

Department of Theater

Student Production Manual

Revised Fall 2023

Introduction

The Dartmouth Department of Theater offers numerous opportunities for students to write, create and produce art under the guidance of the Department of Theater's staff. For all approved proposals, the department assumes the role of producer and provides varying degrees of assistance and support depending on the production. This page serves to acquaint you with frequently asked questions about proposing and producing a student production.

What are potential reasons for proposing a show?

1. Proposing as a senior fellowship
2. Proposing to gain experience as a director, designer, actor, etc.
3. Proposing as part of an independent study
4. Proposing as simply for your own entertainment

When are performance slots available?

The Theater Department offers several opportunities in the Fall, Winter, and Spring terms for Dartmouth students to produce a work of their choice in the available Theater Department performance spaces.

When are these slots announced?

These slots are set aside for Department sponsored student projects and the dates are posted on the boards in and around Sudikoff, in the department newsletter and on the Theater Department website normally by Week 5 in the term before the proposed production .

How are performance slots allocated?

These performance slots are predetermined by the Theater Department in conjunction with other Theater and HOP events scheduled for the academic year. Typically there are opportunities for student productions every Fall, Winter and Spring* term.

*A note on Spring: Depending on the educational goals of our senior theater majors, the spring term may be devoted solely to honors thesis productions and other culminating projects. Please see the department website for more details on honors theses. (Include a link)

How do I propose a production as a Senior Fellowship?

On rare occasions, the department might co-produce Senior Fellowship projects that include a production component. This fellowship is reserved for those students with a strong track record in the department. For more information, [see here](#). Students must consult with the Director of Theater regarding the possibility of department support at the beginning of the spring term of their junior term before submitting a senior fellowship proposal.

What should my proposal include?

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1. Proposal description and copy of script when applicable
2. Proposed production category (small vs big production)
3. Summary of applicant's Department of Theater coursework and production experience
4. Proposed budget (see "Budget" below)
5. Design and technical requests
6. Proposed artistic collaborators.
7. Advertising Image (where applicable)
8. Name of the faculty member who has agreed to be the advisor on the project

What have previously proved proposals looked like?

Here's a link (the link is gone from the website)

When are proposals due?

Proposals are generally due midway through the term prior to the term the production is being proposed. (I.e Fall term proposals are due in the Summer term, Winter term proposals are due in the Fall term etc.). Proposals must be submitted by hard copy or emailed to the Department.

How do production proposals get approved?

These proposals will be discussed and voted upon during the first department meeting of the fall term; students should be prepared to answer questions at this meeting.

Can I get a production credit if I work on a student production?

The department recognizes the amount of work involved in student productions and seeks to recognize this work toward the major or minor when appropriate. To confirm that it could be a production credit, speak with the Production Manager or your Major/Minor advisor.

Can I work on more than one production in a term?

Sometimes, but only in consultation with your faculty advisor.

What are the types of productions I can propose?

- Big Student Production Slot: a fully-realized theatrical production inclusive of a full creative team and design elements.
- Little Student Production Slot: a production opportunity offering faculty mentorship and some technical support.

How large are the student production spaces?

In your proposal feel free to express your production space preference. You may be assigned a different space depending on other departmental programming.

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Theater at Currier

- Proscenium stage
- Loading is at street level. No truck ramp is available.
- **Seating Capacity (House): 58**
- **Maximum Room Occupancy* (performers/crew/public): 99**
- Dressing room capacity: 12
- Dressing rooms are located adjacent to the stage, one with direct access to backstage, one with hall access.
- There is extremely limited storage space onsite, please discuss with the production manager.

Wilson 301

- Thrust Stage
- Loading is at street level. No truck ramp is available. The stage is on the third floor and the elevator is very small—important to consider when loading in large pieces.
- **Seating Capacity (House):** dependant upon size of company—typically 30-40
- **Maximum Room Occupancy* (performers/crew/public): 49**
- Dressing room capacity: 12
- Dressing rooms are located adjacent to the stage, one with direct access to backstage, one with hall access.
- There is extremely limited storage space onsite, please discuss with the production manager.

Bentley **** NOT AVAILABLE UNTIL 2025****

- Proscenium/Thrust Stage
- **Seating Capacity: 148**
- **Seating Capacity when all stage space is in use: 83**
- **Forestage/Orchestra Pit: 16**
- 2 Small Dressing Rooms seat 8 each (with attached showers and toilets)

Moore Theater **** NOT AVAILABLE UNTIL 2025****

- Reserved for Mainstages
- **Seating Capacity: 480 + 1 Wheelchair spot**
- **Seating Capacity when the orchestra pit is in use: 292 + 1 Wheelchair spot.**
- **Forestage/Orchestra Pit: 52**
- **Balcony: 136**
- 2 Small Dressing Rooms seat 8 each (with attached showers and toilets)
- 2 Large Dressing Rooms seat 16 each (showers and toilets down the hall)

* The maximum room occupancy is the fire code regulated maximum room occupancy. It includes everyone in the room. If your production has a smaller cast, the seat capacity can be increased (mostly relevant only in Wilson 301).

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Can I still propose a show if I don't have a complete creative team?

Absolutely. In fact, the relevant faculty member (eg lighting faculty for lights) should be involved in selecting designers and collaborators. If you have difficulty locating students for these positions, we will try to help you find qualified students in those areas.

Can I have non-students in my creative team?

Only if the role cannot be filled by a current student will the Department consider an adult/outside force working on **student** productions.

What does my creative team have to do before submission?

Students proposed for positions in set design, costume design, lighting design, sound design, projection design, music direction, choreography and technical direction must be approved by the faculty and staff of the relevant area. Please have your creative team consult with appropriate faculty members before adding them to your proposal.

What are my benefits for being on the creative team of a student production?

Students approved for these positions will be assigned faculty advisors.

What are the requirements and work expected for the creative/design team?

Here is a [google doc](#) that has more information about each individual role.

What is a faculty advisor?

Directors, designers, and stage managers will have a Faculty Advisor with whom they keep in close contact. They will provide advisors with information regarding the production progress, invite them to rehearsals, and obtain feedback on a regular basis. Please make sure that advisors are supplied with an accurate rehearsal schedule. Students should consult with the Department's faculty about potentially advising their production prior to submitting a proposal.

How much money do I get?

The Theater Department normally absorbs the following expenses for your production: royalties, purchase of scripts, programs and publicity flyers, and house and technical staff. Outside of these expenses you are allotted a production budget to cover expenses for sets, costumes, etc. Your budget, depending on your production category, is as follows:

Small Production:	\$100.00
Big Production:	\$750.00

Can I look for funding outside of the department?

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Yes, students who are interested in applying for funding from other campus sources should consult with the chair of the Student Productions Committee prior to their application.

How do I contact the publisher, copyright holder of the piece of art I would like to propose?

Some works, such as Shakespeare, fall into the category of "public domain," meaning that there is no need to secure rights or pay royalties. If, however, the play is still under copyright or is a copyrighted English translation of an old play that would otherwise be in the public domain (modern translations of Molière, for example), you must secure rights. Permission to produce a play often includes restrictions.

For legal reasons you MUST abide by the restrictions stated by the organization that grants the rights to performance. Again, the Department Administrator can help you through this process.

Where can I find the rights?

Amateur production rights for most plays are managed by Samuel French, Inc.; Dramatists' Play Service; or the Dramatic Publishing Company. Rights and royalties for most musicals are managed by Tams-Witmark or Music Theatre International, Inc. If the play rights are not listed, contact the publisher of the play, and ask them who controls the amateur performance rights. You may be directed to an individual agent or management company. Once you determine who controls the rights, give the information to the Theater Department Administrator, who will handle the paperwork. Make sure you do this well in advance, since sometimes requests for performance rights are denied, and you will need time to appeal or to choose another title. The Department will pay the royalty fees for any production that it agrees to produce. In certain cases, students might be requested to seek out additional funding.

Before any copyrighted play can be publicly performed, you must (1) receive permission to produce the play, and (2) pay royalties. This applies whether admission is charged or not. (Don't be fooled by the common misperception that having free admission relieves you of the need to secure permission and pay royalties!) The performance of any commercial play requires the consideration of copyright and royalty issues.

Can I film my production?

If it's your own work, yes. Unless otherwise noted, recording of copyrighted material is not permitted.

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Approved Student Productions Manual

Technical/Design Support

Once your proposal is accepted, you are required to meet with the Production Manager and chair of the Student Production Committee to confirm appropriate technical support and a production calendar.

For a Full Production or Workshop with design elements, the production team must consult with the design faculty and Production Manager on all elements of production. Scene design must be approved by the scenic design faculty, the lighting design by the lighting design faculty, and the costume design by the costume design faculty. This is to ensure that the demands on the time and expertise of the technical areas of the Theater Department are within realistic bounds and can be met. Regular design and production meetings will be scheduled by the Production Manager to track progress of the design and production elements.

Performance Support

House Management

Hopkins Center policy requires that whenever we invite audiences into our theaters, regardless of whether admission is charged, house managers and ushers must be present. The cost of these individuals is borne by the Theater Department and does not come out of your production budget. An "Events Notice," which is prepared and submitted by the Department Administrator after your production is approved, provides the information to the front of house staff to prepare for your project's performances.

Front of House staff requires notification of several types of technical elements (fog, pyrotechnics, loud noises) so a sign can be posted to alert audience members. Front of House Staff also requires advanced notifications regarding content advisories. If you have questions about notifications for House Management, please consult the Production Manager.

On performance days, your stage manager will work with the house staff to coordinate the start time for each performance, intermissions, etc.

Production Staff Support During Performances

A production staff or faculty member, usually the Production Manager or Technical Director, must be present at all performances. It is the responsibility of the support person to ensure the safety and well-being of all those involved with the production, the safety of the equipment, as well as to deal with any technical problems that may arise during the performance. To this end, in extraordinary circumstances the technical staff member assigned to each show has the authority to determine whether a member of the cast or crew be allowed to perform their duties during a show. If not, it is their decision how those duties should be performed or whether the show can proceed.

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Auditions and Casting

Please keep in mind that the auditions and casting for the Mainstage must be completed before auditions begin for student productions. Mainstage auditions generally begin the first week of class.

Auditions should be arranged in consultation with the Chair of the Department and Production Manager. An online audition sign-up sheet will be generated by the department office.

Casting decisions will be made only after all student project auditions and callbacks are completed. Students may audition for more than one show; however, once an actor signs up for a callback, they have, in effect, made a commitment to be available for that show. If actors audition for more than one production, they may state a preference for a particular production. If the same actor is wanted by two directors, and doing both roles is not feasible, the directors must negotiate to determine who will get cast in what show. A faculty member should be present at all negotiating sessions to offer an objective view. Once casting is completed, cast lists should be posted immediately.

Casting Policy

Auditions for all productions sponsored and/or produced by the Department of Theater are open to all Dartmouth undergraduates. Undergraduates who are on “off” terms are eligible to audition. Given the Department’s focus on the education of undergraduates, priority in casting shall be given to undergraduates. If the special needs of a production make the use of an undergraduate impossible, if no undergraduate is available to take a particular role, or if there is a recognized educational advantage to having a non-student in a cast, then non-students may be used. This includes graduate students, alumni, faculty, community members, and guest professionals.

Standard policy for students auditioning for and accepting roles is as follows. **Once a student auditions, is called back, and attends the callback, they are declaring their commitment to play “as cast” (i.e., in any role of the director’s choosing), subject only to any limitations agreed upon at the beginning of the audition process. A student may tell a director beforehand (in writing on the audition form) that they are interested in only certain roles.** If the director wishes, they may also invite auditioning students to state their preferences for casting. In either case the director can either cast the student in one of the requested roles, or not at all. An actor who limits their casting options in this manner therefore runs the risk of not being cast at all, rather than in a role in which they did not imagine themselves, but in which the director would otherwise have used them. However, given the fact that there is something to be learned by every actor from every role, and that we are operating an educational theater program, it is the general expectation that students will normally make themselves available to play as cast. In light of that fact, a director always has the option of requiring all auditioning students to be available for all roles, and not permit them to limit casting options. **In any event, it is our expectation that a student may not audition, go to a callback, get cast, and then drop out.**

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This policy is necessary because dropping out of a cast in this manner causes considerable problems for the director, and is very unfair to the other students. A director has to scramble to fill a hole in the cast, and often the actor with whom the director would fill that vacancy is already cast in another role in the play. Moving that actor to another role just compounds the problem via a domino effect. Or, the student that the director would otherwise have cast is by that time cast in another production and is therefore no longer available. Or, the student has decided that since they did not get cast in a production, they will become involved in other campus activities, and genuinely will not have time. Additionally, by this point the new actor has lost precious rehearsal time.

Penalties. While the Department hopes and expects that it can rely on the honesty and good will of all concerned, it sometimes does become necessary to enforce this policy via penalty. In the event that a student does drop out of a cast in this manner, they automatically become ineligible for any other casting that term. In the event of repeated examples of this behavior by a student, the Department faculty may decide to impose a more stringent penalty, such as declaring the student ineligible for casting for a longer period of time.

Notice of this policy will be given to all students who audition for all Department sponsored and/or produced productions, in writing, on the audition form. The audition form will either (1) state that all auditioning actors must agree to play as cast; or (2) provide a section for students to declare whether they are willing to play as cast, are interested in only certain roles, and if they have preferences for certain roles they would prefer to play. This policy will also be posted on the callboard along with all audition, callback and casting notices.

Evening lab, exam, or class conflict policy. (With the exception of 3A, 3B, 6A, 6B class periods)

If a professor schedules a lab, class, exam, or other event in the evening, they must offer the student an alternative time if they are involved in mandatory evening rehearsals. Students are encouraged to contact their professors and request an alternative time. If a student is not comfortable with this, they may ask the Chair of the Theater Department, Rebecca Biron, to be in touch with their professor.

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Rehearsal Spaces

Along with the Bentley Theater, the Theater Department has the following options for rehearsal spaces: The Rehearsal Room, 301 Wilson and the HOP Garage Spaces. Because of high demand for use of these spaces, your full rehearsal schedule and request for rehearsal space must be submitted to the Production Manager BEFORE rehearsals begin. After room assignments have been confirmed, the Production Manager will email confirmation of rehearsal space locations. Changes to the rehearsal schedule will be accommodated based on room availability.

Please read and abide by the following guidelines when using rehearsal spaces.

Wilson 301, Theater on Currier, Rehearsal Room & Garage Spaces

- A reservation must be made in order to use Wilson 301, Garage Space or the Rehearsal Room. Even if the room appears vacant, it is often intentionally blocked off from use for important reasons.
- Reservations must be made with 24 hours notice (or by 2p on Friday for a Monday request)
- Individuals or groups found using the spaces without a reservation will be asked to leave.
- Please remember these rooms are also classroom spaces. Rooms should be returned to a clean and neutral condition before leaving. Please throw away all trash and return any furniture or props to the outer boundaries of the space.
- Please report to the Theater Department office any missing or broken items or any lights that are out.
- Please turn out the lights before you leave and lock the door behind you.

Bentley Theater

- A reservation must be made in order to use The Bentley Theater. Even if the room appears vacant, it is often intentionally blocked off from use for important reasons.
- Individuals or groups found using the space without a reservation will be asked to leave.
- The purple chairs are audience seats.
 - If you strike or move any of these chairs during your reservation, please restore them at the end of the rehearsal.
 - If you stack any chairs, please limit stacks to 7 chairs and keep the stacks separated.
 - Please do not stand on the chairs or sit on chairs when stacked.
- Please note that the house left path behind the 'half-wall' is a fire egress and nothing can be stored behind that wall. Also, **paths to the doors illuminated with exit signs must never be blocked.**
- The Bentley lighting and sound system are not available for rehearsals.
 - A portable sound system is available for check out in the Theater office.
 - House lights are located near the house right lobby entrance. Additional work lights are

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located backstage right.

- The Bentley should be returned to a clean and neutral condition before leaving. Please throw away all trash, return any furniture or props to the off stage storage locations and restore audience seating.
- Please report to the Theater Department office any missing or broken items or any lights that are out.
- Please turn out the lights before you leave and set up the ghost light.
- Please lock the door behind you.

Technical Rehearsals will be scheduled by the Production Manager following proposal acceptance, based on information provided in the proposal. Technical rehearsals are scheduled based on availability of the Bentley/Moore Theater and technical needs of the production. Directors and Faculty Advisors are expected to sign an agreement stating they understand the technical rehearsal schedule and performance schedule.

Rehearsal/Performance Reports

Generally, Stage Managers will produce daily rehearsal and performance reports and email these reports to the Production Team. See the Stage Management Advisor for details on reports and the Production Manager for distribution list.

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Advertising

Programs and posters will be produced and paid for, within limits, by the Theater Department. Individual productions will not need to generate these on their own. However, each production is responsible for providing the department with a show image, and for distributing their posters around campus. Website images must be horizontal (855 px wide x 455 px high); poster imagery can be horizontal or vertical. Students will need to consider licensing questions when selecting an image; images that are clearly in the public domain, or that are created for your production, are easiest and quickest to deal with.

Programs for workshop and full productions typically include director, designers(s), stage manager, cast and crew members, faculty advisors, any special thanks the director would like to give, and director's notes (if desired). Please see the Department Administrator for specific information necessary for the program. In most cases, program copies may be submitted electronically to the Department Administrator.

The Theater Department will announce and advertise all performances via VoxDaily, the Dartmouth events calendar, the department website and facebook page, and the department's weekly e-blasts. Productions will also have a presence on the Hopkins Center website and in their e-newsletters.

Tickets

There is a standard ticket price depending on the category of production. All money from ticket sales go to the Theater Department to help defray costs. Please see the Department Administrator for ticket prices.

****COMP TICKET POLICY**

Typically, each member of the cast & crew receives at least one complimentary ticket for their production. Directors, designers and stage managers typically receive 2/night for the run of their show. Complimentary tickets must be picked up in person at the HOP Box Office; please see the Department Administrator for details.

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Appendix A: Checklists

Student Production Checklist

At time of proposal:

- Read Student Production Manual in Full.
- Included in Proposal:
 - Proposed Production Category (Studio Lab, YourSpace, etc.) with Preferred Performance Date(s)/Time.
 - Proposal Description and copy of script where applicable.
 - Summary of applicant's Department of Theater coursework and production experience.
 - Proposed budget.
 - Design and technical requests.
 - All proposed staffing identified to date. Must have the advanced approvals from the faculty.
 - Advertising Image.
 - Faculty member who has agreed to be the advisor on the project.

Upon acceptance of proposal:

- Attend the Department Showcase.
- Create a poster/flier.
- Meet with the Production Manager.
 - Schedule auditions/Create online sign-up sheet (if applicable)
 - Preferred rehearsal location/dates times
 - Tech rehearsal date/time
 - Performance Date/Time
 - Determine seating layout
 - Discuss technical needs
 - Discuss production budget

Student Production Checklist- Workshop or Full Production

At time of proposal:

- Read Student Production Manual in Full.
- Included in proposal:
 - Proposal Description and copy of script when applicable.
 - Proposed Production Category (Workshop, Full Production)
 - Summary of applicant's Department of Theater coursework and production experience.
 - Proposed budget.

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- Design and technical requests.
- Proposed artistic collaborators. *Note that identified collaborators (stage manager, designers, etc.) must have advance approvals from pertinent faculty.*
- Advertising Image.
- Faculty member who has agreed to be the advisor on the project.

Upon acceptance of proposal:

- Attend Department Showcase
- Meet with Department Administrator
 - Discuss Royalties and Copyright
 - Order/Copy Scripts
- Meet with Production Manager
 - Discuss Production Calendar (*see sample production calendar attached*)
 - Schedule Auditions/Create Online Sign-Up Sheet
 - Design Deadlines
 - Schedule First Design Meeting
 - Preferred Rehearsal Location/Dates Times
 - Tech Rehearsal Dates/Times
 - Discuss Production Team and Staffing Needs
 - Discuss Production Budget
- Consult with Design Faculty about Design Team

As soon as auditions are completed:

- Send out cast list to production staff
- Email rehearsal schedule Production Manager for space confirmation.

During rehearsals

- Attend weekly design/production meetings
- Respond to questions Rehearsal Reports or questions from Design/Technical Staff (in a timely manner)

Two weeks before opening

- Confirm final seating arrangement and seat count for the audience.
- Submit cast, crew, and designer list to Department Administrator for comp tickets (if applicable)
- Submit a Director or Artist Note for program
- Send "Special Thanks" list to Department Administrator

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Appendix B: Production Calendar Sample

Tragedy: A Tragedy (F'18 SPS) Production Calendar

Month	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
18-Sep	9	10 <i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	11 <i>Rosh Hashanah</i>	12 Classes Begin	13	14	15
	16	17	18	19 <i>Department Showcase</i> 6:30p	20	21	22 Auditions 2:00p - 5:00p
	23 Auditions 3p - 6p	24 Callbacks 7p - 10p	25	26 <i>Black Theater Summit</i> <i>Retreat</i>	27 <i>Black Theater Summit</i>	28 <i>Black Theater Summit</i>	29 <i>Black Theater Summit</i>
	30	1	2	3	4	5 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Prelim</i> <i>Scenic Design Due</i>	6
Oct-18	7	8 <i>Columbus Day</i>	9	10	11	12 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Final</i> <i>Scenic Design Due</i>	13
	14	15 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Load In</i> <i>Begins</i>	16	17	18	19 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Light Plot</i> <i>Due</i>	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Designer</i> <i>Run</i>	27
	28	29 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Light</i> <i>Hang</i>	30 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy</i> <i>Hang/Focus</i>	31 <i>Halloween</i> <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Focus</i>	1	2	3
18-Nov	4 <i>Daylight Savings</i>	5 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Tech 6p - 10p</i>	6 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Tech 6p - 10p</i>	7 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Tech 6p - 10p</i>	8 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Tech 6p - 10p</i>	9 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Perf. 8p</i>	10 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Perf. 8p</i>
	11 <i>Veterans Day</i> <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Perf. 2p</i>	12 <i>Tragedy:A</i> <i>Tragedy Strike</i>	13 Classes End	14	15	16 Finals Begin	17
	18	19	20	21 Finals End	22 <i>Thanksgiving</i>	23	24