



Department of Theatre & Dance

Jury Handbook for the BFA – Performing Arts: Theatre Design & Technology

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Purposes of the Jury Process

“Juries” is our term for the process in which you meet with faculty on a recurring basis to present your work for feedback. It is intended to:

- Help you determine if the BFA is the appropriate degree for your aspirations.
- Assure there is a baseline of skills, maturity, and determination sufficient to suggest you will be able to successfully complete the program.
- Support your step-by-step growth by providing continuing feedback, suggestions for next steps, and career guidance.
- Open a dialogue with you. We want to hear from you how we can best support you and your changing needs and goals.
- Provide regular opportunities for you to prepare career supporting materials (portfolios, monologues, songs, résumés, scripts, etc.) and practice presenting yourself and your materials in a professional setting.
- Help the faculty to assess the overall outcomes and effectiveness of the BFA – Performing Arts degree.

NAST Standards

Western Kentucky University is an accredited institution member of the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST). Regarding the purpose of a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, NAST standards state:

“Students enrolled in professional undergraduate degrees in theatre are expected to develop the knowledge, skills, concepts, and sensitivities essential to the life of the theatre professional. In any of many possible roles, the theatre professional must exhibit not only technical competence, but also broad knowledge of theatre, sensitivity to artistic style, and an insight into the role of theatre in the life of humankind.” (NAST *Handbook 2021-2022*, Standards for Accreditation, VIII.A.2.)

Evidence of these characteristics and potential for their continuing development is essential for the awarding of the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. The jury process is one way in which the Department of Theatre & Dance monitors the program’s success in developing these characteristics in each student. Upon completion of the Western Kentucky University BFA – Performing Arts degree:

- Students must demonstrate achievement of professional, entry-level competence in the area of specialization including significant technical mastery, the capability to produce work and solve professional problems independently, and a coherent set of artistic/intellectual goals that are evident in their work.
- Students must demonstrate their competence by developing a body of work for evaluation in the major area of study.
- Students must have the ability to communicate ideas, concepts, and requirements to theatre professionals and laypersons related to the practice of the major field.

(The above competencies reference NAST *Handbook 2021-22*, Standards for Accreditation, VIII.C.1-3.)

Eligibility to Apply

All students who state an intention to pursue the BFA – Performing Arts will initially be enrolled under the status “seeking admission” to the major. To be eligible to apply for full admission into the degree you must:

- Have earned at least 30 credit hours, 15 of which must be at WKU.
- Have a cumulative GPA of 2.5 or above.
- Have participated in at least one previous jury. Most students will have participated in two or more juries prior to admission.

Most students will audition or interview for admission into the BFA in the third semester. Student transferring into the program may be able to audition or interview in their second semester. The appropriate semester to audition or interview will be determined in consultation with your advisor.

Continuation in the BFA

Once admitted, retention in the Western Kentucky University BFA – Performing Arts degree program requires that you:

- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.5 and earn a grade of C or better in all classes required in the BFA.
- Maintain an exceptional level of commitment, self-discipline, reliability, and demonstrate consistent artistic growth and development appropriate to the chosen area of concentration, as assessed through the jury process.

Should your cumulative GPA fall below 2.5 in any given semester, or should you fail to earn a C or better in any class required of you within the BFA, your continuation in the BFA may be placed in question. The same is also true if you fail to participate in juries without a suitable excuse, or if the faculty perceive a recurring inability on your part to maintain the commitment, self-discipline, reliability, and consistent artistic growth necessary for success in the program. Should one or more of these occur, you will be informed at, or after, your jury and your status in the BFA will be marked as “insufficient progress” on your Jury Progress Form. Typically, you will be given one semester to make significant improvements.

During this remedial semester, you must meet early with your advisor to develop a plan for improvement. This plan will be documented and list clear and concrete actions you will need to undertake to demonstrate your improvement. The plan may include additional jury preparations, new or repeated coursework, additional meeting with faculty, or other goals, as appropriate. Your advisor may ask that you restrict your production activities or other projects during this semester to ensure you have the time and energy to achieve these goals.

At the end of this remedial semester, the faculty will review your efforts at your jury. At this point, should their concerns not be addressed, they may extend the process for another semester, or they may move to disenroll you from the BFA – Performing Arts degree. The final decision to remove a

student from the degree program will be made by majority vote of the department full-time faculty. This vote will be by secret ballot, administered by the department chair.

The faculty may also choose, by majority vote of full-time faculty, to disenroll a student from the BFA – Performing Arts for violating the WKU Student Code of Conduct. This vote will also be by secret ballot, administered by the department chair. This vote would happen only after the Office of Student Conduct has confirmed the violation. Any recommendations made by that office will also be shared with the faculty prior to this vote.

Appeals

A student not accepted into the BFA may reapply the following semester. A student denied entrance the second time may appeal to the department faculty in writing for permission to reapply for a third and final time.

A student who has been dis-enrolled from the BFA program may request permission to re-apply from the department faculty after discussing the matter with their advisor. Students in this situation should work closely with their advisor to prepare their appeal.

Switching Concentrations

A student is allowed to be enrolled in only one concentration within the degree. Occasionally, a student may wish to switch concentrations once admitted into the degree. Such decisions should be made thoughtfully in conversation with an advisor and/or other faculty members. If a switch is desired, the student must complete the eligibility criteria and reapply for the new concentration at their next jury. What the student must present or perform at this new application jury will be determined by the faculty in the new area of concentration. Students cannot apply to switch concentrations in their senior year. Keep in mind, switching concentrations may require additional semesters to complete the degree.

Jury Scheduling

In November of the fall semester, or in April of the spring semester, announcements regarding the details of jury scheduling will be sent out on the *td.students* list. All department majors must be subscribed to this list. If you are required to do a jury that semester, you will be assigned a day and time and told which type of jury you must do. Juries occur during finals week. It is your responsibility to check that your jury does not conflict with any final you might have. If there is a conflict, or if you feel some other error has been made in the scheduling of your jury, you must report this to someone in the Theatre & Dance Office as soon as possible. The jury announcement will have detailed instructions about the signup process.

Jury Recordkeeping

You will have an individual BFA Progress Form which will be filled out by you and/or the faculty each semester. This will be a Microsoft 365 document that will be viewable only to you and the faculty. It will record your production activities throughout the semester, your participation in juries, your progress, faculty feedback, and other pertinent information.

Semester by Semester Jury Requirements: Theatre Design & Technology

All BFA – Performing Arts: Theatre Design & technology students will participate in the following juries.

1. Welcome Interview (First semester)
2. Baseline Skills (Second semester)
3. BFA Application (Third semester)
4. Pre-professional (Fifth semester)
5. Professional Readiness (Semester before graduation semester) part of PACS
6. Exit Interview (Graduation semester)

What is required of you at each jury, and the timeline of your jury progress may vary, depending on your particular situation and needs. You should always consult with your advisor as the final authority on what is required of you at any given jury.

Specific Areas for Feedback/Discussion: Theatre Design & Technology

After each jury, you may receive feedback in any of the following areas. These are things to think about as you work toward improving your presentation and people skills throughout your time here.

Citizenship/Engagement

- Teamwork (crew responsibilities, rehearsal behavior, etc.)
- Ambassadorship (representing the Department on campus and off)
- Mentorship (being a supportive role model)
- Leadership (on productions and in other roles as appropriate)
- Attendance at department productions and special events

Design Skills

Alignment of concept and execution
Collaboration
Artistic quality
Intellectual engagement
Communication of ideas visually and orally

Technical Skills

Technical mastery or progress towards mastery of techniques
Mastery or progress towards mastery of specific tools, software, equipment
Ability to problem-solve and improvise

Organizational Skills

Generating appropriate communication documents, whether sketches, plots or rehearsal reports
Appropriate formatting of information, data and projects
Roles on productions where coordinating crews, technology or tracking things was required

BFA: Theatre Design & Technology Jury Schedule and Instructions

Jury 1: Welcome Interview

This usually occurs at the end of your first semester as a major in the department, and is actually not a presentation, but an informal “get to know you” interview that gives us an opportunity to discuss your overall educational and career goals. You may also ask any questions you have about the department and/or the BFA program. Think of it as a practice job interview (except you already have the job).

Preparation:

- Fill out the first portion of your Jury Progress Form prior to your jury. This is a list of questions to help the faculty get to know you and your goals.
- Complete a WKU Department of Theatre & Dance [Student Production History Form](#) by the published deadline. This helps us chart your overall involvement in our department productions over time, onstage and off. Don't worry if you don't have much to report this first time around. Fill it out and submit it anyway. It will grow over time.

Presentation

- Show up on time, dressed professionally as if for a job interview,
- Discuss your educational and career goals with the faculty. (Don't worry if you don't know exactly what you want to do with your life yet, or even with your college education; it's fine to have more questions than answers at this point). We just want to get to know how we can help you while you're here.

Feedback

You may get some very informal feedback during this jury, but it's mostly just an open discussion about how your first semester went and how we can help keep or get you on track for success.

Jury 2: Baseline Skills

This usually occurs at the end of your second semester, or the semester following your Welcome Interview semester.

The feedback you get from this performance review will give you some idea of what the faculty expects of you, and how to best prepare for a successful BFA Application jury, which usually happens at the end of the next semester (typically at the end of your 3rd semester at WKU).

Your feedback will be based on your potential for success in the BFA program, as well as your current ability to demonstrate competence and mastery of skills gained in the design and technical theatre classes you have taken, so far. You will also be evaluated for the quality of your work in your other theatre courses and your engagement with our departmental productions, and on department citizenship.

Preparation

- Update your WKU Department of Theatre & Dance [Student Production History Form](#) by the published deadline.
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Presentation

Bring to your jury a copy of your professional Technical and/or Design Resume (please see examples at the end of this document). Even if you do not have much to fill it out with, we

would like to see you demonstrate readiness to progress towards seeking professional employment. Submit an additional copy to your advisor prior to juries for feedback.

Bring to your jury samples of your design and/or technical work, both from classes and from work on productions. This can be from work at WKU and from professional engagements. Depending on your area(s) of interest, this will take a variety of formats. Please meet with your advisor to discuss what you should present and in what format.

Feedback

You will receive immediate verbal feedback from some of the faculty in attendance; be sure to bring a notebook and pencil to record any notes given. This is also an opportunity for you to ask any questions or discuss any issues you wish with the gathered faculty.

You will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Understanding of the overall design and technical process
- Ability to discuss your own role relative to the overall workings of a production
- General progress and potential for progress in the department as well as in your field
- Preparedness for the verbal presentation
- Appropriate preparation of paperwork and visual materials

Jury 3: BFA Application

This is your audition for full admission into the BFA: Theatre Design & Technology concentration, and usually takes place in the 3rd semester, or the semester immediately following your Baseline Skills jury. Students normally enroll in Portfolio Preparation Workshop in their third semester, to help them prepare their portfolios and resumes for application.

You should begin preparing your application materials early in the semester. Be sure to touch base with your advisor even if you are also enrolled in the Portfolio class.

The faculty will base their assessment on the following criteria:

- The quality and timeliness of your application documents.
- The level of self-reflective insight expressed in your application essay.
- The quality of your design and/or technical work, including both classwork and work on WKU productions.
- Your ability to present and talk about your work in a formal setting.
- The level and quality of your engagement in the department, so far.
- The discipline, artistic growth, and maturity you've demonstrated, so far.
- Your GPA (A minimum 2.5 GPA is required for admission into the BFA program).

You will also be assessed on your improvement in specific areas recommended by the faculty after your Baseline Skills Jury.

Preparation

- Review your notes from the previous semester on your Jury Progress Form.
- Complete the BFA Application in your Microsoft 365 Jury folder by the published date.
- Update your WKU Department of Theatre & Dance [Student Production History Form](#) by the published deadline.
- Update your portfolio and professional resume. If you aren't enrolled in Portfolio Prep class during your application semester, please make arrangements with your advisor to get the help you need.

Presentation

Bring to your jury a copy of your professional Technical and/or Design Resume (please see examples at the end of this document). Even if you do not have much to fill it out with, we would like to see you demonstrate readiness to progress towards seeking professional employment. Submit an additional copy to your advisor prior to juries.

Bring to your jury samples of your design and/or technical work arranged into a portfolio or other organized presentation format, both from classes and from work on productions. This can be from work at WKU and from professional engagements. Depending on your area(s) of interest, this will take a variety of formats. Please meet with your advisor to discuss what you should present and in what format.

Feedback

You will receive immediate verbal feedback from some of the faculty in attendance; be sure to bring a notebook and pencil to record any notes given. This is also an opportunity for you to ask any questions or discuss any issues you wish with the gathered faculty.

You will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Understanding of the overall design and technical process
- Ability to discuss your own role relative to the overall workings of a production
- General progress and potential for progress in the department and in your field
- Preparedness for the verbal presentation
- Appropriate preparation of paperwork and visual materials

Jury 4: Pre-Professional Jury

Usually, this jury is first undertaken in the 5th semester. The goal is to demonstrate ongoing academic/artistic growth and maturity commensurate with BFA Program goals. Use this opportunity to get ongoing feedback on your progress as a designer and/or technician.

The quality of your citizenship as a member of the department will also be taken into account when assessing your progress. At this stage in your growth, things like how you handle your crew, production and design responsibilities, and/or your role as a mentor to incoming students may be taken into account.

Preparation

- Review your notes from the previous semester on your Jury Progress Form.
- Update your WKU Department of Theatre & Dance [Student Production History Form](#) by the published deadline.
- Work with your advisor to update your resume and portfolio.

Presentation

Bring to your jury a copy of your professional Technical and/or Design Resume (please see examples at the end of this document). We would like to see you demonstrate readiness to progress towards seeking professional employment. Submit an additional copy to your advisor prior to juries.

Bring to your jury samples of your design and/or technical work, both from classes and from work on productions. This can be from work at WKU and from professional engagements. You may present work from as many different technical areas as you would like, you do not need to “concentrate” in one area.

Students of scenery, lighting and costume should assemble a portfolio of production and class work suitable for seeking employment in the professional world. This portfolio should

include discipline appropriate process images such as research, sketches, models, drafting, mock ups, plots, etc., and pictures of the final product. Sound students should prepare production paperwork and sound effect samples. Stage Managers should present a production prompt book with associated paperwork.

Please meet with your advisor to discuss what you should present and in what format.

Your materials should include selections from your entire body of work, but please focus your presentation on work you have done since your last jury presentation.

Feedback

You will receive immediate verbal feedback from some of the faculty in attendance; be sure to bring a notebook and pencil to record any notes given. This is also an opportunity for you to ask any questions or discuss any issues you wish with the gathered faculty.

You will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Understanding of the overall design and technical process
Ability to discuss your own role relative to the overall workings of a production
General progress and potential for progress in the department as well as in your field
Preparedness for the verbal presentation
Appropriate preparation of paperwork and audio and visual materials
For Designers—ability to present a design concept, and demonstrate how artistic choices support the vision for the production.
For Technicians—ability to present contributions to a production in terms of execution of design, mastery of skills, problem solving and time management. An ability to work with supervisors and subordinates should also be displayed.
For Stage Managers—ability to present work on a production including relevant paperwork and overall managing of rehearsal process, and to reflect back regarding successes, challenges and goals for future improvement.

Jury 5: Professional Readiness Demonstration

Usually completed as part of PERF 451: Career Seminar Workshop

This typically happens in your 7th semester or the semester immediately preceding your last planned semester as a student in the department. This jury gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your readiness to compete in the field. Treat this as a professional interview. You will receive feedback on the material you present, and how well the material showcases your abilities and talents at this point in your career. You will be evaluated on how well you have prepared your materials, how well you present yourself, and whether you have gained mastery of the skills being taught in the classes you've taken. Your work will be measured against your previous juries, productions, and classes, but you will also be measured against your potential. In other words, have you fulfilled the promise of your talent? Have you done your best to become the best theater practitioner you can be at this time?

Preparation

- Review your notes from the previous semester on your Jury Progress Form.
- Update your WKU Department of Theatre & Dance [Student Production History Form](#)
- Professional Resume: Bring two copies of your professional resume with you.
- Work with your advisor and any other relevant professors to prepare your portfolio and/or stage management materials.

Presentation & Feedback

Bring to your jury samples of your design and/or technical work, both from classes and from work on productions. This can be from work at WKU and from professional engagements.

Students of scenery, lighting and costume should assemble a portfolio of production and class work suitable for seeking employment in the professional world. This portfolio should include discipline appropriate process images such as research, sketches, models, drafting, mock ups, plots, etc., and pictures of the final product. Sound students should prepare production paperwork and sound effect samples. Stage Managers should present a production prompt book with associated paperwork.

Please meet with your advisor to discuss what you should present and in what format.

Your materials should include selections from your entire body of work, but please focus your presentation as if you are interviewing for a specific position, such as Assistant Set Designer, Scenic Charge Artist, Technical Director, Stage Manager, First Hand, etc.

Bring to your jury one copy of your professional resume

You should approach this jury as you would an actual professional interview. The faculty will be assessing your ability to demonstrate your professional readiness as well as your ability to compete in the industry. Choose an area or areas to present, in a targeted and organized fashion. Do not try to present all your work.

You will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Understanding of the overall design and technical process
Ability to discuss your own role relative to the overall workings of a production
General progress and potential for progress in your field
Preparedness for the verbal presentation, and comfort presenting in front of a group
Appropriate preparation of paperwork and audio and visual materials
For Designers—ability to present a design concept, and demonstrate how artistic choices support the vision for the production.
For Technicians—ability to present contributions to a production in terms of execution of design, mastery of skills, problem solving and time management, and ability to work with supervisors and subordinates.
For Stage Managers—ability to present work on a production including relevant paperwork and overall managing of rehearsal process, and to reflect back regarding successes, challenges and goals for future improvement.

An unsatisfactory performance of this Professional Readiness Performance Review will result in your being required to repeat it the following semester in addition to any other regularly scheduled performance review requirement, such as an Exit Interview.

Jury 6: The Exit Interview

The Exit Interview usually happens at the end of your last planned semester in residence. This does not include any performance by you, but rather a conversation with the faculty. However, you are welcome to attend the Dance Call for practice if you wish.

Preparation

- Review your notes from the previous semester on your Jury Progress Form. Update your WKU Department of Theatre & Dance [Student Production History Form](#) by the published deadline.
- Bring one copy of your professional resume. The department will keep this copy.
- Complete the Exit Survey by the published deadline.

Presentation

- Show up as scheduled with time to spare, all required paperwork in hand, ready to discuss your “next step” plans as a graduate of WKU Department of Theatre & Dance.
- We will discuss ways you can stay connected with the department.
- As with the Intake Interview, all you need to do is show up as scheduled with time to spare, dressed as you would for a job interview, all required paperwork in hand, ready to discuss your “next step” plans as a graduate of WKU Department of Theatre & Dance. Please note: this does not mean you have to know exactly what they are! Just be ready and willing to honestly share your current thoughts.

Feedback

This session is a conversation that is meant to reflect on your time at WKU as well as your plans post-graduation (vague though they may be.) At this time, the faculty may offer comments or observations about your progress over the years, and we encourage you to share your thoughts about your growth as a creative artist. As always, you can ask for specific feedback or critique from the faculty, and/or ask any questions you have. We also welcome any constructive comments you would be willing to offer about your overall educational experience at WKU, should you choose to share those with us.

Easy Overview of Requirements, Semester by Semester

BFA-MT Jury Overview		1: WELCOME	2: BASELINE	3: APPLICATION	4: PRE-PROFESSIONAL	5: PROFESSIONAL READINESS	6: EXIT
		1 st sem	2 nd sem	3 rd sem	5 th sem	7 th sem	8 th sem
Fill Out	Jury Progress Form Questions	√	√	√	√	√	√
	Production History Form	√	√	√	√	√	√
Upload	BFA Application			√			
Bring with you	Professional Resume (2 copies)		√	√	√	√	√
	Examples of Design work		√	√	√	√	√
In Person	Interview only	√					√
	Presentation				√	√	