AUDITION REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL DISCIPLINES

About NOCCA

Thank you for your interest in New Orleans Center for Creative Arts!

As Louisiana’s arts conservatory for high school students, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA) provides professional arts training to talented Louisiana students in Classical Instrumental Music, Classical Vocal Music, Creative Writing, Culinary Arts, Dance, Drama, Jazz, Media Arts, Musical Theatre, Theatre Design, Visual Arts, and Academics. Attendance options include full-day, half-day, and after school.

A successful NOCCA student is expected to maintain a professional level of commitment to training and progress. NOCCA’s rules, procedures, and grading system mirror those of the professional arts world, so that students receive rewards and setbacks at NOCCA based on the same criteria they would face in an arts career.

NOCCA is tuition-free, but students are required to pay a Department Fee to cover supply costs. Assistance may be available to help pay for such fees, based on the student’s needs.

Program Eligibility

Students who are residents of Louisiana and currently attending a public, private, or parochial school, or homeschool program in the:

- Current 6th-7th grade may apply for Middle School Arts Instruction in Classical Instrumental Music or Dance. Attendance in these programs is after school.
- Current 8th grade may apply for High School Arts Instruction in any arts discipline and the Academic Studio. Attendance in these programs may be full-day, half-day, or after school.
- Current 8th-11th grade may apply for both High School Arts Instruction and Summer Intensive in any either the same or different disciplines. Attendance in these programs may be half-day, after school, or summer.
- Currently enrolled NOCCA high school students may apply for Summer Intensive in a discipline other than their current discipline.

Application Requirements

1. You must be a resident of the state of Louisiana and enrolled in a middle or high school program (public, private, parochial, or state-approved homeschool).
2. You must have at least a 2.0 (C) overall grade point average from your present school.
3. Applicants may only apply for one arts discipline per session, but may apply for both High School Arts Instruction and Summer Intensive in either the same or different disciplines.
4. A complete application consists of a submitted application (either online or paper) as well as any other materials listed in the Audition Requirements section under the arts discipline for which you are applying.
5. A complete application must be received before the application deadline in order to be considered for an audition. **Faxed applications will not be accepted.**

6. Once your complete application is received and you are deemed eligible, you will be scheduled for an audition. Cancelled or missed auditions will not be rescheduled.

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**Audition Requirements for ALL Disciplines**

**Classical Instrumental Music**

**Students currently in 6th-11th grades may apply.**

**At the audition:** All students applying for any instrument will need to prepare to perform (1) two *contrasting* pieces, such as a movement of a Sonata, Sonatina, Concerto, Two-part Invention, Etude, Characteristic Piece, etc., and (2) demonstrate skills in major/minor scales and sight-reading music. It is recommended that the audition pieces best demonstrate the student's ability to play in both technical and lyrical styles. Scales for all instruments must be performed from memory. (3) Students should be able to discuss their grades and express a strong self-drive and motivation to advance in their art form. (4) Students may be given a test in elemental music theory, so that they are placed at the most suitable theory level should they be accepted at the Classical Instrumental Program at NOCCA. Please see below for specific requirements concerning each instrument/area.

*"Contrasting" refers to two different time periods (i.e. Baroque, Classical, Romantic, Impressionistic, Contemporary). In order to show different types of skills (technical, musical, etc.), students may choose one fast and one slow piece, but that is not a requirement and what is meant with "contrasting." Students should not play two pieces by the same composer or two movements of the same piece.

**Classical Piano**

In addition to preparing to perform (1) two contrasting pieces (see definition of contrasting above) from memory that best demonstrate student's good sound, technique, sense of rhythm, expression, and overall musicality, students will need to prepare (2) three scales of their own choosing and be able to perform them in a speed that is allowing the student to demonstrate evenness, good articulation, and correct fingering. It is highly recommended (but not mandatory) that the student is able to perform the scales in 2 to 4 octaves and hands together. In addition, (3) piano applicants may be given a short sight-reading test that is suitable for their level.

**Classical Strings (Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass)**

In addition to preparing to perform (1) two contrasting pieces from memory, students will need to prepare (2) the following scales for the audition:

- Violin: G, A, B-flat major 2-octave scales for Prep; two 3-octave scales for High School (1 major/1 melodic minor)
- Viola: C, D major 2-octave scales for Prep; two 3-octave scales for High School (1 major/1 melodic minor)
- Cello: C, D major 2-octave scales for Prep; two 3-octave scales for High School (1 major/1 melodic minor)
- Bass: E, G major 1-octave scales for Prep; two 2-octave scales for High School (1 major/1 melodic minor)

And (3) string applicants may be given a short sight-reading test that is suitable for their level

**Classical Guitar**

Classical Guitar applicants will need to (1) demonstrate proper sitting position with a footstool showcasing good posture and left and right-hand position and function of the fingers as referenced in *Pumping Nylon* by Scott Tennant. (2) Perform two contrasting pieces from memory (see definition of contrasting above), such as a movement of a Sonata, Sonatina, Concerto, stand-alone piece, or Etude that demonstrate good sound technique, good sense of rhythm, expression, and overall musicality. (3) Demonstrate two-octave major scales (Segovia C-major movable pattern) from 1st to 7th position and a first position chromatic scale on all six strings-alternation of index and middle fingers from the big knuckle should be evident. (4) Sight-reading: students will need to successfully sight-read a short passage in first position.

**Classical Woodwinds (Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon, Saxophone) and Classical Brass (French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba)**

Students will need to prepare to perform (1) two contrasting pieces (see definition of contrasting above). Selected works may be chosen from standard works for the instrument (individual movements from a Concerto, Sonata, Etude or other solo work). Selections cannot be excerpts or individual parts from band or orchestra works. Audition pieces should best demonstrate the student's ability to play in both technical and lyrical styles. It is recommended (but not mandatory) that at least one of the selected pieces is performed from memory. (2) In addition, applicants must prepare at least three major scales of their own choosing (one or two octaves). Scales must be performed from memory. (3) Applicants should demonstrate proper posture and hand position for their instrument.

**Classical Vocal Music**

Students currently in 8th-11th grades may apply.

**At the audition:**

(1) Demonstrate a singing voice with professional potential in classical music by singing one prepared and memorized song from the following list:

- "Caro mio ben," "Sebben Crudele" or any other Italian art song.
- One of these two English songs: "Danny Boy," "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes."
- Two verses of a hymn.
- A traditional spiritual.
No other song genres are permitted. Some of these songs may be downloaded from our website in several keys. Please bring piano accompaniment sheet music for your chosen audition piece with you to your audition in your preferred key so that our provided accompanist can accompany your audition. No unaccompanied singing will be accepted.

(2) Demonstrate the ability to match pitches and melodies that will be played for you on the piano, repeat clapped rhythms, and sing a major scale in tune.

(3) Be able to discuss your grades and express a strong desire to explore Classical Vocal Music.

(4) Demonstrate basic sight-reading skills involving simple rhythmic and melodic sequences. An example of these may be downloaded from our website.

(5) Pass a written test in basic music theory which is given at the end of the scheduled audition. An example of this may be downloaded from our website.

**Creative Writing**

**Students currently in 8th-10th grades may apply.**

Include with your completed application:

(1) An original work of creative writing. This can be a poem, short story, or work of creative nonfiction that you have spent time revising and consider to be an example of your best work.

(2) A list of books you have read over the past three months. The list should include the title (in *italics*) and author (first and last name) of each book.

(3) A writing sample (poem, short story, or creative nonfiction) that describes what you see outside a window in your house. Please include sensory details (how things look, smell, taste, sound, or feel) and at least one simile or metaphor. Limit: 10 lines of poetry or 100 words of prose (fiction/non-fiction).

(4) An essay discussing a poem, short story or novel you read that influenced you as a writer. Please tell us how this work/author changed the way you think about writing. Use quotes and examples from the text to support your ideas. The essay should be between 300 and 500 words.

All writing submissions should be typed using a standard 12-point font and black ink. Please proofread your submissions to ensure that they are free from grammatical and spelling errors. Selected students will be asked to advance to the Audition Process.

At the audition:

(1) Students invited to audition must bring an additional writing portfolio consisting of at least 10 typed pages of original creative writing (poetry, short fiction, or creative nonfiction) and an updated list of recently read books.

(2) Students may be asked to write a short piece assigned by the instructor and will be asked to read aloud and discuss a published poem or story excerpt.

(3) All students invited to an audition should be prepared for a one-on-one interview with a faculty member. Consider these questions prior to your audition date: Why do you want to study writing? Are you willing to spend many hours outside of class on your reading and writing? What do you need to know about NOCCA and the writing program in order to determine if it's the right fit for you? Successful students demonstrate a strong desire to read and write as well as a willingness to do more than the work required.

(4) Students may also be asked to attend a creative writing class.
**Culinary Arts**  
Students currently in 8th-11th grades may apply.

**Include with your completed application:** An essay explaining what culinary means to you, including your relationship with food and how culinary affects your daily life.

**At the audition:**
1. You will be scheduled for an interview with the chef instructor who will ask you a series of questions about your experiences, expertise and commitment. Prepare to discuss your interest in culinary arts, what or who inspires you, and any experience or training. A second interview may be required.
2. Be prepared to be involved in an individual or group practical exam which may include, but not be limited to, weights and measures, conversions, basic knowledge of leading/mother sauces, stock making.
3. Be prepared to get creative and provide menu or product ideas for thematic events.

**Dance**  
Students currently in 6-7th grades may apply for Middle School Arts Instruction; 8-11th grades are eligible to apply for the High School Arts Instruction.

**At the audition:**
1. You will be assessed on your acquired skills in ballet, modern and jazz techniques as well as personal fitness for dance.
2. Come dressed in dance clothes (girls: black leotards, pink and black convertible tights; boys: black tights, white T-shirt). You must bring ballet and jazz shoes. NO JAZZ SNEAKERS. Hair should be pulled back away from the face and secured tightly in a bun (or as close to a bun as possible). Those not appropriately dressed or arriving late will need to politely ask permission to join the audition. No jewelry can be worn and nails must be trimmed to the edges of the fingertips.
3. You will take a class in ballet, jazz, modern, and improvisation. You will be judged upon your demonstration of the following skills: mental ability; energy level within the classes; flexibility of back, legs, feet and foot articulation; musicality and phrasing; rhythmic accuracy; quick recall of combinations; presence and carriage, and ability to perform given combinations with confidence. Do not prepare choreography for this audition. You will take instructions from NOCCA dance faculty.

**Drama**  
Students currently in 8th-11th grades may apply.

**Include with your completed application:** A written or typed resume or list of your training and experiences in performance/acting.

**At the audition:**
1. You will be asked to participate in movement and vocal exercises (appropriate dress required, wear clothes that you can move in easily, including sneakers or other rubber soled shoes).
(2) Perform a memorized monologue selection provided by the Theatre Department (visit www.nocca.com for the list of acceptable choices/NO ORIGINAL SPEECHES OR POEMS) and be familiar with the play from which the monologue was taken.
(3) Respond spontaneously in directed improvisational exercises.
(4) Read Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* prior to the audition. You will be asked to take a short test and participate in a brief discussion of the play. (Copies of the play should be easy to find at your local library or you can read online at http://azactorsacademy.com/uploads/plays/a_raisin_in_the_sun.pdf)
(5) You may be asked to participate in an individual interview if the faculty needs further clarification concerning your application to NOCCA.

**Jazz Instrumental Music**
**Students currently in 8th-11th grades may apply.**
Students should take PRIVATE MUSIC LESSONS for at least ONE FULL YEAR with a QUALIFIED jazz instructor to have the necessary skills required to pass the NOCCA audition.

**At the audition:**
Students who audition for NOCCA are expected to be able to do ALL of the following:
1. Play the melody and improvise with the blues scale over a basic 12-bar blues form. Pianists and guitarists should know some basic jazz chord voicings. Students may choose one of following blues tunes or another similar blues tune: St. Louis Blues (F Blues) Tenor Madness (Bb) Blue Monk (Bb), Second Line (Bb Blues) Sonny Moon for Two (Bb Blues) Now's the Time (F Blues) etc. Students may prepare a more advanced jazz tune if they wish, but at the very least they must be able to improvise over the basic 12-bar blues form.
2. Play and spell the major, mixolydian (7th tone lowered a 1/2 step), and dorian scales (3rd and 7th tones lowered a 1/2 step) EVENLY and ACCURATELY with PROPER FINGERINGS in keys up to 3 flats and 3 sharps (C, F, Bb, Eb, G, D, A).
3. Play ARPEGGIOS for major 7th (1-3-5-7-5-3-1), dominant 7th (1-3-5-b7-5-3-1), and minor 7th chords (1-b3-5-b7-5-b3-1) EVENLY and ACCURATELY with PROPER FINGERINGS in keys up to 3 sharps and 3 flats (C, F, Bb, Eb, G, D, A).
4. Have solid knowledge of key signatures (up to 3 flats and 3 sharps), music theory, and basic intervals (minor 2nd, major 2nd, minor 3rd, major 3rd, perfect 4th etc.) for keys up to 3 sharps and 3 flats (C, F, Bb, Eb, G, D, A., and notes in BOTH clefs.
5. Sight-read a simple melody accurately with correct rhythm and intonation. (All students, all instruments.) Guitar Tab reading is NOT accepted.
6. Sight-read and play basic rhythm patterns accurately (basic 8th note and simple 16th note patterns, including basic time signatures).
7. Match pitches and short melodic patterns by ear (from the piano) and play them back on your instrument accurately and relatively quickly.

Drummers are responsible for all of the above requirements and will be asked to play scales and find notes on the piano by ear. It is strongly recommended that drummers have some experience playing the piano or some other melodic instrument. All students at NOCCA study music theory and drummers must be able to fulfill these requirements at the same level as every other student. Drummers who cannot fulfill these minimum requirements at the audition will not be admitted into the program.
**Media Arts:**
Students currently in 8th-11th grades may apply.

**At the audition:**
(1) Auditioning students are expected to present a sample of their work (portfolio) in film, video, audio recording, motion graphics or animation including a short statement that describes the portfolio work. Students who do not have portfolio material may submit one of the following: (a) a storyboard with text and visual instructions for a short film, video, or animation; (b) a series of photographs that tell a story (at least 15); or (c) a short screenplay (no more than 10 pages).

(2) Candidates should be prepared to answer a series of questions about their portfolio.

(3) Students should be prepared to critique the visual and sound elements of a short film shown at the audition.

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**Musical Theatre**
Students currently in 8th-11th grades may apply.

**Include with your completed application:** 1) A list or resume with the applicants background in Musical Theatre training and productions. Please include, if applicable, dance classes, voice lessons, and acting workshops, as well as their most significant performance experiences. 2) A photograph of the applicant. It may be an informal picture or a professional headshot; please make sure the photo is current, clear, and an accurate likeness of the applicant.

**At the audition:**
The Musical Theatre Audition consists of three elements: **Acting, Music, and Dance.** Those auditioning for the Summer Intensive need only prepare the **Music Element**; those auditioning for the **High School Arts enrollment, Fall and Spring semesters**, must prepare and participate in all three elements, **Acting, Music, and Dance.**

The **ACTING element (High School Arts applicants only):** Choose one (1) scene from the downloadable document below and prepare one (1) character from that scene to perform at the audition. A scene partner will be provided to read with the applicant. The lines do not need to be memorized and the applicant may hold the page during the audition, though a firm understanding of the scene is essential. It is strongly recommended to research the show prior to the audition; the applicant should be prepared to discuss the character they chose and how the scene fits into the overall plot of the show. There is no additional monologue requirement.

The **MUSIC element (High School Arts and Summer Intensive applicants):** (1) Group Evaluation: The audition begins with a short vocal warm-up to assess pitch and rhythm recognition. (2) Individual Evaluation: In the next part of the audition, the applicant performs a song they have chosen and prepared in advance. The song must be memorized. Bring sheet music in the correct key for the piano accompanist. Ideally, the song should be from a musical, but songs from movies and pop songs are acceptable as long as the applicant has sheet music that can be played on the piano. A-cappella performances (singing without accompaniment), as well as recordings and karaoke tracks, are not
allowed. If you have questions about appropriateness or need advice or assistance in obtaining sheet music, please contact Jefferson Turner, Musical Theatre Department Chair (jturner@nocca.com).

The **DANCE** element (*High School Arts applicants only*): Be prepared to participate in a physical warm-up and short class designed to assess basic technique and coordination. The class may consist of stretching, "across-the-floor" exercises, and/or a musical theatre-style dance combination. Wear clothing that allows flexible movement (please, no jeans). It is not necessary for the applicant to have dance training prior to the audition (though previous experience and training can only help); the applicant does not need to prepare their own dance combination.

**CALL BACKS**: Though the elements of the audition help the Musical Theatre Faculty make informed decisions about each applicant, the faculty may need an applicant to return and participate in an additional "call-back" session. The call-back consists of a music and acting class as taught in a typical day at NOCCA. The applicant does not need to prepare anything else, just to be ready to participate with an open mind. If we do not call an applicant back, it is not an indication of their audition; we have all the information we need. The call-back will take place on the third Saturday of auditions. If the applicant is requested to attend a call-back session, the applicant's parents will be notified by email as soon as possible after the last session on the second Saturday of auditions.

**Theatre Design**  
**Students currently in 8th-11th grades may apply.**

**Include with your completed application:** A written or typed resume or list of your training and experiences in theatre tech, performances, backstage work and/or Theatre Design.

**At the audition:**
Submit a sample of work (portfolio) in theatre design and technical crew work (design renderings, paperwork, photos of the completed design, crew sheets, or program credits). Please be specific and give exact descriptions of the actual work completed by labeling the named examples. You may submit an example of a practice design of sets, costumes and/or lighting for a generally recognized play, such as a classic Greek tragedy, Broadway musical or opera. Potential students do not need to be visual artists; simple sketches are sufficient.

**Visual Arts**  
**Students currently in 8th-11th grades may apply.**

**Include with your completed application:** Two drawings: one technical drawing with specific requirements and one personal expression drawing. Both drawings should be drawn in pencil on 8 1/2 by 11" white paper. The technical drawing should be drawn directly from observation. Its subject matter can be either: A) pair of tennis shoes/boots; or B) an arrangement of kitchen tools/utensils. The personal expression drawing can be your choice of subject matter. In both drawings, be sure to use the entire page, consider composition and use full range of value. Drawings submitted with the application will not be returned. Selected students will be asked to advance to the Audition Process.
**Portfolio Review:** Selected students will be asked to present a portfolio of carefully chosen examples of work prior to the student's scheduled audition day and time. Students will be notified of a portfolio drop-off day at NOCCA. Students should submit outstanding original work that demonstrates commitment and investment with an emphasis on work from direct observation. Consider quality before quantity; 10-15 pieces are typical. Include a variety of media, including work in color. All work should have been created within the last two years. All work should fit into a large portfolio or envelope with your name, address and phone number labeled on the outside. **Do not submit framed pieces.** Sculptural work and works on canvas may be included but should be represented by a photograph or a digital print. Do not send the actual sculptural work or canvas. Portfolios will be returned to students at the end of the audition. Any remaining portfolios cannot be stored and will be discarded.

**At the audition:**
(1) You will be required to produce a drawing from direct observation during the audition. (2) You will be required to write a response to an image of an artwork. (3) Faculty members will talk with you reviewing your drawing, written artwork response, reading ability and academic strengths.