



Conductor (Band Officer) Audition Requirements

Requirements:

Possess a bachelor's degree, preferably with a major in conducting, instrumental performance, or music education. A master's degree or doctorate in music is preferred, as the selection process is highly competitive. The typical past successful candidate has been an accomplished musician, well versed in band repertoire, possessing a master's degree or doctorate in music and five years of conducting experience.

Be qualified to enter Officer Training School, be a member of AFROTC, or be a commissioned officer of the USAF on active duty. Civilian and enlisted applicants must be able to pass physical and written qualifying tests. Civilian applicants arrange these tests through a local Air Force recruiter and enlisted applicants arrange them through their local Military Personnel Flight. Applicants who meet the musical qualifications but do not meet these general physical and written requirements cannot be qualified for commissioning.

Be less than 35 years of age on the date of commissioning in OTS.

Be a citizen of the United States.

Application:

The applicant first assembles a package consisting of a resume, official college transcripts, repertoire list, letters of recommendation, and a 15 minute VHS video tape. The repertoire list should be divided into two parts:

- Music you've actually conducted.
- Music played and/or studied enough that the applicant could rehearse and perform it on short notice.

The tape should feature a frontal view of the applicant's conducting skill and rehearsal technique. At least half the tape should be concert performance; some may be rehearsal footage. Audio tapes or CDs are not acceptable as a substitute.

The applicant then submits the package to the nearest active duty USAF band commander. Application materials are not returnable.

Once received, the band commander reviews the application materials and interviews the applicant either live or by telephone. The commander then forwards the packages, with a recommendation or non-recommendation, to Air Force Bands division. Focus of the recommendation is determining the applicant's capability, suitability, and availability for becoming a band officer.

The Board

An invitation board will meet to review the packages that were received and that contain a recommendation from active duty USAF band commanders who interview the applicants.

The invitation board, made up of band officers and senior NCOs, selects a limited number of applicants to invite to the final audition. Selection is based on the whole-person concept, using evidence of band officer potential -- that is, applicants are evaluated on professional qualities, leadership, depth and breadth of experience, past job performance and responsibilities, academic education, specific achievements, and other pertinent criteria. SAF/PAB will notify all applicants with letters of their selection or non-selection to attend the audition.

Audition

The audition requires one working day. Finalists selected by the Invitation Board to attend the audition must be prepared to arrange their trips and pay all expenses relating to their audition. All candidates will experience a two-phase evaluation: Conducting and Music Theory. Selected candidates who pass these first two evaluations will experience the last phase, an Interview by the conducting evaluation panel.

Conducting

Candidates are tested on the following elements during a conducting session:

Ability to conduct and rehearse previously prepared concert band compositions, selected from the lists below. The applicant must demonstrate advanced baton technique, expressive gestures and rehearsal skills in the following areas:

- (1) Signaling changes in meter, tempo, and dynamics.
- (2) Clearness of beat reflecting style of composition.
- (3) Use of the left hand for indicating cues and ensemble balance.
- (4) Score interpretation and communication.
- (5) Clarity and pertinence of verbal instructions.

Ability to ensure accurate performance regarding such fundamentals as:

- (1) Melodic accuracy and rhythmic precision.
- (2) Articulation, dynamics, and intonation.
- (3) Style and phrasing.
- (4) Balance and appropriate ensemble tone color.

NOTE: Historically, this had been the weakest area of the audition. It is imperative that the candidate promptly correct errors. Likewise, the board expects to see a relaxed but focused atmosphere for dealing with professional musicians. The applicant's demeanor and "body language" are important elements in achieving this.

Sight-reading

Candidates will be given an instrumental score to study for about 20 minutes before the conducting audition. Each candidate will rehearse the band for about 10 minutes on this selection.

PREPARE ONE SELECTION FROM EACH LIST

List A La Belle Helene Jacques Offenbach/Odom

Roman Carnival Overture Hector Berlioz/Safranek
Variants on a Medieval Tune Norman Dello Joio
Die Fledermaus J. Strauss/Cailliet or Godfrey
Variations on "America" C. Ives/Schuman/Rhoads

List B Lincolnshire Posy (mvts III & V only) P. Grainger/Fennell

Three Dance Episodes L. Bernstein/Stith

Symphonic Dance Music from "West Side Story" (mvts I,II, & III only) L. Bernstein/Polster
Aegean Festival Overture A. Makris/Bader
selection to be named later

List C Sousa! Sousa/Barker

That's Entertainment arr. Barker
South Pacific arr. Robert Russell Bennett, adapted Mark Rogers
Oklahoma! arr. Robert Russell Bennett, adapted Mark Rogers
Gershwin! Barker

Notes:

1. Only the specified versions are acceptable.
2. Due to time constraints, finalists will be asked to conduct only portions of their prepared work.

THEORY TEST

A written examination tests the applicant's knowledge of music theory, to include chord and scale construction, key signatures, intervals, terminology, notation, scoring, and instrumentation. The exam may also include a few items relating to music history and literature, and the development of wind and percussion instruments. Additionally, there is an aural identification portion including rhythmic, melodic, harmonic, chordal, and intervallic dictation as well as error identification.

INTERVIEW

A board of officers and senior NCOs will interview those who pass the conducting and theory test portions of the audition at the end of the day. All others will be released at this point.

We make every effort to advise all candidates of their test scores and selection or nonselection to become band officers at the end of the audition day; however, candidates may choose to leave and be notified later. Qualified candidates are asked to indicate their willingness and availability to accept a band officer position. Band officer vacancies are filled only with fully qualified most available candidates. Order of merit is established, but it's entirely possible the deciding factor will be the date of a candidate's availability to go to a specific class of Officer Training School (OTS).