.
2. Timekeepers must be available for the duration of the in-person individual events round.
3. Timekeepers are responsible for their own timing device.
4. Timekeepers will receive a packet of timekeeper ballots containing the list of entries in their round.
5. General time-keeping guidelines are as follows:
 - a. Time begins on the performer's first intentional word or action after slate.
 - b. Time ends on performer's "thank you" at the end of the piece.
 - c. Neither slate nor "thank you" is included in a performer's time.
 - d. Timekeepers are expected to record times for all entries and to make note of any that go over time.
 - e. If a performer exceeds the time limit, a 5-second grace period will be allowed.
 - i. Timekeepers will make a note that the performer entered the grace period.
 - ii. A 3-point penalty will be applied to the entrant's score by the MTA officials; timekeepers are not responsible for applying this penalty.
 - f. After the 5-second grace period (e.g. 5:06 for Acting Duet participants), the timekeeper must say "thank you" to

stop the performer.

- i. After the grace period, performers are disqualified.
- ii. Timekeepers should denote that the performer(s) exceeded the grace period, was(were) stopped, and did not finish their performance.
- iii. Timekeepers are **not** expected to notify entrants of their qualification status.

6. Individual time limits for categories are as follows:

- a. Acting Female / Acting Male: 3 minutes
- b. Acting Duet: 5 minutes
- c. Acting Group: 5 minutes
- d. Musical Female / Musical Male: 5 minutes
- e. Musical Duet: 5 minutes
- f. Musical Group: 5 minutes
- g. Original Scene: 5 minutes

Doorkeeper Responsibilities

1. Each school must provide one adult to serve as a doorkeeper.
 - a. Parents or teachers are allowed to serve as doorkeepers.
 - b. Students are not allowed to serve as doorkeepers.
2. Doorkeepers must be available for the duration of the in-person individual events round.
3. Doorkeepers will be stationed outside of the performance room and will not be able to watch performances.
4. Duties include the following:
 - a. Opening the door between performance flights
 - b. Maintaining a low noise level in the hallway at all times
 - c. Assisting students in locating the correct performance room
 - d. Ensuring door stays closed during performances and that no spectators or performers enter or exit during performances
 - e. As needed, collecting judges' score sheets to give to MTA officials

Contact

1. Teachers: contact the secondary IEs chair with any questions or concerns
 - a. Chair: Lauren Ray
 - b. Co-vice chair: Roxie Hood
 - c. Co-vice chair: Jessica Wilkinson
2. Email to: IndividualEvents@mississippitheatre.org

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS CATEGORIES

1. **Performance Events:**
 - a. Acting Solo: 9th & 10th Grade
 - b. Acting Solo: 11th Grade
 - c. Acting Solo: 12th Grade
 - d. Acting Duet
 - e. Acting Group
 - f. Musical Solo: 9th & 10th Grade
 - g. Musical Solo: 11th Grade

- h. Musical Solo: 12th Grade
 - i. Musical Duet
 - j. Musical Group
 - k. Original Scene
2. **Design Events:**
- a. Scenic Design
 - b. Costume Design
 - c. Publicity Design
 - d. Open Division for Evaluation Only (ODEO)

Event Requirements

- Students may participate in no more than five (5) individual events.
- Students may not enter the same event twice.

PERFORMANCE EVENTS: GENERAL INFORMATION

These rules apply to all performance events; read them carefully!

Time Requirements

- All performance events have specific time limits.
- Performers must slate before beginning their performance; slate is not included in the time limit.
 - a. A slate should include: student's name, school code, title of selection(s), and the name of the playwright(s).
 - b. If performing a musical piece, slate should include the title of the selection, title of the show, and the name(s) of the playwright(s).
 - c. E.g. "John Smith; School 9436; *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by William Shakespeare and *Rabbit Hole* by David Lindsay-Abaire."
 - d. E.g. "Hello, we are John Smith and Jane Jones from School 9436, and we will be performing *The Nerd* by Larry Shue."
 - e. E.g. "Hello, my name is Jane Jones from School 9436, and this is "Children will Listen" from *Into the Woods* by James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim."
- Performers should conclude by saying "thank you."
- **Time will begin with first word, musical sound, or intentional movement after the slate and will conclude with performer's "thank you."**
- Participants will have a 5-second grace period after allotted time.
 - a. At the end of the 5-second grace period, timekeeper will say "THANK YOU," and the entrant must stop immediately.
 - b. If an entry exceeds the grace period during the first round, it will NOT be eligible to advance to a final round. These entries will receive first round ballots with scores and feedback from the adjudicators.
 - c. If an entry exceeds the grace period during the final round, it will be disqualified from ranking in the top three but will receive final round ballots with scores and feedback from the adjudicators.
 - d. If a participant exceeds the allotted time but does not exceed the grace period, time will be recorded and a 3 point penalty will be issued to the participant's score.
 - e. The penalty for entering the grace period does not automatically disqualify student from advancing to a final round or ranking in the top three performances in the event.

Material Selection

- Material must be drawn from published plays.
 - a. Works from other literary forms such as poetry, fiction, stand up/sketch comedy, or song lyrics are not permitted.
 - b. Original works are prohibited except in the Original Scene category.

- c. Musical Theatre material must be from published musicals. Popular music will not be permitted unless it is included in the score of a published musical.
 - d. Entrants will be required to identify the company that holds the rights to the play or musical from which their material is selected as part of their registration.
- In events with more than one participant, each participant should be actively involved in the scene.
 - Selections should be appropriate to the performers and should provide interest, intelligibility, and literary value.
 - Performers should demonstrate evidence of understanding in regards to the selection's context and intent.
 - Entrants should use discretion in regards to language and subject matter.
 - a. Directors will attest that they have seen and approved the material their students are performing and that it appropriately reflects the standards of the student's school and community.
 - b. Adjudicators should direct concerns about content to the Individual Events Chair and should in NO CASE address a competitor directly with concerns about the content of their selection.
 - c. MTA supports a policy permitting the widest possible range of dramatic material and is not responsible for the perceived decency of selections that students enter in the Individual Events Festival.
 - No student may enter any Individual Event except ODEO with a selection that their school is bringing to any MTA-sponsored festival during the current school year.
 - No student may enter any Individual Event except ODEO with a selection that their school brought to any MTA-sponsored festival during the previous school year.

Attire

- No costumes or theatrical makeup is allowed.
 - a. Entrants who have created wearable theatrical artifacts for ODEO (costumes, props, puppets, etc.) may display these on a mannequin or dress form.
 - b. Entrants should not don their wearable theatrical artifacts for the interview process.
 - c. Entrants may not use live actors to model their wearable theatrical artifacts.
- Participants are encouraged to dress as they would for a general audition or job interview.
- All-black attire is welcome, but not required.

Equipment

- No hand props should be used.
- No set pieces are allowed for performance categories.
- Certain sound equipment will be provided by the festival:
 - a. Auxiliary cords and speakers will be provided for musical events.
 - b. **CD players will NOT be provided.**
 - i. Participants may bring their own portable CD player if necessary.
 - ii. Power outlets are not guaranteed.
 - c. Bluetooth speakers are discouraged.
 - i. If a participant chooses to use a Bluetooth speaker, the speaker must be connected BEFORE entering competition room.
 - ii. NO extra time will be allotted for Bluetooth complications.
 - d. Students in musical categories must provide another student or teacher to start their music.
- Only straight-back chairs (provided by host institution) are allowed:
 - a. Solo events will be provided with one chair.
 - b. Duet events will be provided with two chairs.
 - c. Group events will be provided chairs up to the number of performers in the group. Groups may not use more chairs than they have performers in the group.

Preparation

- All pieces should be memorized and rehearsed for time.
- Slates should be rehearsed.
- All pieces should be blocked for movement.
- Sample Secondary IEF ballots are available to view online.
- Judges' tips and tricks are available online.
- Design templates and samples are available online.

Miscellaneous:

- Students and sponsors are encouraged to observe individual events.
- Audience etiquette is expected in ALL events. An audience etiquette quick-reference guide is available online.
 - a. No cell phone use of any kind is allowed by observers inside the performance rooms.
 - b. Any violation of this rule may result in observer being asked to leave.
- Each event will be separated into "flights" (groups of performers).
 - a. At the end of each flight, the doorkeeper will open the door to allow participants and observers to enter and exit the room.
 - b. There will be no entry or exit during a flight.
- In the event of a tie for top scores, awards will be mailed to participants as necessary.

PERFORMANCE EVENTS: REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

These requirements include details for each category.

Areas of Competition

- Acting Solo: 9th & 10th Grade
- Acting Solo: 11th Grade
- Acting Solo: 12th Grade
- Acting Duet
- Acting Group
- Musical Solo: 9th & 10th Grade
- Musical Solo: 11th Grade
- Musical Solo: 12th Grade
- Musical Duet
- Musical Group
- Original Scene

For 2023-2024, MTA will continue to host an individual events festival that includes a virtual preliminary round for PERFORMANCE events.

1. Secondary Individual Events will have digitally submitted preliminary rounds for performance events.
2. The following guidelines regarding virtual submissions of digital recordings for preliminary performance entries will be used for the 2023-2024 MTA festival cycle for Secondary Individual Events.
3. All other guidelines, rules, and regulations will continue to follow those laid out in the Secondary Individual Events Operations Manual in the 2023 MTA Handbook.

Timeline:

- **November 15:** Registration for Schools participating in 2IEs

- **November 15 - December 15:** Virtual Preliminary Performance Submissions Window
- **January 1:** Preliminary Judging Complete
- **January 6:** Finalists Announced
- **January 13:** 2IEs Final Round
- **January 14:** 2IEs Awards Ceremony
- **Following MTA:** Teachers Receive Respondent Feedback (via email for preliminary rounds; in-person at the awards ceremony for finalists)

Preliminary Round Video Submission:

1. All performances will be submitted for evaluation via links on the 2IEs entries organizer.
2. Teachers will be responsible for submitting accurate links to their students' performance videos.
3. Entrants will pre-record and upload their performances to the internet.
 - a. Entrants are encouraged to upload to YouTube, Google Drive, or DropBox.
 - b. Teachers should ensure that all videos are accessible to be viewed by anyone with the link.
4. MTA is not responsible for corrupted or unwatchable videos, including links with restricted view access.
5. Entrants should preview their upload prior to final submission to ensure that everything is working correctly.

Filming:

1. Adjudication and evaluative response will focus on the quality of the performance rather than the quality of the video recording.
2. Performers are strongly encouraged to use their tools effectively.
3. A computer or a smartphone camera is sufficient for recording.
4. Elaborate, studio-grade equipment is unnecessary.
5. Video entries should each contain one complete performance and should not have any noticeable editing.
 - a. Trimming the beginning or the end of an entry so that the recording begins with the performer's slate and ends with their "thank you" is acceptable.
 - b. Adjusting sound settings after the filming is complete in order to better hear the audio is acceptable.
 - c. Cutting in the middle of a performance (for example, to splice two different takes of two monologues together in a solo Acting) is **not acceptable** and will result in the entry being **disqualified**.

Framing:

1. Submissions must be filmed in LANDSCAPE (horizontal) orientation; **submissions filmed in portrait (vertical) orientation will be disqualified.**
2. The performer should be the primary focal point of the video submission.
 - a. Performers are encouraged to find a neutral backdrop and should not use green-screens or virtual backgrounds.
 - b. Adjudicators understand that extenuating circumstances may make it difficult or impossible to eliminate all clutter from a performer's private space and are asked to bear this in mind as they complete their evaluations.
3. The camera lens should be placed at or slightly above eye-level.
4. Each entrant should make a deliberate choice about how close their camera is to their face.
 - a. Performers in monologue are encouraged to select full-body, knees-up, or waist-up framing.
 - b. Performers in events with more than one performer are encouraged to select full-body or knees-up framing.
 - c. **Adjudicators want to see all of the important blocking, movement, and gestures in the performance; the framing of the video should allow for this.**
5. Performers should consider best practices in regards to framing (including but not limited to cropping across major muscle groups rather than at joints, leaving adequate clutter-free negative space, and composing the frame to focus on their face).

Lighting:

1. Performances should be easy to see!
2. Performers are encouraged to situate their camera between themselves and two separated light sources - a combination of lamps and natural light are effective.
3. Performers should avoid standing directly in front of a light source as this creates a silhouette and obscures the details of their performance.

Audio:

1. Performances should be easy to hear!
2. Entrants should listen to their audio playback prior to submitting their video.
3. Performers should record themselves in a space that enhances vocal clarity and minimizes echo and excessive background noise.
4. Performers are prohibited from using bluetooth earbuds or other external microphones / voice amplifying devices as contemporary smartphones and computers have adequate microphones for capturing nearby audio.

Acting Solo

- TIME LIMIT: 3 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- **Two contrasting monologues are required.**
- Both monologues are performed by one actor portraying only one character in each of the monologues.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Acting Duet

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- Performed by two performers, each portraying one character.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Acting Group

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- Performed by **three to ten** (3-10) performers.
- Selection should be as equally balanced among all characters as possible.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Musical Solo

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- The performer must present one selection.
- Performers must use pre-recorded, non-vocal musical accompaniment.
 - a. No live accompaniment will be allowed.
 - b. For in-person rounds, all music must be downloaded onto the entrant's device.
 - c. See "Equipment" under General Information for full guidelines.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Musical Duet

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- Performed by two performers, each portraying one character.
- Entrants must present one selection.
- Each participant must be actively involved in the performance.
- Performers must use pre-recorded, non-vocal musical accompaniment.

- a. No live accompaniment will be allowed.
 - b. For in-person rounds, all music must be downloaded onto the entrant's device.
 - c. See "Equipment" under General Information for full guidelines.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Musical Group

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- Selection must be a musical theatre piece performed by **three to ten** (3-10) performers.
- Entrants must present one selection.
- Each participant must be actively involved in the performance.
- Performers must use pre-recorded, non-vocal musical accompaniment.
 - a. No live accompaniment will be allowed.
 - b. For in-person rounds, all music must be downloaded onto the entrant's device.
 - c. See "Equipment" under General Information for full guidelines.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.

Original Scene

- TIME LIMIT: 5 minutes. (Does not include slate.)
- Performed by **two to five** (2-5) performers.
- The selection must be an original work for 2-5 performers, and the writer must be involved with the development of the scene.
 - a. The purpose of the 2-5 character limitation is to encourage students to write well-developed scenes.
 - b. The selection should be as equally balanced between the characters as possible.
- Scenes may be serious or humorous in nature or may contain elements that are both comedic and dramatic.
- Entrants must provide a verification statement confirming that they are the author and original performers of the selection.
 - c. The verification should be submitted to the Individual Events Chair the by the preliminary IEs submission deadline.
 - d. The verification must be signed by the teacher and participating students.
- Refer to Performance Events: General Information for full rules and guidelines.