



## **Auditions and Casting Policies**

Casting decisions for all Department of Theatre Arts productions are made to foster artistic growth of our students and to meet the logistic demands of the production season. The primary goal in casting, therefore, is to meet the educational needs of our student body, while producing the best piece of theatre possible for our audience. We believe that student participation in productions is an extension of their work in the classroom and that it is imperative that our students develop a healthy relationship to the process of auditions and casting. To this end, the faculty has established the following guidelines.

### **Section 1: Eligibility**

Clause 1.1. Auditions are open to anyone on the University of Idaho campus or the community.

Clause 1.2. The Theatre Department at the University of Idaho regards participation in production and performance as an essential extension of the ideas and the practices introduced in the curriculum. To be eligible for participation in productions, undergraduate students must have a 2.5 cumulative institutional GPA. In lieu of auditioning, the student may submit an audition package to the Head of Performance.

Clause 1.3. If a student falls below the appropriate GPA:

- The student is automatically granted a one-semester probationary period to make progress toward academic success. At the end of the one semester probationary period the student must show academic progress (i.e. – an improvement in their GPA).
- If after one semester the GPA does not improve, the student will make written appeal to the Department Chair for reinstatement to remain eligible to participate in production in the upcoming semester. This appeal must be made one week before classes commence. The appeal must include specific steps toward remediation of the academic challenges. The chair will consult with faculty before rendering a decision.
- After two semesters of probation if the GPA does not improve the student must sit out until the GPA improves.

### **Section 2: Auditions**

Clause 2.1. At least one week prior to auditions, directors (in coordination with faculty advisors if they are a graduate student) must make the following documents available to the community:

- Special Considerations Document
- Casting Breakdown
- Specific requirements for auditions
- A perusal copy of the script (available for viewing in the Theatre Office in Shoup Hall, Room 201; or a digital copy in the case of First Bite scripts)

Clause 2.2. We do not pre-cast in any of our season productions. However, we make the following exceptions:

- Special guest artists may be pre-cast in a production if recommended by the faculty as an integral part of the season selection process. It is understood that the decision to cast a guest artist in a role that would otherwise have been played by a student is intended to create a unique and valuable learning opportunity for students.
- In order to stimulate artistic growth within the department, and as a function of their academic appointment as it relates to tenure and promotion, it is departmental policy to encourage faculty members to not only direct and design, but also perform in season productions. Consequently, faculty members may be pre-cast in a season production if recommended by the faculty *at the time of season selection* and approved by the director. It is understood that the decision to cast a faculty member in a role that would otherwise have been played by a student, is intended to create a unique and valuable learning opportunity for students.
- The performance faculty may, with the approval of the faculty and director of the production, pre-cast an MFA acting candidate in a specific role assigned as an Exit Project (THE 596). In all such cases, *this will be announced prior to the general auditions.*

Clause 2.3. It is the expectation that every performance major (BFA & MFA) audition each semester for the department. It is understood that special circumstances may arise where a student may not be able to accept a role for the semester. The following expectations outline the policy for performance majors:

- Each performance major must audition each semester they are a full-time student. If they are ineligible due to academic reasons, they can submit an audition package to the Head of Performance.
- Students can decline to take any role on a semester-by-semester basis, after seeking approval from their advisor.
- If a student is cast, that will be considered their semester Jury and will be what is reviewed with their advisor to satisfy the THE 415/515 credit.
- If a student declines to take a role, they must submit a jury/audition by "Dead Week" (the university-recognized week before Final Exams) to be reviewed by their advisor.

Clause 2.4. Students will not be cast in more than one role per semester (including understudy/swing assignments). Graduate students may request exemption from this policy in consultation with their advisor and the faculty.

### **Section 3: Callbacks and Casting Decisions**

Clause 3.1. Before callbacks, directors confer with members of the faculty to discuss preliminary casting choices. This meeting will help directors to understand the needs of each production and potential challenges with casting. All directors and **must** attend this meeting and the full faculty is **encouraged to** attend the meeting.

Clause 3.2. After callbacks, directors and members of the faculty meet to discuss final casting decisions. While final casting decisions ultimately rest with the director of each production, the faculty provides oversight and advice to directors, and reserves the right to be consulted on the appropriateness of each role in a student's development. All faculty members and directors **must** be in attendance at this meeting.

Clause 3.3. If a student is being equally considered for roles in two different productions, the directors, in consultation with the faculty, must work together to find the best project for the student. **Students may only be cast in one production** (this includes understudy assignments), graduate students may be exempted from this policy with approval from their Major Professor and the faculty.

Clause 3.4. Final cast lists will be circulated via email and posted on departmental callboards within a three hours following the final casting meeting. Directors and stage managers are asked to keep these decisions confidential until the cast lists have been posted.

### **Section 4: Acceptance of Roles and Mandatory Waiting Period**

Clause 4.1. BFA and MFA performance candidates are required to audition for all season productions, and *encouraged* to play as cast. However, students may turn down a role after discussion with their academic advisor and/or the Head of Performance.

Clause 4.2. Students who are cast have **a 24-hour period** following the posting of the cast lists to review the script(s) and decide whether they want to accept the role. Students are encouraged to discuss their role with their major professor and/or their academic advisor. Rehearsals may not begin until after this period has ended.

Clause 4.3. Actors must confirm or decline casting in writing to the Production Stage Manager coordinating the auditions by replying to the casting email with "Accept" or "Decline" before the 24 hour mandatory waiting period is over. Those that do

not respond via email will, by default, be considered as accepting their role. Should more time beyond the 24 hours be necessary to make a decision, contact the Head of Performance requesting an extension for a specified amount of time – being mindful of time sensitivity relevant to the production calendar.

Clause 4.4. Titles are chosen based on casting breakdown and number of roles. If a directorial approach substantively changes this breakdown, the director is required to get approval from the full faculty before casting. The director needs to also get permission from the Department Chair, who will ensure a casting choice does not infringe upon the copyright of the play in question.

## **Section 5: Opting Out**

The theatre department strives to place students in roles or positions that will benefit their growth academically, professionally, and artistically. However, if a student is asked to accept a role or position that they are not comfortable with, they have the option to turn down the role/position without any fear of retaliation. Students are encouraged to discuss this with their advisor but are not required to disclose the reason for turning down a role. The following should be guidelines, a practice to follow that might result in healthy communication:

Clause 5.1. If you are cast in a role in a production that you do not, for whatever reason, want to be a part of, speak with your academic advisor about the role and your concerns. Sometimes discussing your concerns might help you to understand more fully what exactly is challenging, difficult, uncomfortable about the position. At the end of this conversation, you might even find that you are ok with the position. Try to be specific with your reasons for not wanting to accept the position (e.g. – the position would involve working on a play that is personally difficult/offensive, you do not feel qualified or ready for the position, etc.) so that you can work with your advisor to find something that better suits your needs/goals/etc. After consultation with your academic advisor, inform the stage manager of your decision. We have a mandatory 24-hour waiting period for those cast to decide if they want to accept the role.

Clause 5.2. If you are assigned a position in design, tech, stage management, dramaturgy, etc. and you do not want to be a part of the production, start by talking with a trusted advisor. Sometimes discussing your concerns might help you to understand more fully what exactly is challenging, difficult, uncomfortable about the position. At the end of this conversation, you might even find that you are ok with the position. Try to be specific with your reasons for not wanting to accept the position (e.g. – the position would involve working on a play that is personally difficult/offensive, you do not feel qualified or ready for the position, etc.) so that you can work with your advisor to find something that better suits your needs/goals/etc.

## **Section 6: Dropping Out While Production is in Progress**

While we understand that a variety of reasons might lead you to the need to “drop out” during a production, it might be helpful to keep these ideas in mind:

- a. The earlier you voice your concerns about remaining in your role/position, the better.
- b. If/when you decide to step aside, you should make sure to inform your advisor, the faculty supervisor, the director, and chair of the department as soon as you decide.
- c. If you need to withdraw more than halfway through the process it might mean that your ability to participate in future productions is affected (this would not be the case, however, if the situation involved any type of unsafe or abusive behavior).
- d. You should consider carefully how dropping out might affect the team. The earlier you make your choice, the better.
- e. All efforts will be made to find another role/position for you in the same production, if appropriate, or in another production.

## **Section 7: KCACTF And Recasting**

The department recognizes the educational value of actively participating in KCACTF. Due to scheduling conflicts for participating entries, occasionally roles may need to be reassigned. To expedite this process, and to help maintain integrity of the production, the director will re-cast such roles, or make use of understudies as needed.

## **Section 8: Understudy Policy**

Clause 8.1. Productions may make use of understudies in order to

- a. provide actors cast in smaller roles the opportunity to learn one or more larger roles in the same production,
- b. provide actors an opportunity to work on a production that may not otherwise have been cast that semester,
- c. to provide a substitute for a performer who must be replaced for health or academic reasons, and
- d. to reduce the risk of cancellation of a performance during the run of a season production

Clause 8.2. Understudy assignments may be recommended by members of the faculty in consultation with the director.

Clause 8.3. Understudy assignments will only be made once the roles for each season production have been cast.

Clause 8.4. Directors may request that understudies be given a performance during the run of the show. However, this ***must be approved by all parties*** in advance of announcing an understudy performance. The following procedures should be followed:

- Requests for understudy performances must be received by the chair, in writing **before the fourth production meeting**.
- Upon receipt of the request, the chair will call a special meeting to determine whether an understudy performance is feasible. This meeting ***must*** include the full faculty, staff, director, and any other relevant parties.
- If an understudy performance has been scheduled and some complication arises (i.e. – safety of actors is compromised), the faculty and/or director reserves the right to cancel the scheduled understudy performance.

Clause 8.5. Students not cast in a role are encouraged to seek feedback from the directors after the auditions, and to seek out the many other valuable opportunities to participate in our season.