

The Leinster School of Music and Drama

Solo Acting Grade Syllabus







FLSMD

Established 1904

The Leinster School of Music & Drama

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The Leinster School of Music & Drama
Griffith College Dublin
South Circular Road
Dublin 8

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A Brief History

The Leinster School of Music and Drama was founded in September 1904 by Mr. Samuel Myerscough, Mus.B.Oxon., F.R.C.O. Miss May Cosgrave, her sister Joan Burke, and Miss May McCarron diligently carried on and expanded the school in Harcourt Street. They generously dedicated countless hours to advising and training teachers, setting high standards of quality. By the 1950s, thanks in large part to Secretary Joseph O'Neill (also a music critic for the Irish Independent), the school was conducting examinations for 3,000 candidates nationwide.

In 1984, the school relocated to new premises at 5 Upper Stephen Street and under the exceptional leadership of Director Miss Sheila Murphy, the number of centres expanded to over 300 nationwide.

In September 1998, as part of its growth and development, The Leinster School of Music and Drama formed a partnership with Griffith College Dublin. This collaboration brought together the expertise and resources of both institutions, allowing for further expansion and enhancement of the performing arts programmes. The school benefited from Griffith College's state-of-the-art facilities, including modern rehearsal spaces, performance venues, and recording studios.

In 2010, recognizing the growing demand The LSMD embarked on a new chapter by launching their QQI approved third-level Higher Diploma in Arts in Drama Education. This pioneering course focused exclusively on drama education and was the first of its kind in the country. The LSMD expanded its offerings further by introducing the Certificate in Drama Teaching (45 Credits) and Certificate in Drama Performance (20 Credits) courses. These programmes were designed to cater to both full-time and part-time students, accommodating the needs of serious drama enthusiasts who wished to pursue their studies alongside work or other commitments.

Today, The Leinster School of Music and Drama at Griffith College Dublin continues to provide comprehensive training in music and drama to students of all ages and abilities. The school offers a diverse range of programmes, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, diploma courses, and certificate programmes. Students receive rigorous training in their chosen disciplines, combined with practical performance opportunities and a strong focus on artistic development.

The Leinster School of Music and Drama maintains a strong connection with the professional performing arts community in Ireland and abroad. It frequently collaborates with renowned artists, guest lecturers, and industry experts, providing students with valuable networking opportunities and real-world insights. The school's graduates have gone on to establish successful careers in music, drama, teaching, and related fields, contributing to the vibrant cultural landscape of Ireland and beyond.

In conclusion, The Leinster School of Music and Drama, located within Griffith College Dublin, has a storied history spanning over a century. From its origins in 1904 to its partnership with Griffith College, the school has consistently upheld a tradition of excellence in performing arts education. Its commitment to nurturing talent and fostering artistic growth has made it a leading institution for aspiring musicians and actors in Ireland.

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Ambassador of The Leinster School of Music & Drama

Aoibhín Garrihy ALSMD, LLSMD

Aoibhín Garrihy is a graduate of The Leinster School of Music and Drama Associate Diploma and the Licentiate Diploma and was awarded an Honorary Fellowship from The LSMD in 2023. Aoibhín is an actress, speech and drama teacher, entrepreneur, and social media influencer and having graduated with a BA in Acting Studies at Trinity College Dublin in 2009, she became well known from her work in TV dramas Fair City, The Fall and on stage at The Gate Theatre. In recent years she co-founded lifestyle and wellness brand Beo, published a best-selling poetry anthology "Every Day is a Fresh Beginning - Meaningful Poems for Life" with another book due for publication in September 2023. She lives in Co Clare with her husband John and three young daughters.

Other notable Honorary Fellows of The Leinster School of Music and drama include: Anna Scher.

The Leinster School of Music & Drama – Tuition and Examinations

Established in 1904 The Leinster School of Music & Drama is now celebrating over 100 years. Its long-standing tradition both as a centre for learning and examining is stronger than ever.

Tuition

Expert individual tuition is offered in a variety of subjects:

Speech & Drama
Effective Communication
Public Speaking
Solo Acting
Group Drama

Singing and Voice Coaching Keyboard Woodwind Strings

Experienced and dedicated teachers provide excellent tuition to pupils of all ages and levels. The emphasis is on learning through enjoyment, and while exams are encouraged, they are not compulsory.

Examinations

As a national examining body, The LSMD offers grade and diploma examinations in both music and drama, as well as the Higher Diploma in Arts in Drama Education. Over 2000 music and drama teachers nationwide are teaching the school's various syllabuses and preparing students for Leinster School examinations throughout the year. Approximately 15,000 candidates are examined annually - thus the reputation of the School reaches far beyond the province in which it began almost a century ago.

General Guidance and Examination Regulations

This syllabus has been framed on modern and educational lines, and on a systematic basis of progression through the grades from Introductory to Diploma level.

The publications listed in this syllabus are suggested editions. The Leinster School of Music & Drama (LSMD) has tried to source pieces from current publications, but some texts listed may no longer be in print. If you require assistance sourcing material, please contact the Griffith College Library at 01 415 0490 or email library@griffith.ie.

Entry Forms

Entry forms, with particulars filled in and accompanied by fees, must reach The Leinster School of Music & Drama by 01 November for examinations to be held before the Christmas period; 01 February for examinations to be held before the Easter period, and 01 March for examinations to be held after the Easter period.

The right is reserved to refuse or cancel any entry in which case the examination fee will be refunded.

Exam Schedule

Examiners would like to talk to Teachers about the exam timetable etc. prior to exams. When The LSMD email your schedule, the examiner or teacher should contact each other to co-ordinate the timetable. E.g., if you have given candidate times — this is to ensure that the examinations run to the same timetable and candidates/parents times will not run behind and delays will be kept at a minimum.

A timetable must be provided by the teacher to the examiner at least two days before the exam date and should include the starting and finishing times, scheduled breaks, and lunch.

Venue

Examinations are held annually at local centres throughout Ireland. Fees are fixed on the assumption that the venue for examination will be provided by the school or teacher.

Any school or teacher presenting at least twenty candidates for examination in any one subject in any one subject may secure a local centre for that subject. Those presenting fewer than twenty candidates may obtain a centre by paying the equivalent to the fees of twenty candidates, or alternatively can send their candidates to the nearest existing centre.

Exam rooms should be clean, warm, and well lit. A table, chair and socket (for the examiner's laptop if required) should be provided in venues. Noise levels outside the exam room should be kept to a minimum.

Visiting Other Centres

When candidates are visiting another centre for exams it is requested that the candidate arrives fully prepared. The candidate's teacher should inform The LSMD of this change, and in turn they will contact the examiner.

Illness

If through illness a candidate is unable to attend the examination at the appointed time, re-entry will be allowed for the same grade on payment of a transfer fee of €5, or for a higher grade on payment of the difference in fees plus a transfer fee of €5.

Candidates who have been in contact with an infectious illness must not be presented for examination unless they are out of quarantine.

Report Cards

The examiners will make a report on work presented. This report will have the candidates' marks and a general assessment. This report will be sent to the candidate following the examination and should act as a guideline for both teachers and candidates.

Please allow 3 – 4 weeks for the processing of exam results, especially at busy times of the year. The LSMD will do their best to expediate all results on a first come, first served basis. Exams held after mid-May may not have results returned before the end of the school year.

Responsibility is not accepted for loss of report cards after dispatch by An Post. Where cards have been lost, the total marks obtained, but not their details, will be supplied on application. The candidates and the teacher must accept the examiner's decision regarding each candidate unconditionally.

Marks

Maximum marks awarded in all grades and subjects are 100. In Grade 3 and above, a medal will be awarded to candidates gaining 95 marks.

Schedule of Maximum Marks	
First Class Honours	85 – 100 Marks
Honours	80 – 84 Marks
Pass with Merit	75 – 74 Marks
Pass	65 – 74 Marks

Age Requirements

Ages listed in the syllabus are a guide and should be seen as a minimum requirement. For older Grades (6-10), teachers should use their discretion when entering a new candidate for exams. They should look at previous experience/completed grades with other Speech & Drama boards, when choosing the starting grade. Teachers may choose appropriate selections for candidates who come to the exam system as mature candidates and entre for the junior Speech & Drama grades.

Duration of Recitals

Candidates may combine shorter and longer pieces in their performance programmes to stay inside the allotted time. Candidates should make sure that their performances are long enough to provide them with the best chance to exhibit the necessary skills. To ensure that there is enough time to finish all remaining components of the exam, the examiner may urge a candidate to move on to their next task and shorten an extended performance piece.

Prompting

All pieces must be known off by heard unless otherwise stated. Examiners will prompt where necessary, if provided with a copy of the candidates' pieces. The mark awarded will reflect the extent to which prompting is required.

Role Gender

Candidates can perform male or female roles regardless of their gender identification.

Staging and Costumes

Costumes and props are not necessary for performance and candidates will not gain marks for these. If a candidate must set up and strike any furniture or props, this must be done within the allotted time for the exam grade. Although using costumes is not required, candidates who do so should take care to avoid having to change into them between portions of the exam.

Notes

Solo Acting Grade Syllabus

About

The Leinster School of Music and Drama Solo Acting syllabus has been carefully designed to provide a comprehensive overview of the key concepts, techniques, and skills that candidates will need to master and excel in solo acting performance. From character development and script analysis to vocal and physical expression, candidates will learn a wide range of techniques and strategies to help you bring your character to life and engage your audience.

Throughout the syllabus, candidates will also have the opportunity, to explore a variety of genres and styles, from classical theatre to contemporary drama, allowing them to develop their versatility as an actor and broaden their artistic horizons.

The LSMD encourage candidates to approach our exam with a sense of enthusiasm and a willingness to take risks and push their boundaries as a performer. With hard work, dedication, and a commitment to excellence, the LSMD are confident that candidates will achieve great success in this exam and beyond.

Notes for Teachers

The following grades in Solo Acting have been designed for students who show an interest in Acting and Drama. Candidates will be expected to perform 2 pieces of solo drama in which they must show a clear understanding of the following:

- The characters which they have chosen to portray.
- An understanding of the piece or play from which the extract has been taken.
- An ability to convey emotions and feelings.
- An ability to employ vocal variety.
- Candidates will be expected to use movement appropriate to their scenes.
- Candidates will be required to use accent relevant to their scenes.
- The candidates may present themselves in costume, but no extra marks will be given for costume or the use of props in any area of Drama.
- Candidates will also be marked on Presentation of self and material during the examination.

Mime

Mime is a form of performance art that involves acting out a story or message through body movements and facial expressions without the use of words. There are many different styles of mime, including occupational and abstract mime.

Occupational Mime

Occupational Mime involves mimicking specific tasks or actions that are associated with a particular profession or occupation, such as a chef preparing a meal, a carpenter building furniture, or a scientist conducting experiments.

Abstract Mime

Abstract Mime involves expressing emotions, ideas, or concepts through abstract body movements and gestures. It does not focus on specific actions or tasks, but rather on conveying an abstract message or meaning through movement and expression.

Both occupational and abstract mime require a high level of physical control and expressiveness and can be used to convey a wide range of emotions and messages to audiences.

Exam Duration: 12 Minutes

Schedule of Maximum Marks	
Presentation	10
Own Choice Solo Drama	50
Mime	20
Questions	20

Presentation	Notes
Candidates will be expected to formally present and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their grade. Candidates should present a copy of their pieces and drawings to the examiner.	The candidate may pres themselves in costume but no marks will be awarded for cos or use of props. All material presented must be neat and legible.
	-
Own Choice Drama	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory: 1. Solo Drama The drama may be an adaption any book or a piece of drama from any published	The extract chosen must be surange. Max Time: 3 Minutes
Mime	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory: 1. Prepared Mime The mime must decupational	Occupation Mime: Miming everyday tasks e.g. mai pancakes Max Time2 Minutes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory: 1. Prepared Mime	Occupation Mime: Miming everyday tasks e.g. mai pancakes

Exam Duration: 15 Minutes

Schedule of Maximum Marks	
Presentation	10
Own Choice Drama 1	30
Own Choice Drama 2	30
Mime	15
Questions	15

Presentation	Notes
Candidates will be expected to formally present and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their grade. Candidates should present a copy of their pieces and drawings to the examiner.	The candidate may pres themselves in costume but no marks will be awarded for costor use of props. All material presented must be neat and legible.
Own Choice Drama 1	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory: 1. Solo Drama The drama may be an adaption from any book or a piec€rofndaampaublished play.	The extract chosen must be surange. Max Time: 3 Minutes
Own Choice Drama	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory: 1. Solo Drama The drama extract must be in contrast Choice Drama 1.	The extract chosen must be surange. Max Time: 3 Minutes
Mime	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory: 1. Prepared Mime The mime must distract in style and can be of the	AbstractMime: Telling a story through a thoug emotion for e.g. anger or joy Max Time3 Minutes
Questions	Notes
Candidates should be prepared to hold a short conversation with the examiner about the selections chosen for their examination to include the following: How the candidate prepared for playing their character? What's contrasting between the two characters? The story surrounding their selection. 	

Exam Duration: 15 Minutes

Schedule of Maximum Marks	
Presentation	10
Own Choice Modern Drama	30
Own Choice Shakespeare	30
Unprepared Mime	15
Questions	15

Presentation	Notes
Candidates will be expected to formally present and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their grade.	The candidate may present thems in costume but no extra markses awarded for costume or use of pr
Candidates should present a copy of their pieces and drawings to the examiner.	All material presented must be neat and legible.
Own Choice Modern Drama	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:	The extract chosen must be suita
 Modern Drama The drama must be an extract from any publiafted 1960. 	Max Time: 3 Minutes
Candidates will be expected to have read their chosen play.	
Own Choice Shakespeare	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:	The extract chosen must be suita
1. Shakespeare Drama u o	Max Time: 3 Minutes
Candidates will be expected to have read their chosen play.	
Unprepared Mime	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform an unprepared mime. It will stem from either the modern or Shakespeare drama.	Preparation Time: 1 Minute Max Performance Time: 2 Minutes
Questions	Notes
Candidates should be prepared to hold a short conversation with the examiner about the selections chosen for their examination to include the following: How the candidate prepared for playing their character? What are the challenges facing a young performer playing Shakespeare? The story surrounding their selection.	

Exam Duration: 15 Minutes

Schedule of Maximum Marks	
Presentation	10
Own Choice Modern Drama	30
Own Choice Classical Drama	30
Prepared Improvisation	15
Questions	15

Presentation	Notes
Candidates will be expected to formally present and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their grade. Candidates should present a copy of their pieces and drawings to the examiner.	The candidate may present thems in costume but no extra marks vawarded for costume or use of practical presented must be neat and legible.
Own Choice Modern Drama	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:	The extract chosen must be suita
1. Irish Modern Drama The drama must be an extract from slapnyblished planter 1960.	Max Time: Minutes
Candidates will be expected to have read their chosen play.	
Own Choice Classical Drama	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:	The extract chosen must be suita
1. Classical Drama Thedrama must be an extract from any publisbefore 1:920.	Max Time: Minutes
Candidates will be expected to have read their chosen play.	
Shakespeare by an Irish author may not be chosen in this section.	
Unprepared Improvisation	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:	Max Time: 4 Minutes
 A Prepared Improvisation This improvisation will be based on one of their chosen characters everyday task. 	
Questions	Notes
Candidates should be prepared to hold a short conversation with the examiner about the selections chosen for their examination to include the following: How the candidate prepared for playing their character? Compare the performance styles of the two periods. The plays. The authors. 	

Exam Duration: 20 Minutes

Schedule of Maximum Marks	
Presentation	10
Own Choice Irish Classical	30
Drama	
Own Choice Modern Drama	30
Unprepared Improvisation	15
Discussion and Questions	15

Presentation	Notes
Candidates will be expected to formally present and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their grade. Candidates should present a copy of their pieces and drawings to the examiner.	The candidate mpyesent themselv in costume but no extra marks vawarded for costume or use of praction All material presented must be neat and legible.
Own Choice Irish Classical Drama	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:	The extract chosen must be suita
1. Irish Classical Drama The drama must be an extract from any Irish publication 1969.	Max Time: Minutes
Candidates will be expected to have read their chosen play.	
Own Choice Modern Drama	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:	The extract chosen must be suita
1. Modern Drama The drama must be an extract from any publible of the product of the drama must be an extract from any publible of the drama must be an extract from the drama must be an extract from any publible of the drama must be an extract from the drama must	Max Time: Minutes
Candidates will be expected to have read their chosen play.	
An Irish Author may not be chosen in this section.	
Unprepared Improvisation	Notes
Candidates will be expected to perform from memory:	Prep Time: 2 Minutes Max Performance Time: 3 Minutes
2. An Unprepared Improvisation This improvisation wallbased on one of their chosen plays.	
Questions and Discussion	Notes
Candidates should be prepared to hold a conversation with the examiner about the selections chosen for their examination to include the following:	
 How the candidate prepared for playing their character? Compare the performance styles of the two periods. The plays. The authors. 	

Certificate Grade

Exam Duration: 25 Minutes

Schedule of Maximum Marks		
Presentation	10	
Programme	50	
Sight Reading	15	
Improvisation	10	
Discussion	15	

Presentation	Notes
Candidates will be expected to formally present and conduct themselves in a manner that is appropriate to their grade.	The candidate may present thems in costume but no extra marks v awarded for costume or use of pr
Candidates should present a copy of their pieces and drawings to the examiner.	All material presented must be neat and legible.
Programme	Notes
Candidates will be required to present a balanced programme on a theme chosen by the candidate. The programme must include the following:	Marks will be awarded for ar presentation and entertainment va
1. Three Drama Extracts These selections mediect contrasting styles/periods of drama. The candidate least one selection show an ability to use accent.	Max Time15 Minutes
2. Linking script to connect the theme to the extracts.	
Linking script to connect the theme to the extracts. Sight Reading	Notes
	Notes Preparation Time: 2 Minutes
Sight Reading Candidates will be expected to sight read from a play chosen by the examiner during the	
Sight Reading Candidates will be expected to sight read from a play chosen by the examiner during the examination. A short synopsis of the play will be given by the examiner to the candidates.	Preparation Time: 2 Minutes
Sight Reading Candidates will be expected to sight read from a play chosen by the examiner during the examination. A short synopsis of the play will be given by the examiner to the candidates. Improvisation Candidates will be expected to perform an improvisation based on words given by the	Preparation Time: 2 Minutes Notes Prep Time: Minutes
Sight Reading Candidates will be expected to sight read from a play chosen by the examiner during the examination. A short synopsis of the play will be given by the examiner to the candidates. Improvisation Candidates will be expected to perform an improvisation based on words given by the examiner during the exam. Candidates will be given 3 minutes preparation time.	Preparation Time: 2 Minutes Notes Prep Time: Minutes Max Performance Time: 3 Minutes

Notes

Recommended Reading List

Subject	Book Title	Author
Poetry/Literature	The Making of a Poem	A Norton
	How to Read and Why	Harold Bloom
	The Secret Life of Poems : A Poetry Primer	Tom Paulin
	Reading Poetry : An Introduction	Tom Furniss & Michael Bath
	Understanding Poetry	James Read
	The Rise of the Novel	Ian Watt
Subject	Book Title	Author
Theory	Effective Speech	Graham Marash
	Speech Training	Greta Coulson
	Clear Speech	Malcolm Morrisson
	The Practical Guide to Speech Training	Gordon Luck
Subject	Book Title	Author
The Voice	Voice and the Actor	Cicely Berry & Peter Brook
	The Actor and the Text	Cicely Berry
	The Right to Speak	Patsy Rodenburg
	The Need for Words	Patsy Rodenburg
	The Actor Speaks	Patsy Rodenburg
	Speaking Shakespeare	Patsy Rodenburg
	Speech & Communication in the Primary School	Clive Sanson
	Freeing Shakespeare's Voice	Kristin Linklater
	The Voice Book	Michael Mc Callion
Subject	Book Title	Author
The Body	Movement and the Body	M. Evans
	The Empty Space	Peter Brook
	The Actor and His Body	Litz Pisk:Foreword by Michael Elliott
Subject	Book Title	Author
Mime	Movement and the Body	M. Evans
	The Empty Space	Peter Brook
	The Actor and His Body	Litz Pisk:Foreword by Michael Elliott

Subject	Book Title	Author
Improvisation	The Improvisation Game	Chris Johnston
	Improvisation for the Theater, 3rd Edition	Viola Spolin
	Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre	Keith Johnstone intro by Irving Wardle
Educational Drama	Towards a Theory in Drama in Education	Gavin Bolton
	Starting Drama Teaching	Michael Fleming
	Drama Worlds	Cecily O Neill
	Drama Structures	Cecily O Neill
	Developing Drama Skills 11-14	Joss Bennathan
	Drama as a Learning Medium	Betty Jane Wagner
	The Teaching of Drama in the Primary School	Brian Wooland
	Structuring Drama Work	Jonathon Neelands
	Theatre Games	Clive Barker
	An Actor Prepares	Stanislavsky
	Creating a Role	Stanislavsky
	Building a Character	Stanislavsky
	The Art of the Stage	Stanislavsky
	Playing the Game	Chrissy Poulter
	Using Drama with Children on the Autism Spectrum	C. Conn

Subject	Book Title	Author
General Theatre and Drama Studies	Theatre of the Oppressed	Augusto Boal
	Brecht on Theatre	Bertolt Brecht trans. John Willett
	The Field of Drama	Martin Esslin
	Towards a Poor Theatre	Jerzy Gretowski trans. Engenio Bartov
	There are no Secrets	Peter Brook
	20th Century Actor Training	Alison Hodge
	Creating a Role	Stanis Lavski
	Starting Drama	Eric Boagey
	Theatre Directions	Jonathan Neelands & Warwick Dobson
	The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama	Keir Elam
	Theatre as Sign System.	Elaine Aston & George Savona
	A Semiotics of Text & Performance	Carl Allensworth
	The Complete Play Production Handbook	Peter Barkworth
	About Acting	Peter Hall
	Shakespeare's Advice to the Players	Peter Brook
	The Shifting Point	Philip Auslander
	Theory for Performance Studies, A Student's Guide	Cicely Berry
	Text in Action	Colin Counsell & Laurie Wolf
	Performance Analysis	David Wiles
	Greek Theatre Performance, An Introduction	John Barton
	Playing Shakespeare	Simon Callow The Applause Acting Series
	Acting in Restoration Comedy	Bill Bryson
	Shakespeare	Jan Kott
Subject	Book Title	Author
Associated with Irish Theatre	Theatre Talk.	Edited by Lilian Chambers,
	Voices of Irish Theatre Practioners	Ger Fitzgibbon & Eamonn Jordan
	Critical Moments	Fintan O' Toole
	A History of Irish Theatre 1601-2000	Christopher Morash
	Devised Performance in Irish Theatre	Siobhan O'Gorman & Charlotte McIvor

PUBLISHED BY THE LEINSTER SCHOOL OF MUSIC & DRAMA

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