

# Equity Fight Directors Register Requirements for Entry

## Background Information

The qualifications for the Equity Fight Director Register in the 'Requirements for Entry' and the Assessment Procedure were set up to fulfill the following criteria.

To maintain or raise the standard and range of skills of the Fight Directors coming onto the register.

To ensure that the Equity Fight Director Register qualifications are above those required in the fighting qualifications of the Stunt Register and thus show Fight Directors are as qualified, as stunt performers are to arrange fights in the Mechanical Media.

To establish a way of dealing fairly and equally with all candidates, be they known to the committee or not.

The job of the Fight Director is very broad and includes teaching, coaching and performance. The aim of the qualifications is to strike a balance between these. It is important that a Fight Director has a physical understanding of the principles of defence with both the sword and in a form of unarmed combat. To have no real understanding of these is not only unprofessional but to a large degree a dereliction of duty. These qualifications are believed to be the most appropriate to have for people who seek to choreograph fights in all media.

As there is no one methodology or pedagogy for fight direction or stage combat it was determined that expertise in 'fighting arts' was required. This was of particular importance if the Equity Fight Director Register were to convince the stunt register and employers in the mechanical media that the Equity Fight Director Register is of equal competence.

By having qualifications from outside Equity and the field of stage combat the Equity Fight Director Register was able to avoid the situation of the final assessors being the bodies that provided training.

Given that the constituent members of the Equity Fight Director Register committee have and continue to change over the years, the qualifications provide a level playing field for all candidates so that, for example, the protégé of an officer of one of the stage combat organizations is not given preferential treatment.

The coaching qualification gives the Fight Director a greater validation in the eyes of the public at large and the greater part of the profession

The advantage of the fencing qualification is that the fencing coach has in approaching a staged combat is his/her complete familiarity with the logic of combat, extensive experience in "sizing up" a fencer's abilities to tactic assess what moves and strategy might be best to defeat them, and long practice in teaching the moves with precision.

If that fencing coach also happens to well understand the actor's job and the dramatic whole, then I think it's likely that the fight scene will work very well.

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This applies equally to Martial Arts as well. The common perception is that if you have a Black Belt you are an 'expert'. Whereas in fact having a black belt just means you've done your apprenticeship and are now ready to truly learn about the martial art. So black belt level is considered a minimum starting point

The profession demands increasingly high levels of skill in Martial Arts especially the mechanical media. One can see the influence of Hong Kong directors like John Woo on Hollywood movies and this too is reflected in UK Films and Television. It is worth noting that it was a British Stunt Co-ordinator and Martial Artist that staged the fights for movies such as 'The Phantom Menace', 'Fight Club' and 'The Last Samurai'.

**The Equity Theatre Fight Directors' Committee**  
February 2010

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Entry onto the Register is a three-stage process.

<b>Stage 1)</b>	<b>Initial Qualifications</b>
<b>Stage 2)</b>	<b>Fight Director Training</b>
<b>Stage 3)</b>	<b>Final Assessment</b>

## **Prior to Application**

The applicant should be aware that a significant amount of training is needed prior to Stage 3 (Final Assessment) and acceptance onto the Register. Prior to making an application for membership, a candidate will have read a copy of the Requirements for Entry. Further copies are obtainable from the Secretary of the Fight Directors' Register at Equity Head Office by sending an A4 stamped addressed envelope.

The criteria for making an application to join the FD Register are set out in this document but are subject to revision by the Council at any time. Therefore, if a candidate anticipates making an application to join the FD Register is an Equity member and has obtained not less than two of the 'Initial Qualifications', then he/she should notify the secretary of the FD Register in writing with evidence of the current status of each qualification.

By doing this, an applicant can ensure that her/his application will be subject to the requirements in place at the time of writing, provided that an application to move to *Stage 2 Fight Director Training* is made within 12 months of receipt of the letter of reply from the secretary of the FD register. This is known as '*Freezing*' an application. However if no application to move to *Stage 2 Fight Director Training* were forthcoming within these 12 months, then any changes in the Requirements for Entry would come into force.

The Initial Qualifications required are listed below. There are various training bodies outside of the Equity Fight Directors Register that run courses in the disciplines that the candidate is required to study. This study must be carried out with one of the Organisations listed at the back of this document. If any candidate wishes to study with any individual(s) or organisations not listed at the back of this document they must contact the Secretary of the Fight Directors' Register at Equity Head Office prior to the commencement of study in order that the training on offer may be assessed by the Equity Fight Director's Committee.

Contact addresses for the principal training resources are listed at the back of this document. Once the candidate has acquired the 'Initial Qualifications' they will contact the secretary of the FD Register in writing and send copies of all relevant qualifications and support documentation.

Certificates of documentation must be no more than five years old. If the documentation is in order the candidate will be recommended for next stage of the process, *Stage 2 Fight Director Training*.

All candidates must fulfil the requirements of *Stage 2 Fight Director Training*, as this will form the basis of the *Stage 3 Final Assessment*.

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The timescale for *Stage 2 Fight Director Training* is left in the hands of the candidate. However it should be noted that candidate is unlikely to be successful unless proper study is undertaken.

On completion of *Stage 2 Fight Director Training* the candidate will inform the secretary of the FD Register in writing that they wish to move onto the *Stage 3, Final Assessment*.

If all the candidate's documentation is in order, an assessment will be arranged within three months of the committee meeting following receipt of the candidate's letter requesting the *Stage 3 Final Assessment*.

The Final Assessment panel will be constituted of an equal number Equity Registered Fight Directors from the Stage Combat Organisations listed at the back of this document.

On successful completion of the *Stage 3, Final Assessment*, the candidate will be recommended to the Equity Council for acceptance onto the Equity Fight Directors' Register.

Should any candidate not be successful in the *Stage 3, Final Assessment*, they will be advised of their areas of weakness and further study they need to undertake. They may again apply, in writing, to take the Final Assessment after a period of not less than 6 months has passed. They may also be required to show evidence of continued study of the *Stage 2 Fight Director Training* requirements.

# Equity Fight Directors Register Requirements for Entry

## Stage 1

### Initial Qualifications

- a) Stage Combat
- b) Fencing
- a) Martial Arts

#### a) Stage Combat

The British Academy of Stage & Screen Combat ADVANCED Actor/Combatant Certificate (or equivalent).

Or

The British Academy of Dramatic Combat ADVANCED with Recommendation (or equivalent).

Or

The Academy of Performance Combat, Stage One, Advanced (or equivalent).

Or

East 15/University of Essex Bachelor of Arts Degree in Acting and Stage Combat at the level of 2:1 or above

#### b) Fencing

- a) The British Academy of Fencing INTERMEDIATE Coaching Award in Foil or equivalent
  - b) The British Academy of Fencing Level Five Award in Sabre or equivalent
  - c) The British Academy of Fencing Level Five Award in Epee or equivalent
- Or
- a) British Fencing Association Level Five Coaching Award in Foil or Equivalent
  - b) British Fencing Association Level Five Award in Sabre or Equivalent
  - c) British Fencing Association Level Five Award in Epee or Equivalent

#### c) Martial Arts

A 1<sup>st</sup> Dan Black Belt or higher in an unarmed Martial Art with formal grading systems, as recognised by the Amateur Martial Association or equivalent. In the event of a candidate having a Martial Art with no formal grading system an independent assessment will be required.

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## Stage 2 Fight Director Training

During **Stage 2** the candidate is required to make further study of the following weapons systems and topics, as these will form part of the final assessment:

- Rapier and Dagger
- Smallsword
- Broadsword (single and double handed)
- Sword & Shield
- Quarterstave and Polearms
- Unarmed Combat
- Knife Fighting
- Found weapons

Also to study the following areas

- Health & Safety
- Risk Assessment
- Script Analysis
- Actor coaching
- Proscenium/Arena staging
- Comedy Fights
- Group Fights
- Historical Fencing
- Blood effects
- Legislation and safety for Theatrical Firearms
- Weapons Maintenance

Candidates are strongly advised, prior to the Stage 3 (Final Assessment) that they;

- 1/ Seek opportunities to observe Equity Fight Directors at work.
- 2/ Invite Equity Fight Directors to observe them at work on any Fringe/Non-Equity fight direction they may be doing,

This is for the purpose of constructive feedback on the candidates' progression and to offer guidance on continued development.

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Candidates are also advised to study from the reading list below.

## Required Reading List

Equity Rule Book and Fight Directors Contract		
A History of Theatre	Wickham	ISBN 0-7148-2736-3
Fight Direction for Stage & Screen	Hobbs	ISBN 0-7136-4022-7
Swashbuckling	Lane	ISBN 0-87910-091-5
Fight Directing for the Theatre	Suddeth	ISBN0-435-08674-x
Actors on Guard	Girard	ISBN 0-87830-058-9
Combat Mime	Martinez	ISBN 0-88229-730-9
The Art & History of Personal Combat	Wise	ISBN 238.78946.2
Methods & Practice of Elizabethan Swordplay	Turner & Soper	ISBN 0-8093-1562-9

## Recommended Reading List

A-Z Fencing	Morton	ISBN 0-356-15439-4
The Swords of Shakespeare	Martinez	ISBN 0-899950-959-2
The English Master at Arms	Aylward	
The Complete Works of Shakespeare	Shakespeare	<i>Various</i>
Swords & Daggers	Wilkinson	ISBN 7063 1030 6
English Weapons & Warfare 449-1660	Norman & Pottinger	ISBN 0 88029-044-7
The Fight Arranger's Companion	Girard	New Haven: N.P., 1997.
Master of the Blade	Ryan	Paladin Press, 1999.
The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe		Anglo New Haven
and London:		YaleUniversityPress, 2000.
The History of Fencing	Gaugler	
Foundations of Modern European Swordplay.	Bangor, Maine:	Laureate_Press, 1998.

# Equity Fight Directors Register Requirements for Entry

## **Stage 3 Final Assessment**

In **stage 3 final assessment**, candidates will be required to attend an assessment where Equity registered Fight Directors will observe them. Candidates will be required to create and rehearse fights for a number of different scenes of the kind they are likely to meet in the profession. Candidates will be given fourteen days' notice of the scenes/weapons that will be used. Candidates should be prepared to create a fight for which there is limited preparation time.

Examples of types of scenes/scenarios that will be set:

- A group fight or battle  
(e.g. Troilus & Cressida)
- A rapier & dagger fight  
(e.g. Romeo & Juliet)
- A broadsword fight  
(e.g. Macbeth)
- An unarmed fight where the characters are unskilled fighters  
(e.g. Private Lives)
- An unarmed fight where the characters are skilled fighters  
(e.g. As You Like It, Grosse Pointe Blank)
- Comedy Fights  
(e.g. Twelfth Night, Comedy of Errors)

Candidates will be required to provide a written Risk Assessment for each fight/scene

Candidates should be familiar with all forms of staging.

Particular attention will be paid to safety at all times during the Final Assessment.

## **Practical Arrangements**

The applicant must contact one of the three recognised training bodies to arrange the Stage 3 assessment. The organisation will make the arrangements for the assessment and then bill the applicant. Arrangements will include an admin fee, room hire, performer costs, assessor's fee and expenses (this list is not exclusive). A quote and breakdown of costs should be supplied to the applicant by the organisation.

The assessment panel will consist of members of the Equity Fight Directors Register.

Applicants should allow two days for the assessment.



# Equity Fight Directors Register Requirements for Entry

## Training Resources

- ◆ The principal Stage Combat training bodies in the UK are:

THE BRITISH ACADEMY OF STAGE & SCREEN COMBAT Suite 280, 37 Store Street London, WC1E 7QF	<a href="http://www.bassc.org">www.bassc.org</a> <a href="mailto:info@bassc.org">info@bassc.org</a>  07981 806265
THE BRITISH ACADEMY OF DRAMATIC COMBAT 3 Castle View Helmsley North Yorkshire, YO62 5AU	<a href="http://www.badc.co.uk">www.badc.co.uk</a> <a href="mailto:info@badc.co.uk">info@badc.co.uk</a>  01439-770546
ACADEMY OF PERFORMANCE COMBAT 101 Tower Crescent Lincoln LN2 5QH	<a href="http://www.theapc.org.uk">www.theapc.org.uk</a> <a href="mailto:info@theapc.org.uk">info@theapc.org.uk</a>  07928324706

- ◆ The principal Fencing training bodies in the UK are:

THE BRITISH ACADEMY OF FENCING Prof. Bob Bales 144 Straight Road, Lexden Colchester, Essex, CO3 5DT	<a href="http://www.baf-fencing.com">www.baf-fencing.com</a> <a href="mailto:Mjosephbaf@compuserve.com">Mjosephbaf@compuserve.com</a>  01206-762056
THE BRITISH FENCING ASSOCIATION 1 Baron's Gate 33-35 Rothschild Road London W4 5HT	<a href="http://www.britishfencing.com">www.britishfencing.com</a> <a href="mailto:headoffice@britishfencing.com">headoffice@britishfencing.com</a>  020 8742 3032

- ◆ The principal resources for Martial Arts information in the UK are:

THE AMATEUR MARTIAL ASSOCIATION 66 Chaddesden Lane Derby DE21 6LP	<a href="http://www.amauk.co">www.amauk.co</a>  01332 663086
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**This list is not exclusive.**