

Millikin University School of Theatre & Dance

Updated 08/2021

This handbook lays out many of the policies and practices currently in use by the Millikin University School of Theatre & Dance (SOTAD). This is presented as a resource for students, faculty, and staff within SOTAD. It is not an exhaustive document, nor is it fixed. Policies and practices will adjust based on time and circumstance. It is possible that in exceptionally rare circumstances, an exception to stated policy may be made. These exceptions may only be made at the discretion of the Director of the School of Theatre & Dance.

We highly recommend that, in addition to this document, students familiarize themselves with the Millikin University Bulletin, which can be found online at <https://millikin.edu/academics/registrar/course-catalog>.

Questions about the content of this handbook can be directed to any member of the faculty, or to the following people:

Interim Director of the School of Theatre & Dance
Administrative Assistant, School of Theatre & Dance
Coordinator of Design & Production
Coordinator of Performance Programs
Coordinator of Marketing & Recruiting
Coordinator of Academic Programs

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The below list of policies speak to general departmental ethos.

1. In order to become a professional working artist, one must learn how to maintain a balance between their work and the other responsibilities of life. One can easily become absorbed in a show or a project and let other considerations slip. Neglecting necessary responsibilities is imprudent and unrealistic training for a life in the theatre/film/television industries. An artist must be organized in order to budget their time and energy and arrange priorities. Production is a vital part of training, but only part. If a student concentrates only on performance or production, they are missing vital steps in training, which are offered in the classroom setting under the guidance of experience and skilled professionals. If the faculty learns that a student is failing to meet classroom responsibilities, or falling behind academically in general, they may take disciplinary action, including removal from production responsibilities.
- 2.

C.

Syllabi are created by SOTAD faculty to meet the expectations outlined above, and also to make individual, course expectations clear to students. SOTAD faculty may define policies in their syllabi that address issues including, but not limited to: absences, tardiness, missing/late work, professional work, grading, details for final exams, and preparation. It is the responsibility of faculty to provide syllabi to students. It is of equal responsibility that students read the syllabi and ask questions if clarification is needed. Faculty must submit syllabi to the Director and Dean at the start of each semester.

2. Each student is assigned a faculty advisor within the School of Theatre & Dance for assistance in developing a Plan of Study, and for continued advice and counsel throughout the student's years at Millikin. The student and advisor will work collaboratively to develop the student's Plan of Study, which will be reviewed and revised throughout the student's undergraduate years. This advising is an integral and continuous part of the educational process.
 - a. Academic advising is a proactive, on-going relationship that pairs guided discovery with intentional strategic planning to result in enhanced persistence, connection to appropriate campus and community resources, and development of career goals.
 - b.
 - i. and their academic histories and be available to partner with the advisee to develop and revise the plan of study, incorporating career goals, skill development, and personal and professional development as part of the student's University experience.
 - ii. and progression policies of the student's chosen field(s) of study.
 - iii. (such as Student Development, Center for Academic and Professional Performance, Writing Center, Math Center, tutoring services, Health Clinic, Counseling Services, etc).
 - iv. and FERPA requirements.
 - v. (if applicable) and report issues through available technologies.
 - vi. and development on advising.
 - c.
 - i. with the assigned advisor, to include regular communication.
 - ii. of the chosen field(s) of study.
 - iii. Present specific questions, prepare for class scheduling sessions by creating a tentative schedule, and monitor own progress, keeping in mind the requirements, plan of study and career goals.
 - iv. regarding personal and academic growth, and take advantage of university resources beyond the faculty advisor (including Secondary Student Development Advisors, Center for Academic and Professional Performance, Writing Center, Math Center, tutoring services, Health Clinic, Counseling Services, etc).

- d. Every student will meet with their advisor on or around Advising Day every semester. During this meeting students will work with their advisors to determine what classes to take the following semester. Students must be sure to do the following for Advising Day:
- i. When your advisor emails and asks you to schedule your advising meeting, respond quickly. Some advisors post sign-up sheets on their office doors, while others use an online tool like SignUpGenius. Make sure to write down the time that you have signed up for.
 - ii. Prior to your advising appointment, do the following:
 1. This can be found at <https://millikin.edu/academics/cas/theatre-dance/resources/current-students/school-forms>.
 2. This can be found through MU Online. If you don't know how to do it, ask your advisor.
 3. This can be found at <https://millikin.edu/advising/resources>. If you come to your advising appointment without a completed scheduling worksheet, your advisor may choose to send you away.
 - iii.
- e. Although your advisor provides information regarding course selection, you are ultimately responsible for ensuring that all of your degree requirements are met.
- i. , communicate that interest to your advisor as early as possible so that you can plan your schedule carefully, as not all classes are offered every semester.
3. a. is the authoritative document for your academic requirements and standards.
- i. is the edition that governs your course of study.
 - ii. you may choose to adopt the new catalog or stay under the current one. You may not adopt only a portion of a new catalog.
 - iii. at <https://millikin.edu/academics/registrar/course-catalog>.
- b. Remember that to earn a Millikin degree you need to complete more than your SOTAD classes. Beyond those courses required for your major, do not lose track of things like:
- i.
 - ii. (128 for Musical Theatre students)
 - iii.
4. Academic accommodations are available to students with documented disabilities. To access services, students must self-identify and provide appropriate documentation to the Center for Academic and Professional Performance

(CAPP), located on the third floor of the University Commons. For further information, please contact that office.

with Administrative Assistant for the School of Theatre and Dance at the main office desk.

1. Any student currently enrolled at Millikin University, regardless of major, is welcome to audition for a School of Theatre & Dance production.
 - a. Requirements to audition may vary based upon degree program and year.
 - i. are required to participate in Unified Auditions every semester they are enrolled in the program, with the exception of those who are studying abroad.
 1. are required to present a monologue, sing, and participate in the dance call every semester they are enrolled in the program.
 2. are required to present a monologue, sing, and participate in the dance call during their first and second years in the program. Juniors and seniors may petition out of the singing and dancing portion of Unifields. The deadline for petitions is during the semester prior to the audition and is announced to students via email with ample time to prepare the petition. Petitions should be sent by email to the Coordinator of Performance.
 - ii. are strongly encouraged to participate in Unified Auditions, but are not required to do so. These students are also strongly encouraged to act, sing, and dance at auditions, but may elect only to perform the monologue if they so choose.
 - b. Students on academic probation are ineligible for casting. This applies to Mainstage season, Studio Series, Pipe Dreams Studio Theatre productions, or any production/event that requires a faculty advisor or is funded by APO.

2. Students cast in a mainstage production must enroll in the TH 315 course for one credit. Students will receive a syllabus for this course by the end of the first day of rehearsal. While the mainstage syllabus changes somewhat for every production based on needs, among the consistent policies found in that syllabus are the following:
- a. — including completion of all required duties— in order to receive a passing grade.
 - b. :
 - i. before or during rehearsals or performances.
 - ii. during rehearsals or performances.
 - c. Any student may be placed on probation for any of the below reasons. If probationary instances continue, the faculty member may choose to remove the student from the show and award a failing grade.
 - i. Two issues of lateness to rehearsal, costume fittings, load-in, etc.)
 - ii. One issue of failure to attend a scheduled rehearsal, costume fitting, work call, etc. without being excused by the faculty director.
 - iii. Two conversations with faculty regarding failure to prepare, including memorization, preparation for work call, or attitude.
 - iv. One issue of disrespecting other artists on the production, equipment, artistic process, or facilities.
 - v. Inability to maintain satisfactory progress in course work outside the production.
 - vi. It is a top priority to maintain one's physical and mental health. If it is evident that one is unwell, faculty will work with students to obtain the resources they may need. Removal from a production may be a result for safety purposes.
- 3.
- a. Measurements and fittings are requested by the costume shop and scheduled by the stage manager. Once scheduled, you should consider a fitting the same as you would a rehearsal, meaning you cannot miss it. In the event an emergency occurs necessitating you missing your fitting, you must contact the Costume Shop Supervisor at 217-424-6372.
 - b. Always arrive on time.
 - c. Come to your costume fitting having recently showered and wearing the appropriate undergarments.
 - i. Students coming from dance classes should bring bra/underwear with them and you will be given a moment to change before your fitting begins.
 - ii. Performers arriving with issues of basic hygiene or without appropriate undergarments will be asked to leave and will be considered as missing their fitting.
 - d. Performers with shoulder-length or longer hair should come prepared to arrange it up from their necks.

- i. _____ as “close up” (photographer shoots from onstage) or “wide” (photographer shoots from the house).
 - ii. _____ to photographers and will make sure the list is posted in the dressing rooms and backstage for cast and crew.
 - c. _____
 - i. _____. As able, SOTAD will hire a professional photographer to document the show.
 - ii. _____. Production staff are also permitted to take photos with their own personal cameras.
 - d. _____ The stage manager will oversee the photo call.
 - i. _____ Photo call shall last no more than one hour.
 - ii. _____ They will be the first person to shoot a particular setup. If a shot is intended as a portfolio shot rather than an archival shot, the professional photographer should be clearly informed. For archival shots, the professional photographer is free to request adjustment of light levels to ensure adequate illumination for the photo.
 - iii. _____ ask them kindly to step out of the way after they finish their photo.
 - iv. _____ state “Clear!” in a full voice so that the stage manager is ready to move on.
 - e. _____ Photo call will be scheduled either after final dress or after one of the performances, depending on the production and calendar. _____ cast members may _____ say hello to friends and family in the lobby after the show— remaining in costume— before returning to participate in photo call.
- 9. _____ Mainstage productions may not rehearse in excess of 20 hours per week.
 - i. _____ This policy softens during Tech Week, when the length of the show and the needs of tech may dictate later evenings. No one may remain in the theatre past midnight.
 - ii. _____ Directors may choose to keep actors later when they enter the “T wo W eek” period, designated as the period between load-in and strike. During this period, director may elect to keep performers until midnight.
 - iii. _____ SOTAD rehearsals run according to the Actors’ Equity Association break schedule, requiring one 5-minute break every hour or one 10-minute break every hour-and-a-half. Time will be kept by the stage manager, and directors may not ignore these break schedules.
- 10. _____ At the discretion of the director, a production may elect to employ a student Assistant Director and/or Dramaturg. These positions are awarded through an application and interview process.
 - a. _____ These assignments are prioritized for students in the BA program.
 - b. _____
 - i. Shortly after the announcement of the season, faculty will email all of SOTAD inviting applications.

- ii. Students will submit these applications, following the criteria laid out in the email, to the listed faculty member.
 - iii. Faculty and directors will collaborate to make assignments. Sometimes this will involve directors conducting interviews with possible ADs and dramaturgs.
 - c. By the nature of these positions, responsibilities will change based on a show-by-show basis. In general, however, the responsibilities are as follows:
 - i. Attend all design meetings the semester prior to production, participate in auditions/casting, attend all rehearsals, attend all production meetings the semester of the production. The AD will work closely with the director, with tasks including taking notes, contributing ideas, and possibly staging scenes or working with understudies.
 - ii. Attend all design meetings the semester prior to production, provide dramaturgical research to the company as requested, attend selected rehearsals during the rehearsal period. The dramaturg is also responsible for writing a short program note and for preparing a lobby display outside the theatre.
 - 1. The student dramaturg will be paired with a faculty mentor for the production, with whom they will check in occasionally. This mentor will also be there to assist that student at their request.
 - d. Both the AD and Dramaturg should enroll in TH 315 and receive one credit for their work on the show. They should earn this academic credit the semester of the production.
 - e.
11. At the discretion of the choreographer, a production may elect to employ an assistant choreographer. The process for selecting or appointing an assistant choreographer will vary based on the needs of the production. Students interested in such a position should contact the Faculty Choreographer and/or Director for the production as early as possible. In some cases, a call for proposals may go out to the entire student body. If selected before casting is complete, assistant choreographers may or may not be eligible for casting, depending on the level of involvement

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1. Students in the BA, BFA Acting, BFA Musical Theatre, and BFA Stage Management programs are required to complete three credits of TH 101: Theatre Practicum in order to graduate.
 2. 2. Students will complete Practicum preference forms at the beginning of the semester and submit them to the Production Manager. The Production Manager will make ú

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1. Students regularly design on the mainstage season.
 - a. goes to Junior and Senior-level students in the BFA Design & Production major, as these courses fulfill requirements for the degree. Although, any student is eligible to apply for a position.
 - b. include having worked as an assistant designer under a Millikin faculty designer and having completed the application for a design position.
 - c. should meet with the Coordinator of Design & Production in order to secure an assistant position in a timely manner.
 - d. in December of the previous school year. Once student designers are assigned, remaining roles are filled by faculty and guest designers.
 2. Students regularly hold leadership positions on productions for the mainstage season for SOTAD.
 - a. goes to students in the BFA Design & Production program, as they are required to fulfill two of these assignments each semester.
 - i. are open for interested students.
 - ii. should communicate their interests to the Coordinator of Design & Production.
 - b. shortly after Advising Day.
 - c. vary depending on the production, but they could include:
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
 - vi.
 3. Students in the BFA Design & Production program who wish to take on additional theatrical work outside of their assigned season responsibilities must submit an Extra Project Form to the design faculty. The faculty will consider this application and make a decision in the best interests of the student. BFA Design & Production majors may not take on additional theatrical work without permission from the design faculty.
 4. Students in the BFA Design & Production program are required to participate in periodic portfolio reviews. These are mandatory, and students may not opt out of them.
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1. Students enrolled in dance courses are required to wear attire appropriate to those courses. Proper shoes and dance wear should be considered as required educational materials for courses, akin to textbooks. There is no need to purchase new dancewear/shoes if the student already owns these items. It is possible to

find shoes at a range of prices. Purchasing the most expensive option is not

- b. a student with a valid space reservation may be “bumped” out of that space due to SOTAD or university needs. These occurrences are rare and regrettable, but they do happen from time to time.
- c. We use 25Live to reserve spaces in SOTAD. Space reservation requests must be made at least 72 hours in advance.
 - i. Do not stick a sign on the door, “claim” a space on social media, etc.
 - ii. for class or scene rehearsals.
- d. Anyone using a SOTAD space is completely responsible for leaving the space in an orderly, clean condition. Always aim to leave a room better than you found it. Failure to follow this procedure may result in the withdrawal of permission to use the facilities.
- e.
 - i.

- i. must also communicate this to the Coordinator of Performance. Employment doesn't excuse participation in Unified Auditions (see below).
 1. must petition the Coordinator of Performance.
 - ii. must also communicate this to the Coordinator of Design and Production.
 - iii. must also communicate this to Production Manager.
 - iv. must communicate this information to their advisor and to their faculty for the term. Additionally, they must communicate this information to the heads of their respective degree programs, as outlined above. Employment does not excuse you from finishing course requirements, including finals. Please note, that some courses and syllabi require attendance at finals. You should check on this early in the semester and be aware that, in these cases, to finish the course you must attend the scheduled final. Please refer to Academic Freedom Policy.
- 4.
- a.
 - i. (airplane mode or turned off, not just silenced) backstage at all times during tech and performance. The only exception to this rule is stage-management, who may use their technology to communicate issues to the Production Manager, or of issues of a sensitive nature that are not appropriate for headset communication.
 - ii. may be used in front of house during tech by designers and technicians under the supervision of their faculty mentors. Work on these devices should be restricted to work being done for the production. Run crew may do homework backstage during the rehearsal process, as long as it does not interfere with their onstage duties.
 - iii. backstage are empowered to police use of technology.
 - iv. (generally on Sunday), all personal technology must be turned off during the run/performance.
 - b. These guidelines are intended to help us maintain an online social media presence that is professional and appropriate for our work in production and in all aspects of our educational endeavors. Please observe the following guidelines about posting content to social media during production:
 - i. photographs and video recordings should not be seen by individuals not associated with the production. Images from the production should not be shared on any form of social media (Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) or any website unless they are part of a coordinated promotional effort under the supervision of a faculty member.
 - ii. , only approved promotional materials are to be posted

1. All BFA students in good standing will be offered an opportunity to showcase in Chicago.
 2. New York is the most competitive theatre market in the world and requires a higher level of scrutiny. Therefore, students who wish to showcase in New York market must audition for consideration.
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1. Our unique approach to Showcase has and continues to inform the development of our BFA performance curricula and the sequencing of the performance-based coursework. Students who have not successfully completed the prescribed BFA course requirements are not adequately prepared to participate in the showcase. Therefore, beginning with the class of 2025, the showcase will only be available to those studying in the BFA Acting or Musical Theatre programs.
 - a. Students enrolled in the BA program who will graduate between 2022 and 2024 may audition for consideration for the Showcase.

the highest standards expected of those seeking work in a given market. The performance faculty is honor bound to prepare students for professional success. Putting a student who we know doesn't quite meet the standards each market expects of new talent is irresponsible and could put the reputations of the student, program, and faculty at risk. To ensure the Showcase experience will live on for many years to come, we must demonstrate to our professional partners a clear understanding of what is expected of those seeking their time.

Respect, Punctuality, Preparation, and Availability are the pillars of this policy. These pillars are necessary in establishing a learning environment that supports the Mission Statement and Learning Goals of the School of Theatre and Dance. All students are expected to take responsibility for their actions. Failure to address issues of professionalism that have been articulated to the student may result in probation, removal from current semester productions or future casting considerations, loss of scholarship, and ultimately removal from an academic program. The intent of this policy is not to punish, but to hold students accountable for their actions while providing ample opportunities to alter ineffective behavioral patterns.

Significant transgressions against these four pillars are subject to the following process. In cases that involve the health and safety of Students, Faculty, and Staff – immediate action may be taken, and the below articulated process, circumvented.

- a. Upon the first incident, an instructor will communicate directly with the student. This communication will include an e-mail to both the student and the Coordinator of Performance, as well as an academic alert. The instructor has the autonomy to determine if a student's actions are worthy of this formal report.
- b. Upon the second incident, an instructor will again communicate directly with the student. This communication will include an e-mail to both the student and the Coordinator of Performance, and an academic alert. It is not necessary that the second action be the same action that was addressed earlier, and it is not necessary that the same instructor move the process forward. In lay terms, if two instructors address two separate actions with the same student, the following actions will be taken.
 - i. The student and faculty member (or members) will meet directly with the Coordinator of Performance and/or Director of School of Theatre and Dance. During this meeting parameters for change will be discussed and articulated. Following the meeting, the parameters for change will be e-mailed to the student. The Center for Academic and Professional Performance as well as the Office of Student Affairs will be informed and relevant academic alerts will be sent. At this point, the student is on probation and is subject to removal from casting from any SOTAD sanctioned event.
- c. If a third incident is observed or reported, the behavior can reasonably be understood by all parties to be consistent and documented. The student has been advised of the parameters for change. Those parameters have been articulated, mutually agreed upon, but not adhered to. "Willful and sustained disruption of the learning environment" has been established and multiple opportunities for adjustment have been given. In such cases, any of the above-articulated actions may be enacted, by consensus of the Performance Faculty.

A student will remain on probation for the academic year unless