Scottish Community Drama

One-Act Play Festival
GUIDANCE

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1 Guidance for Festival Entrants

1.1 Entering the Festival

To enter the festival, your club must be a current paid up member of the Association. Subscription and renewal is available via the SCDA website.

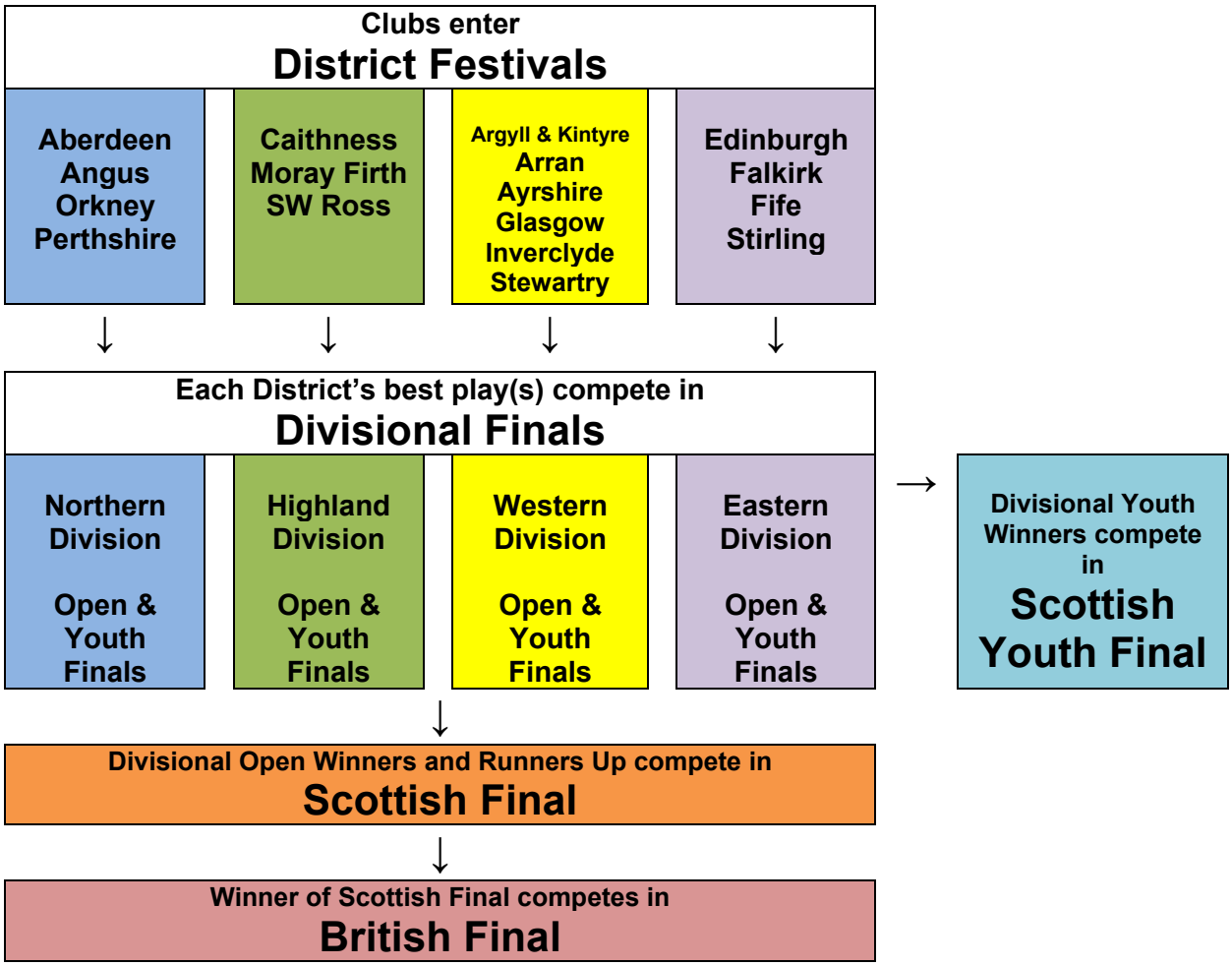
1. Select a play with a running time of between 20 and 55 minutes, with at least two speaking parts.
2. Ensure the play is available for amateur performance, and that your club has (or has applied for) the necessary rights and permissions to perform the play.
3. Complete the Entry Details page of 'Combined Entry Form F1' and submit this to your District Secretary, along with the appropriate entry fee, no later than the second Saturday in December.

Entry fee is £40 per play (November 2022).

A returnable deposit, typically £50, may also be requested by the organising committee.

1.2 How the SCDA's One Act Play Festival Works

The illustration below shows how the competition works, with each festival feeding in to the next level:



1.3 District Festivals

1.3.1 Before the Event

Once the deadline for entries has passed, the District's organising committee will determine a running order for performances. Typically, this will involve a random draw, with some flexibility to ensure a varied programme that accounts for duration, genre, language, cast size/age and so on.

In the unlikely event that the number of entries received exceeds the maximum number of performance slots available at the chosen venue, the organising committee may need to address this, in conjunction with the competing clubs.

Along with a performance date and position in the running order, you will be given a time and date for your technical rehearsal.

It is essential that the cast and crew are made aware of the scheduled dates and times. Successful productions at the District festival progress to Divisional, National and British rounds of the competition, so it is important that all team members are also aware of the relevant dates and possible future commitment.

While the SCDA carries a national insurance policy which covers all festivals, it is a clubs responsibility to insure themselves against liability for the actions of their members.

Where a club's local District Festival is not taking place for any reason (such as insufficient entries or the District being in abeyance), their Division should facilitate that club's performance at another District Festival within the Division. If transfer to another District proves impractical, the Division should seek advice from the Festivals Committee before any decision is made.

1.3.2 Technical Rehearsals

Each team is given technical rehearsal slot ahead of their performance – for a District round, this is at least one hour. This may be earlier the same day, or on one of the preceding days/evenings.

During the time available, the team must place and mark the position of all scenery and stage furniture, agree lighting settings, rehearse lighting and sound cues and allow these to be programmed, where appropriate. Teams must strike the set within the rehearsal time, leaving an empty stage.

Technical staff familiar with the available equipment will be provided (by SCDA or the venue), but all decisions and instructions are the responsibility of the competing team.

1.3.3 Performance

Your team will be allocated a dressing room at the venue, taking into account cast size, age and gender where possible. Note that (other than at Youth Festivals), it is not appropriate for cast members to be seen in costume other than as part of the performance, unless this is unavoidable.

When the stage is ready to be set for your production, the Stage Director will call your crew to the stage and start the timed 10-minute setting time. You will be told when the stage, technical team and house are ready for you performance to start. All time limits and penalties are detailed in the Rules.

1.3.4 Adjudication

At the end of each session, all teams will receive a public adjudication (recommended to last 5-10 minutes per play).

After the public adjudication, teams are entitled to a private adjudication. If you do not want one, please inform the Stage Director or Organising Secretary at the technical rehearsal.

The adjudicator scores each play out of 100. Marks are available for Acting (40), Production (35) Stage Presentation (15) and Dramatic Achievement (10). Once all the plays have been performed, the adjudicator will add up the scores and announce the winners. The scores are not made public.

Soon after the festival (usually within seven days) you will receive a written adjudication. This shows the points awarded in each category and may provide more detail than the adjudicator's public comments.

1.3.5 Expenses

Teams are entitled to be reimbursed for royalty fees (to a maximum of £75) and an allowance towards other expenses, in accordance with the current guidance issued by the National Executive. You should make any claim, supported by receipts, within two weeks of the festival.

1.4 Progressing to Divisional Festival

The number of plays progressing to the Divisional round of the festival (usually 1 - 3) depends on the number of entries across all Districts in the Division, and is agreed in advance by the Divisional Committee. Remember that only one play per club is able to go through to the next round.

If your club has a team going through, you will be contacted by the Organising Secretary soon after all District Festivals are complete. Your team will be advised of the date/time your performance slot and technical rehearsal, and be provided with details of the venue.

Note: It is the play Director's responsibility to send entry form F1 to the Divisional Organising Secretary, including any changes (for instance, to sound, light or staging).

Divisional Festivals are run in the same way as District Festivals, with the following differences:

- Technical Rehearsals are at least 75 minutes, and recommended to be 90 minutes
- Private adjudications are optional, and teams should request this via the to the Organising Secretary/Stage Director at the technical rehearsal. At the end of the final evening, those teams progressing to the Scottish Final may meet the Adjudicator privately.

1.5 Progressing to the Scottish Final

Teams placed first and second in the four Divisional rounds progress to the Scottish Final.

If your club has a team going through, you will be contacted by the Organising Secretary soon after all Divisional Festivals are complete. Your team will be advised of the date/time your performance slot and technical rehearsal, and be provided with details of the venue.

Note: It is the play Director's responsibility to send entry form F1 to the Scottish Final Organising Secretary, including any changes (for instance, to sound, light or staging).

The Scottish Final is run in the same way as Divisional Festivals, with the following difference:

- Technical Rehearsals are 90 minutes

2 Guidance for Festival Organisers

A detailed checklist for organisation of Open and Youth Festivals, is available as 'F-3 Festival Organisation Checklist'. At all times, organisers should maintain an impartial approach and be aware that casual comments or actions might be misconstrued.

The responsibilities of the Organising Secretary and Committee are summarised below:

2.1 Scheduling

- District Festivals shall be held on any dates on or after the 1st February and completed by the first Saturday in March, unless otherwise approved by the Divisional Committee.
- Divisional Festivals shall be completed by the first Saturday of April, unless otherwise approved by the National Committee.
- Scottish Final Festival shall be completed by the first Saturday of May.

2.2 Venue

- Confirm the theatre hall booking in writing, complete the contract letter and obtain the theatre licence if required.
- Make arrangements to obtain by hire or otherwise curtains etc. If there is no fixed stage in the hall, also organise the necessary fit-ups.
- Order additional lighting and/or sound equipment if required.
- Appoint a Festival Stage Director and, if necessary, Assistant Stage Director.
- Appoint a competent person to take responsibility for electrical safety where this is not provided by the venue. The Authorised Electrical Person will report to the Festival Stage Director.
- Appoint a Lighting Technician and Stage Crew to operate under the Stage Director.
- Consider appointing an official photographer to record the event. It is essential that they are positioned in such a way to avoid any disturbance to the audience or the actors and that no flash is used.
- Make allowance in venue hire so that the first team is able to start the rehearsal on time.

2.3 Scripts

- Collect scripts from adjudicator and the reserve adjudicator at the end of the festival
- Send all scripts for those teams progressing to the next round to the appropriate organising secretary
- Return the remaining scripts to the relevant teams

2.4 Teams

- Send 'F1-Combined Form' and rules to interested/participating teams as soon as possible.
- For teams progressing from District or Divisional festivals, return their previous entry form, requesting any changes they wish to make (for instance, to sound, light or staging)
- Send all fees to the Divisional Treasurer.
- Where deposits are required by the Organising Committee, they should be retained by the District Committee and returned where appropriate
- Arrange the order of the appearance of the teams
- In conjunction with the Stage Director, provide each team with a detailed plan of the stage on which it is to perform, along with details of the lighting, sound and other stage facilities available. These should include position of LX bars, number of available channels, available specials, types of sound equipment available and any possible limitations on access.

2.5 Feedback

To provide feedback on Adjudicators, use Form F5.

- Make competing teams aware of the Adjudicator Feedback form and encourage them to complete it
- Fill in the Adjudicator Feedback form on behalf of your Organising Committee and forward it to the Festivals Committee

See also 2.16, Resolution of Issues.

2.6 Publicity

- Make strenuous efforts to publicise the Festival.
- Consider issuing complimentary tickets to the local press and others, if this is likely to encourage paying audience members.

2.7 Photography

- If practical, appoint an official photographer to record the event for future publicity. If a photographer is present, minimise the potential nuisance to audience members by creating an exclusion zone around the photographer, and if possible, using a mirrorless camera.
- If an official photographer is present, post notices to alert the audience that they may be photographed as well.
- If parents are seen video recording or photographing their child's performance, despite verbal or written announcements not to do so, they should be asked delete these recordings.

2.8 Booking

- Decide the price of seats, including whether to offer Season tickets at a discount, and make arrangement for ticket sales.
- Seats should be bookable in advance, with a paperless option where possible.
- Reserve suitable seats for the Adjudicator, Adjudicator's Steward and the Reserve Adjudicator to ensure privacy and elbow room.
- If possible, save a block of seats for the players on the evenings of their performance. Teams should pay for tickets (possibly at a reduced rate) if they are to see at least one production on the evening they are performing.

2.9 Programmes

- Consider obtaining of estimates for the printing of programmes and endeavour to obtain advertising to cover the cost of printing.
- Include in the programme names of the Organising Committee and appropriate contact details
- Where possible, place complimentary copies of the programme in the dressing rooms for each cast
- Where the Festival is benefiting from sponsorship or similar support, ensure publicity is given in the programme and/or elsewhere.
- Include the following statement in the District programme. "While a club may enter more than one team, only ONE team from any club can progress to the next stage of the Festival."

2.10 Front of House

- Appoint a Front of House Manager, Fire Safety Officer and Marshals, First Aider, Stewards and Programme Sellers, etc.
- Instruct Stewards to refuse admittance after the house lights are out, and post an official notice to this effect outside the doors.
- Make stewards aware of the emergency exits and procedures, and make public announcement of safety features if considered necessary

- Except in Youth Festivals, keep cast members in costume away from auditorium unless this is unavoidable (or part of the performance)
- Intervals should not normally last more than 20 minutes
- Teams should pay for tickets (see Booking) to see at least one production on the evening they are performing, but may be admitted free of charge to hear the adjudications, if there are seats available.

  Do not compromise health and safety (eg by allowing people to stand in an aisle) to allow this.

2.11 Performance

At each stage of the Festival, the Organising Committee is responsible for fixing the place, date and time for the performance of each team, and notifying them accordingly.

For the Scottish Final, the draw for the days each Division appears is made by the National Committee at their February meeting. Thereafter the National Chair, Vice Chair(s), Festival Convenor and National Secretary will determine the allocation of teams to days and the running order taking into consideration all information available.

2.12 Finance

2.12.1 Revenue and Expenses

District and Divisional Committees are responsible for collecting all revenue due to the Association from the Festivals which they organise, and for all relevant payments.

- District Committees are responsible for paying the validated expenses of their member clubs appearing at the District Festivals.
- Divisional Committees are responsible for paying the validated expenses of their member clubs appearing at the Divisional Festivals.
- SCDA nationally are responsible for paying the validated expenses of the clubs appearing at the Scottish Final.

The Organising Committee at each stage of the festival may refund royalty fees to teams for the play as performed, up to a limit of £50. They may also make an allowance towards teams' other expenses, in accordance with the current guidance issued by the National Executive.

Where grants to the Association are made at any level, these will be taken into account in determining the level of support. Grants made to individual clubs will be dealt with at the discretion of the relevant Organising Committee.

2.12.2 Submission of Accounts

All accounts must be submitted via Festival Accounts Form F-12 within two months of the related festival.

- Districts should submit accounts to the Divisional Treasurer
- Divisions should submit accounts to the National Treasurer
- Expenses for competitors in the Scottish Final will be scrutinised by the National Treasurer before payment by HQ

At all Festivals, raffle money and any other income should be included in the accounts.

Festival revenue cannot be used to fund social events - these should be self-supporting or subsidised from local fund raising.

2.13 Programme and Production Details

At each stage of the Festival, the relevant Festival Secretary issues form F-1 to each team, with a due date for return. You should also supply teams with:

- A stage plan and technical details of lighting and sound systems
- If possible, photographs of the stage to help understanding of layout
- Clear information on access and get in and get out times
- Parking arrangements for set transport

2.14 Adjudication

2.14.1 Appointment

Adjudicators and Reserve Adjudicators shall be appointed as follows:

a) District Festivals by the District Committee.

b) Divisional Festivals by the Divisional Committee.

c) Scottish Final Festival by the National Committee.

The relevant organising committee is responsible for agreeing the rate with the adjudicator and paying their fees and expenses. Adjudicators should be offered travelling expenses by second class rail or an agreed mileage rate for travel by car.

2.14.2 Contract and Engagement

Adjudicators will be given a contract (form available from the SCDA website), which details the responsibilities of both parties. Remember SCDA employ the adjudicator and can insist that they adhere to the contract. In summary:

The adjudicator agrees:

- Not to be in the position where they could adjudicate on the same team at more than one level of the Festival
- Not to infringe the Conflict of Interest rules, as stated in the draft contract.

The Organising Committee agree:

- To provide the Adjudicator with full details of the Festival in writing
- To provide the adjudicator with a copy of the Festival rules and guidance
- To ensure the Adjudicator inspects the stage conditions and technical facilities before the Festival starts
- To organise reasonable hotel accommodation, with appropriate writing facilities, for the Adjudicator if required
- To appoint an Adjudicator's Steward to meet and look after the Adjudicator throughout the Festival
- To provided a small desk or writing board with an electrical lamp and a copy of the programme

2.14.3 Public Adjudication

- The Adjudicator should limit their public adjudication to a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 minutes per team.
- Where the same play is presented by more than one team in the same Festival, the Adjudicator must defer public (but not private) adjudication of all until after the last such performance.

2.14.4 Private Adjudication

Teams should be made aware of the availability of a private adjudication and should also be told who is entitled to attend.

Attendees should be limited to members of the club who have actively contributed to the production.

An upper time limit should be set by the committee but should not exceed 12 minutes.

The Adjudicator's Steward should:

- Accompany the Adjudicator and introduce them to the teams
- Remain present throughout the meeting and be responsible for the control of the meeting
- If necessary, set a time limit and ensure it is adhered to
- Ensure that relationships do not become strained or overheated
- Ensure that unfair comments are not directed at the Adjudicator
- Be prepared to halt the private adjudication at any time

2.14.5 Marking and Awards

- Before the final results are announced at any Festival, the calculation of marks must be checked by a member of the Organising Committee
- A Youth team that has entered only the Youth competition is not eligible for any placing award in the Open competition
- Awards such as 'Best Set' or 'Best Moment in Theatre' are open to all teams that appear in the Festival
- If more than one team from any club has performed in a District Festival, the rule that no more than one team from a club may proceed beyond the District Festival shall be explained to the audience
- The Stage Director must, before the adjudication, inform the Organising Secretary or other appropriate official and the Adjudicator of any infringement of the rules by any team, or the occurrence of any technical issues outwith a team's control

The adjudicator must apply the following marking scheme:

- Acting 40
- Production 35
- Stage Presentation 15
- Dramatic Achievement 10

  (Total 100)

Clear instructions should be given to the Adjudicator for announcing the winners, including the following:-

- No 'nightly winners'
- Trophy winners in reverse order of merit
- Teams can be given equal marks for categories or in total, but trophies cannot be shared between teams. If a mark is used to award a trophy, it must be different from that given to other teams
- Half marks can only be used to separate teams otherwise tied for a prize
- Where the same Festival is held in different venues the Adjudicator will, at the end of the Festival, place the leading teams irrespective of where they have appeared
- The Adjudicator's decision is final on all matters relating to marking and awards

2.14.6 Mark Sheets

Adjudicators should be informed that they must take no account of any deductions because of timing issues.

The Adjudicators marks should be passed to the organising secretary or other SCDA representative (not the Adjudicator's Steward) to make any deductions, check totals and that the marks adhere to SCDA policy.

It is recommended that the organising secretary provides each team with a copy of all marks. (Form F-7). This is at the discretion of each Division/District.

2.14.7 Reserve Adjudicator

The Committee shall appoint a Reserve Adjudicator, either:

- Any suitable person (for example a trainee adjudicator)
- A panel of three experienced members of an SCDA

For Divisional and Scottish Finals, one Reserve Adjudicator is preferable to a panel.

No-one directly involved with any club performing in a Festival should be a reserve adjudicator or panel member.

The Reserve Adjudicator or Panel should be given seating preferably in the same row as and near, but not next to the Adjudicator. With the agreement of the Adjudicator, a Reserve Adjudicator can attend private adjudications, but may not make any comment unless invited to do so by the adjudicator. The Adjudicator and Reserve should discuss the adjudication, but only after placings have been announced.

Where a panel performs the adjudication, each member of the panel should mark the plays independently, with the result based on the average marks. One member of the panel should give a brief public adjudication and announce the placings.

If a Reserve Adjudicator is required to stand in, then all subsequent adjudications must be done by the substitute.

A Reserve Adjudicator should:

- Take into account any adjudications, markings and placings available from the original Adjudicator
- Give short public and private adjudications;
- Provide a written adjudication

A Reserve Adjudicator may be paid expenses and/or a fee if requested and appropriate

2.14.8 Feedback

- Clubs should be asked to return form F-5,Adjudicator Feedback to the organising committee.
- Organising committees should complete a form F-5,Adjudicator Feedback and return to the Festival Committee (festivals@drama.scot).
- Adjudicators should be given a copy of form F-12, Festival Feedback for Adjudicators and invited to comment on the organisation and conduct of the festival to the Organising Committee.

2.15 Announcements

Any necessary announcements at a Festival must be made by an appropriate official of the SCDA and not by the Adjudicator.

- The Organising Committee should announce any alterations to cast and whether the play contains offensive material, strobe lighting or gunshots on the evening where it occurs.
- Refer to current legislation on the use of weapons on stage and make any associated announcement
- Warn the public of any use of strobe lighting or flashing images
- If a team is disqualified or loses marks because of infringement of the Rules of the competition they must be informed, and this must be announced by an SCDA official before the public adjudication.

2.16 Resolution of Issues

Any matter relating to the Festival shall be dealt with by the Organising Committee of each District or Divisional Festival, with any question on these rules ultimately being referred to the National Committee of the Association for final decision.

2.16.1 Problems Before or During a Festival

If, during the festival period, a team has an urgent problem concerning technical, staging or rules issues, the matter should be referred to the SCDA Stage Director, who will assist wherever possible. His/her decision on all matters is final.

If a problem arises of a more general nature, this should be referred to the Secretary of the Festival Organising Committee

Reference to Theatre Staff or to other SCDA office bearers is not allowed.

2.16.2 Issues Raised After a Festival

Teams

Where a team wishes to raise a formal complaint, this should be made in writing by a representative of the team, usually the Director or Stage Manager, as soon as possible after the event (within five working days).

The nature of the complaint must be clear and include any relevant information including dates and times, providing as much information as possible.

Copies of any relevant correspondence can be sent by email or post.

The Adjudicator is not obliged to enter into any correspondence with teams once the Festival has finished.

Organising Committee

The organising committee will:

1. Record details of the complaint and acknowledge its receipt within five working days.
2. Make sure that the complaint is thoroughly investigated and, if necessary, ask for further information or meet with representative(s) of the team.
3. Let the complainant know the outcome within twenty-eight working days, or a mutually agreed date if that is not possible.
4. Give full consideration to the team's feedback and if appropriate use their suggestions to improve future Festivals.

Complainants have the right to raise an issue to the next level of the SCDA, whose decision will be final (District Festival to Divisional Committee, Divisional Festival and Scottish Final to National Executive.)

3 Guidance for Stage Directors

The Organising Committee at each festival will appoint a Stage Director to whom they may delegate all matters relating to the stage.

The SCDA Organising Secretary and SCDA Stage Director will be familiar with a venue's technical facilities and requirements for risk assessment under Health and Safety legislation.

The Stage Director must be fully conversant with the rules. The Stage director's decision on all matters relating to the stage shall be final and binding on all teams.

3.1 Planning and Advice

The Stage Director will, having studied the technical forms;

1. Ensure that all appropriate technical personnel have copies of the forms a clear week before each Festival and that any problems have been addressed.
2. Liaise with competing teams to ensure that there are no foreseeable problems.
3. Give competing teams the opportunity to view the stage facilities prior to the Festival.
4. Ensure everyone involved in the Festival understands the theatre's safety rules.
5. Ensure that written permission to perform as approved by the author/ agent (as stated in Rules of Entry) is in place, liaising with the Festival Secretary if necessary.
6. Provide advice to clubs on safety requirements.
7. Brief each team on the venue's safety procedures.
8. Be familiar with the responsibilities outlined in the Safety Guidance Note (Doc 5).
9. Review the Safety Plan, (in the combined Form F-1) submitted by each team and require additional safety measures if considered appropriate.

3.2 Stage Set and Equipment

The Organising Committee will provide stage draperies including, a cyclorama or alternative. Teams may bring their own flats, and box sets are permitted

The Stage Director is responsible for ensuring that all flats, furnishings and properties are fireproofed, and all electrical equipment requiring Portable Appliance Testing has an up-to-date PAT label. Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to the cancellation of a performance.

Teams may use additional lighting and other equipment at their own expense. This must be agreed with the Stage Director prior to the technical rehearsal. It cannot be guaranteed that such lighting can be left in position during other performances. If this situation arises, then the relevant time will not be included in the setting and striking times set out in the rules. The audience must be warned if strobe lighting is to be used.

3.3 Stage Crew

The Stage Director must have an adequate number of assistants in attendance throughout all rehearsal periods and performances. With the Stage Director's permission, teams may use volunteers in setting and striking scenery, but may not employ paid stagehands.

3.4 Timings

Use official time sheets to note the time taken for setting and striking and duration of the performance. The Stage Director's decision on these times is final.

Each team has a specified technical rehearsal time (60-90 minutes, as recommended below) to test lighting plans, stage facilities and acoustics. The period allotted may be used in any manner the team desires. The Stage Director shall see that the teams adhere strictly to their allotted periods, as follows:

- District at least 1 hour
- Divisional recommended 1½ hours, and 1¼ hours minimum.
- Scottish 1½ hours.

Allow at least 15 minutes interval between each rehearsal. The same requirements apply to Youth events.

Give clear indications as to when a team may commence and must finish rehearsal, as well as advising time remaining at appropriate intervals (such as half way, 10 and 5 minutes from the end and again at the end).

Establish with the team when the performance timing will begin.

You can allow teams to assemble items of furniture and staging which have been broken down for transport, outwith the technical rehearsal timing.

In the event of a technical problem beyond the control of the team, stop the clock and re-start when solved.

Report any contraventions of rules/guidelines to the Organising Secretary as soon as possible.

3.5 Performance

For each team's production, you must ensure:

- Timings are taken of setting, running and striking
- Setting times do not include the rigging of any specials etc. that are required for this production.
- Teams are advised at 5 and 8 minutes of setting time.
- Teams are advised at 3 and 4 minutes of striking time.

Record and report any safety related incidents or near misses to the Organising Secretary in writing.

Complete and return the time sheets provided by the Organising Secretary.