



Guidelines for Convenors of Speech and Drama Performing Arts Societies

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About Us

Speech Communication Association (NZ) is a national organisation developing voice, communication and performance.

SCA represents a diverse group of teachers, trainers and students working in many sectors including voice training for actors, broadcasting, clear speech, speaking for business, English as a second language, theatre, public and professional speaking, adjudication, examining, oral literacy and communication.

We acknowledge and promote the importance of voice skills in effective, confident presentation and performance. We promote the services and development of our members and offer a code of conduct that ensures highest professional standards are maintained for the benefit of the wider community - our clients.

SCA adjudicators are highly valued for their scope and knowledge of performance and presentation and are sort after by drama, speech and theatre festivals in schools and community groups. SCA offers accreditation to SCA Registered Teachers who undertake our adjudication training course.

Employment of Adjudicator

We would encourage you to select an accredited SCA adjudicator. Our member who adjudicate are listed on our SCA website (www.speechcomm.org.nz).

The benefits of employing an accredited adjudicator include:

- a depth and breadth of experience and knowledge evident in the decision-making;
- a consistency of assessment from a professionally trained and appraised adjudicator;
- a high standard of dress and professional manner;
- a warm rapport with the competitors and their teachers;
- a sense of collegiality and understanding that every festival is a shared enterprise.

It is worthwhile engaging the adjudicator between 6 – 12 months prior to the festival.

Contracts and Payments

Prior to the festival, a contract should have been offered, signed and received. The expected payment is negotiated but the most common remuneration is between \$90 - \$100 per session of 2 ½ - 3 hours.

For most adjudicators this is well below their professional fee, however they do work for a relatively reduced fee, as they enjoy the opportunity to give some service to the community in the discipline in which they are working.

Adjudicators are highly skilled and experienced within their field. They are expected to assess, write reports and rank in a very efficient, accurate and rapid manner. They are working hard.

Prior to the competitions, they prepare an adjudicating book to enable the process to run quickly and smoothly. They also provide test pieces, sight reading extracts, and often have to create mime and improvisation topics. They also spend considerable time researching any Young Performer extracts in order to confidently assess these performances.

Funding

We are aware that funding is an issue for societies, and would encourage you to investigate funding as a charitable organisation for adjudicators through applying to community group general funding.

Generosity NZ (www.generosity.org.nz) is a great starting point and also try your local gaming societies at local pubs and local hotels.

Funding is tagged to local endeavours.

Other suggestions are Mainland Foundation, Infinity Foundation and Lion Foundation.

Programming

This is the most important consideration for an adjudicator who needs adequate time to assess , construct an accurate report with feedback and feedforward, and rank the competitors in the classes.

Please ensure that time is not only allowed for the actual performance pieces but also allow time to meet both the needs of the adjudicator and the competitors.

Competitors need time:

- to get on and off the stage/performance area;
- for actual performances;
- to set up for classes requiring props;
- to strike any props.

Adjudicators need time:

- to watch and listen to each competitor;
- to write brief reports – not always possible until a competitor has finished;
- to review the class and finalise the marks and placings;

- to write marks and placings on reports;
- to breathe, stretch, refocus and look ahead to what is coming up next;
- to clear their head after session with a planned brief morning/afternoon tea break.

In particular, consideration should be given to late running evening sessions. Adjudication requires intense concentration and focus, and at the end of a long day, an adjudicator's mind does not always 'turn off' for an hour or two.

Perhaps consider making the day sessions longer and the evening sessions shorter where possible. These late evening sessions might also affect performers' presentations.

Adjudicators will persevere to keep to the scheduled times; however, it is vital that sessions are scheduled with consideration to facilitate this more readily.

Reports

Comments from the adjudicator are written with the express purpose of encouraging students throughout the festival. Each performance generally improves in terms of confidence and as a result of the comments made.

Feedback and feedforward comments should guide students and support teachers. Reports should be given to the competitors promptly after the adjudicator's comments from the stage and place getters have been announced.

Positioning of the Adjudicator

The adjudicator should be positioned at a reasonable distance from the stage, and if seated amongst the audience, should be protected from them so that they are not overheard.

Many adjudicators dictate comments for improvisation and mime, and there are administration matters at the end of classes, which can require some conversation. Adjudicators might be screened or roped off from the audience on the sides of them, if easily achieved.

Accommodation and Travel

Travel should be by air or by private vehicle (mileage paid at the government rate) and should be paid by the Performing Arts Society. The travel should take into consideration when the festival is going to begin. It is often helpful to have the adjudicator arrive the night before an early morning start, or travel the morning of an afternoon start.

Accommodation should be comfortable, in a motel or hotel, as near to the performance venue as is possible. Adjudicators appreciate the quiet after the intense concentration of the assessment process. Some adjudicators also enjoy staying at an independent bed and breakfast place. Do check what the adjudicator prefers.

Closing Comments

As stakeholders in the event, we are all aware of the benefits, challenges and delights of the regional performing arts festivals. We are also aware of the physical and financial constraints that many of the smaller centres face.

Adjudicators fully understand the voluntary nature of the committees and how difficult it is to balance the budget. Adjudicators expect to work hard during the course of competitions and expect to spend time in preparation before the competitions begin. It is important, however to recognise that adjudicators should be reasonably recompensed for their expertise and loss of other income.

Performing Arts Festivals are definitely valued by all concerned. Adjudicators value the connection that comes through being able to provide assessment rationale and commentary on classes throughout the festival and meeting with competitors, their families and teachers. The competitors, families and teachers also value the connections of the competition community and the professional development and in-depth information learned at this time.

Contact Us

**For more information about SCA or our
Accredited Adjudicators please contact us:**

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