

Boston College
Department of Theatre and the Robsham Theater Arts Center

Rehearsal Guidelines

Theatre Department productions are co-curricular activities; they augment the classroom curriculum and hence have both an artistic and educational mission. Consequently they should be regarded as a priority for all participants. Extracurricular activities should be relegated to a lesser priority or place on hold during the duration of student work on any Department production. It is also understood that students involved in co-curricular Theatre Department productions carry a full load of liberal arts classes. The rehearsal guidelines are intended to ensure that the time for the student to give both to academics and to the theatrical process is respected and to engender mutual respect between directors, actors and crew members through their responsibilities to each other and to the creative process.

Pre-production:

1. The Chair of the Theatre Department, the Director of the Robsham Theater Arts Center and the director of a particular production will determine the rehearsal period (number of weeks for rehearsals) that a production will receive. The rehearsal period and approximate rehearsal schedule will be made public prior to the auditions for the production. Schedules for rehearsal must include the ending time.
2. The initial rehearsal schedule and the Rehearsal Guidelines will be distributed to all students auditioning for the production, and redistributed at the first business meeting for the cast.
3. At the time of auditions, and again at the first business meeting, cast members MUST inform the stage manager of ALL known conflicts that overlap the rehearsal period. Thereafter the student/actor must not add any additional conflicts, (except in the case of emergency or serious illness), without the expressed permission of the director.
4. By accepting a role, the student actor agrees to abide by all conditions of rehearsal.

Production rehearsals:

1. The regular workweek will be defined from Saturday to Friday and consist of those weeks from the beginning of rehearsal until the commencement of production week. Production week for the departmental shows shall include technical rehearsal and dress rehearsals. The definition of rehearsal shall include, but is not limited to, table work, warm-ups, and notes. If necessary, notes may be e-mailed or typed and distributed outside of rehearsal.
2. On class days during the regular workweeks every effort will be made to end rehearsals by 11:00 pm. However, no rehearsal will exceed four and one half hours (4.5 hours) except during the week before tech week (often referred to as "run-

through week”) when rehearsals may be extended to five hours (5 hours). The policy of the Robsham Theater prohibits any activity in the building after midnight. This stipulation applies to dry tech and technical rehearsals. There are no exceptions.

3. With the exception of production week, no student actor will be required to rehearse more than seven (7) hours a day on non-class days.
4. During production week, in addition to special technical calls (such as shift rehearsals and such) the company will be called for technical rehearsals. It is understood that a one-hour break during the course of these rehearsals will be permitted, but the break may be staggered to allow some people to have a break while others work.
5. No student actor will be called for more than 25 hours/week during regular workweeks, 27 hours/week during run-through week and 30 hours/week during production week. It is also strongly recommended that all actors called are either be used in a timely manner or released as soon as possible; it is not acceptable for actors to be called to rehearsal when the director does not expect to use that actor during the rehearsal.
6. Student actors will receive a 30-minute meal break on days when rehearsals are scheduled for five (5) hours or more.
7. With the exception of production week, student actors are expected to be present ten (10) minutes before rehearsal begins. The student actor should put on rehearsal costumes, if needed, in advance of this 10-minute period. If the director is late, s/he forfeits those hours; if a student actor is late and/or impedes the rehearsal process, the director may extend the rehearsal on that day. Actors are required to attend strike until completion or until they are released by the Technical Director of the production or other strike manager.
8. Rehearsal times do not include time necessary to memorize lines, research, preparations assigned by the director, or conferences initiated by the student actor.
9. It is understood that rehearsals may be scheduled on weekend days and on holidays, but that this must appear in the rehearsal schedule published before rehearsals begin and must adhere to previously stated limits.
10. During regular rehearsals, rehearsals may be scheduled up to seven days a week, but every student will have at least one day in any given rehearsal week when they are not called. During Production Week – Actors, Stage managers and production personnel will be called every day through the production.
11. Every effort will be made to have at least a 10-hour rest period between the end of rehearsal on one day and the beginning of rehearsal on the next day. If, because of unusual circumstances, it is necessary to begin a rehearsal before the 10 hours, then ample notice must be given in order for all affected individuals to have an opportunity for response and adjustment.
12. The above notwithstanding, stage managers may be asked to remain for a maximum of thirty minutes after each rehearsal to discuss necessary production details.
13. Given the late hour that most rehearsals end, every effort should be made to schedule actor conferences during the day, but as stated in 2 above, the Robsham must be cleared of all rehearsal activity by midnight. While the confidentiality of

the actor/director conferences are not to be compromised, the stage manager must be able to report the beginning and end of all actor conferences conducted after other actors have been dismissed. As it will be discussed below, the Stage manager is required be the last student to leave the building in order to document the exact times of the rehearsal segments.

14. Special attention is paid to two areas: Rehearsal records and redress of grievance.

A. Rehearsal records:

It is the responsibility of the stage manager to post (both on the call board and thru email) the rehearsal calls for the reasonable future. This public posting should be no later than three days prior to the next called rehearsal. The calls must be consistent with the approximate rehearsal schedule published prior to the auditions for the production. Subsequently, the stage manager should carefully record on a rehearsal report sent to all production personnel as well as the Chair of the Theatre Department and the Director of the Robsham Theater for their records and review the following:

- Call time
- Actual start time
- Any late actors and/other production personnel who are responsible for running the rehearsal with reasons for the late arrival noted on the form.
- A summary of the work done
- Specific notes for all interested production areas
- When individual actors are released from rehearsal
- Actual ending time of the rehearsals

It is essential that ALL violations of this policy be noted in the rehearsal report. The posted rehearsal calls and rehearsal reports becomes the documentation necessary to support any dispute arising from a rehearsal.

B. Redress of Grievance:

Redress of grievance is meant to deal with situations involving the cast and the director.

It is hoped that failures to observe this agreement can be discussed face to face and that an amicable solution can obtain. However, if face-to-face discussions are not possible, a student representative may report alleged infractions. The student will be a member of the cast who is elected at the first rehearsal by the company. Upon request from an aggrieved party (or parties) appropriate information will be submitted in writing on a standard form provided by the Director of the Robsham Theater or the Production Stage manager to the Director of the Robsham Theater and the Chairman of the Theatre Department. Upon receipt of this information these two individuals will act to correct the situation.

(If the chair or the director of the RTAC is the production director, they will automatically excuse themselves from this procedure).

15. This policy is subject to revision. It is intended to establish guidelines for Boston College Theatre Department/Robsham Theater Arts Center productions.

Technical and design guidelines:

1. For departmental productions the student stage manager will share duties with at least one assistant stage manager. During regular workweeks either the student stage manager or an assistant is to be present at every rehearsal. However, the student stage manager should attend a majority of rehearsals in any given week. It is understood the stage manager or his/her assistant will arrive sufficiently before the rehearsal to prepare the space for rehearsal, and remain after the rehearsal to return the rehearsal space to a condition consistent with the use of the room. It is also a requirement that the stage manager be the last student to leave the rehearsal in order for the stage manager to accurately record the complete rehearsal procedures. Under no circumstance should the stage manager leave before the last student has completed all rehearsals and conferences. Specific guidance for stage managers and assistant stage managers can be found in Lawrence Stern's book: Stage Management, Allyn and Bacon, (current edition). Also, all stage managers are expected to meet weekly with the stage manager mentor for advice, counseling, and instruction. This meeting is part of the two-credit course for which stage managers must register. Specific stage managerial duties will be addressed during this class.
2. The stage manager is responsible for assembling a cast list with the names of the actors and the roles they play along with any time, location, scene descriptions, act descriptions and other descriptive material. It is the responsibility of the stage manager to check the spelling and other details of the cast list with the cast members. To the extent possible, cast members should approve the way they are listed in the program subject to the final approval of the production director and the administration of the Robsham Theater.

Contingencies:

If the situation arises that the director needs to make significant adjustments to the rehearsal schedule during the rehearsal period, then the director needs to consult with the student representative, the Production Manager, the Chair of the Theatre Department and the Director of the Robsham Theater Arts Center. Such changes must be announced with ample time for all production team members (including actors) to be able to react and adjust.

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