



# IOWA HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL THEATER AWARDS

Presented By  **EMC**  
INSURANCE

## 2020-2021 ADJUDICATOR GUIDELINES

### Table of Contents

PROGRAM OVERVIEW .....	2
PURPOSE.....	3
ADJUDICATOR SELECTION .....	3
RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES .....	3
FEEDBACK CRITERIA .....	3
SUPPORT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT .....	4
STEPS TO THE ADJUDICATION PROCESS.....	5
COMPENSATION, MILEAGE, & HOTEL REIMBURSEMENT.....	8
ADDITIONAL ADJUDICATOR OPPORTUNITIES .....	8
<b>APPENDIX A:</b> HOTEL REIMBURSEMENT FORM.....	9

## 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 2020-2021**

All participating schools receive access to exclusive learning opportunities offered throughout the year that are designed to help 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 2020-2021**

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

Adjudication is a foundational component of the IHSMTA program. Typically, every participating school participates in the adjudication process, but due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic we are allowing past participating schools to participate without having a musical production adjudicated this academic year.

**3. AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS**

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. END-OF-YEAR PROGRAMMING**

Typically, the year culminates in a professionally produced Awards Showcase celebrating student achievement at the Des Moines Civic Center. Due to the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020-2021 end-of-year programming plans for are to be determined. Confirmed plans will be shared once they are finalized.

## PURPOSE

Adjudicators' primary role is to attend high school musicals and offer educationally focused, critical feedback on all elements of the productions, including, but not limited to, students' theatrical performance, instrumental and vocal music execution, choreography, technical elements and direction. Feedback is given to schools with the intent of educating participants as well as serving 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 are required to attend a training session **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, consisting of a written evaluation, score assessment, and award nominations, through the electronic Evaluation Form and Nomination Ballot within three business days after viewing the production. (In most cases, this window includes at least a partial weekend.)

It is estimated that the Evaluation Form and 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 questions, if needed.

In addition, adjudicators are expected 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 you feel a member of the public could question as having affected your ability to be an impartial responder to the production

## FEEDBACK CRITERIA

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

1. Celebrates students, directors and schools for wherever they are on their journey as young 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. Avoids assumptions about the rehearsal process and references to 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 specific production or performance. Does not make comparisons between students and/or schools.
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 the use of full, grammatically correct sentences and accurate spelling.

## SUPPORT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

To uphold the integrity of the adjudication process and thus the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards program, Des Moines Performing Arts implements performance management to cultivate and drive an equitable adjudication process, centered around the scoring and feedback criteria.

Adjudicator performance management has three primary components including:

### 1. TRAINING/PLANNING

Program staff establish the adjudication process procedures and goals at the beginning of the year and provide 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

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:

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 you 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 he or she is particularly interested in receiving feedback, may give some insight into the resources available to them, 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. GUIDE TO PROVIDING HELPFUL FEEDBACK

This document has been developed based on school and adjudicator input about considerations for how to provide the most helpful feedback to schools. We recommend that adjudicators read through this prior to filling out their written comments.

### PRODUCTION ATTENDANCE:

For 2020-2021, 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 the number one priority at Des Moines Performing Arts and in light of the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, 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/>

## **Logistics**

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 able to follow any entrance safety protocols and 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, 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. Please make sure to follow COVID-19 Safety Guidelines when picking up tickets and sitting in the performance space.

### **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 tone.

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 performances**

The virtual performance experience will be different for each individual school that offers this viewing option. IHSMTA program staff will confirm these virtual performance details with each school and share them with the adjudicator team as they are available. Details to include necessary technology requirements, links/access codes, timeline to log in, other helpful details about the experience, etc.

We acknowledge that virtual performances and adjudication is a 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 sound will impact the level of detail of what adjudicators will be able to assess and respond to, and have alerted schools of this fact. 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 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 question on the survey there is a comment section. **Your written comments are required for each question.**

**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.

The completed Evaluation Forms will be collated and shared with the director, who is encouraged to share the feedback with their students, production team, and administrators. 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.**

### **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 **any 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.)

**BOTH Outstanding Overall Performance AND Outstanding Overall Technical and Creative Achievement** (takes into account all performance and technical elements)

## COMPENSATION, MILEAGE, & HOTEL REIMBURSEMENT

### Honoraria

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

### Mileage

The 2020-2021 Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is open to all high schools in the state of Iowa. 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, you will be prompted to fill out an online Mileage Reimbursement Form **at the conclusion of each semester**. The form should only be filled out once per semester.

Mileage reimbursement will be issued for fall productions in December and spring productions in May along with honoraria.

### 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 be reimbursed up to \$125 for overnight accommodations.

To receive reimbursement, submit a Hotel Reimbursement form and receipt within 30 days of seeing the production. Further instructions and parameters regarding hotel reimbursement can be found on the Hotel Reimbursement form (See [Appendix A](#)).

## 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 on the Technical, Creative and Business Awards selection panel. These adjudicators review the portfolios submitted by students independently and then conduct a brief phone interview with the applying student(s) about their work to determine whether an award should be designated.

Selection panelists will conduct virtual interviews on the following dates: December 9, 2020; December 10, 2020; April 8, 2021; April 28, 2021; and April 29, 2021.

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. These honoraria will be issued in December, April and May, respectively.

# **APPENDIX A:** HOTEL REIMBURSEMENT FORM

## ADJUDICATOR HOTEL REIMBURSEMENT FORM

### ADJUDICATOR INFORMATION

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Adjudicator Name

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Mailing Address

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City, State, Zip Code

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Email

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Day phone

Evening phone

### PRODUCTION INFORMATION

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Production/School Adjudicated

Date of Adjudication: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Total Amount of Hotel Reimbursement: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (up to \$125 for room and tax)

*Conditions of reimbursement:*

- *The maximum amount of hotel reimbursement for each stay/production adjudicated is \$125. Hotel reimbursement is for room and tax only; any incidental charges are to be covered personally.*
- *To be eligible for reimbursement, you must have travelled 90 or more miles one-way to adjudicate the production listed above.*
- *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.*

I hereby verify that the above information is correct and that I have attached a valid receipt to confirm the amount of hotel reimbursement requested.

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Signature

Date

Please email all completed forms as a PDF or Word document along with a photo or PDF of your hotel stay receipt to Sarah Florian ([SarahF@DMPA.org](mailto:SarahF@DMPA.org)).

**All forms must be submitted within 30 days of hotel stay.**

Questions? Contact Sarah at [sarahf@dmpa.org](mailto:sarahf@dmpa.org).