

2020-21 M.F.A./CERTIFICATE PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Financial Aid

Funding from federal, state, and A.C.T. sources is available to eligible students in the M.F.A./Certificate Program. Limited A.C.T. scholarship funding is available for Summer Training Congress students. To be eligible for federal or state funds each applicant must:

- Complete a free application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Be a high school graduate (or equivalent)
- Demonstrate satisfactory academic progress in the respective A.C.T. program
- Be a U.S. Citizen or qualified resident alien
- Neither be in default on a prior federal financial aid loan nor owe a repayment on a federal grant
- Have a valid social security number (unless the applicant is from the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, or the Republic of Palau)
- Register with the Selective Service, if required
- Certify that he or she will use federal student aid only for educational purposes
- Demonstrate financial need

The following financial aid is available based on the above conditions and the applicant's status as a graduate or undergraduate student:

- Federal Pell Grants – based on financial need, undergraduates only
- Federal SEOG Grants – based on financial need, undergraduates only
- ACG Grant – financial/selected criteria, undergraduates only
- Cal Grant – based on financial need and GPA, for undergraduate California residents
- Federal Work-Study
- Federal Perkins Loan – based on eligibility and funding availability
- Federal Direct Loan – graduate students eligible for unsubsidized loans only
- Federal Graduate PLUS Loan – for independent graduate students
- Parent PLUS Loans – for dependent graduate and undergraduate students only
- A.C.T. Scholarships – based on demonstrated need

In addition to need-based aid, A.C.T. provides several merit-based scholarships, including: The A.C.T. Merit Scholarship, The Mort Fleishhacker Scholarship, The Mary Metz Scholarship, The Shenson Performing Arts Scholarship, The Joan Sadler Award, and The Heather M. Kitchen Endowed Scholarship.

Although incoming Master of Fine Arts/Certificate students will be cast in one (1) A.C.T. professional productions in their third year for which they will receive compensation in accordance with the then-effective contract between A.C.T. and Actors' Equity Association (AEA), they should carefully consider options for financing the three-year M.F.A. Program. Federal Stafford Loans must be repaid, and students relying primarily on Stafford

Loans will incur substantial debt upon graduation. Students are strongly encouraged to keep living costs low and to save as much money as possible before beginning classes in order to limit the need to borrow. Since the M.F.A. Program requires a full-time commitment, students will have little opportunity to earn money from outside employment during the school year.

M.F.A. PROGRAM FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 12, 2020. Financial aid applications will be available at the time of audition callbacks.

FAFSA DEADLINE: Jan 29, 2020 for applicants wanting to be considered for Callback Weekend travel reimbursement need eligibility.

PROBATION OR DISMISSAL OF FINANCIAL AID RECIPIENTS
Students on financial aid must maintain satisfactory academic progress as noted in the A.C.T. student handbook. If a student is dismissed, the director of academic affairs will notify the financial aid director by the next class day, and the appropriate financial aid review will take place. Any refunds due the student and/or a financial aid program will be calculated according to the latest federal regulations and policies detailed in the M.F.A. Program student handbook and financial aid information.

SUMMER TRAINING CONGRESS A.C.T. scholarships are available on a limited basis. The maximum award ranges from \$500 to \$1,000 per student. To apply for an STC scholarship, applicants must complete the 2020–21 FAFSA, available starting October 1, 2019, by going to fafsa.ed.gov. Please note that federal funding, such as the Pell Grant and Stafford Loan, is NOT available for the STC. Private/educational loans may be available to cover tuition and cost-of-living expenses. Applicants must meet lender eligibility criteria to qualify. Applicants may contact the A.C.T. Financial Aid Office at 415.439.2411 or email jlopez@act-st.org if they have questions.

STC SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE: APRIL 17, 2020. Students applying for scholarships must complete their enrollment application packages, as well as their FAFSA, by April 17, 2020, since admission materials are used to make award decisions.

THE SAN FRANCISCO SEMESTER A.C.T. scholarships are available on a limited basis. To apply for an SFS scholarship, applicants must complete the 2020–21 FAFSA, available starting October 1, 2019 by going to fafsa.ed.gov. While no federal or state aid—such as a Pell Grant or a Stafford Loan—is available, A.C.T. can work with your current/home college to develop a consortium agreement if you are eligible. Private/educational loans may be available to cover tuition and cost-of-living expenses. Applicants must meet lender eligibility criteria to qualify. Contact the A.C.T. Financial Aid Office at 415.439.2411 or email Jerry Lopez at jlopez@act-st.org if they have questions.

SFS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE: April 1, 2020 for the fall semester. Students applying for scholarships must complete their enrollment application packages, as well as their FAFSA, by April 1, 2020 since admission materials are used to make award decisions.

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Student Right-To-Know

COMPLETION AND GRADUATION RATES See data disaggregated by demographic categories online at act-sf.org/righttoknow.

M.F.A./Certificate Program

Class of	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Enrolled	12	10	12	13	13
Graduated	10	10	11	12	13
Withdrew	2	0	1	1	0
Dismissed	0	0	0	0	0

Summer Training Congress

Class of	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Enrolled	74	61	67	55	56
Graduated	74	61	67	53	55
Withdrew	0	0	0	2	1
Dismissed	0	0	0	0	0

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General Information (Please see website for full information)

UNIT OF CREDIT DEFINED One (1) unit of credit represents approximately thirty (30 contact hours).

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION In an effort to enrich the collective creative experience, A.C.T. seeks to attract to its faculty, staff, and student body qualified persons from diverse backgrounds. In accordance with this policy, A.C.T. does not discriminate in admissions, financial aid, educational programs, or employment against a disabled person who is otherwise qualified, or against any individual on account of gender, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, age, or national or ethnic origin.

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS Immediately after acceptance to the program, students with special needs must notify the director of academic affairs, in writing, of the precise nature of their needs. Upon notification, A.C.T., in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, will then consider what reasonable accommodations may be necessary to meet those needs.

BEHAVIOR All A.C.T. students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner conducive to an environment of positive learning. Respect, courtesy, and care are mandatory in theater, and students will be encouraged to comport themselves as apprentice actors. Students are expected to be prepared and on time for all classes and rehearsals. Breaches of common decency in behavior, including sexual or racial harassment, will be cause for disciplinary action. *Lean Forward*, a booklet explaining professional etiquette at A.C.T., is distributed prior to registration along with the student handbook, which contains further information about expectations and disciplinary procedures.

CAMPUS SECURITY Facility security and safety reports, policies, and statistics on campus crime are printed in the student handbook and are available upon request or on the A.C.T. website on the M.F.A. Program's "General Information" and "Student Right to Know" pages at act-sf.org/conservatory.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT APPLICANTS A.C.T. is authorized under federal law to enroll nonimmigrant alien students in the M.F.A. Program and STC. In order to qualify, students from non-English-speaking countries must present evidence of proficiency in the English language at a level that will permit undertaking and completing the course. Foreign applicants should be aware that financial aid available to international students is restricted. It is important that each foreign applicant be aware of the cost of attending A.C.T. and prepared to meet these expenses. Check with the A.C.T. Financial Aid office regarding aid. The director of academic affairs will issue a certificate of eligibility (I-20) after the applicant has submitted all supporting materials (see application) and documentation showing the student's means of support for the academic year. Financial documentation must show that the student has sufficient funds to pay tuition (\$30,325 for the 2019-20 academic year, plus annual living expenses of at least \$30,404. Transcripts of high school and any college-level work must be presented in official English translation with indications as to their U.S. equivalents wherever possible. Foreign students wishing to receive an M.F.A. degree must submit evidence of a bachelor's degree or its equivalent, as well as transcripts of all class work completed, in English translation. They must also include with all transcripts the name of the organization by which the college is accredited.

CREDIT FOR PREVIOUS EDUCATION Students may enter the M.F.A. Program only at the first-year level. Credit for previous training is maintained as part of each student's record. Due to the unique nature and intensity of instruction in the M.F.A. Program, and the importance of continuity, students must complete the entire curriculum. Students in the M.F.A. Program who are veterans may receive credit for previous course work that is identical in content and substance to equivalent A.C.T. courses.

INSURANCE Students are covered under a special portion of A.C.T.'s insurance policy for injuries sustained during classwork and performances. If you are injured during class or performance, you must immediately notify your instructor or stage manager, who will either provide you with the correct forms or direct you to the

conservatory office to obtain them. Please read the instructions carefully and complete and return all necessary paperwork in a timely fashion. Delays in reporting or filing paperwork could complicate your claim. Student Accident Insurance is not student health insurance and should not be considered as primary health protection. All students should have their own private insurance policies for illness and any injuries sustained either off campus or not as part of class work. Beginning the fall of 2013, all students are required to provide proof of individual health insurance at Registration. You may obtain any plan that best suits your needs. Some of you may still be covered under your parents' policies. A.C.T.'s accident insurance covers only classroom related incidents, not any type of personal medical issues. And in the case of a classroom accident, A.C.T. has a primary excess policy, which means that all claims must first be submitted to personal insurance, with our policy as secondary only. The following websites may be useful to you in obtaining personal health insurance coverage: www.ehealthinsurance.com. Other sites include: (Kaiser) kpif.kp.org/ or (Blue Cross Health Insurance - Anthem-Health.com) www.anthem-health.com/Apply-Now.

HOUSING A.C.T. has no housing facilities. Apartments, rooms, and residence clubs are located within walking distance of the A.C.T. offices and studios in central San Francisco, where all classes are held. Most students share rentals on a monthly basis at an average cost of \$800 to \$1,000 each. The conservatory office maintains information about where to look for apartments and introduces students interested in sharing housing. A.C.T. does not find housing for students.

UNLAWFUL HARASSMENT A.C.T. is committed to providing a work and learning environment free of unlawful harassment and discrimination. Company policy prohibits sexual harassment, and harassment and/or discrimination based on pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions, race, religious creed, color, national origin or ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, gender, gender identification, genetic characteristics, sexual orientation, family responsibility, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance or regulation. All such harassment and discrimination is unlawful. A.C.T.'s anti-harassment policy applies to all persons involved in the operation of the company, including employees, students, clients, vendors, and contractors, and prohibits unlawful harassment or discrimination by any employee or student of A.C.T., including supervisors, faculty, and coworkers. (See page 22 of the M.F.A. Student Handbook for full information on Unlawful Harassment & Discrimination, Workplace Bullying, Sexual Assault, and Hate Crimes policies.)

DRUG-FREE POLICY Drug and/or alcohol abuse is a serious problem and will not be tolerated. The use or possession of unprescribed amphetamines or barbiturates, narcotics, cocaine, LSD, marijuana, or other hallucinogenic agents or controlled substances is a violation of state and/or federal laws. A.C.T. does not condone the unprescribed use or possession of any of the above agents, and the use of drugs or alcohol on the premises or during or before classes or rehearsals is cause for dismissal. (See page 29 of the M.F.A. Student Handbook for full information on A.C.T.'s alcohol/substance abuse/drug free policies.) A.C.T. stands ready to provide information, counseling, and referral with complete confidentiality for students with questions or problems in this area. Students who do not respond to counseling and continue to abuse drugs and/or alcohol will be suspended. Complete information about A.C.T.'s drug and alcohol policy is printed in the student handbook and is available upon request.

TRANSCRIPTS Students and graduates may obtain official transcripts of course work completed and credit earned at A.C.T. by submitting a transcript request and a \$5 fee for the first copy (\$4 for each additional copy). Transcripts may be requested in person or by mail. Please allow two weeks for processing each request. For rush orders (two-day service), add \$4. No transcript request will be processed without the accompanying fee. The release of A.C.T. transcripts is contingent upon the fulfillment of all financial obligations. For further information, contact: Director of Academic Affairs, A.C.T., 30 Grant Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94108-5834.

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Withdrawal and Refund Policy

Upon written cancellation received by A.C.T. **before** the date classes are to begin, the student will be refunded all deposits minus a processing fee of \$275.

- Students who wish to withdraw from the M.F.A./Certificate Program **after** the start of classes must complete an official withdrawal permission form, obtainable through the registrar's office. Students who withdraw after the start of classes must also attach a letter to the conservatory director detailing the reason(s) for withdrawal. Upon receipt of the form and letter, the conservatory director and one other administrator will meet with the student to conduct an exit interview. Upon completion of the exit interview, the conservatory director will notify the director of academic affairs, at which time the student's withdrawal will be considered official—unless the student has received federal aid.
- All students who withdraw who have received federal student aid are also required to have an exit interview with the director of financial aid before their withdrawal becomes official. Failure to meet for an exit interview will result in a hold being placed on the student's academic transcripts until the interview has taken place.
- Students who withdraw completely from A.C.T.'s M.F.A./Certificate Program before completing more than 60% of the semester, are entitled to a refund of tuition. The calculation of the amount of the refund will be based on a daily proration of the unearned tuition through the 60% period of the semester. No refund will be made after the 60% period of the semester.

- The Financial Aid Office is required by regulation to calculate a REFUND of FEES and a Return to Title IV Funds amount for all students who withdraw, or are dismissed during a semester. The Return to Title IV Funds is the amount of unearned aid received at the beginning of the term that must be returned to the federal, state and institutional aid programs. Any aid received in excess of the earned amount is considered unearned. The earned portion is calculated on a daily basis using a calendar days from the first day of instruction for that term. Students who receive federal (Title IV) and/or state financial aid will have the unearned portion of the tuition returned to the aid programs from which it was drawn. In most cases, this return of aid will reduce the student's Federal Direct Loan obligation. A.C.T. will return Unearned Title IV to the appropriate Title IV programs in the following order: Unsubsidized Direct Stafford Loans, Subsidized Direct Stafford Loans, Perkins Loans, Federal Direct PLUS Loans, Federal Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), TEACH Grant.
- The withdrawal date will be the earlier of the date the student begins A.C.T.'s withdrawal process or the date the student otherwise provided official notification of his/her intent to withdraw OR the last documented date the student attended academically-related classes.
- Students who are dismissed will be refunded on the same basis as students who withdraw.

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Conservatory Administration

Melissa Smith
Conservatory Director

Jill Mclean
Young Conservatory Director

Mark Jackson
Studio A.C.T. Director

Christopher Herold, PhD
Director of Summer Training Congress

Jack Sharrar, PhD
Director of Academic Affairs

Jerry Lopez
Director of Financial Aid

Charlotte Brockman
Manager, Conservatory Operations

Koy Smith
Conservatory Associate

Sophia Nguyen
Young Conservatory & Studio A.C.T. Associate

Matt Jones
Bursar/Payroll Administrator

Joseph Tally
Librarian

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AMERICAN CONSERVATORY THEATER WAS FOUNDED IN 1965 BY WILLIAM BALL.
A.C.T. is a nonprofit, tax-exempt foundation.

ACCREDITATION

A.C.T. is accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC, 985 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 100, Alameda, CA 94501, 510.748.9001), an institutional accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education. A.C.T. has the approval of the State of California Council for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education to enroll veterans and other eligible persons for G.I. benefits.

A.C.T. is sponsored in part by the Grants for the Arts/San Francisco Hotel Tax Fund, National Endowment for the Arts, and California Arts Council, a state agency. The closing date for material was August 17, 2017. A.C.T. reserves the right to withdraw or modify the courses of instruction and faculty members at any time.

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