

Florida Vocal Association Adjudicator Information

Adjudication, defined in its most basic terms, is teaching, and is intended for directors as well as students. A judging assignment is an opportunity to evaluate, teach, and motivate. It is the objective of MPA adjudication to provide choral music teachers and their students with guidance to improved positive musical effectiveness.

THE ADJUDICATOR'S EVALUATION FORM

The adjudication form is divided into three equally-weighted categories that encompass the essential rudiments of choral and vocal tone, technical performance preparation, and musical artistry. (*Sing well, sing the right notes at the right time, and make music!*)

The adjudicator will circle a letter grade for each category, as defined by the criteria on the back of the form.

The adjudicator will record a + or - by the elements within each category that are especially strong or those needing improvement, in relation to the letter grade assigned. Performance elements that are of an average performance level do not require any marking. The top of each column is numbered 1 through 3, so that the adjudicator may indicate strengths or elements needing improvement for each of the two or three selections. **The grade for each category is not determined by the balance of pluses or minuses, but rather by the criteria on the back of the form.**

The adjudicator will identify two or three weaknesses and strengths within each category, and provide suggestions and recommendations for improvement through written commentary. He/she should also encourage and reinforce the positive elements of the performance with written comments.

The general comment section at the bottom of the page may include any of the above categories, but it is here that commentary not related to the above categories should be written.

FINAL RATINGS

Criteria reference adjudication requires that the appropriate grade, based upon the descriptions under each category, be applied to each category without bias. There is a "gray area" in which the adjudicator may consider other factors. The adjudicator must be satisfied that the final rating is the result of the three categorical ratings. If the final rating is not what the adjudicator intended, it may be necessary for him/her to revisit the categorical grades. However, any changes must be warranted and reflect oral or written commentary.

A final rating **must** be assigned based on the grades of the three categories, in any order of the following:

<i>Superior</i>	<i>Excellent</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Poor</i>
A A A	A A C	A B E	A E E	D E E
A A B	A A D	A C D	B D E	E E E
	A A E	A C E	B E E	
	A B B	A D D	C C E	
	A B C	A D E	C D D	
	A B D	B B D	C D E	
	A C C	B B E	C E E	
	B B B	B C C	D D D	
	B B C	B C D	D D E	
		B C E		
		B D D		
		C C C		
		C C D		

Superior

The best conceivable performance for the event and class of participants being adjudicated; exhibiting outstanding musical quality demonstrating exceptional knowledge of appropriate concepts. Criteria are performed on a "consistent" level.

Excellent

A distinctive, above-average performance in most respects; displaying minor defects. Criteria are performed “often”.

Good

A commendable, average performance; showing promise, but lacking in the execution of some fundamental concepts. Criteria are “sometimes” executed.

Fair

A below-average performance; generally weak and uncertain; revealing numerous errors in most fundamental concepts. Criteria are “seldom” evident in performance.

Poor

A performance revealing almost a complete lack of preparedness and understanding of fundamental concepts. Criteria are “rarely” or “never” performed.

A FEW GENERAL REMINDERS

You may be asked to provide taped commentary. The advantage of taped commentary *during* a performance is that it allows the adjudicator and the director to analyze the performance as it occurs with instant reinforcement or critique. Impression and analysis are recorded immediately and simultaneously. The adjudicator should keep comments concise, have an open ear to the performance as he/she speaks, and be flexible enough to stop commentary when segments of the performance need to be heard more intently. The disadvantage of this technique is that many feel that the adjudicator’s ability to hear portions of the performance is hindered as he/she is providing commentary.

Taped commentary *following* a performance obviously allows the adjudicator to listen without speaking. It would be important for the adjudicator using this method to place markings in the score and take notes for later commentary. The disadvantage to this technique is that sometimes impressions are not recalled, and the director cannot hear the immediate responses and critiques to the performance.

The adjudicator should choose the technique for taped commentary with which he/she is most comfortable. The best evaluation occurs when the adjudicator is relaxed, focused, and not pressured.

- Begin with a pleasant but functional greeting, that should include the event, your name, and that you are looking forward to hearing the performance.
- Clear, specific dialog is important. Avoid using vocabulary that is not clearly understood, and at the same time, use a wide range of terminology. The tone of your voice speaks more than words. Don’t babble – be concise, clear, and succinct. Tone of voice reflects attitude and personality – work to develop a variety of voice inflections, volumes, and mannerisms to maintain interest. Keep your vocabulary appropriate, honest, and positive that will inspire the listener.
- Be consistent in your commentary. Be certain that your written comments reflect your oral commentary.
- Evaluate only the tangible elements of the performance with concrete statements. Avoid making judgments concerning performers’ attitudes, commitment, or dedication.
- Use the “Triple C” approach: COMPLIMENT, provide CRITICISM, and conclude with a COURSE OF ACTION that will inspire the director and students to improve.
- Remember, no matter how weak a performance, the director and students have worked hard to achieve it! Even comments concerning weaknesses should be laced with empathy.
- Quick decisions and responses are essential. There is no time to observe, mull over, contemplate, and make suggestions at the **next** rehearsal. Judgments and teaching must be done **now**, on the spot. A good adjudicator instantly recognizes the primary target for improvement and makes meaningful comments.
- Be very specific in your observations of weaknesses and their causes. Do not get bogged down with a single issue. Offer clear suggestions and recommendations for improvement. This may best be done following the performance.
- Short, concise words of praise during the performance should be used at every opportunity.
- Adjudicators should avoid proving how high their standards are by assigning low ratings and giving negative comments. Adjudication is all about evaluating, teaching, motivating, and inspiring. Demeaning or rude comments are unacceptable.