



Jury/Portfolio Review (JPR) Handbook

BFA Musical Theatre

BFA Admission & Retention Policies and Procedures.....	2
General JPR Overview	4
BFA Musical Theatre Jury Schedule and Instructions	
Intake Interview	5
Baseline Skills Jury	6
Specific Feedback Breakdown.....	8
BFA Application Jury	9
Retention & Progress Juries	11
Professional Readiness Jury	13
Professional Readiness Jury	15
BFA Probation Policy	16

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, with a grade of C or better in all classes included in your BFA (seeking admission) program of study
- 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 Musical Theatre 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 Musical Theatre 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 in which you respond to a few questions about your educational and career goals. [Available here.](#)
- **Download a *WKU Department of Theatre & Dance Student Production Résumé* from the [T&D Department website](#), 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 and song.

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).

Because this is a **Baseline Skills Jury**, your evaluation will be based on your potential for success in the BFA program, as well as your current ability to demonstrate competence and mastery of skills gained in classes such as Voice & Movement, Voice Lessons, Music Theory, Level One Dance classes, Prod I, Design I, and so on. You will also be evaluated for the quality of your work in your coursework and engagement with our departmental productions, and on department citizenship.

Preparation

- Update your WKU Department of *Theatre & Dance Student Production Résumé* and email it to your advisor by the published deadline.
- Download a *Monologue/Song Analysis Form* from the [T&D Department website](#), fill one out for your monologue one for your song, and email them 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.
- **SONG:** Prepare one ballad or medium-tempo song from the American musical theatre. *The song must not be longer than three minutes.* For this first jury, you are advised to present a song you have worked on with your voice teacher.

Presentation

DANCE: Attend the group Musical Theatre Dance call, at which you will perform a dance audition combination learned on the spot. This dance call is separate and in addition to your individual scheduled jury, and usually takes place in the morning. You are expected to warm-up on your own, which means you will need to arrive early. You'll also be expected to wear dance audition attire: for women, that means leotard/tights with hair secured and make-up; for men, form fitting shirt/jazz pants/dance belt.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have a conflict with this dance call, such as a final exam, please let your advisor know immediately so you can be excused, or other arrangements can be made. Otherwise, failure to attend the dance audition will affect the overall impression you make at this first jury.

ACTING/SINGING: For this jury you should arrive *with time to spare for properly warming up*, dressed as you would for an audition, with well-marked sheet music for the accompanist in hand, and some means of taking notes during the feedback session that follows your presentation.

When your turn comes you will be called into the room, where you will have a moment to speak with the accompanist to establish tempo and performance order (you may decide which to lead off with with, your monologue or your song). After you've finished speaking with the accompanist, you'll take your place on stage and wait for the "go ahead" from the faculty. When given that nod, announce your monologue and song in the order you plan to present them. For the monologue, state the name of the play from which it is taken, the name of the playwright, and the character you will be performing. For the song, state the title of the song, the name of the musical and the composer and lyricist. (ie: "Today I'll be performing one of Biff's monologues from Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*," and "Ten Minutes Ago" from Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*). Then perform your pieces.

Feedback

You may receive both written and verbal feedback immediately after your group dance call, and again after your individual jury; you should have a pen and paper in your music binder to take notes on any verbal feedback you get. After you receive feedback, you will have the opportunity to ask questions or discuss your education.

Specific Areas for Feedback/Discussion

DANCE: Here you will be evaluated primarily on technique from dance classes, but also on the quality of your work in your performance coursework and engagement with our departmental productions. Here are areas that faculty may mention in their feedback:

- Professional appearance
- Reproduction of movement patterns and sequence
- Ability to complete clean body lines with strength and flexibility
- Alignment, Placement
- Articulation of feet
- Movement integration and effective use of the core
- Spatial awareness, rhythmic accuracy, use of energy
- Performance quality and facial expressions

MONOLOGUE AND SONG: You will be expected to draw on the skills you've acquired in your coursework so far, as well as knowledge gained from watching or participating in productions and master classes at WKU. Here are things faculty may mention in their feedback:

- Professional appearance (clothing/makeup)
- Level of personal energy and confidence
- Memorization depth
- Vocal presence and "fit" to the room
- Quality of vocal production and voice technique
- Diction and/or quality of speech (including issues such as lisps, KY dialect, etc.)
- Physical presence: postural alignment, stability, and "sure-footedness"
- Quality of movement (if any)
- Eye focus
- Sustained concentration, characterization consistency
- Comprehension of the text, knowledge of the play your monologue comes from
- Clarity and dramatic value of your acting choices (goals, tactics, stakes, etc.)
- Ability to sustain accurate pitch
- Basic understanding of lyrics
- Quality of song/monologue cut
- Attention to musical detail and how it informs dramatic choices
- Musical phrasing and style
- Understanding of musical theatre singing style

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 Musical Theatre degree 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 .

The faculty will base their assessment of that readiness on the following criteria:

- The quality and timeliness of your application documents. Late applications will result in the BFA Application being denied/deferred one semester.
- The level of self-reflective insight expressed in your application essay.
- The quality of your dance, song and 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).

Preparation

- **BFA APPLICATION FORM:** Download a *BFA Application form* from the [T&D Department website](#), 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.
- Complete a *Monologue/Song Analysis Form* for each monologue and song, and email it to your advisor by the published deadline.
- **MONOLOGUE: Prepare one 60 second monologue.** Though you will not be timed, it is expected that you will stay as close to 60 seconds as you can Do not repeat monologues you've used in other juries or for KTA/SETC auditions.
- **SONGS: Prepare two *contrasting songs** from American musical theatre. The songs combined **must not exceed five minutes**. Applicants may make internal cuts in order to meet the time limitation. Do not repeat songs used in other juries. For this jury, you should present at least one song you have worked on with your voice teacher. The othe other song may be something you have worked on by yourself. You will have the opportunity to rehearse both songs with an accompanist. Failure to meet with the accompanist will be discussed at your jury, and could affect your Audition outcome.

*Examples of contrasts might be:

One song is up-tempo, one song is ballad tempo

One song is legit, one song is belt/mix

One song is dramatic, one song is comic

One song is newer (written after 1980), one song is older (before 1980)

Presentation

DANCE: Performance of a dance audition combination learned on the spot during the dance call, which takes place at a different time than your jury, usually in the morning. The dance call is part of your audition. Barring exceptional circumstances, failure to attend will result in non-acceptance to the BFA. Follow guidelines outlined in the **BASELINE JURY** description.

ACTING/SINGING:

As with the **Baseline Skills Jury** you should show up as scheduled with time to spare, dressed appropriately (as for an audition) all required paperwork and well-marked sheet music for the accompanist in hand, including a notebook and pen to take notes with during the interview portion of the session. You should also be well warmed up and ready to perform.

When your turn comes, you will be called into the room, where you will have a moment to speak to the accompanist before beginning your jury. You may decide the order in which you present your songs and monologue. Announce the titles of your songs and monologue, following the guidelines outlined in the **BASELINE JURY** description. When you've finished, you'll be invited to sit for a few minutes for a brief verbal interview session.

Feedback

There will be no immediate feedback regarding your actual jury performance. Instead, you will receive a letter notifying you of the status of your application. After you receive your notification, make an appointment with your advisor to discuss your jury performance in more detail and receive feedback. After you receive this notification you are welcome to seek out feedback from individual faculty members. Please see the criteria for Monologue/Song/Dance in the Feedback section of the previous Baseline Skills Jury section of this handbook to see specific areas where you will be assessed on your progress, plus your improvement on specific areas recommended by the faculty after your **BASELINE SKILLS JURY**, as well as in your classes and production work.

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.**
- **PROFESSIONAL RÉSUMÉ:** Bring two copies of your professional résumé with you to your jury.
- Complete a *Monologue/Song Analysis Form* for each monologue and song and email it to your advisor by the published deadline.
- **MONOLOGUE: Prepare one 60 second monologue.** Though you will not be timed, it is expected that you will stay as close to 60 seconds as you can. Do not repeat monologues you’ve used in other juries or for KTA/SETC auditions.
- **SONGS:** For each Retention and Progress Check Jury you will be expected to perform **two** songs. Total time of both songs must be less than 5 minutes. You may make internal cuts to songs for the sake of time. Do not repeat songs you’ve used in other juries or for KTA/SETC auditions.

Presentation

DANCE: Performance of a dance audition combination learned on the spot, during the dance call, which takes place at a different time than your jury, usually in the morning. The dance call is part of your audition. Barring exceptional circumstances, failure to attend will result in an Unsatisfactory performance rating.

ACTING/SINGING: As with previous juries you should show up as scheduled with time to spare, dressed appropriately (as for an audition) all required paperwork and well-marked sheet music for the accompanist in hand, including a notebook and pen to take notes with during the feedback portion of the session. You should also be well warmed up and ready to perform.

In addition, you should consider these Retention and Progress Juries as practice for “real world” auditions by thinking about how best to present yourself in terms of clothing, song and monologue choices, preparation, and behavior. You should be thinking in terms of building your audition “book” with the material you select for juries, which requires thinking about the kinds of roles you could play right now.

Feedback

Feedback from the faculty will continue to focus on the Monologue/Song/Dance bulleted lists given in the introduction to juries section of this handbook, but may also cover areas/issues you were told to address in your last jury and things you are working on in classes and lessons, in addition to professional considerations. The faculty may also discuss your overall performance in the program including your classes, productions, auditions, etc. See detailed information listed in the descriptions for Baseline Skills and Application Juries

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 singing actor in the field. You will be assessed on the quality of the material you choose to present, how well-suited that material is to you, and the quality of your presentation.

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.)
- *Song/Monologue Analysis forms are not required for this jury.*
- **SONG/MONOLOGUE LIST:** Prepare a neatly typed list of all the songs and monologues you've prepared for this jury. For monologues include the name of the play, character and playwright. For songs include the title of the song, the musical or larger work it is from, and the composer and lyricist. Bring 8 copies of this list to your jury. (*If you desire you may assign a title to your monologues for clarity ie: "The Dog Speech"*)
- **MONOLOGUES:** Prepare TWO contrasting monologues. At least one of these must be new, not used in any previous jury. You will pick the first monologue, the faculty may ask to hear a second. Traditional contrast is comic/serious, but you may also use contemporary/classic. *Song/Monologue Analysis forms are not required for this jury.*
- **SONGS:** Prepare FIVE songs, at least two of which must be "new" – not used in any previous jury. You will pick the first song and the faculty will choose the second one. You may be asked to sing part of a third song. **Each** of the songs must also have an 8-bar, 16-bar, and 32-bar cut ready to sing.

PRESENTATION

DANCE: Performance of a dance audition combination learned on the spot, during the dance call, which takes place at a different time than your jury, usually in the morning. The dance call is part of your audition. Barring exceptional circumstances, failure to attend will result in an Unsatisfactory performance rating.

ACTING/SINGING: You should treat this Professional Readiness Jury as a professional audition. You will be assessed on the material you choose, and how well-suited that material is to you at this point in your career. You will be evaluated on how well you

have prepared your pieces, how well you present yourself, and whether you have gained mastery of the skills being taught in the classes you've taken. Your work will be measured against your previous juries, productions, and classes, but you will also be measured against your potential. In other words, have you fulfilled the promise of your talent? Have you done your best to become the best performer you can be at this time?

FEEDBACK

Feedback from the faculty will continue to focus on the Monologue/Song/Dance bulleted lists given in the introduction to juries section of this handbook, as well as areas/issues you were told to address in your last jury, things you are working on in classes and lessons, in addition to professional considerations. The faculty may also discuss your overall performance in the program including your classes, productions, auditions, etc. See detailed information listed in the descriptions for Baseline Skills and Application Juries

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. As with the Intake Interview, this not a performance jury, but rather 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

As with the Intake Interview, all you need to do is should show up as scheduled with time to spare, all required paperwork in hand, ready to discuss your “next step” plans as a graduate of WKU Department of Theatre & Dance. We will discuss ways you can stay connected with the department.

Feedback

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

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 (Jury or Dance Call).
- Failing to maintain an 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 may not be cast in any shows that semester, and roles they have already been assigned may be recast. Similarly, designers or stage managers may be replaced on any shows they had previously been assigned. 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.