



IOWA HIGH SCHOOL **MUSICAL THEATER AWARDS**

Presented By  **EMC**
INSURANCE

2021-2022 ADJUDICATOR GUIDELINES

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards, presented by EMC Insurance Companies, is an initiative of Des Moines Performing Arts that celebrates the extraordinary achievements of young musical theater artists. The program aims to create visibility and support for high school musical theater programs and to highlight the importance of arts education.

The program consists of four main components:

1. Learning Opportunities (All schools, regardless of whether producing a musical in 2021-2022)

Participating schools receive access to exclusive learning opportunities offered throughout the year that are designed to help both students and directors advance their understanding of the craft. Workshops and master classes addressing performance, technical and creative topics are led by theater professionals from the state of Iowa as well as by Broadway industry experts.

2. Adjudication (Opt-in process for 2021-2022)

Panels of community adjudicators comprised of performing arts educators and professionals attend and review each participating school's musical production. Students and directors receive valuable constructive feedback that can be used to grow and strengthen their future work.

Adjudication is the foundational component of the IHSMTA program. Typically, every participating school participates in the adjudication process, but again in 2021-2022, we are giving schools as much flexibility as possible as they determine what is best for their community in response to evolving conditions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. As such, submitting a musical for adjudication is optional for this school year.

3. Awards and Recognition

Based on adjudication results, schools receive awards that honor their achievements in performance, technical and creative categories.

The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is designed to be celebratory rather than competitive in nature. Any student or school at an outstanding level is recognized for their achievement. Multiple honorees may be named in each category as achievements merit.

4. Awards Showcase

The year culminates in a professionally produced Awards Showcase event held at the Des Moines Civic Center – Iowa's top destination for touring Broadway productions. The Awards Showcase is a full evening featuring excerpts from award-winning productions.

In addition to being a celebration of student achievements, the Awards Showcase allows students to watch and learn from their musical theater peers, as well as to work directly with a guest choreographer and music director from New York City to rehearse several special medley performances for the Awards Showcase. (Please note: plans for the 2022 Awards Showcase may again shift in response to health and safety conditions.)

PURPOSE

Adjudicators' primary role is to attend high school musicals and offer educationally focused, critical feedback on all elements of the productions. This includes but is not limited to students' theatrical performance, instrumental and vocal music execution, choreography, technical elements and direction. Feedback is given to schools with the dual intent to educate participants and to serve as a tool to determine merit-based awards.

ADJUDICATOR SELECTION

All adjudicators are selected by Des Moines Performing Arts based on their qualifications and experience in musical theater, directing, acting, vocal music, technical theater and related fields. All adjudicators complete training **each year** before evaluating productions.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

All adjudicators must participate in a mandatory pre-season orientation and training.

Adjudicators **must** be willing and available to review at least four school productions per school year and complete the adjudication process. The adjudication process consists of completing a written evaluation, score assessment, and nomination ballot within three business days after viewing the production. (In most cases, this window includes at least a partial weekend.)

On average, the electronic Evaluation Form (consisting of scores and written comments) and the Nomination Ballot take approximately three to four hours total to complete.

Adjudicators must have a valid email address and check it routinely for program-related communications throughout the year. Email is the primary method used to communicate with adjudicators.

At the end of each semester, adjudicators are given the opportunity to provide feedback on final honors to be awarded. In addition, Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards staff may contact adjudicators throughout the year with further clarifying questions, if needed.

In addition, adjudicators are required to communicate conflicts of interest, including but not limited to:

1. Having an existing personal relationship with a member of the director team or student in the cast
2. Serving as a personal coach or voice teacher of a student in the cast
3. Being a recent alumni of the high school
4. Being a former student of a current member of the director team
5. Other personal connections that a member of the public could question as having affected your ability to be an impartial responder to the production

Adjudicators review school productions anonymously. As such, adjudicators should not publicly share what schools they have been assigned to review.

FEEDBACK CRITERIA

Adjudicators must be able to provide written feedback that meets the following criteria:

1. Celebrates students, directors and schools wherever they are on their journey as performers, technicians, or other role in the theater.
2. Gives constructive criticism that focuses on the next steps for growth and improvement, based only on what you observed at that performance as a member of the audience. Feedback further avoids assumptions about the rehearsal process nor references other productions.

FEEDBACK CRITERIA, cont.

3. Justifies the rating given on the Evaluation Form against the rubrics within the Adjudication Standards by giving concrete, specific examples rooted in the viewed production or performance. Does not make comparisons between students, schools or other versions seen of the same title.
4. Respects the various levels of resources that each individual student and school has available to them and provides feedback based on what the school is able to accomplish within those resources.
5. Communicates clearly through use of full, grammatically correct sentences and accurate spelling.

SUPPORT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

In order to cultivate an equitable, growth-minded adjudication process, the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards provides the following supports and checks for members of the adjudicator pool:

1. Training/Planning

Program staff establish the adjudication procedures and goals at the beginning of the year. Adjudicators receive training.

2. Coaching And Revision

Program staff will check in with new adjudicators after the first two completed school adjudications and provide individual support and coaching as needed.

All adjudicators will be provided with feedback at the conclusion of the fall semester.

Please note that program staff will ask for revision to scores and/or written feedback on an ongoing basis if a completed evaluation does not meet the scoring and feedback guidelines.

3. Performance Improvement, if Needed

All adjudicators are expected to perform at acceptable levels. Program staff will provide coaching as needed, but if performance problems persist, adjudicators will be counseled up to and including being asked to step down from the adjudicator team. In general when adjudicator performance falls below acceptable levels, program staff may begin performance improvement steps.

- a. *First Warning:* A member of program staff will discuss performance after informal coaching has already taken place. This discussion is: (a) stating and defining the issue; (b) developing an action plan with adjudicator input and consensus, and (c) establishing a date for follow-up assessing adjudicator progress.
- b. *Second Warning:* Occurs when performance has not significantly improved subsequent to first warning (at least one adjudication must have been completed since the first warning).
- c. *Release from Adjudicator Team:* If sub-standard performance continues the adjudicator may be released.

STEPS TO THE ADJUDICATION PROCESS

BEFORE ATTENDING THE PERFORMANCE:

Approximately one week prior to opening night, program staff will send an email with all pertinent information and forms to adjudicate the upcoming production. This email will include the following attachments, which adjudicators should thoroughly review:

1. Adjudication Form and Cast List

Please review this document prior to the production. Included you will find the performance address and parking information for in-person performances, access information for virtual performances, a list of the individual students to be evaluated as principal roles, as well as other cast and technical information. The director may also note certain elements about which they are particularly interested in receiving feedback, may give insight into the resources available to the school, and any other information they would like to communicate with the adjudicators.

Please note that individual roles adjudicated are limited to eight and are chosen by the director.

2. Adjudication Standards and Evaluation Rubrics

This document is what you will refer to as you fill out the evaluation form. As this document is foundational to the entire adjudication process, please alert program staff if you have any remaining questions about how to appropriately use it after program training.

Adjudication Standards and Evaluation Rubrics can be found online here:

<https://desmoinesperformingarts.org/ihsmta-adjudicators/>

3. PDF of Evaluation Form

For adjudicator convenience, program staff sends out a PDF version of the school's customized Evaluation Form.

Some adjudicators like to print this document and take it with them to directly take notes on or to help them anticipate the various aspects and students they will be asked to evaluate. (The actual Evaluation Forms are filled out online using a link provided in the pre-production email.)

4. One-Pager: Key Reminders, Comment Check List & Sentence Starters

This one-page document has been developed to serve as a quick resource for adjudicators to use when formulating and reviewing their written comments. We recommend that adjudicators use the checklist when re-reading their comments before submitting and revise as needed.

VIEWING OR ATTENDING THE SHOW:

For 2021-2022, productions may be adjudicated virtually, in-person, or a combination of the two based on each individual school's format offerings.

In-person attendance

COVID-19 SAFETY GUIDELINES

Safety is a top commitment of Des Moines Performing Arts. As such, the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards has drafted **minimum health and safety requirements for participating schools and adjudicators to follow if they wish to participate in the in-person adjudication process**. Schools and adjudicators can find the most up-to-date information regarding adjudication health and safety guidelines on our website here:

<https://desmoinesperformingarts.org/ihsmta-adjudicators/>

PRODUCTION ATTENDANCE, cont.

In-person attendance, cont.

For in-person attendance, please note the following while keeping in mind the COVID-19 Safety Guidelines:

1. Arrival at Performance Location

Please double-check the performance location listed on the Adjudication Form prior to departure. Remember that some productions are not held at the actual high school. Productions may take place in affiliated elementary or middle schools, community theaters, churches or other community centers. Please plan to arrive at least 10-15 minutes early to ensure that you are in your seat by curtain.

2. Picking Up Tickets

For each production reviewed, adjudicators will receive two complimentary tickets – one for the adjudicator and one for a guest. Schools are directed to hold your pair of tickets at Will Call under "Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards." Specific adjudicators' names are not shared with the school in advance. (As such, reminder that adjudicators should also not publicly share what schools they have been assigned after the schedule has been released.)

Schools are encouraged to provide adjudicators with seats on an aisle in a location that still provides an optimal viewing experience. In the event the seats set aside do not work for you, please alert the appropriate parties and politely make your request for new accommodations.

3. Professionalism And Etiquette

Please remember that you are representing the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards at all times while you are at a school. Engage with school staff, volunteers, students, parents and fellow audience members with a positive and respectful attitude.

Please refrain from discussing the production (either positively or negatively) during the performance, at intermission or directly afterwards. **Always assume that parents, grandparents, school faculty, etc. are listening.**

Virtual attendance

The virtual performance experience will be different for each individual school that offers a virtual viewing option. IHSMTA program will confirm virtual performance details with each school and share them with the adjudicator team as they are available.

Details will include necessary technology requirements, links, access codes if applicable, timeline to log on and any other helpful details about the experience.

We acknowledge that virtual performances and adjudication remains a relatively new endeavor for all involved. As questions come up, please let us know so that we can work through them together. We acknowledge that quality of video and audio will affect the level of details adjudicators will be able to assess in their responses. We have alerted schools of this consideration. We are sympathetic to the challenges and the limitations that this viewing experience may pose.

WITHIN 3 BUSINESS DAYS FOLLOWING THE PERFORMANCE:

After the performance's conclusion, return to the pre-production email. In it, you will find links to the following forms that must be completed **within three business days following the performance**:

1. Evaluation Form

Fill out the online Evaluation Form using the [Adjudication Standards](#) to evaluate the elements of the production.

For each element on the survey, there is a comment section. Your written comments are required for each element.

- You must write a minimum of 3-4 complete sentences in paragraph form for each comment section (the online form system does not keep formatting of lists, bullet points or multiple paragraphs).
- Comments should be written directly addressing the adult or student in the specified role. Think of it as a conversation rather than a review.
- Please be mindful of the wording of your feedback so that the evaluation can be used as a supportive educational tool. Students often see adjudicator comments directly.

Program staff will collate the completed Evaluation Forms from the team of adjudicators who saw the production and share the results with the director. The director is encouraged to further share the feedback with their students, production team, and administrators.

2. Nomination Ballot

Last, fill out the online Nomination Ballot. This is your opportunity to give direct recommendations for which students and elements to honor. You will be asked to recommend whether each element or performer should receive an Outstanding Achievement Award or no recognition.

You will also be asked to nominate the production for the following cumulative awards:

Outstanding Overall Performance (takes into account all performance elements: principal roles, ensemble, orchestra)

Outstanding Overall Technical and Creative Achievement (takes into account all technical elements: scenic, lighting, costuming, sound, etc.)

The ballot is seen by program staff only; it is not shared with schools.

COMPENSATION, MILEAGE, & HOTEL REIMBURSEMENT

Honoraria

Serving as an adjudicator is considered a volunteer position. In appreciation of adjudicators' time, efforts and expertise, adjudicators receive an honorarium of \$75 for each production reviewed. Honoraria will be issued for fall productions in December and for spring productions in May.

Mileage

Adjudicators will receive the prevailing IRS mileage rate for each mile travelled beyond a 25-mile radius from the adjudicators' home location. To receive mileage reimbursement, program staff will prompt you to fill out an online Mileage Reimbursement Form **at the conclusion of each semester**. The form should only be filled out once per semester.

Along with honoraria, mileage reimbursement will be issued for fall productions in December and for spring productions in May.

Hotel Reimbursement

The statewide nature of the program may require adjudicators to travel to distant productions. As such, adjudicators travelling more than 90 miles one way to review a production may apply for reimbursement up to \$125 for overnight accommodations.

To receive reimbursement, submit an electronic [Hotel Reimbursement Form](#) and an accompanying receipt within 30 days of seeing the production.

Additional Conditions of Reimbursement:

- The maximum amount of hotel reimbursement for each stay/production adjudicated is \$125.
- Hotel reimbursement is for room and tax only; adjudicators are to cover any incidental charges personally.
- To be eligible for reimbursement, you must have travelled 90 or more miles one-way to adjudicate the production.
- All reimbursement requests must be received within 30 days of your hotel stay. Fill out a separate form for each reimbursement.
- \$20 per diem will be included in your reimbursement to go toward meal expenses.

ADDITIONAL ADJUDICATOR OPPORTUNITIES

Technical, Creative and Business Awards Selection Panel

Technical, Creative and Business Awards are given for individual and team contributions by students. Contributions in these areas are evaluated and awarded based on student-created portfolios and phone interviews.

A select team of adjudicators will serve as Technical, Creative and Business Awards selection panelists. These adjudicators review the portfolios submitted by students independently and then conduct a brief virtual interview with the applying student(s) about their work to determine whether to designate an award.

Selection panelists will conduct interviews on the following dates: December 8-9, 2021; April 6, 2022; and May 4-5, 2022. Selection panelists may participate in one or more days of interviews, dependent on availability. Panelists will receive \$75 honoraria for each full day of interviews they complete. Honoraria will be issued in December, April and May, respectively.

ADDITIONAL ADJUDICATOR OPPORTUNITIES, cont.

Adjudicator Stewards

To ensure consistency across the Evaluation Rubrics, the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards has created an additional adjudicator steward opportunity for a subset of adjudicators. Each adjudicated school production participating in the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards program will ideally be reviewed by a minimum of one adjudicator steward, comprised of Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards program staff and this small group of adjudicator stewards.

Adjudicator stewards will invest additional time in attending productions, traveling and meeting with program staff. Stewards will attend 10-15 productions over the course of the year and will need to have availability to attend productions on high-volume weekends in the fall and spring.

There will be additional training and communication between adjudicator stewards and program staff. Adjudicator stewards receive an honorarium in the amount of \$25 for each production they attend as a steward only. Honoraria will be issued for fall productions in December and for spring productions in May. Mileage and Hotel Reimbursement guidelines also apply for the adjudicator steward role.

This opportunity is available for returning adjudicators only.

End-Of-Year Opportunities

Any end-of-year opportunities for adjudicators will be announced at a later date. End-of-year programming shape is still being determined.