BFA in Musical Theatre
Program Handbook

Departments of Theatre & Dance and Music
Missouri State University

Based upon the BFA for Stage and Screen Handbook, Created by Kurt Gerard Heinlein.
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Amended for BFA Musical Theatre by
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Professional performance training at Missouri State…
Where conservatory quality meets the liberal arts.

A Message from the Musical Theatre Coordinator

Welcome to the BFA Musical Theatre Program at Missouri State University

Whether you're just beginning your journey or deep into your training, I'd like to take a moment to welcome you—and remind you of the extraordinary program you're a part of. This is one of the most respected and forward-thinking musical theatre training grounds in the country. We don't just prepare students to be employable—we prepare you to be employed.

Our program offers performance-driven training with a clear focus on preparing students for professional employment—all within the context of a broad liberal arts education. That means we expect you to be an artist, a thinker, and a collaborator. You will be challenged to take bold risks, to fight for what your objectives, and to develop a mastery of storytelling in all its forms—through song, text, movement, and presence. Our work demands specificity, urgency, and connection. You'll hear us say often: *"What are you fighting for?"* That question sits at the heart of everything we do.

Missouri State's Department of Theatre and Dance is an extraordinarily competitive training ground, but it's also one of the most supportive artistic communities you'll ever encounter. Students, faculty, and staff alike use the word *"family"* to describe what we've built here. We show up for each other. We grow together. And we celebrate each other's success—whether in rehearsal, in the audition room, or on Broadway.

The faculty you'll train with are working artists and educators with international credentials and deep industry insight. They are passionate, student-centered, and fully committed to your journey. We're also proud to collaborate with our partners in the Department of Music and in the professional community at large—from regional theatres and symphonies to industry showcases in New York and beyond.

Throughout this handbook, you'll find clear expectations, detailed requirements, and helpful resources to guide you from your first day on campus to your first professional job—and far beyond. Use it. Revisit it. Let it keep you grounded as you push your limits.

Welcome to Missouri State. You belong here, and we're so glad you're with us.

Warmly,

Josh Young, M.Ed.

Coordinator of Musical Theatre
Associate Professor of Theatre
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A. DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

The BFA Musical Theatre Program at Missouri State University is a nationally respected interdisciplinary degree offered through the Department of Theatre and Dance and the Department of Music. Our program blends rigorous performance training with the breadth of a university education, empowering students to grow as skilled, thoughtful, and working artists.

Our mission is rooted in the belief that serious training should lead to real opportunity. Students in the BFA MT program receive intensive, practical instruction in acting, singing, and dance—with each discipline approached as an essential part of storytelling. From the first year onward, students are encouraged to take bold risks, pursue emotional specificity, and build a repeatable process rooted in objective, circumstance, and high stakes. This is a program that demands presence, preparation, and a commitment to growth.

Coursework spans traditional musical theatre, contemporary and pop/rock styles, as well as original work. Students benefit from direct access to industry professionals through initiatives such as our two-tiered New York City Senior Showcase, the MSU 29-Hour Reading Series, professional collaborations with symphony orchestras, and on-campus masterclasses with directors, casting professionals, and agents. These opportunities reflect our priority: preparing students not just to be competitive—but to start working.

Admission to the program is highly selective, based on audition, interview, and academic promise. We aim for a cohort of between 15 and 20 students in each first-year class. Class sizes are capped according to NAST (National Association of Schools of Theatre) and NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) standards to ensure focused faculty mentorship and meaningful performance opportunities across all four years.

This program is for students who are ready to work—artists who are excited to collaborate, unafraid to fail forward, and committed to refining their craft in a fast-paced, supportive environment. Our goal isn't just to prepare you for the industry; it's to make sure you're already in motion by the time you leave.

B. PURPOSE OF THE BFA MUSICAL THEATRE HANDBOOK

The BFA Musical Theatre Handbook is updated yearly. It aims to provide the student of musical theatre with a comprehensive resource that documents vital philosophical and practical information, aiding your success as a musical theatre student at Missouri State University. Additionally, it contains many helpful professional resources to guide your entrance toward becoming an industry professional. Each student in the BFA Musical Theatre Program is required to read the Handbook *yearly* before the first day of Fall semester classes and all freshpersons and incoming transfer students are required to hand in a signed agreement form (located at the back of the Handbook) prior to beginning Acting Studio I. Students should also consult the Dance Program guidelines before the first dance class meeting each semester.

C. MUSICAL THEATRE FACULTY/STAFF

Angi Griffee-Black, Per Course Instructor of Dance

Jena Cantrell, Per Course Instructor of Music, Voice

Dr. Carol L. Chapman, Associate Professor of Music, Voice Area Coordinator

Heather Chittenden-Luellen, Music Director/Accompanist

Dr. Ann Marie Daehn, Associate Professor of Music, Voice

Nikki Ferry, Assistant Professor, Instructor of Acting, Theatre

Dr. Kurt Gerard Heinlein, Professor of Theatre, Acting Program Coordinator

Dr. Christopher Herr, Theatre and Dance Department Head

Jessica Madden, Assistant Professor of Dance

Haley Olszewski, Per Course Instructor of Dance

Dr. Paula K. Patterson, Associate Professor of Music, Interim Music Department Head

Brandon Russell, Artist-in-Residence, Instructor of Music, Voice

Karen Sabo, Assistant Professor, Instructor of Acting, Theatre

Allegra Schaeffer, Per Course Instructor, Pilates

Sean Spyres, Per Course Instructor of Music, Voice

Dr. Chris Thompson, Professor of Music, Voice

Sarah Wiggin, Professor of Theatre

Emily Padgett-Young, Per Course Instructor of Music, Voice

Josh Young, Associate Professor of Theatre, Musical Theatre Program Coordinator

D. ADMISSION PROCESS

The BFA Musical Theatre Program at MSU is a pre-professional actor training program. Admission into the program is selective, determined by audition, interview, and academic promise. The rate of admission is approximately 6%. Members of the Missouri State acting, musical theatre, voice and dance faculty determine the applicant's acceptability for the BFA Musical Theatre Program.

E. ACCEPTANCE CRITERIA

The following serve as sample criteria for a student's acceptance into the BFA Musical Theatre Program:

- Talents and abilities as an actor/singer/dancer.
- Intellectual curiosity and desire to learn.
- Physical and vocal strengths.
- Artistic sensitivity.
- Stage presence and personality.
- Passion for the craft of performance.
- Castability.
- Potential to compete in the profession.
- Desire and demonstrated discipline to develop professional skills.
- Collaborative spirit and positive attitude toward self and others.
- Academic promise.

F. RETENTION GUIDELINES

Academic

- Maintain MSU cumulative GPA of 2.5.
- A grade of "B-" or above must be maintained in all major-required courses.
- Enrollment as a full–time student (12 hours minimum each semester).
- Completion of minimum 12 credits per semester.
- Completion of a minimum of two performance class credits (THE, MUS, DAN prefix) per semester.
- Satisfy all demands as outlined in the BFA Musical Theatre Handbook.
- Meet all assessment parameters as noted in the BFA Handbook.

Performance

- Audition for all Department of Theatre and Dance mainstage productions and accept parts offered.
- Participate and achieve advancement in yearly assessments.
- Demonstrate artistic excellence throughout training and make notable growth toward defined goals.
- Demonstrate growth and excellence in the defined areas of acting, singing, and dance.
- Satisfy all assessment requirements as outlined in the BFA Musical Theatre Handbook.

Competency

At each level of the BFA Musical Theatre Program, the student will be assessed on their competency and mastery of the required skills. At the conclusion of study in the Program, the student should be able to demonstrate:

- A consistently high level of performance as an actor, singer and dancer.
- Believable projection in word and action into imaginary circumstances.
- Convincing characterization in productions of different genres and styles in an ensemble relationship with other performers.

- Vocal technique (speaking) that employs a strong foundation in the principles and practices of breathing, support, and resonance.
- Singing technique that employs a strong foundation in the principles and practices of breathing, support, and resonance.
- Dancing technique that employs a strong foundation in the principles and practices of breathing, support, and alignment.
- Physical tools of the actor and the ability to access kinesthetic impulses suitable for character exploration.
- An appreciation for the people and ideas which contributed to the development of contemporary performance as well as the corresponding canon of theatrical literature.
- Effective and competitive audition skills and repertoire.
- Relevant professional marketing skills and tools.
- Approaches and attitudes consistent with the expectations of the professional performance community.
- Satisfy all assessment measures as outlined in the BFA Musical Theatre Handbook.

Suitability to the Profession
Students in the BFA Musical Theatre Program are expected to demonstrate professional excellence in their classwork, rehearsals, performances, external work, and in their daily involvement with others.
Sample yardsticks for determining suitability to the profession include talent, motivation, discipline, temperament, and professional marketability.

1. Talent:
    a. A marked innate ability for artistic accomplishment.
    b. Consistent success and growth in class and production work.
    c. Achievement of markers for artistic success including excellence in scene work, singing classes, dance classes, casting and production work.
    d. Positive reinforcement as disclosed in yearly assessments.

2. Motivation:
    a. Self–motivation in the pursuit of knowledge.
    b. Keeping apprised of and engaged in current industry trends.
    c. Taking initiative for personal development, including but not limited to:
        i. Reading performance and industry–related materials, other than class work.
        ii. Attending professional performances and workshops.
        iii. Executing a daily actor warm–up.
    d. Willingness to work and experiment in class and production.
    e. Dedication to learning in the classroom as well as in rehearsals.
    f. Taking responsibility for self–motivation and inspiring one's own work.
    g. Collaborative spirit with fellow student–artists.
    h. Sincere care for the growth of oneself and others.
    i. Personal goal setting and a quest for continued excellence.
    j. Taking accountability for personal health and personal appearance as relevant to the profession.

3. Discipline:
    a. Being fully prepared to work and in a state of "presentness" in the classroom, rehearsal, and performance:
        i. Self–sufficiency in character development.
        ii. Bringing into the rehearsal process informed character choices.
        iii. Leaving personal issues outside class and rehearsal.
    b. Punctuality: being prompt/early to classes, rehearsals, and performances.
    c. Directability: listening to director; knowing how to receive and implement scene/character choices.
    d. Professional conduct in rehearsal and performance for classes, rehearsals, and performances.
    e. Consistent personal motivation in developing in voice, singing, movement, dance, and acting.
    f. Developing and maintaining a repertoire of audition materials.
    g. Structure and discipline as evidenced in one's academic and professional ethic.
    h. Personal goal setting and a quest for continued excellence.
    i. Taking accountability for personal health and personal appearance as relevant to the profession.

4. Temperament:
    a. A positive attitude toward self, others, and the Program.
    b. Humility and respect for the art and craft of performance, self, fellow students, faculty, and staff.
    c. Ability to work with others.
    d. Professional courtesy.
    e. Emotional stability.
    f. Attention to one's emotional and physical well-being.

5. Professional Marketability*:
    a. Excellence in craft and audition skills.
    b. Excellence in work ethic and interpersonal skills.
    c. A healthy understanding of self in relation to industry market needs.
    d. Healthy attention to personal fitness goals and well-being in relation to personal marketing strategies.
    e. Thorough comprehension of industry/business logistics.
    f. Demonstration and execution of personal marketing materials and skills.
    g. See "Suitability to the Profession" numbers 1-4.

*Marketability in the field of musical theatre starts with understanding who you are—vocally, physically, emotionally, and professionally. At Missouri State, we believe that your most marketable self is your truest and healthiest self. The faculty encourage all students to approach their training with curiosity, self-awareness, and a willingness to grow—not just as performers, but as whole people.

We're committed to fostering a positive, collaborative classroom environment where conversations around physical and vocal health, mental wellness, and personal identity are part of the learning process. This dialogue is especially emphasized in courses like *Auditioning*, *Acting for the Camera*, and *Professional Practices*.

Without exception, your professors believe that a healthy, grounded view of self brings both psychological and physiological benefits—and that those benefits are essential to building a sustainable, fulfilling performance career. If at any point you have questions or concerns in this area, please reach out to your advisor, voice or acting teacher, or the Musical Theatre Program Coordinator.

G. FORMAL ASSESSMENT OF BFA PROGRAM CANDIDACY

The student will be formally assessed in the spring of each year of degree candidacy. The purpose is to evaluate the student's growth in relation to the assessment retention criteria. If the faculty deem the criteria are not being met, the student will be placed on probation for one semester. At the end of the probationary period, a determination will be made as to whether the student should continue in the Program. Participation in the musical theatre assessment process is mandatory for continuation in the BFA Musical Theatre Program. Musical Theatre students must participate in acting assessments during academic years when the individual has been enrolled in an acting class. The assessment process consists of the following:

1. **Self-Assessment Packet.** The candidate will submit required self-assessment materials yearly. Materials include a self-assessment form, résumé, and headshot. Submission procedures and deadlines will be communicated annually by the Musical Theatre Coordinator. Late materials will not be accepted. The assessment packet shall consist of:
   - *a. A Self–Assessment Form.* The candidate will submit a typed self–evaluation to the Head of the Acting Program. This document, along with the faculty assessment, will serve as the springboard for the student's formal evaluation.
   - *b. A Résumé.* The candidate will submit a professional résumé, alongside the self- assessment, to the Head of the Acting Program.
   - *c. A Headshot.* Prior to taking Auditions class (THE 451), the candidate will submit a suitable headshot, alongside the self-assessment and résumé, to the Head of the Acting Program. Once Auditions class (THE 451) is completed, the candidate will submit a professional headshot with their assessment packet.
2. **Unified Auditions.** Students in the program are required to prepare for and participate in unified mainstage auditions. In addition to providing a format for being cast in mainstage shows, they also serve as a vital component in the assessment process, giving the acting faculty a key opportunity to view and evaluate student development.
3. **Evaluation Meeting.** The faculty will evaluate each BFA candidate at the end of each academic year, using assessment measures as a tool for assessing artistic and academic growth. The meeting also helps the student set goals for upcoming semesters. A student who misses their assessment meeting may be removed from the Program.
4. **Recommendation for Course of Study.** At the assessment meeting, each student will be provided one of three recommendations from the faculty: recommended for continuation in the program, recommended with reservation (put on a probationary period for the following semester), or not recommended for continuation of study.
5. **Seniors will have additional assessment criteria** as outlined in the syllabi for their capstone class, and as pertaining to the development and performance of the senior showcase, including but not limited to professional marketing materials and a professional personal website.

Note: All assessment materials, including faculty evaluations and recommendation for course of study, will be kept on digital file in the office of the Acting Program Coordinator. A student may make an appt. to access their file/assessment scores at any time during the academic year.

H. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS FOR BFA MUSICAL THEATRE STUDENTS

What are assessments?
Assessments are held once a year. You submit the required materials (below) then sit down for an assessment/dialogue with your respective faculty. We discuss your successes, challenges, and set some goals. For BFA Musical Theatre students, performance assessments are also the time that we discuss any issues that may impact your retention in the program. For more information, see Acting Guidelines Retention Criteria and Acting Guidelines Assessment (p. 7-15 of BFA Program Guidelines)

Do you need to participate in an assessment?
All *returning* BFA Acting and BFA Musical Theatre students who have taken Acting Studio 121, 221, 321, or 421 during the academic year must participate in acting assessment meetings. Students who were put on probationary status in spring or fall must also participate.

Do I need to participate in department Unified Auditions as part of my assessment?
Those who did not take Acting 121, 221, 321, or 421 in the 2025-26 academic year should not schedule an assessment. However, all returning BFA Acting and MT students must participate in unified mainstage auditions. Your audition submission is viewed by the acting faculty as an integral part of your yearly development process.

Do incoming BFA Acting or MT students need to participate?
No. Only students who already have completed THE 121 (Acting Studio I) need to participate in assessment.

Can I sign up for assessment if I wasn't in acting class?
Yes. Remember, all BFA Musical Theatre students that were in acting class are required to sign-up. Also, Musical Theatre students who were not in acting class must still sign up for an acting assessment with the faculty and must submit the same required materials (see below) as all others being assessed. Dance and Music Department assessments will be held separately by their respective coordinators.

When and Where are they?
Returning Students: Assessments are being held during assessment week, which is the same week as unified auditions (TBD). Your assessment meeting will last approximately 12 minutes.

Graduating Seniors: A group assessment may be held. Graduating students may also sign-up for an individual assessment time, but it is not required.

What happens if I do not complete my required assessment?
For BFA Musical Theatre students, non-completion of the required assessment will result in dismissal from the BFA Musical Theatre Program and/or ineligibility for performing in the fall.

Where do I sign up?

Acting Assessment Sign-Up Link

What do I need to prepare, and how do I submit materials?
Please submit the following materials:

1. A completed copy of your completed self-evaluation form.

The completed form should be labeled: Last Name 2026 Self-Evaluation
Example: Streep 2026 Self-Evaluation
The self-assessment form is in the sign-up folder. A copy will also be sent from the BFA Acting for Stage & Screen Coordinator.

2. A **pdf** of your photo/resume.

The photo/resume should be labeled: Last Name 2026 PR
Example: Streep 2026 PR

3. All properly labeled materials should be placed in **one digital folder**.

The folder should be labeled as: Last Name 2026 Assessment Materials
Example: Streep 2026 Assessment Materials

4. **Submit** your folder here (*once submitted, materials cannot be changed*.)

Acting Self-Assessments 2026 Drop Here

Assessment Material Due Dates

Place materials in the folder by _____.
Late, incomplete, or improperly organized materials will not be accepted. No exceptions.

Self Evaluation Form

Missouri State University, Department of Theatre & Dance
BFA Musical Theatre Self-Evaluation Form
(To be completed by the musical theatre student prior to the spring acting assessment meeting.)

Name	Program	Year in Program	Date

I. **Performance Record.** List roles in performances and/or productions since arriving at MSU (including this semester). Please include dates (month and year):

Name of Work	Role	Producing Entity	Dates

II. **Repertoire.** List performance repertoire learned or performed this year in or out of class, including acting scenes, monologues, narrative/poetry, and songs learned in voice lessons and performance classes. Do not include material from above:

Name of Work	**Role**	**Class**	**Dates**

III. **Auditions.** List performances and/or productions for which you have auditioned prior to this assessment:

Name of Work	Producing Entity

IV. **Other Activities.** List other activities that have informed your progress (performances for special events, certifications, University Theatre, ushering, Departmental service, dance team, etc.).

I. Rank your progress in the measurable areas noted below:

NI =needs improvement
FP =fair progress
SP =significant progress
EP =excellent progress
NA =no improvement required
NP =does not pertain

Measurable Area	Self-Ranking
Acting Strength and Development: Includes core skills of listening, responding, loss of negative self-awareness, living in imaginary circumstances, character development, emotional availability and risk-taking, and text analysis as applicable to acting performance.	
Vocal Strength and Development (Speaking): Includes core skills of understanding the logistics of the vocal instrument, loss of negative vocal-awareness, freedom from tension and constriction, vocal health, projection and support, diction, enunciation, and dialects as applicable to acting performance.	
Vocal Strength and Development (Singing): Includes core skills of understanding the logistics of the vocal instrument, loss of negative vocal-awareness, freedom from tension and constriction, vocal health, projection and support, diction, enunciation, pitch, expressivity and phrasing as applicable to acting/musical performance.	
Dance Strength & Development: Includes core skills of balance and alignment, extension, expressivity, loss of negative physical self-awareness, freedom from physical tension and constriction, personal fitness, and physical character development as applicable to acting/dance performance.	
Movement Strength & Development: Includes core skills of physical listening and responding, loss of negative physical self-awareness, freedom from physical tension and constriction, personal fitness, and physical character development as applicable to acting performance.	
Stage Presence/Personality Strength and Development: Includes the actor's personal presence and personality as related to performance work and castability in the profession of acting/musical performance.	
Collaborative Spirit Strength and Development: Includes the ability to participate in, and contribute to, a productive and trustful ensemble-based environment in both classroom and rehearsals.	
Desire/Discipline/Work Ethic Strength and Development: Includes desire for professional success, personal discipline, work habits, organizational skills, classroom and rehearsal work ethic, and inter-personal relations as related to the profession of acting performance. As academic success is an indicator of industry success, this measure also includes elements of scholastic achievement including GPA, receipt of scholarships, and the engagement of other measurable scholarly activities.	
Supporting Materials/Personal Marketing Strength and Development: Includes all elements of personal/professional marketing tools including health and appearance as related to personal career goals; business acumen, headshots, resumes, cover letters, industry research, professional outreach, and personal website development. Also includes a concerted effort toward awareness of current and developing industry market trends.	
Scholarship Strength and Development: Includes all elements of scholastic measure including major GPA, cumulative GPA, receipt of scholarships, and of other measurable scholarly activities.	
Self-Care: Includes all elements of self-care as related to personal career goals, type, the demands of the professional industry, and the corresponding development of self in relation to market needs.	

II. Please obtain your current GPA and list below:

Cumulative GPA	

III. Attach to this sheet a typed, proofread, and coherent self-evaluation of your work this year/since your last assessment. Use the following questions:

1. What are your goals beyond Missouri State University?
2. Did you set immediate goals for this closing year? What were they?
3. Did you achieve those goals? Why? Why not? How?
4. Noting the measurable areas above, what are your strengths?
5. Noting the measurable areas above, what are your weaknesses?
6. How are you addressing these challenges?
7. What goals have you set for next year?

IV. Please follow the guidelines outline in the BFA Musical Theatre Handbook and submit one (1) copy of your required assessment materials and this self-evaluation form to the Musical Theatre Program Coordinator by the required due date.

Signature _____Date _____

Please do not write below this line. Faculty Comments Only

BFA Musical Theatre Program, Missouri State University Department of Theatre & Dance Student Learner Outcomes/Yearly Assessment Form

(To be completed by Acting, Dance, and Music faculty prior to yearly student assessment meetings.

Student Name: _____

Score Chart:

1. Does Not Apply
2 Does Not Meet Established Program Standards
3 Marginally Meets Established Program Standards
4 Meets Established Program Standards
5 Meets and Contributes to the Development of Established Program Standards

	Score	Score	Score	Score
Acting Strength and Development: Includes core skills of listening, responding, loss of negative self-awareness, living in imaginary circumstances, character development, emotional availability and risk-taking, and text analysis as applicable to acting performance.				
Vocal Strength and Development (Speaking): Includes core skills of understanding the logistics of the vocal instrument, loss of negative vocal- awareness, freedom from tension and constriction, vocal health, projection and support, diction, enunciation, and dialects as applicable to acting performance.				
Vocal Strength and Development (Singing): Includes core skills of understanding the logistics of the vocal instrument, loss of negative vocal- awareness, freedom from tension and constriction, vocal health, projection and support, diction, enunciation, pitch, expressivity and phrasing as applicable to acting performance.				
Dance Strength & Development: Includes core skills of balance and alignment, extension, expressivity, loss of negative physical self- awareness, freedom from physical tension and constriction, personal fitness, and physical character development as applicable to acting performance.				
Movement Strength & Development: Includes core skills of physical listening and responding, loss of negative physical self-awareness, freedom from physical tension and constriction, personal fitness, and physical character development as applicable to acting performance.				
Stage Presence/Personality Strength and Development: Includes the actor's personal presence and personality as related to performance work and castability in the profession of acting performance.				
Desire/Discipline/Work Ethic Strength and Development: Includes desire for professional success, personal discipline, work habits, organizational skills, classroom and rehearsal work ethic, and inter-personal relations as related to the profession of acting performance. As academic success is an indicator of industry success, this measure also includes elements of scholastic achievement including GPA, receipt of scholarships, and the engagement of other measurable scholarly activities.				
Collaborative Spirit Strength and Development: Includes the ability to participate in, and contribute to, a productive and trustful ensemble-based environment in both classroom and rehearsals.				
Supporting Materials/Personal Marketing Strength and Development: Includes all elements of personal/professional marketing tools including health and appearance as related to personal career goals; business acumen, headshots, resumes, cover letters, industry research, professional outreach, and personal website development. Also includes a concerted effort toward awareness of current and developing industry market trends.				
Scholarship Strength and Development: Includes all elements of scholastic measure including major GPA, cumulative GPA, receipt of scholarships, and other measurable scholarly activities.				
Self-Care: Includes all elements of personal appearance as related to personal career goals, type, the demands of the professional industry, and the corresponding development of self in relation to market needs.				

BFA Musical Theatre Program, Missouri State University Department of Theatre & Dance Faculty Recommendation for Course of Study

(To be completed by faculty prior to yearly BFA Musical Theatre student assessment meetings.)

Student Name: _____

After thorough and thoughtful examination of comprehensive student performance (including all components indicated in student assessment measures), the faculty comprising the BFA Musical Theatre, Acting, Dance and Music Areas at Missouri State University make the following recommendation regarding continuation of the above student's course of study:

Recommendation	**Date**	**Date**	**Date**	**Date**
Recommendation for continuation of study.				
Recommendation, with defined reservations, for continuation of study.				
Recommendation for discontinuation of study.				

_____

**For the categories of "Vocal Strength and Development (Singing)" and "Dance Strength and Development," the following score chart will apply:*

1. *Does Not Apply*
2. *No Progress*
3. *Some Progress*
4. *Satisfactory Progress*
5. *Excellent/Exceptional Progress*

***The Department Head signature is only required when the student is recommended with reservation or for discontinuation.*

Faculty Present at Assessment:

External Evaluator Form

BFA Musical Theatre Program Missouri State University Department of Theatre & Dance Unified Audition Assessment Form

(To be completed by acting area faculty in response to unified auditions.)

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Program: _____ Year: _____

Faculty Member Evaluating: _____

	Does Not Meet Program Standards		Marginally Meets Program Standards	Meets Program Standards	
Acting Strength/Develop Includes core skills of listening, responding, loss of negative self-awareness, living in imaginary circumstances, character development, emotional availability and risk-taking, and text analysis as applicable to acting/musical performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Vocal Strength Speaking/Develop Includes core skills of understanding the logistics of the vocal instrument, loss of negative vocal-awareness, freedom from tension and constriction, vocal health, projection and support, diction, enunciation, and dialects as applicable to acting performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Vocal Strength Singing/Develop Includes core skills of understanding the logistics of the vocal instrument, loss of negative vocal-awareness, freedom from tension and constriction, vocal health, projection and support, diction, enunciation, pitch, expressivity and phrasing as applicable to acting/musical performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Dance Includes core skills of balance and alignment, extension, expressivity, loss of negative physical self-awareness, freedom from physical tension and constriction, personal fitness, and physical character development as applicable to acting/musical performance.					
Movement Includes core skills of physical listening and responding, loss of negative physical self-awareness, freedom from physical tension and constriction, and physical character development as applicable to acting performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Stage Presence/Personality Includes the actor's personal presence and personality as related to performance work and castability in the profession of acting/musical performance.	1	2	3	4	5
Supporting Materials/Marketing Includes all elements of personal/professional marketing tools including health and appearance as related to personal career goals; business acumen, headshots, resumes, cover letters, industry research, professional outreach, and personal website development.	1	2	3	4	5
Self-Care Includes all elements of personal appearance as related to personal career goals, type, fitness, the demands of the professional industry, and the corresponding development of self in relation to market needs.	1	2	3	4	5

Notes:

I. PROBATION POLICY

If a BFA candidate fails to meet the assessment retention criteria, they will be placed on probation for one semester ("Recommended with Reservation"). The faculty will specify the nature of the student's deficiencies and suggest remedies. At the end of the probationary semester, the faculty will reassess the student's status and make all necessary determinations and recommendations. The student's failure to remediate their deficiencies will result in dismissal from the BFA Musical Theatre Program. Probationary status is limited to one semester only.

J. DISMISSAL FROM BFA MUSICAL THEATRE PROGRAM

If a student does not meet the identified goals during the probationary semester, they will be removed from the Program. Additionally, The BFA Musical Theatre faculty reserve the right to remove a student from BFA candidacy without the benefit of a probationary semester whenever they deem such removal to be in the best interests of the student and/or the Program.

K. AUDITION POLICIES

1. All eligible BFA Musical Theatre students are required to audition for, and accept roles if cast in, departmental theatre mainstage productions. If, due to an extraordinary circumstance or academic probation, etc., wish to not be considered for casting, must submit a written request to the Musical Theatre Coordinator at least two weeks prior to auditions. Auditions are an integral part of the development and assessment process. Students who are given a performance waiver are still required to participate in unified auditions. A student may elect to refuse a role if cast in a play that contains material that conflicts with their social, religious, cultural, or ethical framework, but only after prior consultation with the Musical Theatre Coordinator.

Please note that those who choose to disregard this policy place their program status at the discretion of the faculty. Consequences could include being placed on program probation, being prohibited from auditioning for all MSU productions in the semester following the infraction, or removal from the BFA Musical Theatre Program.

2. A cumulative grade point average of 2.5 must be maintained in order to participate in all MSU Theatre & Dance productions. For example, in order to be eligible for a fall production, the student's cumulative grade point average following the previous spring must be at least 2.5**. In addition, a grade of B- or above must be earned in all major-required courses.** In the case of extreme circumstances, the student may submit an exception request. Requests must be put in written form and submitted to the Musical Theatre Coordinator, who will review the request, then forward it to the Department Head for final consideration.

3. First semester Acting for Stage & Screen and Musical Theatre students may not engage in public performance while enrolled in THE 121. This stipulation applies to <u>all</u> public performances, both internal and external. In exceptional circumstances, students may submit a waiver request to allow their participation in a public performance. Every request will be given due consideration, but students should be aware that a request does not infer automatic permission. The academic and artistic circumstances will be carefully and fairly evaluated in each unique circumstance, underscored by the intent of best serving the student's long-term developmental needs.

4. For BFA Musical Theatre students, there are two exceptions to this policy. The first is choral singing. While

enrolled in Acting Studio I (THE 121), Musical Theatre students may participate in choral groups and choral singing, strengthening musicianship and vocal technique. This exception includes our collaboration with the Springfield Symphony Orchestra. The second exception to this policy is participating in a dance ensemble.

5. All Musical Theatre students are encouraged, but not required, to audition for the fall and spring Dance Concerts. If cast in either the fall or spring dance concert, dance rehearsals cannot conflict with other mainstage performance responsibilities.

6. There is an 8 semester eligibility to audition for MSU mainstage productions as a BFA Musical Theatre student. We expect our students to work hard and graduate in a timely manner so they can begin auditioning for professional work outside of academia. The 8 semester eligibility allows students to audition for the MSU mainstage season 8 times after they become a BFA Candidate. Since students enrolled in THE 121 are ineligible for performing on the mainstage, this allows our BFA candidates 4 ½ years of eligibility at MSU.

7. After completion of THE 451 (Auditions), BFA Musical Theatre students are required to submit a professional photo/résumé at all program auditions and assessments.

8. Prior to entering their final/senior year, BFA Musical Theatre students are required to have a live professional website and list the web address on their résumé/audition materials.

9. BFA Musical Theatre students who have completed the first round of auditions are required to attend all listed callbacks.

10. Part-time seniors (enrolled for less than 12 hours) may audition for departmental productions with approval of the Musical Theatre Coordinator. Approval will only be provided for one semester.

11. Students may not perform while on Program probation.

12. See “N. Outside Production Activities”

L. PRODUCTION CASTING PHILOSOPHY

The BFA Acting and BFA Musical Theatre Programs at MSU are both pre-professional, conservatory style, training programs. The goal is to fruitfully prepare every student for the professional rigors of the industry. In relation, our casting philosophy is tri-fold, encompassing the dynamic of individual development/opportunity, promoting excellence in production, and embodying a "real-world" sense of industry competition. In short, our casting outlook aims to:

1. Provide developmental opportunities for each individual.
2. Contribute to excellence in production and the maintenance of professional performance/production values.
3. Provide students with a competitive real world casting model.

Following unified auditions, all production directors meet to thoroughly discuss these dynamics in relation to the casting process and the forthcoming production season. Student actors preparing for entrance to the industry should be comforted that the faculty directors make every attempt to equitably incorporate these principles. However, it is also important for the student actor to note that there will likely be times of conflict and frustration involving development and relative opportunities. If a student finds themself feeling frustrated or unfairly treated in the casting process, they are encouraged to visit with a faculty mentor, advisor, or the Musical Theatre Coordinator.

M. REHEARSAL POLICIES & EXPECTATIONS

Theatre & Dance rehearsal policies are outlined clearly in the departmental handbook. Rehearsal expectations include:

1. Warm up your body and voice prior to rehearsal.
2. Arrive at rehearsal at least 5 minutes prior to your start time.
3. Be prepared to work at the top of rehearsal.
4. Wear appropriate rehearsal and/or character attire. Own and utilize required rehearsal attire, identified in the section labeled "Classroom Expectations".
5. No smoking, eating, or gum chewing.
6. No cell phone use or texting.
7. Stay in the rehearsal room. If you need to leave the rehearsal room for any reason, make sure you inform the stage manager or choreographer as to your whereabouts.
8. If for some unanticipated reason you are unable to be on time for rehearsal, please notify the stage manager immediately.
9. Check the callboard once daily and your department email two times daily.
10. Stay healthy. Keep your body and voice in condition for rehearsals and performances.
11. Attend all classes. Production is an extension of classroom learning. If you are unable to attend any class your director may not allow you to attend rehearsal that evening.
12. State all rehearsal period conflicts on your audition form. Conflicts not presented on the audition form <u>will not be granted</u> by the director.
13. Be present and professional at all dress/technical rehearsals and production related functions such as photo call, etc.
14. Attend and participate in production strike.

Note: Failure to rise to these expectations and the policies outlined in the department handbook will result in probation or removal from the BFA Musical Theatre Program.

N. OUTSIDE PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES

The city of Springfield has a vibrant Arts community and many exciting opportunities. However, as a BFA Musical Theatre candidate, the student's primary obligation is to the Program and its attendant department productions. Students must be clear of departmental obligations prior to auditioning for or committing to outside performance/production projects. It is highly recommended that students consult with their advisor before considering opportunities which might compromise their Program responsibilities, i.e., rehearsals, classwork, or productions.

We encourage you to see and support as much theatre as you are able, but please remember that you are a student here for only 4 years and we want to ensure that you are able to fully immerse yourself in the intensive training that is part of the BFA Musical Theatre Program at Missouri State University.

O. CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Specific expectations and policies for each performance class are outlined in the syllabus for the given class. All performance classes within the BFA curriculum share the following guidelines:

1. Attendance and Prompt Arrival:

Attendance and Prompt Arrival: All required BFA Acting performance classes share a uniform attendance/late policy. Regular attendance and on-time arrival are expected of all students. We're working together to form the building blocks of professionalism and industry success, and attendance is a keystone. Absences equal to the number of 6 contact hours (3 total classes) are permitted. There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. Any reason for an absence falls under the umbrella of three that are allowed: including but not limited to: illness, family crisis, family events, oversleeping, appointments with professors, university sanctioned events, external work taken, mental health days, jury rehearsals, showcase events, production commitments, etc. After three absences, the student's grade will be lowered by one full letter grade for each additional class absence. It is advised that students use their three allowed absences wisely.

In very exceptional/rare circumstances such as hospitalization/severe illness or a death in the immediate family, a student may appeal to the professor for an exception to surpass three absences. However, in such cases the student must present official documentation and a letter of explanation. Please be advised, a professor may ask for additional documentation. A request for documentation does not infer mistrust. In contrast, it's intended to create an equitable playing field where students are working with the same expectations and obligations. If an exception is approved, the professor may provide the student with an opportunity to make-up an absence(s).

Additionally, students may not enter the performance classroom late without prior approval. Two tardies will count as one full absence. A gentle reminder that a final grade of B- or above is required for advancement to the next level of acting classes/BFA Acting curriculum. It's important that students understand that the absence policy is not in place as a disciplinary measure. In contrast, it's intended to help build professional ethic, orient focus toward craft development, and to support a classroom environment where students consistently lend to the development of one another.

Sample Scenario:

Based upon his work, Tim has a 92% (A-) average in Acting Studio 1 (121).

If he has 3 absences- the 92% (A-) is retained.

If he has 4 absences- the 92% grade becomes an 82% (B-).

If he has 5 absences- the 92% becomes a 72% (C-). This means Tim cannot advance to Acting II (221)

If he has 4 absences and 2 tardies- the 92% becomes a 72% (C-). This means Tim cannot advance to Acting II (221)

2. Classroom Equipment and Space Maintenance: Students are expected to restore the space following all classes and rehearsals. This includes restoring all chairs, rehearsal furniture, props, and personal items. Food and drink are not allowed in classroom and rehearsal spaces. Water is allowed in an enclosed container. Always leave the space *better* than you found it.

3. Partnering and Scene Work: As a member of a training ensemble, you hold a responsibility toward the growth of not only your work, but also the work of others. Positive and responsible scene partnership is a key part of this responsibility. Partnering expectations and guidelines include:

a. Create a schedule in advance with your partner. Set a goal for each rehearsal.
b. Stick to the schedule. If something comes up and you absolutely must cancel, do so immediately via phone, and schedule a make-up rehearsal.
c. Be open and available to new experiences. Say "yes" to your partner's ideas and listen to their opinions.
d. Respect your partner's boundaries and allow your boundaries to be challenged, but never compromised.
e. Treat your partner in a professional and ethical way at all times.

4. Etiquette and Expectations for Students Taking Dance Classes: Dancers are expected to practice the following customary points of professionalism while participating in classes, rehearsals and performances:

a. Attend all classes and rehearsals. Come into the studio ready to work, concentrate and commit to the experience. It is not up to the instructor or choreographer to "make" you focus.
b. Being "on time" means arriving 5 to 10 minutes early.
c. Warm up before rehearsals, so that you are ready to go, physically and mentally.
d. Check the syllabus for each class for proper attire.
e. Keep track of due dates for assignments – these are noted in the course syllabus.
f. Once a class or rehearsal has begun it is inappropriate to leave the studio unless you have made arrangements with the instructor/choreographer.
g. It is inappropriate to correct other dancers in class. Inform the instructor or choreographer in private of any problems you have noted.
h. Incessant talking and other disruptive behaviors are unprofessional and may result in ejection from class or rehearsal.
i. It is unprofessional to offer choreographic suggestions, unless requested by the choreographer.
j. If circumstances occur that interfere with your ability to attend class and/or rehearsal, notify your instructor(s) and/or choreographer, preferably *before* the class/rehearsal begins.
k. Respect other people's property – in the studio, in the classroom, in the dressing rooms, in performance spaces.
l. Please do not eat in the studios. Keep water in a container that you can close.
m. When you leave the studio, please check that you have all your belongings; pick up any items that have dropped on the floor, so that the space is restored and clean.
n. Turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices *before* entering a studio or classroom for class or rehearsal. The "vibrate" setting…vibrates! Everyone hears the bzzzzzz! Not a good

thing! (When combining class and cell phones, silence is, indeed, golden!)

5. Sexual Harassment Awareness: Sexual harassment takes many forms, both conscious and unintended. Performance classes involve a good deal of partnering and body work. Please be mindful of the feelings and sensitivities of others. Harassment of any kind undermines the trust necessary in a successful ensemble atmosphere. Any inappropriate behavior—emotional, physical, or verbal—will be dealt with severely and will impact your status in the BFA Musical Theatre Program.

6. Scene Intimacy: Physical intimacy and physical violence in scene and classroom work must be clearly defined and agreed upon by all parties involved. A third party should be present at all rehearsals involving intimacy and/or physical violence.

7. Trust: A foundation of ensemble trust is one of the most essential ingredients for successful growth in a professional training program. In addition to noted forms of sexual harassment, the disintegration of trust wears many masks. Behavior that negatively impacts the trustful ensemble atmosphere of the classroom and the program at large is entirely unacceptable and will result in probation or removal from the BFA Musical Theatre Program.

8. Attire: Students are required to wear solid black clothing in all movement and voice classes. As appropriate to gender identification, students should own and be prepared to utilize the wardrobe noted below in both class and/or rehearsal settings in all ***acting*** classes.

- A corset. These can be found at many lingerie stores and online – you do not need to spend a lot of money. Ideally it is a front button or hook and a back lace-up, with boning. Something simple – this is not about finding a "sexy" corset, but finding a working corset!
- A rehearsal skirt. Floor length, medium fullness. Must fit over the corset.
- Character shoes AND ballet slippers.
- A dressy button-down blouse.
- Class solid black clothing.
- A suit coat that fits you well.
- A button down (collared) shirt.
- A suit vest that fits you well.
- A pair of tall boots with a stable heel (like a cowboy or riding boot).
- Hard soled dress shoes.
- Dress pants

cIn all ***dance*** classes, students should adhere to the dress code as outlined by each instructor. In general, you should own ballet, tap, jazz, and character shoes. You should have a selection of dance/athletic wear in solid colors that you are comfortable wearing as well as supportive undergarments - sports bras or dance belts, whichever is appropriate for your body. If you have never purchased or are unsure of how to wear a dance belt, click here for instructions.

- Rehearsals
  a. Everyone: Attire is at the discretion of the choreographer
- All Classes
  a. Everyone: No baggy pants or shorts, see-through dancewear, rubber/nylon pants, or exposed midriffs. No jewelry (including watches) or banana clips.
- All Classes and Rehearsals
  a. Everyone: Hair must be neatly tied back away from the face in either a bun or French braid. If hair is too short

for these styles, it must be tightly secured with either a headband or elastic for all classes.

b. Everyone: Appropriate layered clothing allowed during cooler seasons

*For further information about dance belts, please go to:
http://www.dancebelt.info/17165091C1D94631B10E/the-complete-guide-to-dance/

1. Scene Material: All students are challenged to expand their intellectual and artistic horizons while in the Program. One means of accomplishing this is by choices in scene material. However, it is never a faculty member's intent to mandate a scene that the student deems inappropriate in relation to their religious, social, cultural, or ethical framework. Students are highly encouraged to discuss relevant concerns with their course professor, BFA Musical Theatre Coordinator, or the Department Head.

2. Accompanist and Sheet Music Information: All Musical Theatre students will be expected to provide an accompanist when needed for private lessons, studio classes, area recitals, and juried presentations. The student will be expected to cover the expenses of hiring the accompanist (a list of available pianists will be provided). The amount of time required for an accompanist at private lessons will vary among the different voice instructors, but we usually recommend budgeting an average of $25-40 per week for each week of school to cover the costs. Each student will be expected to sign a contract with the accompanist regarding expectations and method of payment.

1. In addition, all Musical Theatre students will be expected to provide sheet music for their accompanist and voice instructor. This sheet music must be provided to the accompanist and/or voice instructor in either paper or PDF format, according to accompanist/voice instructor preference. The student will be expected to bring their sheet music for their songs to every voice lesson. If the sheet music is in digital form, then the student must be able to notate directly onto the document in order to record notes/adjustments from their instructor. That having been said, most voice instructors prefer that students work from a paper printout of the music. Students are expected to budget for and obtain sheet music in a legal manner, whether it be from the library, online sheet music distributors, or an instructor's collection. We respect copyright at Missouri State because we know that purchasing sheet music supports our composers and lyricists so they can continue to create new and exciting work.**Addressing Faculty:** BFA Musical Theatre students are to address faculty by title until they have successfully completed their first assessment. Any exceptions to this policy will come directly from your course instructor.

2. Classroom Privacy Policy: As noted, a foundation of ensemble trust is one of the most essential ingredients for successful growth in a professional training program. A core component in building a trustful training environment is maintaining a closed and private classroom environment. It is expected that all discussion of student work stays within the classroom setting and under the guidance of the professor. In relation, discussing (in any context including verbal, written, or social media) the coursework of your peers outside of the classroom is strictly prohibited. Violation of this understanding will result in probation or removal from the BFA Acting Program, at the discretion of Program faculty.

3. Cell Phones: Cell phone use, recording and texting during class is prohibited. Cell phones should be turned off before entering the classroom. The instructor will leave their personal device on in order to receive emergency alerts.

4. Recommendations for the First Day of Acting Class:

a. Check the location the day before to be sure you can find the studio. (This is also a good audition policy.)
b. Arrive 10 minutes early to class. Sit in front.
c. Be already seated, quiet, and ready to listen/work when your teacher arrives. (A teacher should never have to ask for your focus.)

d. Be prepared/dressed to move. No hats. Be 100% sure to follow any and all pre- determined attire guidelines for that specific class/session.
e. Have a copy of your class outline/syllabus (If provided) and all writing/note-taking materials.
f. No coffee or food. Water is generally permitted in a closed container.
g. Address the teacher by title until instructed to do otherwise.
h. Arrive without ego and defense mechanisms. Everyone is nervous and uncertain about their abilities in relation to those around them.
i. Be open and generous to those around you.
j. If asked to participate, jump in, "ready" or not.
k. Enjoy!

P. COURSEWORK & ACADEMIC ADVISING

In this Handbook is an outline of required course work and the semester breakdown for the BFA Musical Theatre candidate's 4-year and 3-year (transfer) programs of study. The MSU General Education Requirements are readily available in the undergraduate catalogue. Your advisor will be one of your core teachers, so please consult with them regularly in order to ensure that your class work is meeting your needs both artistically and academically. The BFA Musical Theatre Program is rigorous, but if you are able to follow the attached schedule, you will be able to complete your studies in 4 years. As BFA Musical Theatre students you have a distinct advantage in that your advisors are also faculty members in the Department of Theatre and Dance. Please make sure to consult with your advisor EVERY semester in order to ensure that you are completing your coursework in a manner that will allow you to graduate in a timely manner.

Please Note: As stated in this handbook on pp. 6 & 22, all Musical Theatre Students are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.5, and a grade of "B-" or above in all major- required courses. As a "C+" is technically passing, it is possible for a student to receive a "C+" in a major-required course and still maintain the 2.5 threshold. However, if a student receives a "C+" in any major-related course, that student will be required to retake the course they received a "C+" in and successfully complete it with a "B-" or better. Failure to do so will be grounds for automatic dismissal from the program.

Bachelor of Fine Arts Musical Theatre - Four Year Degree Plan

Updated Fall 2025

Semester One – Fall

Course Code	Course Name	Credit Hours
MUS 153	Voice	1
THE 121	Acting Studio I	3
THE 122	Tools of the Actor	3
DAN 100	Dance Fundamentals	2
THE 130	Script Analysis	3
THE 195	Practicum: Tech Crew	1
GEP 101	First Year Seminar	2
Gen Ed	General Education	3
	TOTAL	18

Semester Two – Spring

Course Code	Course Name	Credit Hours
MUS 153	Voice	1
THE 221	Acting Studio II	3
THE 226	Intermed Voice & Movement	2
DAN 230	Elementary Ballet	3
THE 195	Practicum: Tech Crew	1
MUS 100	Music Fundamentals (optional)	0
Gen Ed	General Education	6
	TOTAL	16

Semester Three – Fall

Course Code	Course Name	Credit Hours
MUS 253	Voice	1
MUS 137	Piano Class I	1
MUS 115	Musicianship for MT Performer I	3
MUS 280	Acting the Song	2
THE 321	Acting Studio III	3
DAN 225	Tap	3
THE 185	Foundations in CCM	1
THE 186	CCM Studio I	1
Gen Ed	General Education	3
	TOTAL	18

Semester Four – Spring

Course Code	Course Name	Credit Hours
MUS 253	Voice	1
MUS 298	Upper Division Status	0
MUS 116	Musicianship for MT Performer II	3
THE 421	Acting Studio IV	3
DAN 245	Elementary Jazz	3
THE 285	CCM Studio II	2
Gen Ed	General Education	6
	TOTAL	18

Semester Five – Fall

Course Code	Course Name	Credit Hours
MUS 353	Voice	2
MUS 343	Musical Theatre History I	3
THE 451	Auditions	2
THE 385	CCM Studio III	2
Tech Req.	Stagecraft/Costuming/Lighting	3
Gen Ed	General Education	3
	TOTAL	18

Semester Six – Spring

Course Code	Course Name	Credit Hours
MUS 353	Voice	2
MUS 344	Musical Theatre History II	3
DAN 323	Dance: Musical Theatre Styles	2
THE 386	CCM Studio IV (optional)	0–2
THE 495	Practicum: Performance	3
Gen Ed	General Education	7
	TOTAL	17

Semester Seven – Fall

Course Code	Course Name	Credit Hours
MUS 453	Voice	2
MUS 480	Senior Showcase	2
MUS 380	Practicum: Performance	3
THE 195	Practicum: Tech Crew	1
Gen Ed	General Education	6
	TOTAL	14

Semester Eight – Spring

Course Code	Course Name	Credit Hours
MUS 498	Senior Recital	2
MUS 480	Senior Showcase	2
THE 424	Dialects	1
DAN/MUS/THE Elective	Elective from DAN, MUS, THE	3
Gen Ed	General Education	6
	TOTAL	14

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

This major requires a department audition—see http://theatreanddance.missouristate.edu for more information.

This tracking sheet is meant to serve only as a guide. Please see your advisor early in your first program year and in each following semester to discuss your degree plan. All statements in this document concerning requirements, prerequisites, conditions or other matters are for informational purposes and are subject to change. Effective academic advisement is a partnership, with advisees sharing in the responsibility.

*15 total gen ed classes required

Bachelor of Fine Arts (comprehensive) - Three Year Degree Plan

First Semester (Fall)

Course	Cr. Hrs.
MUS 153 Applied Voice	1
THE 121 Acting Studio I	3
THE 122 Tools of the Actor	3
THE 130 Introduction to Script Analysis	3
DAN 130 Dance Fundamentals I Ballet	2
General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3
	Total Hours = 17-18

Second Semester (Spring)

Course	Cr. Hrs.
MUS 153 Applied Voice	1
THE 130 Introduction to Script Analysis	3
THE 186 CCM Studio Class I	1
THE 221 Acting Studio II	3
THE 226 Intermediate Voice and Movement	2
DAN 131 Dance Fundamentals II Modern	2
General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3
	Total Hours = 18

Third Semester (Fall)

Course	Cr. Hrs.
MUS 115 Musicianship for the MT Performer	3
MUS 137 Piano Class I	1
MUS 253 Applied Voice	1
MUS 298 Upper Division Applied Status	0
MUS 380 Musical Theatre Workshop	2
THE 250/255/260 Choose One Tech Course	3
THE 321 Acting Studio III	3
DAN 146 Dance Fundamentals Jazz Dance	2
General Education Course	3
	Total Hours = 18

Fourth Semester (Spring)

Course	Cr. Hrs.
MUS 116 Musicianship for the MT Performer	3
MUS 353 Applied Voice	1
THE 224 Stage Makeup I	1
THE 285 CCM Studio Class II	2
THE 421 Acting Studio IV	3
DAN 125 Dance Fundamentals Tap I	2
General Education Course	3
General Education Course	3
	Total Hours = 18

Fifth Semester (Fall)

Course	Cr. Hrs.
MUS 343 Musical Theatre History I	3
MUS 453 Applied Voice	2
MUS 480 Musical Theatre Workshop	2
THE 385 CCM Studio Class III	2
THE 451 Auditions	2
DAN 245 Elementary Jazz	3
General Education Course	3
	Total Hours = 17

Sixth Semester (Spring)

Course	Cr. Hrs.
MUS 344 Musical Theatre History II	3
MUS 453 Applied Voice	2
MUS 480 Musical Theatre Workshop	2
MUS 498 Senior Recital	2
THE 386 CCM Studio Class IV	2
THE 424 Dialects	1
DAN 323 Musical Theatre Dance Styles	2
GEN 499 University Exit Exam	0
General Education Course	3
	Total Hours = 17

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

This major requires a department audition—see http://theatreanddance.missouristate.edu for more information.
This tracking sheet is meant to serve only as a guide. Please see your advisor early in your first program year and in each following semester to discuss your degree plan. All statements in this document concerning requirements, prerequisites, conditions or other matters are for informational purposes and are subject to change. Effective academic advisement is a partnership, with advisees sharing in the responsibility.

*15 total gen ed classes required. The number remaining for each 3-year student will vary according to how many gen ed courses transfer to MSU.

SENIOR SHOWCASES

BFA Musical Theatre Showcase Opportunities

During the final year of residence in the Program, each BFA Musical Theatre student will prepare for a senior showcase. Under the guidance of the Musical Theatre Area Coordinator and Music Director, all qualifying graduating seniors will develop and perform in two professional showcases during the spring semester: the **Casting Director Panel Showcase** and the **Major Industry Showcase**, both held in New York City.

Students selected for participation must:

- Complete all BFA Musical Theatre curriculum requirements through seven semesters of training
- Successfully pass all annual BFA assessments
- Audition for both showcase events during the fall semester of senior year

1. NYC Casting Director Panel Showcase

This exclusive, closed-room event offers students the rare opportunity to perform for a panel of **top casting directors** who actively shape casting decisions on Broadway, national tours, major regional theaters, cruise ships, television, and streaming platforms. This curated experience allows for direct exposure to high-level professionals in an intimate setting, providing opportunities for callbacks, constructive feedback, and networking.

2. NYC Major Industry Showcase

Presented for a wide range of **industry professionals**, this event serves as a capstone for students' BFA training and is designed to highlight their individual strengths and marketability. Attendees include **casting directors, agents, managers, major theatre directors, composers, lyricists, and producers**, offering students exposure to the full spectrum of professional collaborators who drive the entertainment industry. This showcase not only helps students secure professional representation, but also facilitates meaningful relationships with decision-makers across multiple performance platforms.

3. Musical Theatre Virtual Showcase

The MSU MT Virtual Showcase provides an extended and nationally distributed platform for our graduating students. Featured on both the Actors Access website and Missouri State's designated Senior Showcase webpage, each student presents two contrasting songs—one in the Contemporary Commercial Music (CCM) genre and one in the Musical Theatre canon—carefully selected to highlight the unique qualities that will help secure them jobs and professional representation. This showcase is promoted across multiple social media platforms to ensure the widest possible reach and accessibility, allowing industry professionals who cannot attend in person to experience and connect with the graduating class.

3. LA BFA Stage/Screen Showcase

During the final year in residence, each BFA in Acting for Stage & Screen student must register for Advanced Actor's Seminar (Fall THE 489, 2 Credits), and Senior BFA Project (Spring THE 513, 2 Credits). Advanced Actor's Seminar/Senior BFA Project are defined as a "Performance project that demonstrates the student's mastery of skills received during Acting degree training…" As such, these two capstone classes are designed to mentor the graduating student toward successful completion of the showcase experience. Under the guidance of the course professor(s) and area coordinator, all graduating seniors will develop and perform in the showcase. Participation in on-camera performances and in local showcase activities is mandatory for completion of the BFA Acting degree. Performance in Los Angeles Showcase Week *requires an audition* and is limited to graduating students who have completed all the sequential BFA Acting track prerequisites to THE 498 and THE 513 (see below), and who successfully completed all required yearly BFA Acting for Stage & Screen assessments. It is important to note that selection for participation in LA Showcase Week is competitive, contingent upon the audition/interview process,

and is an opportunity that should not be taken lightly, or for granted by the student.

The showcase capstone experience aims to demonstrate the individual growth, talent, marketing skills, and capability for industry success present in each BFA in Acting for Stage & Screen participant, and also highlight their abilities for collaboration. LA Showcase Week is focused upon connecting graduating students to industry professionals, successful alumni, and in garnering professional representation.

Primary Los Angeles Showcase Week Goals include:

1. Assisting graduating seniors in garnering professional representation.
2. Helping graduating seniors develop vital professional relationships and industry connections, including MSU alums working in the industry.
3. Allow graduating seniors the opportunity to view first-hand the professional and logistical mechanics of a large industry center.
4. Provide opportunities for graduating seniors to participate in workshops with noted alums and high-level industry professionals.

The Los Angeles Showcase features the talents of the graduating class in the Acting Program. Graduating BFA Musical Theatre Students (and sometimes recent MSU BFA Acting alumni) may participate (via audition) with the approval and invitation of the acting faculty provided they have completed the curricular Acting 1-4 sequence contained in the BFA Acting Program and all required assessments. They must also have completed THE 522-Auditioning for the Camera or THE 524-Acting on Film.

SCHOLARSHIPS

BFA Musical Theatre students are eligible for scholarships in Musical Theatre, Theatre and Dance, and Music. Students are responsible for researching yearly application processes and due dates (generally March 1). To be considered, students must fill out a FAFSA and the university's General Scholarship Application through the financial aid office. Some scholarships may require additional application materials through the respective department as well as an audition. Students are encouraged to watch for announcements of scholarship auditions from each area. Recipients of scholarships will be notified in late spring. Please visit the Financial Aid, Theatre and Dance office, or Music office for information regarding selection/retention criteria and the amounts available under each designated scholarship.

Scholarships Specific to BFA Musical Theatre

SCHOLARSHIP	REQUIREMENTS
Virginia Cox-Bussey Musical Theatre Scholarships	Musical Theatre major; Sophomore level or higher; 2.5 departmental and overall GPA. Minimum award $1000. Audition required.
George W. and Bernadene B. Oliver Musical Theatre Scholarships	Musical Theatre Major; 3.0 GPA. Award amount variable.
Musical Theatre Program Scholarships	Currently awarded to seniors or upperclassmen in the program. Award amount variable.

Scholarships in Theatre & Dance (Musical Theatre students are eligible)

SCHOLARSHIP	REQUIREMENTS
Kathleen Turner	75 hours, GPA 3.0. Commitment to work in Professional World. Requires audition – two monologues
Irene Coger	50 hours, GPA 3.2. Special consideration for Acting majors.
Professional Performance	Senior, intending to enter performance market. Demonstrated skill as an actor. Enrolled in at least 12 hours / semester.
Bob Comer Memorial	Grad or Undergrad, first preference to student who worked in Tent Theatre box office, second to staff member during regular academic year.

Byrne Blackwood Scenic Design	30 hours, GPA 2.5. Student pursuing design. Preference to student who has worked in scene design during TENT season.
Ben Soto Costume	SO, GPA 2.5. Interested in costume design & construction.
Robert Gilmore Tent Theatre Founders	30 hours, GPA 2.5. Financial need and interest in directing.
Howard Orms Memorial	Enrolled (or having taken) THE 430: Dir I. Potential & desire to stage direct.
Chyrel Miller	Any academic level dance major. Could be FR. Awarded on basis of audition or participation in performance productions.
Mike McElhanney Shakespeare Award	Graduate or Undergrad, GPA 2.5, must carry 12 hours (undergrad) or 9 hours (grad)who deserves recognition for excellence in Shakespeare studies.
Sam and Adele Huber	30 hours, GPA 2.5. Renewable, given "with regard to financial need."

Ann Page	Major in theatre. Renewable, "regard for financial need."
Jean Jones Johnston	SO, GPA 2.5, financial need and first priority to a student from Hartsville or Mansfield.
Dennis Warning	Given for "outstanding contributions."
Joseph Cantlin	Given for "outstanding contributions."
Winnie Lawrence Clark Memorial	GPA 2.74, BS Ed. student in English or Speech and Theatre. Financial need considered.
Brad Ferguson	Awarded annually to a student that has worked in the Theatre Department's Costume Shop, and has a cumulative GPA of 3.0.
Ruth McKenney	Awarded to B.S.Ed. junior or senior with a minimum 3.0 GPA. Financial need.

Regents Scholarships and Out of State Waivers
In addition to the above scholarships, the Theatre and Dance Department allocates a yearly distribution of Regents Scholarships for BFA Acting students. Distribution amount and quantity is dependent upon the recommendation of area faculty. The university also distributes a number of out-of-state tuition waivers, based upon the recommendation of area faculty and the Department Head.

S. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND ACTOR TRAINING

The faculty in the BFA Acting for Stage & Screen Program at Missouri State University embrace the philosophy that ethical behavior is an essential ingredient toward a long successful career in the industry. We view it as our responsibility to consistently model positive ethical behavior for our students and hold the corresponding expectation that our students will integrate those same behaviors into their own outlook and work. Please consider the following:

Professional Ethics: Codes of conduct established by professionals to govern ethical behavior within that profession.
Accountability: The responsibility of moral agents for their own actions.
Altruism: An action in the interest or welfare of others.
Character: The totality of a person's disposition or personality.
Conflict of Interest: The clash of a public or formal obligation with a private (personal) need or interest.
Honesty: Honesty is the value of speaking truth and creating trust in the minds of others. This includes all varieties of communication, both verbal and non-verbal.
Integrity: is consistency of actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations and outcome.
Leadership: Always lead by example.
Moral Responsibility: Answerability or accountability for actions.

Pluralism: The tolerance of different and often incompatible views.
Pride: Taking positive ownership of all of your work and behavior.
Prudence: Sound judgment in practical affairs.
Stewardship: Moral responsibility for the management of one's life, the right of others, and the environment in which they live.

T. ACTING & PUBLIC AFFAIRS

As actors we hold the gift to publicly engage and inform our regional and national communities. In line with the Program philosophy on professional ethics, it is the belief of the Program that all faculty and students within be active stewards of the public affairs mission at Missouri State University. Missouri State University was granted a statewide mission in public affairs in 1995 when Senate Bill 340 was signed into law. The public affairs mission defines a primary way in which an education from Missouri State is different from that of other universities and one way by which we educate our students to imagine the future.

The MSU public affairs mission has three pillars:

1. Ethical Leadership
2. Cultural Competence
3. Community Engagement.

Ethical leadership
Goal: Students will articulate their value systems, act ethically within the context of a democratic society and demonstrate engaged and principled leadership.

Missouri State is preparing students for the future by helping them understand the ethical dimensions of leadership and take what they learn in the classrooms and use it to help solve problems and bring about change.

Cultural Competence
Goal: Students will recognize and respect multiple perspectives and cultures.

Missouri State works to build up students' cultural knowledge in several ways. Through study abroad programs, interaction with international students and the opportunity to study different languages, histories and religions, students broaden their horizons, help build relationships and bring about better competition for the future.

Community engagement
Goal: Students will recognize the importance of contributing their knowledge and experiences to their own community and the broader society.

Community engagement lets students branch out and see how the world is working through a different lens, giving them the opportunity to work with their communities and build up their ability to lead in their careers.

U. SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has become a vital professional tool for actors. However, it is also important to remember that you have no control over how your social media posts are shared and viewed. In that respect, social media can also have considerable negative consequences upon your life and early career. Some helpful practices that you are expected to adhere to include:

1. Avoid all posts that are negative in tone or outlook. You never know who may be viewing your posts, and no wants to work with a negative personality.

2. Keep your opinions professional, and never use social media to comment upon the work of others (either local or beyond), class-related items, or relationships with your faculty and/or peers.

3. Remember that your social media posts are a reflection of who you are. Are you so sure a casting director isn't viewing your images and posts to get a sense of you? Perhaps keep the content to a level Grandma would approve of.

4. Protect yourself. Social media is a goldmine for those preying upon young performers; financially, emotionally, and sexually. Protect yourself and your personal information at every digital angle.

5. Do not vent. Never use social media or public forums to vent your frustrations about a teacher, director, or fellow student. Furthermore, students may not engage in social media posts of any kind that the faculty determine to undermine the collaborative trust within the BFA in Acting for Stage & Screen Program.

6. This should go without saying, but do not engage in online harassment. Harassment comes in many forms, including but not limited to: Online bullying, unsolicited romantic/sexual communications, or inappropriately discussing another student in a public or private digital thread.

Students who do not adhere to these guidelines may be placed upon Program probation, have opportunities removed, or face immediate dismissal, at the discretion of the acting area faculty.

V. ACTING ON CAMERA CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

The Department of Theatre & Dance and The Department of Communications, Media, Journalism, and Film collaborate to house an 18-hour certificate program in Acting on Camera. The certificate prepares performers for the professional on-camera marketplace. Acceptance is based upon audition and application. Current students from any Missouri State degree program may apply.
https://theatreanddance.missouristate.edu/ActingOnCamera/default.htm

W. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & RESOURCES

1. Student Productions: The department houses and supports several student-run organizations that produce films public performances. These provide the Theatre & Dance students with additional opportunities to be a vital and exciting part of the MSU arts community.

2. Tent Theatre: Tent Theatre is a professional AEA summer Company (summer stock) housed within the Department of Theatre & Dance at Missouri State. Students participate in a wide variety of capacities including performing, stage managing, marketing, technical positions, house staff, and much more. All students are encouraged to audition or apply for participation in Tent Theatre.

3. Movement & Stage Combat Training: In addition to the movement and stage combat training present in the curriculum, The Department of Theatre and Dance at Missouri State has strong relationships with the Association of Theatre Movement Educators, Fight Director's Canada, the United Stuntmen's Association, and the Society of American Fight Directors. Many external training workshops are available to our students from these organizations.

5. Study Away: Study away is supported and encouraged by the faculty in the Program. However, due to the focused and sequential nature of the curriculum, it is recommended that students begin planning early, and with advisor

assistance. Ideally, planning should begin during freshman year and be executed during sophomore or junior year. Information can be found at http://international.missouristate.edu/studyaway/

6. Department of Communications, Media, Journalism, and Film: The Theatre & Dance Department has an excellent creative relationship with The Department of Communications, Media, Journalism, and Film. This relationship provides acting students opportunities to perform in a wide number of on-camera projects, including short and feature films. Acting students are encouraged to immerse themselves within the opportunities this relationship provides.

7. MSU Department of Theatre and Dance Mainstage Genre Rotation Schedule

Category	Guideline Dates	Est. Number of times this category repeats in 4 year rotation
Musical	Any period	8 (including 1 youth musical)
Youth Theatre	Any period	1
Dance	Any period	4
New and Recent Works	Scripts published in the last 10-15 years	2
Late 20th Century	1950s-1990s	1
Realism/Early 20th Century	Late 1800s-1950s	1
Restoration-Melodrama	1660-late 1800s	1
Shakespeare/Renaissance	1500-1660	2
Greek/Roman/Medieval	As Noted	1
Multicultural/Non-Western	Any period	1
OPEN (non-musical)	Any period	2

Schedule of Categories

2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
Musical	Musical	Musical	Musical

Open	Youth	Open	Multicultural/Non-Western
Musical	Musical	Musical	Musical
Spring Dance	Spring Dance	Spring Dance	Spring Dance
New and Recent	Realism/Early 20th Cent.	New and Recent	Late 20th century
Style	Shakespeare/ Renaissance	Restoration, Neoclassicism, Romanticism, Melodrama	Shakespeare/ Renaissance

8. Sample Events, Conferences, Unified Auditions, and Notable Training Workshops

SETC Professional Auditions
-For Professionals and Pre-Professionals, performers and designers, seeking year-round work.
September
www.setc.org

STAM-Speech and Theatre Association of Missouri
September
https://speechandtheatremo.org/

Shakespeare & Company
Provides Intensive and Summer Shakespeare Training
Summer on-site in Mass., Year-Round Various Locations
www.shakespeare.org

University Resident Theatre Association (URTA)
Unified Auditions/Interviews for MFA Programs
January
www.urta.com

Unified Professional Theatre Auditions (UPTA)
Unified Prof. Theatre/Dance Auditions, Interviews, Workshop/Training Opportunities
February
www.upta.org

Southeastern Theatre Association
Unified Auditions for Prof. Theatre/Dance work and Graduate Programs, Workshop/Training Opportunities. Design Interviews. Excellent for Musical Theatre!
Non-Professional Auditionees Must First Pass Regional Screening!
March
www.setc.org

Institute of Outdoor Drama Auditions
Unified Professional Outdoor Drama/Tech. Auditions, Workshop/Training Opportunities
March
Chapel Hill, NC
http://www.stahome.org/institute-of-outdoor-theatre

Fight Director's Canada
Combat Certification Workshop

Toronto, Canada
www.fdc.ca/

Bread and Puppet Theatre
Internship Program
Summer
http://breadandpuppet.org/

National Stage Combat Workshop
Workshop for Beginning and Intermediate Actor/Combatants. Testing Provided at Workshops End.
Society of American Fight Directors
July
Las Vegas, NV and North Carolina
www.safd.org

SAFD Fight Directors and Action Film International Workshop
Workshop for Fight Directors and Advanced Combatants.
August
www.safd.org

Association of Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE)
Provides Presentation, Workshop, & Training Opportunities in Theatre,
Both Practical and Scholastic.
August
www.athe.org

Association of Theatre Movement Educators (ATME)
Provides Presentation, Workshop, & Training Opportunities in Theatre,
Both Practical and Scholastic.
Summer
www.atmeweb.org

DellArte School of Physical Theatre
Training Workshops in Theatre Movement
Summer
www.dellarte.com

9. *SAMPLE Headshot/Resumes*

Click here

11. *SAMPLE* AGENT MEETING REQUEST

(Note: This is only a sample. Your version should highlight your individualized outlook and assets.)

HI [Name of Agent/Manager],

I am preparing to graduate from the BFA Acting for Stage & Screen Program at Missouri State University and will be

arriving permanently in Los Angeles on May 15th.

I've researched your (name of agency) and would like to invite you to an industry showcase featuring myself and 13 other young talented actors from MSU. We will be performing April 12th at 7:30pm at the Garry Marshall Theatre in Burbank. I am a talented, disciplined, and marketable performer ready to get to work.

I look forward to seeing you at the showcase and hope to meet with you in a more personal forum to discuss representation. In the meantime, please visit our showcase link!

http://theatreanddance.missouristate.edu/showcases/linkhere

Sincerely,

Your Name

12. ACTOR TOOL CHART - STAGE

Guiding Principles
1. Moment to moment discovery.
2. Illusion of the 1st time.

Meisner	
Time	
Place	
Relationship	
Want	
Why Want it?	
Why now?	

Shurtleff	
Moment Before	
Humor	
Opposites	

13. ACTOR TOOL CHART- FILM

Guiding Principles:
1. Moment to moment discovery
2. Illusion of the 1st time
3. Behave, don't act.

Moment Before	
Environment-Scope	
Relationship	
Strong Internal Want	
Active Silence/Listening	
Active Internal Discovery	
Humor	
Secret	

Feel Deeply	
Veil the Emotion	

14. ACTOR TOOL CHART- COMMERCIALS

Guiding Principles:

1. Think as a business-person.
2. Product first.

What is the problem?	
What is the solution?	
What IS the product?	
Who is the market audience?	
Who *exactly* are you speaking to?	
What *type* of energy is required to sell it?	
Product First.	
Positive Choices.	
Sensuality Sells.	

Common Commercial Formats

Naturalism	
Heightened Realism	
Spokesperson	

Fantasy/Fashion	

15. ACTOR TOOL CHART- TV COMEDY

Guiding Principles
1. Moment to moment discovery.
2. Illusion of the 1st time.

Time	
Place/Scope	
Relationship	
Want	
Why Do I Want it?	
Why now? Immediacy!	
Moment Before	
Level of Self-Abandon	
Scene Rhythm	
Takes	
Bold Choices	
Play the Situation (not the laugh)	

16. TOOL CHART FOR FILMED SELF-SUBMISSIONS

What your auditor is looking for.
1. Are you right for the role?
2. Who are you?
3. Can you act the role?

Goal: Does your self-submission allow your auditor to clearly note the above three <u>without distraction</u>?

Logistical considerations that help the auditor remain undistracted from what they need to see.	
Sound Quality	Is the sound quality good and full? Is it free of white noise and intrusive environmental sounds, allowing the viewer to focus on your performance?
Light Balance	Is the lighting appropriately balanced? Does the viewer have full visual access to you, allowing them to focus on your performance?
Neutral Background	Is your background neutral, allowing the viewer to focus upon you without environmental distractions?
Quality of File	Is your file quality high enough to allow the viewer to view your work without being distracted by graininess or fisheye distortion?
Slate?	Is a slate requested? If so, is your slate friendly, allowing the viewer a sense of who you are when not inside of character?
Reader Placement	If using a reader, are they slightly off camera, thus allowing the viewer full visual access you without you directly addressing the camera?
Point of Focus	If not using a reader, is your eye line where the reader would be?
Directions	Are you following instructions regarding your slate, framing, file type and size, the chosen medium for sharing content, and file labeling?
Framing	For stage drama, television/film, framing should be in medium-closeup unless otherwise instructed, or the physical life of the submission requires a broader frame

17. ACTOR TOOL CHART- COLD READS

Guiding Principles:
1. Moment to moment discovery.
2. Illusion of the 1st time.
3. Strong, positive choices.
3. Head out of the page.
4. Effective Tracking technique.

Time	
Place/Scope	
Relationship	
Want	
Why Do I Want it?	
Why now? Immediacy!	
Moment Before	
Scene Rhythm	
Bold Choices	

18. ACTOR TOOL CHART- VOICE OVERS

Guiding Principles
1. Welcome the listener for a full sensory connection.
2. Illusion of the 1st time.

Time	
Place	
Relationship	
Want	
Why Want it?	
Why now? Immediacy!	
Moment Before	
Scene Rhythm	
Character Pitch & Volume	
Bold Choices	
Character Physicality	
Lifting the End of Lines (Commercial)	

19. Sample Outside of Class Rehearsal Schedule

This is a sample schedule for rehearsing outside of studio class with your assigned scene partner. Your actual schedule may vary in content, depending upon the goals and learning tools provided in the specific studio class. Excellent partnering is crucial to learning the craft of acting. As such, it is vital that one be a reliable partner, always aware that their own work-ethic impacts the growth of others.

Rehearsal One: Table Reads (45-60min)
Rehearsal Two: Table Reads/Meisner Questions (45-60min)
Rehearsal Three: Environment (45-60min)
Rehearsal Four: Environment/Get on Feet. (45-60min)
Rehearsal Five: Relationship (45-60min)
Rehearsal Six: Wants (45-60min)
Rehearsal Seven: Moment Before (45-60min)

Rehearsal Eight: Run/Work (45-60min)
Rehearsal Nine: Run/Work (45-60min)
In-Class Performance

19. TIPS FOR PROFESSIONAL HEADSHOT SESSIONS

Practice Sessions: Many emerging actors wait until they have immediate need to have their first professional headshots taken. This is a mistake on many levels. Headshots are a *key* marketing tool in your early career, so the process shouldn't be rushed, and you shouldn't enter as a "headshot novice." Getting good shots, like good acting, requires letting go of self-awareness. It takes time and practice. Bad self-awareness in a shoot leads to images that appear forced, stiff, and don't let the real you resonate. Get comfortable in front of the camera through practice sessions with peers, or other means you have at your disposal, so that when you arrive for that vital shoot you are free and engaged in front of the camera.

Choosing a Photographer: It's great to use your friends and novice photographers for *practice* sessions. You learn together, and you begin to let go of inhibiting "on camera" self- awareness. However, it is vital to use a professional HEADSHOT photographer for your working headshots. These days, it's pretty easy for anyone to buy an expensive digital device and take some headshots, and sometimes they get lucky with an image or two. This is not the route you want for your professional images. In addition to knowing how to take images that offer consistent quality, a professional, *industry centered* headshot photographer also understands the industry and market changes in headshot needs and trends. Remember, this is a KEY marketing tool, and needs to be a professional priority. Be sure to examine the work of potential headshot photographers. Some are better than others, some more appropriate for distinct markets, and some have their own sense of photographic style that may or may not be right for you. Make sure the photographer's work aligns with your marketing needs *before* you book. It can also be helpful to meet with the photographer in advance, so you can see if you have a good rapport with them. This will help you feel more comfortable on the day you take your headshots.

Makeup: You may or may not choose to engage a makeup artist. Make your decision thoughtfully. If using one, actors must communicate respectfully but clearly with the artist. The makeup artist should not be left to "brand" you or guess your needs. Never put that responsibility in the hands of the makeup artist. Be clear about your look and needs. The actor needs to feel empowered and responsible for the makeup outcome.

Photographer Communication: The same applies to the photographer. A photographer should not have to "brand" or guess an actor's needs. The best photos come when the actor is very clear about photographic wants and needs and is free of inhibiting self-awareness in front of the camera.

Marketing Considerations: Many emerging actors aim for an "all purpose headshot," and there are times when that may be successful in starting career communications. But, in general it can be an ill-advised strategy. Again, the headshot is a key marketing tool. In order to create and engage a marketing tool you must know your target "customer." What is the specific purpose of your headshot? Headshot trends vary by region and professional purpose. For example, your commercial headshot may not suit your needs accordingly when submitting to a regional theatre, and the headshot you submit in an attempt to garner a commercial agent will likely vary from your NY stage shot. As a result, actors aiming at an "all-purpose headshot" sometimes end up with a no purpose headshot. If you can only afford to have one look reproduced, set clear goals and strategize what your first marketing target will be and aim your headshot squarely at it.

Know Your Target Market: Set specific marketing goals. Many actors think "I just want to go to NYC or LA and work." Of course, you do, but getting to work takes a marketing strategy, with purpose in each career step. Look at yourself. Research your chosen market. Create a timeline and list of articulated goals. What is your first

goal? Is it getting a commercial agent? Is it being cast in an Equity stage production? Is it booking daily work on a daytime drama? If you haven't articulated your first steps, it's unlikely you'll climb the staircase. These choices heartily inform your headshot process.

Before the Shoot: Get a good night's sleep. Stay away from caffeine and alcohol in the 24 hours prior, as both dehydrate. You want to be feeling healthy, relaxed, and confident entering your session.

Clothing: Actors frequently ask, "What should I wear at my session?" The first primary answer is, "Who are you? How are you going to market YOU?" You've already focused the marketing goal of your shots, so choose attire that aligns YOU with that. With that in mind, the focus in the shot should be you and not your clothing. It's *generally* advisable to stay away from busy patterns, logos, and colors that wash you out. Most photographers recommend choosing a color that compliments your eye color. One consistent common denominator in variances in headshot market applications is that they should always look like YOU. Your vibe, your age, your personality. Whether at a commercial audition or an AEA open call for King Lear, the person they see in the headshot should look like the same one that walks through the door.

The GLAM Factor: Emerging actors commonly "over-glam" in their early rounds of headshots. It's an easy mistake. It feels glamorous and we love the attention those beautiful shots bring us from our friends and family. This is a fatal marketing error. Your friends and family are certainly not the target audience of your headshots and cannot book you auditions. Put all your focus in your session upon looking like you in your shots- from clothing selection, to photographer communication, to image selection- it should all be pointed at capturing the real you as respective to your target early career goals.

Some Helpful Thoughts for The Shoot:
1. Bring a friend. As a courtesy, touch base with the photographer first, but it's generally great to bring along a good friend. Having a friend present will contribute to your fun and ease, creating an environment that helps you get your best shots.
2. Inform your shots. This is vital. Your shots have to be informed from the inside. Working in front of a still camera is acting and acting requires filling moments from within. If the photographer asks for more warmth, that just doesn't mean smile bigger. It means make a choice from within that radiates warmth and a connection to your partner, the camera. Yes. That camera is your acting partner.
3. Eyes, eyes, eyes. This relates to informing your shots. If your shots are informed, your eyes will be engaged in your shots. If not, you'll end up with "dead eyes" that don't resonate interest and connection to the person viewing your shots.

Selecting Images: With digital photography, photographers fire images faster and in greater number than they used to. Many do no pre-sorting before passing the images to you. In relation, it is extremely important that the actor learn to choose images with purpose and clarity and with the guidance of a professional- yep, not friends or social media. If a photographer shoots consistently during a shoot, some transitional images may indicate changes in camera focus. In relation, an actor *must* view potential images at full scale. There is no reason EVER for an actor to ever have an image from a professional session that is slightly out of focus. Take time to choose. Again, seek the advice of a professional. Do NOT seek advice from friends and family in choosing your headshot. DO NOT post it on social media to see how many likes each image gets. This will confuse your selection process with opinions of uninformed parties who have a view of you that may not coincide with your goals or marketing strategy.

Reproductions: If in need of hardcopy headshots, professional repros are a non-negotiable. Use a reliable reproduction source that specializes in performer headshots. Reproductions should have a border. Name in border. Walgreens or Walmart glossies are never acceptable.

20. SOME DIGITAL RESOURCES FOR THE ACTOR

Digital Resources

iActor	http://www.sag.org/iactor-online-casting
Backstage	http://www.backstage.com
CallSheet	http://www.backstage.com/bso/call-sheet/index.jsp
Actors Access	http://www.actorsaccess.com
ArtSearch	http://www.tcg.org/artsearch/
Dept. Webpage	http://theatreanddance.missouristate.edu/
BFA Acting Showcase	http://theatreanddance.missouristate.edu/showcases/LA.htm
Voice-Over	https://voice123.com

Union/Organizational

SAG/AFTRA	www.sagaftra.org
Actors Equity	www.actorsequity.org
Am. Guild of Variety Artists	www.agvausa.com/
Assoc. Theatre Movement Educators	www.atmeweb.org/
Voice & Speech Trainers	www.vasta.org/
Society of Am. Fight Directors	www.safd.org
Fight Directors Canada	www.fdc.ca
Am. Council on Exercise	www.AceFitness.org

Headshots

Jeff Nicholson (LA)	www.theshotphotography.com
Melissa Hamburg (NY)	www.melissahamburg.com/
Adriana Tomeu (OK)	www.adrianatomeu.com

21. SOME PUBLICATIONS FOR THE ACTOR

Acting

Improvisation for the Theatre by Viola Spolin (Improv)
Theatre Games for the Classroom by Viola Spolin (Improv/Games)
An Actor Prepares by Stanislavski
Building a Character by Stanislavski
Creating a Role by Stanislavski
On Acting by Sanford Meisner
Respect for Acting by Uta Hagen
Free to Act by Mira Felner (Good Beginning Text)
Audition by Michael Shurtleff (Audition)
How to Stop Acting by Harold Guskin (Support Reading)
Irreverent Acting by Eric Morris (Advanced)
No Acting Please by Eric Morris (Acting)
Acting Onstage and Off by Robert Barton (good exercises)
Advanced Acting by Robert Cohen (Style)
On the Technique of Acting by Michael Chekhov
To the Actor by Michael Chekhov
The Art of Acting by Stella Adler
At Work with Grotowski by Thomas Richards

The Incredible Indoor Games Book (Youth Games)
Acting in Musical Theatre: A Comprehensive Course by Rocco Dal Vera
Lessons for the Professional Actor by Michael Chekhov
Respect for Acting by Uta Hagen
A Challenge for the Actor by Uta Hagen

Acting Styles
Freeing Shakespeare's Voice by Kristin Linklater (Voice/Style)
Acting in Shakespeare by Robert Cohen (Shakespeare)
Style: Acting in High Comedy by Maria Aitken (Comedy)
Secrets of Acting Shakespeare by Patrick Tucker (Great Read)
Style: Acting in High Comedy by Maria Aitken (Comedy)
Acting with Style by John Harrop
Playing Shakespeare by John Barton
Acting in Restoration Comedy by Simon Callow

Analysis
Backwards and Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays by David Ball

Acting for the Camera
Acting in the Million Dollar Minute by Tom Logan (Commercial)
Acting for the Camera by Tony Barr (TV/Film)
Acting in Commercials by Joan See

Stage Combat
Fight Directing for the Theatre by J. Allen Suddeth
Actors on Guard by Dale Girard
Swashbuckling by Richard Lane

Voice
Freeing the Natural Voice by Kristen Linklater
The Right to Speak by Patsy Rodenburg
Voice and the Actor by Cicely Berry
The Use and Training of the Human Voice by Arthur Lessac
The Actor and the Text by Cicely Berry

Movement
How to Learn the Alexander Technique by Barbara Conable
Team Building Through Physical Challenges by Donald Glover
The Actor and His Body by Mitz Pisk
The Alexander Technique: A Skill for Life by Pedro de Alcantara
The Alexander Technique: Freedom in Thought and Action by T. Miller and D. Langstroth
Awareness Through Movement Moshe Feldenkrais
The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints by Anne Bogart & Tina Landau
The Thinking Body by Mabel Todd
Human Movement Potential by Lulu Sweigard
Body Movement: Coping with the Environment by Irmgard Bartenieff

Career
Unfu*k Yourself: Get Out of Your Head and into Your Life by Gary John Bishop
Acting is Everything by Judy Kerr LA

LA Access by Richard Saul Wurman (current ed.)
NY Access by Richard Saul Wurman (current ed.)
The Courage to create by Rolo May
The Artists Way by Julia Cameron
Directory of Theatre Training Programs
Regional Theatre Directory
Summer Theatre Directory
Acting Professionally: Raw Facts about Careers in Acting by Robert Cohen
Fodor's Guide to New York City
Fodor's Guides (NYC, LA, Chicago)

Faculty Written Books
Performing Disability: Staging the Actual, Dr. Telory Davies
Evangeline Drowning (play), Kurt Gerard Heinlein
Green Theatre, Kurt Gerard Heinlein
Clifford Odets and American Political Theatre, Dr. Chris Herr
Giving Voice, The Power of Theatre for Positive Change, Dr. C.J. Maples
Auditioning for Pre=Professional Programs, Kurt Gerard Heinlein

https://theatreanddance.missouristate.edu/_Files/AuditioningForPre-ProfessionalActingAndMusicalTheatrePrograms.pdf

X. LETTER OF AGREEMENT

Acknowledgement of the Policies Presented in the BFA Acting Handbook

I (Please print name) _____ have read the BFA for Musical Theatre Program Handbook in full. I understand that any questions I have regarding policy may be addressed through inquiry to the Area Coordinator before this letter is signed and submitted.

By signing this letter, I acknowledge that I comprehend and choose to abide by all the BFA Acting for Stage & Screen Program policies contained within the Handbook, and that all exceptions must be requested in writing from the Acting Area Coordinator, who will review and respond to the request accordingly. I also acknowledge that failure to abide by area guidelines will result in probation or suspension from the BFA in Acting for Stage & Screen Program at Missouri State University.

Signature_____

Date_____

New students, please submit a signed copy of this letter to the BFA Acting Area Coordinator by the end of the first week of Fall classes.