



General Information on Auditions

Each autumn, teams of adjudicators travel round the country to audition applicants for membership in the following year's orchestras. (Membership is from 1 January to 31 December each year.) Membership is granted for a year only and all members have to re-audition in competition with all other applicants if they wish to be in the Orchestra again in the following year.

The auditions are organised all round the country to try to put a venue in the reach of everyone who is interested. Applications for auditions are accepted from May each year. Parents are asked to give two choices of venue if possible. Each venue has a maximum number of candidates who can be seen in a day and these audition 'slots' are allocated as the applications are received. Once a venue is full, any later applications requesting it will have to take a place in their second choice venue instead. If you need a particular venue or date, you are advised to get your application in as early as possible. There is no preference given to existing members: it is strictly 'first come – first served'.

Invitations to audition are sent out in mid September giving a date, place and time for each audition. These are despatched in the order that the auditions will take place, earliest venues first. Those who have chosen one of the venues later in the audition schedule should have received their invitation by the end of September.

Once these invitations have been despatched, there is a £5 administration fee if you request a change of venue and it is possible to arrange this. You need to be aware that it is not always possible to arrange a change, especially if you are asking for one of the more popular places which may be full.

When all the auditions have been completed, the Director of Music watches all the recordings again in groups so that he reviews all the eleven-years-old cellists one after the other, for instance. He will make any minor adjustments in the scores awarded to each child to ensure that it does not make a difference which adjudicator heard the applicant, where they auditioned or whether it was at the beginning or the end of the audition period.

The results are then listed in order of merit and a decision is made on who will be offered the places available. Results are sent out by post and everyone receives a short report on the audition. Please note that we do not give out results over the phone.

Most results will be despatched by the end of November. The main exceptions are that the results for the members of the current Under 13 Orchestra will not be sent out until after their Winter Concert which will be held on 5 December in London.

Sending in an application

You can print off an application form from this website, request that a copy be sent to you by email or request that a printed copy be sent to you by post. For either of the two latter options, please email us or write giving your address.

The completed form must be sent to us together with a cheque for the audition fee and an optional self-addressed and stamped postcard if you wish to receive notification of its arrival at our office.

You may wish your child to audition on more than one instrument. If this is so, he or she will have a separate audition scheduled for each instrument with time between them to allow for full preparation for each one. There is a reduced audition fee for the second and any subsequent instruments providing the auditions are at the same venue on the same day. The fee for a single audition is £25 with an additional £5 for each extra instrument when those conditions apply. (Non-members who attended one of our Access2Orchestra days in May will have been sent an application form which permits them to apply for an audition at a reduced rate.)

Each audition requires a separate application form to be completed. It is not acceptable to put the information for more than one audition on any form.

If your music teacher wants to have all his or her pupils auditioning on the same day, or you plan to share travel arrangements with another family, you need to put a note in with your application form to say which other child (or children) you wish to be adjacent to on the audition timetable. Once the slots have been allocated in September, it may be impossible to make any changes to facilitate these arrangements. This would also apply if you wish to share an accompanist. (NCO does not require a child to play accompanied and does not provide accompanists. If you wish your child to have an accompanist, you will need to make your own arrangements for this.)

Geraldine Jones
Office Manager
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