

ARTS ENTERTAINMENT CLASSIFICATION CODE

INTRODUCTION

1 Classifying content according to their suitability for different age groups is a practice adopted by many countries. Arts entertainment classification serves to protect the young while enabling adults to make informed viewing choices. Classification decisions aim to reflect generally accepted social norms, while giving due consideration to the event's artistic and educational merits.

2 Arts entertainment covered under this code includes stage plays and literary readings, sketches, performance art, variety shows, dance, music and exhibitions.

3 This code forms part of the licensing conditions that are issued by the Licensing Officer under section 10 of the Public Entertainments and Meetings Act (PEMA Cap 257).

4 The code should also be used as a guide for institutions, events and genres currently exempted under Section 16 of PEMA.

CLASSIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS

I General Principles

5 In general, classification decisions are guided by the following principles:

a. Protect the young from unsuitable content

Content that may be harmful to or unsuitable for the young should carry the appropriate classification.

b. Sensitivity to the national interest

Singapore is a multi-racial and multi-religious society. Content should be sensitive to the concerns of different racial or religious groups and the prevailing community expectations of what is necessary to safeguard racial harmony and religious harmony.

Content should not undermine public order, national security and/or stability.

c. Recognition of generally accepted community values and prevailing public sentiments

Content should be sensitive to prevailing community standards of morality and decency.

d. Treatment of theme, content and message

When classifying arts entertainment, the rating given will be considered in context of its overall theme, content and message. Flexibility can be given for

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exploration of mature content¹, depending on how it is presented and its inherent artistic or educational merit.

e. Evaluation of impact

As they are likely to have a differing impact on audiences, a distinction is made when classifying live performances vis-à-vis stills. Stills will typically be subject to less stringent classification.

II Classification Ratings

6 There are four classification ratings for arts entertainment. The R18 rating is the only enforceable rating where the age restriction must be imposed by the licensees/organisers.

- a. G – Content suitable for a general audience
- b. Advisory – Content may not be suitable for a general audience
- c. Advisory16 – Content more suited for persons 16 years and above
- d. R18 – Restricted to persons 18 years and above

7 In exceptional cases, an arts event may not be allowed for all ratings when its content exceeds the R18 rating. In general, this includes content which may undermine national interest or likely to cause feelings of ill-will between different racial or religious groups or cause offence to any race or religious group. It also includes content which glorify lifestyles or behaviours contrary to prevailing social norms; or is excessive and/or exploitative in its depictions. When classifying such content, due consideration will be given to the context of the event, overall theme and messaging.

III The Six Content Elements

8 To classify arts entertainment, the content is first evaluated against the six content elements, which must be applied in conjunction with the General Principles at paragraph 5.

a. Race and religion

Racial or religious content can be portrayed, if handled sensitively.

b. Social Norms

Prevailing social norms, which are norms accepted by a majority of the community at a given point in time, should be recognised. The portrayal of non-mainstream lifestyles and behaviours should typically be accompanied by at least consumer advice. This includes, but is not limited to, alternative sexualities, fetishes and addictions.

c. Violence

Where the depiction of violence may frighten or invite imitation, especially from children, it should typically be accompanied by at least consumer advice.

¹ Mature content includes, but is not limited to, crime, juvenile delinquency, promiscuity, gangsterism and critiques on race, religion and politics.

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- d. Nudity
Nudity can be portrayed to varying degrees, depending on the context.
- e. Sexual content
Sexual content in verbal or non-verbal references or depictions are allowed to varying degrees, depending on the intended audience.
- f. Language
Expletives can be used to varying degrees, across all languages, depending on the context.

CLASSIFIABLE CONTENT ELEMENTS

9 The content suitable for each classification rating is detailed below. This section cannot be read in isolation, but must be read in conjunction with paragraphs 5 to 8 of this code.

I General (G)

10 This rating covers arts entertainment which is suitable for a general audience, including children. If desired, the public can be informed that an arts event is in the General (G) category. A G-rated event typically comprises the following content elements:

General	
Race & Religion	Infrequent use of mild racial/religious stereotyping.
Social Norms	No references and depiction promoting issues or lifestyles contrary to prevailing social norms.
Violence	Mild references to and depiction of violence e.g. slapping.
Nudity	Portrayal of upper back nudity.
Sexual Content	Mild sexual verbal references (e.g. mild sexual innuendos) or gestures (e.g. brief kissing), if infrequent.
Language	Use of expletives including "f***", if infrequent.

II Advisory

11 This rating includes **some mature content** such as occasional scenes of a sexual or violent nature, or expletives which may be upsetting or disturbing to some audience members. Arts entertainment with an Advisory rating will be accompanied by consumer advice to enable the public, especially parents, to make an informed choice for their children.

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Advisory	
Race & Religion	Use of mild racial/religious stereotypes or mild racially/religiously charged language.
Social Norms	Implied references and depictions of issues or lifestyles which are contrary to prevailing social norms.
Violence	References to and depiction of violence including infliction of pain and injury but should not be detailed or prolonged.
Nudity	Brief portrayal of full rear nudity.
Sexual Content	Mild sexual verbal references or gestures. Implied sexual activity, if infrequent and brief.
Language	Use of expletives including "f***", if not excessive.

III Advisory 16

12 This includes content with **mature themes** such as prostitution and sadism or alternative lifestyles such as transgenderism which are more suitable for discriminating audiences 16 years of age and above. Arts entertainment with an Advisory 16 rating will be accompanied by consumer advice to enable the public, especially parents, to make an informed choice for their children.

Advisory16	
Race & Religion	Use of moderate racial/religious stereotypes or moderate racially/religiously charged language.
Social Norms	References and depictions of issues or lifestyles which are contrary to prevailing social norms.
Violence	References to and depiction of violence including detailed and prolonged infliction of pain and injury, if infrequent.
Nudity	Portrayal of female frontal upper body, back and rear nudity.
Sexual Content	Sexual verbal references (e.g. sexual humour or imagery) or gestures (e.g. kissing and caressing). Simulated heterosexual sexual activity, if infrequent.
Language	Use of strong expletives, if infrequent. E.g. "motherf**ker", "cunt", "chee bye", "lan jiao", "puki mak" and "pundai"

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IV R18

13 This rating covers arts entertainment suitable only for audiences aged 18 years and above. These events feature adult themes with more explicit content than the Advisory 16 category. This is an enforceable category where arts companies and event organisers have to ensure that no one below the age of 18 is allowed into the performance venue. Consumer advice will also be provided for potential audience members to make an informed choice.

R18	
Race & Religion	Exploration of contentious racial or religious issues. Use of strong racial/religious stereotypes or strong racially/religiously charged language.
Social Norms	Explicit references and depictions of issues or lifestyles which are contrary to prevailing social norms.
Violence	References to and depiction of violence including frequent, detailed and prolonged infliction of pain and injury.
Nudity	Non-excessive portrayal of full male and female nudity, including exposure of genitalia, in a non-sexual context.
Sexual Content	Strong sexual verbal references (e.g. explicit sexual language or description). Simulated heterosexual sexual activity. Occasional sexual gestures (e.g. kissing and caressing) in a homosexual context.
Language	Use of strong expletives.

CONSUMER ADVICE

14 Where an arts performance does not fall within the standards meant for a general audience (G), classification ratings with consumer advice are to be provided. This will enable an individual to make an informed decision as well as guide parents on the suitability of the arts performance for their young. For G-rated arts performances, licensees/organisers may also take the prerogative to flag out specific content concerns if necessary for audiences.

15 The ratings and consumer advice for arts entertainment must be reflected in all publicity materials and advertisements (such as fliers, brochures, posters, programmes, press publicity, and TV/radio advertisements), and at booking offices, websites and notices outside the performance venues.

USE OF MULTIMEDIA IN ARTS ENTERTAINMENT

16 Where an arts event includes the use of multimedia content, as in film/video clips, this may have a bearing on its overall rating. This is particularly if the multimedia content takes up a substantive part of the event or contains graphic violence, sexually explicit scenes or other sensitive subjects. In such instances, the multimedia content will need to be

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submitted for classification. If the multimedia content is rated R21, this higher rating will apply to the entire arts event.

PUBLICITY MATERIALS

17 All publicity materials should comply with the Singapore Code of Advertising Practice administered by the Advertising Standards Authority of Singapore (ASAS)*. Generally, all publicity materials should reflect community standards and not offend public sentiment. Special attention should be given to publicity materials that are made available in public spaces and the covers of publicity programmes and brochures.

18 Arts events which are classified R18 should not be promoted on TV and radio as stipulated under the Media Development Authority TV and Radio Advertising and Sponsorship Codes.

(*ASAS is an Advisory Council under the Consumers' Association of Singapore (CASE) which regulates all local advertising activities)

PERIODIC REVIEW

19 The arts entertainment classification code will be reviewed periodically to reflect changes in lifestyle, public expectations and concerns.

20 This arts entertainment classification code takes effect on 2 Jun 2014 and replaces the framework of 13 Jun 2008.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Brief:	Of a short duration.
Excessive:	Beyond reasonable limits, especially in terms of detail, duration or frequency.
Expletive :	An exclamatory word or phrase that is obscene or profane e.g. "f***", "motherf**ker", "cunt", "chee bye", "lan jiao", "puki mak" and "pundai".
Explicit:	Language or depiction with strong details
Exploitative:	Appearing to take advantage of or abuse the situation for the enjoyment of viewers or for sensationalism; lacking moral, artistic, or other values.
Implied:	Depiction of a subject in which an act or thing is inferred or indicated without actually being seen.
Infrequent:	Not occurring often.
Mild:	Depiction that features minor details and has minimal impact on audiences.
Moderate:	Depiction that features some details and may have some impact that is kept within reasonable limits, which is generally acceptable to audiences.
References:	Words that imply or allude to something.
Strong:	Detailed depiction likely to have high impact on audiences.