

Foundation Diploma (Full Time)

COURSE OUTLINE



The Foundation Diploma is a one-year vocational training in acting. This course provides basic training in acting and is for students with less experience.

It is aimed at those wishing to gain experience and confidence in a drama school setting before embarking on a higher level course at drama school or university, or for those wishing to learn more about acting and the performing arts.

The course aims to provide a comprehensive and rigorous training in the core skills of acting techniques, Improvisation, textual analysis, vocal training, singing, movement and dance, among others, which contribute to the formation of a professional actor. In addition, there are regular performance projects that enable students to consolidate their learning and put into practice the new skills acquired in the many classes undertaken. All classes are taught by dynamic working professionals.

The first term is designed to set in place the necessary techniques which are the foundations of performance. Students will investigate the essential nature of performance. The second term is where students are able to explore creatively their individuality as an actor and begin to discover what professional direction you wish to take. The third and shorter term consists of full-time rehearsals towards an end of term production at a professional theatre venue in Central London. As well as the techniques and skills provided, students benefit from regularly meeting working actors, directors and other industry professionals who will give practical advice and information on different aspects of the acting world.

Those attending our Foundation Diploma course will not be treated as beginners but will be pushed and challenged to ensure the maximum amount of development.

LSDA may offer students a place on the Advanced Diploma in Acting programme after displaying exceptional talent and discipline on this course.

Students on this programme study full time at all three LSDA venues between the hours of approximately 9am – 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. The year consists of twenty-five weeks, delivered as three terms.

SUBJECT AREAS

ACTING

Students are taught exercises and techniques based on the works of Strasberg, Stanislavsky, Hagan, amongst others, that will give them the foundation of a solid acting technique. They study, and develop an understanding of, character behaviour and impulse. They begin exercises in creativity and imagination. Through our varied programme, we strive to foster each student's individuality as a beginner actor and help them find their own unique "voice". In order to understand and have a foundation for creating characters different from themselves students will learn about themselves. They will be given many exercises based on them getting to know who they are, what makes them tick, their histories, loves, hates, beliefs, exploring themselves as a character all designed to get them to know, and appreciate their own instrument, and the tool box they will need to draw on in order to create truthful characters.

There will be acting workshops that work towards finding the actors natural place of neutral both physicality and vocally. Students will experience theatre games that will allow students to open themselves emotionally, to trust, to learn to communicate truthfully and to play, before they begin a series of exercises designed to introduce them to an organic way of working. They will explore how to find truthful emotional centre and transmit that to an audience by developing vocal and technical skills.





Students will also become familiar with different methods of creating physical characterisation. They will learn the importance of physical character choices and how that influences and conveys story. Students will be introduced to a variety of techniques that explore ways to create characters physically, these include the Stanislavkian principle of 'Characteristics', the four elements and animal studies which focus on the tempo, weight and mask of the animal and then learning to transfer the animalistic physicality to suit human characters. Throughout, the emphasis will always be on making choices that are faithful and suit the story they are telling.

During these sessions students will be guided through exercises that further encourage the actor to connect up to imaginary given circumstances in a truthful way using principles of Stanislavski's 'Magic If' and the work of Uta Hagen with regards to emotional substitution and endowment. They will hone their skills at connecting to their imagination and the emotional energy that can give. They will experience in practice the Uta Hagen exercise of being 'private

in public' and then subsequently an improvisation with a partner that is detailed in given circumstances and will encourage truthful, impulsive pursuit of their objectives in action.

Theatre history is also covered, and the difference between technical versus organic acting.

IMPROVISATION

The art of improvisation enables the actor to act spontaneously in a scene. Students begin to learn to access their innate spontaneity and imagination through improvisation. Even the most courageous actor has inhibitions of one form or another. Foundation Improvisation classes encourage the students to overcome these inhibitions in a fun, creative and dynamic way. The beginner exercises will help the foundation student to open up their imagination and quickness of thinking on their feet. It encourages them to play and enjoy the art of creating their own scenes and characters. The structure of a good improvisation will be explored using status, storytelling, blocking, the magic "if" and characterisation.

DEVISED THEATRE

Students will use various exploratory devising techniques to devise and perform a piece of theatre. They begin to look at how different stimuli can contribute towards making theatre. They embark on an understanding of how non-naturalist theatre can be used and its effect; consider how space and atmosphere contribute to performance work. The foundation students work collaboratively as a group, taking joint ownership of their devised project under the guidance of their teacher/director.

VOICE STUDIES

Voice is a vital component for the student actor to be heard. From a foundation level, the students begin to explore release and use of tension, breath capacity and effectiveness, development of tone and resonance, clarity and articulation, muscularity of the word, connection and credibility. They begin to use the voice in varied texts. Voice blends with the acting and all other disciplines within the training ensuring that students will begin their understanding of how their voice 'works'. They begin to learn how to analyse and use the voice effectively within the performance demands that are placed on them. On this course there are 4 different voice classes; Practical Voice, Speech and Phonetics, Voice and Text and Creative Impulse.

1. PRACTICAL VOICE

Students will learn exercises to develop the following areas of voice towards performance: breath support and capacity, resonance and range (pitch), placement, articulation, voice and text, voice and character, and vocal presence.

To this end, an introduction to the skeletal system – with particular attention to the ribs and their relationship to breath capacity will be explored; the spine, alignment, and breath will be investigated; the relationship of the diaphragm to breath capacity and control as well as an introduction to auxiliary breath support muscles will be reviewed; the larynx and the anatomy of articulation will also be explored. Additionally, students will be introduced to resonance and range, creative articulation into text and the muscularity of language, vocal health issues, and starting pitch vs. habitual pitch. There will be whole-body Alexander Technique practices to centre, ground, stretch, breathe, focus, collect & connect students.

2. SPEECH & PHONETICS

In this class students will look at the articulators and develop a sense of awareness of their own individual speech patterns. Then they will work on the Neutral Standard English accent, signature sounds and developing familiarity with the different forms of speaking. They will be introduced to phonetic symbols so students can identify all the sounds in symbol and in pronunciation of the accent. As students move into term 2 they will consolidate their learning of phonetic transcription and articulation. They will develop auditory awareness of stress patterns, intonation, pace, pitch and dynamics.



3. VOICE & TEXT

In this module students will also learn exercises to develop the following areas of voice towards performance: breath support and capacity, resonance and range (pitch), placement, articulation, voice and text, voice and character, and vocal presence. The course starts with practical voice exercises which are then extended to include text in a safe way. Various exercises are introduced to encourage the students to play with text vocally e.g. considering Laban efforts (whole body and voice) to gain variety - colour and movement into the voice, identifying vowels and consonants - sounding them to gain further information about text and to connect vocally etc.. Over the year a wide range of texts are use, each with different challenges.

4. CREATIVE IMPULSE

A year-long exploration called 'Creative Impulse', these whole day workshops take place monthly. These workshops are designed to support students in becoming more creatively free, more open to artistic exploration, aide them to be courageous and assist them in letting go of fear and limiting beliefs. Through the year they work towards balancing and channelling the stronger creative impulse with the practical qualities required for professional engagement.



SINGING

The students experience in the singing classes is intended not only to develop the singing voice but more importantly to encourage their confidence in hearing their singing voice out loud in the creative working space. The singing classes are aimed at the relevance to actors and their character work. They are encouraged to 'tell a story' with the song and treat it as an acting text expressed as a song for heightened effect. Over the year students will cover a variety of styles including ballad, up tempo, pop, legit musical theatre, modern musical theatre and individual composers like Sondheim. The level of work set will be dependence on the individual student's level of ability and experience. At the end of the year all students will be able to sing individually and in harmony as part of the group, to listen to and repeat phrases without music in a variety of styles and will understanding good singing technique.

MOVEMENT/DANCE

Awareness of the physical self is essential in order to be able to change, shed and gain a new physicality in the process of character building. An actor needs to be physically fit, strong and have flexibility in order to have full dramatic expression.

1. MOVEMENT STUDIES

The aim of the movement class is for each student to become aware of their physical tension and habits and work towards mastering the process of finding relaxed movement. At the start of the course students work on spatial awareness, awareness of other actors and begin to explore the body as a means of creative expression for the actor. As students develop there will be workshops in shadow work (noticing actors own and creating for character), gesture and physical characterisation as well as exercises based on Anne Bogart's Viewpoints and the work of Laban. They will experiment with physical representation of inner life and work on the physical expression of status. In term 3 students will look at different interpretations and styles of physical theatre as well as looking at interpretation and choreography. Working as a group the students will then spend the remainder of the course creating their own piece of physical theatre, from a given short story, incorporating techniques and practices that they have studied over the year.

2. DANCE

In Dance, students will study a variety of Jazz, Latin and Ballroom styles of dance such as Waltz, Swing, Foxtrot, Cha-Cha, Rumba/Mambo, Argentine Tango, Quick Step and Tap. They will also work throughout the year on posture, basic fitness; strength & stretch, walking/posing and Eurhythmics.

3. PHYSICAL THEATRE

In this class students are Introduced to the Frantic Method. In term 1 students will develop their ensemble skills and confidence in their physical ability broadening their physical vocabulary for devising work. Skills taught in term 2 will include lifting, falling and catching which will then be taken into a variety of devising techniques. Emphasis is on physical warmup and fitness, co-ordination and awareness of the body.

AUDITION TECHNIQUES

This unit of work prepares the students for the experience of the audition arena through mock auditions and classes in audition technique. These classes comprehensively cover what the students' need to know in order to best prepare them for auditioning for further training or industry castings. The classes encourage students to feel 'at home' and to empower themselves in the audition space. Students will work on improving their cold reading techniques as well as working on expanding their personal monologue repertoire.



PERFORMANCE PROJECTS

1. REHEARSAL EXERCISE PROJECTS

During the year at LSDA students will be involved in several rehearsal exercise projects; this is where the students rehearse specific scenes, monologues and whole plays with a view to performance. This gives the students the opportunity to put into practice the skills and techniques they learn during each of the individual classes. It is essential they experience the live audience situation at the end of their module of work. They then begin to understand their nerves and individual reactions to this experience in a safe environment which encourages their confidence in the performance arena.

a. REHEARSAL EXERCISE: MONOLOGUES

There are 3 monologue projects throughout the year. They are:

- Contemporary
- Shakespeare
- Monologues for Audition



Through these projects the students will be able to analyse and deconstruct a speech in order to portray a character truthfully, with full understanding of the play and supported by further research and reading. They will have an understanding of the use of the given circumstances and the technique of Actioning and learn how to apply it practically. They will learn how to analyse a text individually and be able to create a fully formed character inspired by the script: implementing physical choices and clear objective and actions to play the character and tell the story.

During the first monologue project students will gain a greater understanding of the role of the actor and explore how to prepare. The second project sees each student working on Shakespeare monologue. During this project they will study Shakespeare's language, plays and themes in depth and will explore how to confidently perform his work. The final project will be a chance for the students to work on a variety of monologues to gain experience, build confidence and in preparation for future auditions.

b. REHEARSAL EXERCISE: SCENES

As with the monologues there are scene study projects throughout the year - on average there will be between 3 and 4 scene study projects. They are:

- Contemporary
- Physical Transformation
- Classical Group
- High Emotion

Like the monologue projects the scene study modules provide students with the opportunity to practice and develop skills and techniques that they have learnt in their other classes. In addition, they are faced with the challenges of working with their scene partners. Students learn the importance of listening, 'reacting' rather than 'acting', and of being 'in the moment'.

In the first scene study project students will work without props and set - the focus of these scenes will be truth and connection. The second project sees each student given a character that has opposing physical characteristics to their own in order for them to make as great a physical transformation as possible. In term 2 student's will start working on classical group scenes where the focus is on staging scenes with more characters and the technical challenges of this. Students will explore ensemble scenes and also scenes with main and secondary characters. They will work on the emotional and narrative arc of the scene as a whole as well as the technical delivery and focus of the scene. The final scenes to be work on scenes that contain specific emotional elements that are considered challenging for the individual actor. For some this might be vulnerability or sorrow, for others it might be anger or fear.

c. REHEARSAL EXERCISE: FULL PLAY

In both term 1 and 2 students, work on a full play with a professional director enabling them to further put into practice the new skills learnt in the many classes undertaken. In addition, it allows the students the opportunity to work on the whole journey of the character throughout the play. Students learn to develop, and have responsibility for, their own personal work method in order to get their work to performance standard. They also strengthen their ability to fully sustain a character throughout the play whilst honestly and simply telling their story.

The rehearsals sessions are one day a week for approximately five weeks and then full-time for the final week of term. The first term is generally a modern play performed to LSDA staff and tutors. The second term is a more classical piece, often a 19th or early 20th Century European classic which is once again performed to LSDA staff and tutors.



2. GRADUATE PRODUCTION

By the end of the third term their foundation graduate performance will take place for two evenings in an established Central London theatre to an invited audience of friends and family. This full-scale graduation production gives every student the opportunity to showcase their talent whilst experience their first full technical and dress rehearsal experience in a professional theatre. Students will be in rehearsals for around 4 weeks before entering the theatre for the tech and performances. The choice of piece is dependent on each individual year and what LSDA decides would best challenge that particular year. Previous shows have been both Modern and Classical, Tragedies and Comedies.

The graduation play is the final opportunity for students to challenge themselves, put into practice all that they have learnt as well as work on accurately and truthfully replicating performance over the two shows.



COURSE AIMS

By completing the Foundation Diploma course you can expect to be able to:

- develop and play a character in rehearsals and performances and sustain it before an audience or within the framework of a production
- show evidence of the skills of basic characterisation
- create believable characters and emotions appropriate to the demands of the text and production
- define the objectives of a character and embody and express these within the context of a production
- begin to make full use of individuality in performance
- work sensitively with other actors in both rehearsal and performance
- begin to show evidence within performance of creative imagination, emotion, thought, concentration and energy
- develop an effective working process
- begin to draw upon and make use of personal experience and observation to assist in the creation of a role
- prepare and sustain the quality of concentration necessary for each performance
- use costumes and props effectively to develop performance
- begin to communicate to an audience with expression, emotion and spontaneity
- begin to read and interpret texts with accuracy and confidence
- begin to use textual analysis, research and observation in the development of a role
- begin to study text and make full use of the structures and phrasing in order to reveal character, intention and the development of a story



LEARNING OUTCOMES

The foundation course endeavours to deliver to the graduating students a solid grounding and understanding of what is required of them for their future professional career. They will begin to understand themselves as creative artists and acquire knowledge of the discipline involved in the pursuit of their possible career choice.

If a student successfully participates in and completes the course, making full use of the opportunities for learning that this course provides they should know and be able to do the following:

VOICE

- begin to realise individual vocal potential
- begin to use and protect the vocal resources
- begin to create and communicate character, emotion, thought and narrative through the use of language - spoken and sung
- begin to read and interpret texts with confidence
- begin to express and communicate emotions and thoughts with spontaneity
- begin to communicate with confidence and assurance
- begin to read with clarity and understanding from a prepared passage
- begin to apply vocal techniques of breathing, centring and relaxation in relation to pitch, resonance, projection and articulation of speech in rehearsal and performance
- understand the necessity to prepare and execute suitable warm-up exercises in order to protect the voice and ensure the optimum potential in rehearsal and performance
- respond and listen to other actors and be aware of the audience
- begin to sing harmonically and tell the character's story within the song.



MOVEMENT

- begin to use the body to the full in a free, safe and flexible manner while taking care of physical resources
- begin to realise character, emotion and narrative through the use of body and movement
- begin to communicate physically in performance with confidence and assurance
- begin to move with understanding and awareness of space
- begin to move economically and expressively and use relaxation and balance as a sound basis for the efficient use of body and voice
- begin to assimilate and commit to memory and recall simple dance patterns demonstrating musicality and rhythm in the execution of dance movements and/or sequences
- begin to maintain stamina in specific movement tasks and demanding work over a lengthy period
- understand the necessity to prepare and execute personal warm-up exercises in order to avoid personal injury and to facilitate the fullest use of physical skills in performance.

COURSE DATES

2026/27 ACADEMIC YEAR - 12th October 2026 – 17th May 2027

TERM 1 - 12th October – 11th December 2026

TERM 2 - 4th January – 12th March 2027

TERM 3 - 5th April – 17th May 2027

COURSE FEES

The total tuition fee for the course is £7,995.

This fee is inclusive of the required £1,000 confirmation payment (due on acceptance of place). The remainder is to be paid in three instalments of £2,335 (before the start of term 1), £2,335 (before the start of term 2) and £2,325 (before the start of term 3). A discount rate of £7,495 applies if full tuition fees are paid prior to course commencement.



LSDA

LONDON SCHOOL OF DRAMATIC ART



ABOUT LSDA

London School of Dramatic Art (LSDA) was set up to provide a comprehensive and professionally relevant vocational training that was both accessible and centred around the individuality of the students attending. The management, staff and tutors at LSDA are all working professionals: a fact that ensures relevant training methodology and approach, along with a clear focus on current industry requirements and practices, are always at the heart of the training experience.

Graduates of LSDA's courses have been successful in obtaining professional acting work within all performance mediums; stage, TV, film, and voiceover as well as gaining representation by reputable agents. In addition to this they have established relationships with industry casting consultants and directors.

Our style of teaching is not to impose methodologies but to provide the tools to enable students to become imaginative creative professionals. We foster the individual talents in all our students. We encourage them to take responsibility for creating specific character choices whilst studying at LSDA and throughout their ongoing career. LSDA aims to assist each student in reaching their full potential.

LSDA admits only a limited number of students each year because we want to maintain a high creative standard of student in a close-knit learning environment. We believe this sets the right scene for growth and development for an actor.

The founding principles of the London School of Dramatic Art continue to remain the essence of what makes this school a unique and refreshing place to train.

LSDA is a partnership with David Game, Chairman of the David Game College Group, Drama Centre London trained Jake Taylor (current Principal) and Casting Director Urvashi Chand.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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