



THE ONE ACT DRAMA FESTIVAL CIRCUIT: RULES 2026

MISSION STATEMENT

The spirit that lies behind these festivals is more one of participation than of competition. Therefore, every effort should be made to emphasize the experience of sharing.

The Joint Committee of the ADCI/DLI (hereafter the Joint Committee) reserve the right to amend or revise these rules; to add supplementary rules in exceptional circumstances and shall have the sole discretion in any matter regarding their interpretation. The decision of the committee in any such matter shall be final and binding.

Any issue arising not covered by this document must be discussed with the Joint Committee, through the national secretary.

GROUPS

(These rules should be read in conjunction with The One-Act Drama Festival Circuit: Adjudicators Brief 2026).

1. All groups wishing to compete on the One-Act Drama Festival Circuit must register with the National Secretary of the Joint Committee. Applications for registration will not be accepted before noon on 1 August 2026.
2. A registration number will be assigned to each group for the upcoming season and an official application form forwarded in August. This form must be used to make applications to individual festivals, from noon on 29 August 2026.
3. Completed application forms shall be considered to constitute complete acceptance of these rules and must be signed by an officer of the competing group.
4. Festival participation is confined to amateur groups and is for one-act plays only.
5. The plays will be presented in a curtain setting. Only essential free-standing pieces will be allowed; Stage props should be kept to a minimum because of backstage storage space.

(Please note that The One-Act Drama Festival Circuit: Adjudicator's Brief 2026 states: "The spirit of the One- Act Drama Festival Circuit is that groups essentially perform in front of drapes and therefore the use of sets is not allowed. Only free-standing pieces

shall be used and proportionally most of the setting (not including props or furniture) should be drapes/curtains and not flats. To this end groups must set-up in 10mins and strike in 5mins. The adjudicator shall be concerned to especially encourage groups showing imagination in dealing with this limitation. The adjudicator shall decide on whether a set has been used in a production. In the event of an adjudicator deeming a set to have been used, the penalty is disqualification).

6. There must be a minimum of two actors in each play.
7. Plays must not exceed fifty-five (55) minutes in duration and plays lasting less than 20 minutes will not be accepted. The approximate running time of the play must be stated in advance. For the purposes of timing, the play is adjudicated to commence on lights up and end on lights down.
8. The author's permission to perform must be obtained and appropriate fees must be paid in advance. No alteration to the script may be made without the written permission of the author/agent.
9. On acceptance to a festival, the licence to perform, copy of script and any other items specified by the festival secretary must be forwarded by the specified date. Electronic copies or photocopies of scripts are NOT acceptable. Where the original is out of print or only available electronically, proof of same must be furnished and a high-quality bound copy may be submitted.
10. Notice of acceptance of a festival is binding and cannot be reneged upon if alternative festival offers are received. Groups risk sanction from The Joint Committee if they cancel following acceptance of an offer. In the event of unforeseen circumstances, cancellation by a group which has already accepted an offer from a festival, must be communicated immediately to the festival secretary and to the secretary of the Joint Committee, followed by an email outlining the circumstances.
11. Proof of group insurance must be provided to the festival committee.
12. All perpetual trophies shall be returned by 1 October of the following year or when requested to do so by the festival committee. The winners should ensure their perpetual trophy is properly engraved and that all trophies are cleaned and/or polished before being returned to the following year's host festival. Winning groups must bear the cost of any work or repair to trophies if they chose to hold them for the year.
13. Each group may compete/participate in a maximum of five festivals but may take qualification points from three festivals only. In the event of two or more competing groups having equal marks for the last qualification place in the All-Ireland Finals, marks from a fourth and subsequent festival(s) may be taken into account to decide on qualification. Subsequently, if the results are still identical for the last qualifying place, in either the Open Section, the Confined Section, or both Sections if applicable, then a draw will take place to determine who will be given the last qualifying place(s) in the All-Ireland One Act Finals. The draw will be held as soon as is practicable after the last festival on the qualifying circuit has been completed.
14. Complaints concerning any aspect of a festival should be made to the festival director/secretary concerned as soon as possible after the matter arising. The complaint must be put in writing to the Secretary of the Festival within 3 days of

completion of the festival. The festival may consult with the Secretary of the Joint ADCI/DLI Committee for assistance with resolving the matter. The competing group may appeal the decision of the festival director/secretary to the Joint Committee within 24 hours of having the decision communicated to it. The decision of the Joint Committee on any matter shall be final and binding on all groups and festivals.

15. Any group found by the Joint Committee to have brought the One-Act Drama Festival Circuit into disrepute or which has committed a serious breach of the rules will be suspended from the One-Act Drama Festival Circuit for two years. Any such penalty can be appealed to the Joint Committee.

FESTIVALS

(These rules should be read in conjunction with The One-Act Drama Festival Circuit: Adjudicators Brief 2026).

16. The dates for the holding of all preliminary festivals shall be notified by 1 June each year to the national secretary of the Joint Committee with the name of the adjudicator.
17. Preliminary festivals must be affiliated to either the DLI or ADCI.
18. Applications for new festivals will be considered at the AGM of the Joint Committee held in February of each year.
19. Affiliation to the All-Ireland One-Act Drama Festival Circuit may be withdrawn if a festival fails to comply with The One-Act Drama Festival Circuit: Rules 2026 or the directions of the Joint Committee. A festival has the right to appeal this decision to the Joint Committee.
20. The One-Act circuit commences on the Thursday prior to the October Bank Holiday Weekend and finishes two weeks before the finals.
21. There shall be an open and confined section with a minimum of three (3) groups in any section to make a qualifying competition. Ideally all festivals should aim for 4 groups in each section unless the Joint Committee allows a competition in exceptional circumstances.
22. A festival may take a break from the circuit for one year. Where a festival takes a break from the circuit for more than one year, the festival must re-apply to the Joint Committee for permission to host a preliminary festival thereafter.
23. Festivals must only accept applications on the official entry form with a valid registration number. Successful entries are at the discretion of the festival committee. All entries, successful or unsuccessful shall be advised as soon as is practicable.
24. Festivals may not announce their final line-up until after 5 September 2026.
25. The line-up of participating groups must be provided to the national secretary prior to the October meeting of the ADCI/DLI Joint Committee. No alteration to the list of participants may be made following this, without the consent of the Joint Committee.
26. On acceptance, festivals must furnish groups with stage plans and details of technical facilities. Extra technical equipment, such as strobe and smoke machines etc., may only be used with the prior agreement of the festival. IT IS INCUMBENT

UPON THE HOST FESTIVAL TO ADVISE THE AUDIENCE OF THE USE OF THIS TYPE OF EQUIPMENT.

27. The festival committee must ensure that the bars used to provide general FOH wash must not be or interfered or moved.
28. Festivals shall provide plain drapes and masking flats and the use of a cyclorama or cyclorama cloth.
29. All festivals must provide a copy of their insurance to the Joint Committee.
30. The festival programme cover must include the following sentence “Under the Auspices of the Joint Committee of the Amateur Drama Council of Ireland/Drama League of Ireland” and the Joint Committee logo.
31. Plays must not exceed fifty-five (55) minutes in duration, and a play lasting less than 20 minutes should not be accepted. For the purposes of timing, the play is adjudicated to commence on lights up and end on lights down.
32. Plays must commence at the specified time and intervals between them will be limited as follows: Each group will be allowed a maximum of ten (10) minutes to set-up and five (5) minutes to strike. Groups that run over this schedule will be penalised by a deduction of ten (10) marks from their total. Each festival committee shall appoint a timekeeper whose duty it is to time the set-up, the strike and the play and to inform the adjudicator of groups who exceed the limits.
33. There must be a specified venue opening time available for performing groups. This must include the availability of a technical person for 30 minutes per group prior to performance.
34. Broadcasting of performances or nightly public adjudications is not permitted; however, the final results may be broadcast.
35. The onus is on festival secretaries to check and verify the marking sheets before the announcement of results.
36. Festival results must be sent by each festival secretary to the competing groups within one week of the conclusion of their festival.
37. Results of preliminary festivals must be communicated to the national secretary IMMEDIATELY after the closing of the festival on final night by phone call, TEXT, or Whats App to allow results to be posted on social media. The official results sheets must be sent to the national secretary by post or email within three days of the conclusion of the festival.
38. Festivals who fail to comply with any of these rules may have their nominating status withdrawn by the Joint Committee. Any such decision can be appealed to the Joint Committee.
39. Adjudicators should be chosen from a recognised panel. (Currently, the Joint Committee recognises the ADA, GODA and SASDA panels and a series of approved independent adjudicators). Should a festival wish to employ a non-affiliated adjudicator, they must submit a detailed CV for consideration to the Joint Committee prior to the April meeting.
40. A festival may only employ the same adjudicator for a maximum of two consecutive years, following which they must appoint a new adjudicator.

41. In the event of an adjudicator not being able to complete their duties then the festival must have a contingency plan. Should an agreement or solution not be available then that festival will be declared void, and no qualifying points can be awarded.

ADJUDICATOR

(These rules should be read in conjunction with The One-Act Drama Festival Circuit: Adjudicator's Brief 2026).

42. Plays must not exceed fifty-five (55) minutes in duration and plays lasting less than 20 minutes will not be accepted. For the purposes of timing, the play is adjudicated to commence on lights up and end on lights down. The approximate running time of the play must be stated in advance. Where 55 minutes is exceeded, five points per minute or part of a minute shall be deducted. Should a play run over by five (5) minutes, automatic disqualification will apply.
43. THE ADJUDICATOR SHALL RETURN ALL SCRIPTS TO THE COMPETING GROUPS
44. The adjudicator's decision in regard to awards and marking is final.
45. The following marking system shall apply to each Festival:
 - Acting 40
 - Production 35
 - Presentation 15
 - and Dramatic Achievement 10
 - Ties for places may not be awarded.
 - Marks towards All Ireland: 1st Place 12 points; 2nd Place 5 points; 3rd Place 2 points.
 - Points are only awarded to a third placed group when there are four or more groups competing in that section. (See the note in the introduction).
46. An adjudicator may officiate at a maximum of two festivals in any one season, and they may be in the same province.

ALL-IRELAND FINAL

47. The rules governing the One-Act Drama Festival Circuit shall also apply to the All-Ireland One-Act Finals.
48. The Finals shall be conducted according to The All-Ireland One-Act Drama Finals: Protocol 2026.
49. Qualifying groups must have at least one win at a preliminary festival unless otherwise determined by the Joint Committee where an exceptional case arises.
50. All qualifying groups must supply their information electronically in WORD FORMAT, within 24 hours of notice of qualification, to the secretary of the All-Ireland Festival Committee. (i.e. Cast and crew listings, group history and play synopsis).
51. The hosting of the final's festival shall rotate annually and shall take place on the weekend commencing the first Friday in December each year, unless otherwise directed by the Joint Committee.
52. The finals festival shall consist of 6 Plays in the Open Section and 5 Plays in the Confined Section and shall be held over three days. The presentation of the plays over the festival weekend must follow the format and running order detailed below:

- 3 plays presented on Friday night: one confined; one open; one confined
- 3 plays presented on Saturday night: one open; one confined; one open
- 3 plays presented on Sunday afternoon: one confined; one open; one confined
- 2 plays presented on Sunday night: two open.

The above format is the format approved by the Joint Committee. Any proposed alterations to this format by the host festival must be communicated to the Joint Committee for consideration.

- 53.** An open draw shall be held for the order and dates of participating groups in the All-Ireland Finals. The draw will be supervised by members of the Joint Committee of the ADCI/DLI for the One-Act Drama Festival Circuit.
- 54.** The winner of the Confined Section in the All-Ireland must perform in the Open section in their next competitive year.
- 55.** At the February meeting (post All Ireland), when presenting the final report, a donation of €600 must be given to the Joint Committee to assist them in their operational costs. Expressing an interest to host the All-Ireland Finals is seen as agreement to the above donation.