

ROPA audition recommendations and ideas

The following items are suggestions from the ROPA EDI Workgroup, which consists of musicians performing in ROPA orchestras around the United States, that orchestras can implement with goals to attract a larger applicant pool, ensure as fair and unbiased of an audition process as possible, and hire the most qualified candidate

1. All audition vacancies should be shared publicly
 - a. Local auditions are strongly discouraged in favor of national auditions in order to eliminate bias towards local candidates and widely advertise the opportunity
 - b. Orchestra managements should proactively contact musicians whose information is housed in the [NAAS database](#) or within other analogous resources to ask as many musicians as possible to apply for their upcoming auditions
2. Orchestras should encourage a wide variety of repertoire and multiple perspectives when considering audition lists and committee makeup
3. Orchestras should evaluate the use of audition deposits to have candidates confirm their attendance
 - a. Orchestras could consider limiting the amount of the deposit to \$50 or using alternative means of attendance confirmation, as a higher amount may be a financial barrier for candidates who can no longer attend or need to cancel their audition at the last minute
 - b. If an audition deposit is utilized, orchestra managements should clearly communicate its intent and possible use, emphasizing that it will be returned at the audition check-in for each candidate in attendance and kept for each cancellation or no-show
4. Orchestras should consider granting all applicants a live audition
5. Orchestras should consider additional measures when there are time constraints and/or when a large quantity of applicants apply to take an audition
 - a. Pre-advancing any candidate(s) into any later round of an audition is very strongly discouraged, but candidates that the

committee deems qualified for pre-advancement may be considered in the following ways:

- i. If the candidate already performs in the orchestra, they could be pre-advanced
 - ii. If the candidate has recently performed as a substitute and/or extra musician in the orchestra multiple times, they could be pre-advanced
 - iii. A pre-advanced candidate could be offered and/or may elect to play any or all rounds prior to the round to which they have been advanced with this understanding communicated and consented: if they do not receive sufficient votes from the committee to advance to the next round, they will be excused from the audition and not allowed to play in any later rounds
 - b. Orchestras should consider enforcing a short time limit on the preliminary round and select the quantity of repertoire accordingly
 - c. If a time limit on any round is utilized, the committee should inform candidates in advance of the round and enforce that time limit for all candidates auditioning in that round
6. Orchestras should have the candidates draw or redraw numbers at the beginning of each audition round
7. Consider sharing the smaller repertoire lists for each round to all candidates in advance of the round at the same time
- a. Preliminary round repertoire could be shared to all candidates at least twenty-four hours in advance of the first scheduled audition via email - this is only appropriate if all preliminary round auditions will take place on the same day
 - b. The repertoire for any additional round could be shared prior to having the remaining candidates redraw numbers
8. Have the screen in place for all rounds of the audition
9. Allow candidates to play the entire round of repertoire as the schedule or time limits permit out of respect for their time and investment

10. Encourage collecting the cell phones of all audition committee members and/or monitoring their use
 - a. Have the union representative present at the audition collect committee cell phones prior to the start of the first round of the day(s) and return them at the conclusion of any day and/or the audition
 - b. Have the union representative remind the committee to turn their phones off or put them on silent and/or airplane mode prior to collection
 - c. Keep the phones in a safe yet visible and secluded place for the union representative and the committee, and ensure that the candidates cannot see or hear the phones of committee members
 - d. Provide the cell phone number of the union representative to members of the committee for them to share with their relevant contacts ahead of the audition in the event of an emergency
11. Chamber music rounds are discouraged, but, to preserve the anonymity of the candidates, they could be utilized in the following ways:
 - a. If one or more members of the committee want to play alongside a candidate, leave the screen in place and/or have any playing member(s) abstain from discussions and voting
 - b. Additional orchestra musicians who are not serving on the audition committee could be hired to play in an ensemble with the candidate(s)
12. Engage in good-faith efforts to hire a qualified candidate at the conclusion of the audition
 - a. An audition resulting in a no-hire is a frustration for all parties
 - b. Orchestras are encouraged to hold a sufficient number of screened audition rounds to determine a clear winner
 - c. Trial weeks are discouraged after the conclusion of the audition
 - when there is a clear winner, the full probationary period should be utilized to ensure a fair hiring process