



Jury/Portfolio Review (JPR) Handbook

BFA Acting

(Revised 4/12/19)

BFA Admission & Retention Policies and Procedures.....	2
General JPR Overview	4
BFA Acting Jury Schedule and Instructions:	
Intake Interview	5
Baseline Skills Jury	6
BFA Application Jury	8
Retention & Progress Juries	10
Professional Readiness Jury	11
Exit Interview	13
BFA Probation Policy	14

WKU Department of Theatre & Dance

BFA Admission & Retention Policies & Procedures

Mission Statement and Purpose of Jury/Portfolio Review

The WKU Department of Theatre & Dance Jury/Portfolio Review process (JPR) serves as a means to:

Determine a student's readiness for admission into, and retention in, the BFA Performing Arts degree program

Provide the department faculty regular opportunities to assess a student's potential for success in their chosen discipline, both in the BFA program, and after graduation

Provide regular opportunities for BFA students to practice presenting themselves in a professional manner to the assembled faculty, and to address issues related to their educational goals, future development, and long-term career plans

Assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the WKU Department of Theatre & Dance BFA Performing Arts degree

NAST Standards

The Western Kentucky University Department of Theatre & Dance adheres to the standards for admission and retention at the BFA level outlined by the National Association for Schools of Theatre (NAST):

The Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree is the initial professional degree in the performing arts. Its primary emphasis is on the development of skills, concepts, and sensitivities essential to the performing arts professional. In any of the roles as creator, scholar, or teacher, the performing arts professional must function as a practitioner who exhibits technical competence, broad knowledge of performing arts, sensitivity to artistic style, and an insight into the role of the performing arts in the life of humankind.

Evidence of these characteristics and potential for their continuing development is essential for the awarding of the Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. Upon completion of the Western Kentucky University BFA in Performing Arts degree program students will have:

- Experienced significant and meaningful engagement in the creative/interpretive processes of performing arts event production
- Achieved significant technical mastery in at least one of the BFA concentration areas (Acting, Musical Theatre, Theatre Design & Technology)
- Experienced significant and meaningful engagement with the history, theories, and aesthetics of the performing arts, and demonstrated a critical sense of how they inspire and inform their own work
- Demonstrated their competency with all of the above through evaluated performance and/or portfolio review

Criteria for Acceptance into the BFA in Performing Arts

All students matriculating at Western Kentucky University who state an intention to pursue a BFA in Performing Arts will first be enrolled under the status “seeking admission” to the major. Students are typically required to formally apply for admission into the BFA program in their 3rd semester as a Department of Theatre & Dance major, though special arrangements may be negotiated to accommodate students transferring into the Department of Theatre & Dance after completing semesters in other programs. To be eligible to apply, you must have:

- Earned at least 30 college credits from an accredited college, university or post-secondary conservatory
- Maintained an overall cumulative GPA of at least 2.5
- Demonstrated exceptional talent, commitment, self-discipline, reliability, and a reasonable likelihood of success in at least one disciplinary concentration of the BFA program;
- Participated fully in the department’s JPR process

Criteria for Continuation (Retention) in the BFA Program

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

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

Appeals policy and procedure

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

JPR (JURIES) OVERVIEW

All students seeking admission into the BFA Performing Arts degree program, and ongoing retention in that program, are required to fully participate in the department's **Jury Portfolio Review (JPR) program**, which provides regular opportunities for the faculty to assess a student's readiness for admission into the BFA Performing Arts degree program, their ongoing fitness for retention in the BFA program, and likelihood of success in their chosen discipline after graduation.

The JPR program also provides regular opportunities for BFA students to practice presenting themselves in an audition/interview context, and to address issues related to their overall educational goals and long-term career plans at the programmatic level with a faculty panel.

Finally, the JPR program provides the department faculty regular opportunities to assess the outcomes and effectiveness of the BFA Performing Arts degree program, as evidenced by the knowledge and skills demonstrated by students during their JPR reviews.

All BFA Acting majors are required to do the following juries, scheduled by semester, in this order:

- Intake Interview (First semester)
- Baseline Skills Jury (Second semester)
- BFA Application Audition (Third semester)
- Retention and Progress Check Juries (Scheduled as needed)
- Professional Readiness Jury (Semester before graduation semester)
- Exit Interview (Graduation semester)

After each of these juries the faculty will award one of four ratings:

- Pass with Distinction: Indicates an exemplary jury; no further action is required.
- Pass: Student has met all the requirements; no further action is required.
- Pass with Conditions: Requires a student to work with their advisor to address the specific issues that resulted in this rating.
- Unsatisfactory: Results in student being placed on probationary status* in the BFA program and requires the student to work with their advisor to address the specific issues that resulted in this rating. *A second consecutive Unsatisfactory JPR rating will result in being dropped from the BFA program.*

** The JPR probation policies and procedures are outlined in an Appendix at the end of this handbook*

BFA Acting jury schedule and instructions

First Jury: Intake Interview.

This first session occurs at the end of your first semester as a major in the department, and isn't really a "jury" at all. It's simply an informal "get to know you" interview that gives you an opportunity to discuss your overall educational and career goals at this stage with the faculty, and ask any questions you may have about the department and/or the BFA program.

Preparation:

- **Complete a [Personal Learning Goals Inventory](#).**
This is a simple online questionnaire, found [here](#) on the [Department web site](#), in which you respond to a few questions about your educational and career goals.
- **Download a [WKU Department of Theatre & Dance Student Production Résumé](#) from the [Department web site](#), fill it out, and email it to your advisor by the published deadline.** This is not the same thing as a typical acting résumé, it's a specialized form, formatted by semester, that charts your overall involvement in our department productions over time -not just acting roles. Don't worry if you don't have any production stuff to fill in just yet for this first jury; that's quite common, and we don't expect first semester students to have much list this first time out. But we expect you to submit one anyway, to demonstrate that you were able to find and use this form.

Presentation

Show up on time, dressed as you would for an audition or job interview, and be ready to discuss your educational and career goals with the faculty. That's it. And don't worry if you don't know just yet exactly what you want to do with your life, or even with your college education; that's not a problem. Just be ready and willing to honestly share your current thoughts about those things.

Feedback

Since this JPR session is a simple "get to know you" conversation, whatever feedback the faculty wishes to share will happen during the interview.

Second Jury: Baseline Skills Jury-

This jury typically occurs* at the end of semester following your Intake Interview semester. The care and effort you put into preparing for this jury will weigh significantly on the faculty's assessment of your relative maturity and readiness to audition for the BFA Program. You should begin preparing for this jury early in the semester, starting with a discussion with your advisor about finding and preparing your Monologue.

The feedback you get on this performance jury will give you some idea of what the faculty expects of you, and how to best prepare for a successful BFA Application jury, which under normal circumstances, typically happens at the end of the semester immediately following the semester in which you present this Baseline Skills Jury (typically at the end of your 3rd semester at WKU).

** This schedule may differ for transfer students. Check with your advisor if you have any questions about this.*

Preparation

- Update your [WKU Department of Theatre & Dance Student Production Résumé](#) and email it to your advisor by the published deadline.
- **MONOLOGUE:** Find, analyze, memorize and rehearse the presentation of one 60-90 second contemporary Monologue (1960 or later). While you are encouraged to consult with your advisor about how to look for appropriate jury material, you are ultimately responsible for finding and preparing this Monologue. Download a [Monologue/Song Analysis Form](#) from the [Department web site](#), fill one out for this Monologue and email it to your advisor by the published deadline.

Presentation

For this jury you should arrive *with time to spare for properly warming up*, dressed as you would for an audition, with some means of taking notes during the feedback session that follows your presentation. When your turn comes, you will be called into the jury room and instructed where to wait for the “go ahead” from the faculty. When given that nod, “slate” your presentation by announcing the name of the play from which your Monologue was taken, the name of the playwright, and the name of the character you will be performing. (ie: “today I’ll be performing one of Biff’s Monologues from Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*”) and perform your Monologue. When you’ve finished you’ll be invited to sit for a few minutes for a brief verbal feedback session.

Feedback

Your performance will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Professional appearance and attitude
- Level of personal energy and confidence
- Comprehension of the text and context
- Complete, accurate memorization
- Vocal presence and “fit” to the room
- Resonance and/or quality of vocal production
- Diction and/or quality of speech
- Physical presence: postural alignment, stability and “sure-footedness”
- Integration of vocal, facial/emotional and physical (gestural) performance qualities
- Authenticity and consistency of characterization
- Focus and concentration
- Clarity and dramatic value of your acting choices (goals, tactics, stakes etc.)

At the conclusion of your presentation the Acting faculty will give you some immediate verbal feedback on all of the above; how you assimilate this feedback will play a significant role in their assessment of your readiness to apply for the BFA program at your next jury *so you should be ready to take notes during this feedback session*. This is also an opportunity for you to ask any questions or discuss any issues you wish the faculty in attendance.

Third Jury: BFA Application & Audition

This jury functions as your audition for official admission into the BFA Acting Concentration, and typically takes place the semester immediately following your Baseline Skills Jury semester. This is your opportunity to demonstrate your readiness for full admission into the BFA Acting degree program. The faculty will base their assessment of that readiness on the following criteria:

- The quality and timeliness of your application documents.
- The level of self-reflective insight expressed in your application essay.
- The quality of your Monologue performances.
- The level and quality of your engagement in the department so far.
- The discipline, artistic growth and maturity you've demonstrated so far.
- Your GPA (A minimum 2.5 GPA is required for admission into the BFA program).

You should begin preparing your application materials early in the semester, starting with a discussion with your advisor about finding and preparing your Monologues, and to establish a schedule for submitting drafts of your BFA Application documents for review and feedback prior to officially submitting them .

Preparation

- **BFA APPLICATION FORM:** Download a [BFA Application form](#) from the [Department web site](#), complete it and email it to your advisor by the published deadline.
- **Update your WKU Department of Theatre & Dance Student Production Résumé and email it to your advisor by the published deadline.**
- **MONOLOGUES:** Find, analyze, memorize and rehearse two 60-90 second contemporary Monologues (1960 or later). Download a [Monologue/Song Analysis Form](#) from the [Department web site](#), fill one out for each monologue and email them to your advisor by the published deadline. *PLEASE NOTE: Unless specifically instructed otherwise at your Baseline Skills Jury, you may not repeat the same Monologue you presented at that jury.*

Presentation

Same as for your Baseline Skills jury, "slateing" both Monologues.

Feedback

Immediately following your presentation the faculty may ask some brief, interview style questions about your decision to apply for the BFA Program, but there will be no discussion of your actual jury performance at this point. Instead, the following BFA application status procedures will kick in:

BFA Application Status Notification & Procedures

No later than the second week of the semester following your application jury you will be notified of the status of your application. When you receive this notification you should make an appointment with your advisor to discuss your application jury performance in more detail, and your options going forward as they relate to the outcome of your application.

If your application has been accepted, the “Seeking Admission” status will be dropped from your degree program, and your advisor will determine your jury schedule going forward.

If you are denied admission into the BFA program, your options are:

- Retain your “Seeking Admission” status for the BFA and reapply the next semester
- Change your degree program status to another major/minor program of your choice

If you do not take action on one of the above options, your status will automatically be changed to a BA in Theatre and you will be required to declare a minor (or double major).

If you choose the first option (reapplication the next semester) but are subsequently denied admission into the BFA program a second time, you may formally petition the faculty for one final chance to apply. However, you should discuss this with your advisor before making this decision.

Retention and Progress Juries

Following acceptance into the BFA Program you will be required to periodically demonstrate ongoing academic/artistic growth and maturity commensurate with our BFA Program retention standards; the mechanism for this is the Retention and Progress Jury.

These R&P juries may or may not occur every semester; your individual R&P jury schedule will be determined by the faculty on a semester-by-semester basis. For example, if the faculty feels that your BFA Application Jury was strong enough to merit a “semester off” you may be allowed to skip a semester before scheduling your first R&P jury. On the other hand, if the faculty feels you would benefit from immediate further work on your jury presentation skills, your first R&P jury may be scheduled for the next consecutive semester. Another possible scenario; a student with high visibility in productions and performance showcases in a given semester may not be required to schedule a jury that semester, where another student who has not been as obviously involved may be.

Finally, you should note that along with your continued personal academic/artistic growth, the quality of your citizenship as a member of the department will also be taken into account when assessing your fitness for retention in the BFA Program. Your department as a “company member” of the WKU Department of Theatre & Dance, on AND off stage, matters. Things like how you handle your crew responsibilities, your behavior in rehearsal, and/or your role as a mentor to incoming students will be taken into account.

Preparation

- **Update your *WKU Department of Theatre & Dance Student Production Résumé* and email it to your advisor by the published deadline.**
- **MONOLOGUES:** Find, analyze, memorize and rehearse three 60-90 second contemporary Monologues (1960 or later). Download a [Monologue/Song Analysis Form](#) from the [Department web site](#), fill one out for each monologue and email them to your advisor by the published deadline. *PLEASE NOTE: Unless specifically instructed otherwise at a previous jury, you may not repeat a Monologue you've previously presented at jury.*

Presentation

Same as for previous performance juries, “slateing” each monologue you intend to present.

Feedback

There may or may not be formal feedback sessions immediately following your R&P Juries; that will be determined on a case-by-case basis. One way or another, you should make an appointment with your advisor to discuss your jury performance in more detail.

The Professional Readiness Jury

The Professional Readiness Jury typically happens the semester immediately preceding your last planned semester as a student in the department, and gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your readiness to compete as an early career actor. You should approach this jury as you would an actual professional audition/interview. Your presentation will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Professional deportment and demeanor
- Level of personal energy and confidence
- The quality of your chosen material
- Suitedness of your chosen material for you personally
- Comprehension of the text and context
- Complete, accurate memorization
- Vocal presence and “fit” to the room
- Resonance and/or quality of vocal production
- Diction and/or quality of speech
- Physical presence: postural alignment, stability and “sure-footedness”
- Integration of vocal, facial/emotional and physical (gestural) performance qualities
- Authenticity and consistency of characterization
- Focus and concentration
- Clarity and dramatic value of your acting choices (goals, tactics, stakes etc.)

Preparation

- **Update your *WKU Department of Theatre & Dance Student Production Résumé* and email it to your advisor by the published deadline.**
- **PROFESSIONAL RÉSUMÉ:** Bring two copies of your professional résumé with you to your jury. (*The department will retain one copy.*)
- **MONOLOGUES:** Prepare five monologues for presentation, in any combination of the following types: contemporary, classical verse, serious, and comic. Prepare a neatly typed list of all the monologues you’ve prepared, including the title of the monologue*, the play from which it comes, and the playwright. ***Bring 10 copies of this list with you to distribute to the faculty.*** Unlike previous juries, in this case you are allowed to include previously performed Monologues in this list of five, and Song/Monologue Analysis forms are not required for this jury. **Monologues typically do not have assigned titles, so you make up a title yourself, ie: “The Dog Speech”, or The Breakup Speech etc.*

PRESENTATION

You should treat this Professional Readiness Jury as a professional audition; arrive dressed appropriately, with time to spare to properly warm up. When you're brought into the jury room, hand your monologue lists to the faculty, take your place on stage, and wait for the "go ahead" from the faculty. When given that nod, "slate" the monologue you've chosen to present, and perform it. Following that monologue, the faculty will choose which of the remaining four monologues on your list they would like to see.

FEEDBACK

There may or may not be a formal feedback sessions immediately following this Professional readiness jury; that will be determined on a case-case-basis. One way or another, you should make an appointment with your advisor to discuss your jury performance in more detail.

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

The Exit Interview

The Exit Interview is a “bookend” interview to the Intake Interview you did in your first semesters in the department, and typically happens at the end of your last planned semester in residence. Like the Intake Interview, this not a performance jury, but a conversation with the faculty.

Preparation

- **Update your *WKU Department of Theatre & Dance Student Production Résumé* and email it to your advisor by the posted deadline.**
- **Print out one copy of your professional résumé and bring it with you to your jury session.** The department will keep this copy.

Presentation

Just show up on time ready to discuss your “next step” plans as a graduate of WKU Department of Theatre & Dance. Please note: this does not mean you have to know exactly what they are! Just be ready and willing to honestly share your current thoughts.

Feedback

Like your intake interview, his JPR session is a conversation, this one designed to give you an opportunity to discuss your post-graduation plans, to reflect on your time in the department, and ask the faculty any questions you have as you head out to the next chapter of your life.

APPENDIX: BFA PROBATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Departmental Probation Policy

Any of the following may result in a BFA student being placed on departmental probation:

- Failing to attend all or part of their end-of-semester JPR.
- Failing to maintain a overall cumulative GPA of 2.5 or better.
- Receiving a rating of “Unsatisfactory” Jury rating.

Upon the first incident of the above, a student may be placed on **preliminary probation**. A student on preliminary probation may continue with any roles, design, or stage-management assignments assigned prior to the advent of their probation, but may not take any further such assignments unless authorized by their advisor to do so. The goal is for students to work with their advisors in order to address whatever issues caused their probationary status, and to only take on production work when their advisor is convinced that a) it will not negatively impact their overall performance and b) they have the necessary work ethic and maturity to successfully complete the assignment along with their other curricular commitments. Students may also be required to meet with the faculty during the semester and/or present a mid-semester JPR in order to fulfill the terms of their probation. Failure to fulfill any requirements may result in a second semester on preliminary probation or, if the faculty deems it appropriate, full probation (see below).

Failure to honor the terms of preliminary probation may result in being placed on **full probation**. This means that they are automatically barred from doing any production work (including performance) beyond what is required to complete their Prod assignment (if applicable) in their probation semester. This means students cannot be cast in any shows that semester, and roles they have already been assigned will be recast. Similarly, designers or stage managers will be replaced on any shows they had previously been assigned to. Students may also be required to meet with the faculty during the semester and/or present a mid-semester JPR in order to fulfill the terms of their probation. Failure to fulfill any requirements may result in a second semester on full probation or, if the faculty deems it appropriate, dismissal from the BFA. Please note: probation semesters need not be consecutive; once a student has been placed on preliminary probation, a second probationary offence *in any semester* may result in full probation.

Students who commit further probationary offences after spending a semester on full probation may be dropped from the BFA. A student who has been dropped from the BFA program may request permission to re-apply after discussing the matter with their advisor. Students in this situation should work closely with their advisor to prepare their appeal.