

ACADEMIC POLICY
Memo No. 12
Revised September 2000

DESIGN/TECH GRADUATE STUDENT GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Students are admitted to the program if the faculty feels there is good reason to believe that at the end of their formal training they will be employable at an entry level (or higher) position in a reputable regional theatre. Students are expected to be talented, disciplined, and highly motivated.

It is apparently the policy in some professional training programs that several entering students will be cut from the program before the conclusion of their training. This is definitely not true at the University of Washington. While we are under no obligation to retain all students accepted into the program, we are also fortunately not under any compulsion to drop some of each class.

Any decision to retain a student or to recommend another action is made by all the Design faculty, as is the final decision to recommend a Drop action to the Graduate School.

Student is expected to attend all classes and to be prompt. When illness or other emergency causes the student to miss a class, the student should notify the instructor before the class is scheduled to begin.

Advising:

The official adviser for graduate students in design/technology is the Head of the Design/Technical program. Each student will also be assigned a faculty adviser in their specific area. Students are encouraged to seek advice from any member of the faculty at any time. The Graduate Program Adviser for the School of Drama is Professor Sarah Nash Gates.

Each student when assigned to a major production responsibility will have a faculty supervisor who should be kept informed about the production project as it develops.

Assignment to Productions

The design/technical faculty assigns students to design productions in accordance with the needs of the production program, the student's progress as a designer and insofar as possible, the student's preferences. Normally a first-year student will be assigned as an assistant before serving as a designer. It is generally expected that each student will complete one major production assignment (designer, assistant designer, or similar assignment) each quarter. Also each student whose emphasis is scenic or lighting design should expect to be assigned as property master for one show during the year.

Outside Work

Any design or technical work for a theatre outside the School of Drama must be approved by the

design faculty prior to the student making any commitment for such work. The student's first responsibility is to his/her course work and design assignments within the School of Drama's season. While the faculty encourages appropriate work outside the School (work which contributes substantially to the student's professional development) it does not readily approve assignments which merely duplicate the level of experience already available to the student in School productions. Only rarely will the faculty approve design or technical work for theaters less well-funded and/or equipped than its own. Such work often constitutes exploitation of the student under the guise of resumé building and is seldom productive. To repeat, approval of any theatre design or technical work outside the School of Drama during the regular university session or during the student's appointment as a GSA or TA must be secured prior to committing to or undertaking such work. Failure to secure such approval will constitute unsatisfactory progress toward the degree and will be grounds for non-renewal of a GSA or TA appointment.

Financial Aid:

Financial aid awards are granted on the basis of merit (demonstration of adherence to standards, interest, attitude and talent). As it is more likely that financial aid will be more available from Federal work/study sources, students are encouraged to apply for work/study eligibility. The usual deadline for application for Fall work/study is March 1st. Students are encouraged to start the application process in early January. Design/tech students receiving financial aid will supervise laboratories or supervise and maintain such areas of the shop as props, furniture, paint, wardrobe or electrics.

For purposes of financial aid, a distinction is made between "work for credit"; i.e. shop work undertaken in fulfillment of a course requirement - and "work for pay". In general, design, technical direction, design assistant, and other major supervisory and creative responsibilities relate to graded work for credit while paid tasks are usually lab teaching and supervision, general construction, and maintenance assignments. Weekly time sheets are submitted by each student for production work in both the paid and the credit categories.

Production Requirements:

Production assignments are a part of the academic learning experience and will be accompanied by registration for practicum credit each quarter of participation in the program. Grading for those courses will be done by the entire design/tech faculty in conference. A personal portfolio review will be given each student at the completion of each quarter.

Production assignments which include work in the Costume or Scene Shop or in one of the theatres, will be made as far in advance as possible. Assignments may include regular work as a member of a crew; a position of responsibility such as technical director, electrician, costumer, or designer; equipment maintenance; or work on a special project related to a show. Each student should expect to have at least one production assignment each quarter.

Safety:

Work in the Scene Shop must be done at a time when a member of the Design/Tech faculty, classified staff, or a graduate staff assistant is in attendance in the building and has agreed to be supervisor for that time period. In no case will anyone be permitted to use any shop power tools without at least one other person in attendance.

If you are unsure of the proper and safe way to use a tool in the shop, ask someone.

Smoking is not permitted in University buildings and vehicles. Proper safe attire when working in the shop or in the theatres is required.

Running Crews:

In most cases, shows are run by undergraduates as a part of their basic technical production course requirements. For the graduate student whose experience has included all elements of running shows as a part of previous training, further work may not be necessary. It is often wise, for example, for a future lighting designer to first act as board operator or master electrician in a theatre where she or he might later design. Students should make their feelings known to the faculty about their running crew needs.

Strikes:

Graduate students are on call for all production strikes. At the discretion of the Technical Director or Costume Director, on smaller productions where the full crew is not needed, a system of rotation will be followed. Additionally, all members of the cast, crew and production staff of each production are required to help with the strike and clean up.

Make-up of missed time:

Students and staff members should discuss schedule conflicts with the scene shop supervisor or costume director as far in advance as possible. This includes students with a show in previews on the day of a strike. If permission to miss a scheduled crew call is granted, the direct supervisor of the crew in question must be notified. Make-up of the missed crew time will be at the discretion of the crew supervisor. Those who owe missed crew time will be the first called for weekend or evening crew when necessary.

Release Time:

Students on the paid hourly or assistantship staff will not be given release time to prepare the design of a show for which practicum credit is being earned.

Clean up:

All personnel are required to clean up the various work areas at the end of each work shift.

Extra-departmental Productions:

Permission to use the shops for productions other than those of the School of Drama must be obtained, scheduled and guided by the appropriate director and be scheduled by him or her, and must follow guidelines as established by the them.

GRADING

At the end of each quarter the faculty meets with each student to review his/her work for the quarter. After this meeting the faculty assigns grades for team-taught classes, and individual faculty members assign grades for classes in which they are the sole instructor. In accordance with Graduate School practice, a grade of "B" (3.0) is the minimum acceptable grade and a student receiving a grade of less than 3.0 should regard this as an indication that the work is not satisfactory, and that improvement must be made.

In addition to maintaining an average of 3.0 or better, a graduate student in the design program must continue to make "satisfactory progress toward a degree." In the design area this is defined as continuing to progress in both classroom work and actual production work in a way that gives the faculty confidence that the student will be able to function at a professional level when his/her degree is conferred. It is thus expected that the student will not only grow as an artist and craftsman, but will develop a mature and professional way of working and interacting with all those persons one deals with in the course of designing a production.

If a student's work falls below acceptable standards, in the judgment of the design/technical faculty, the student will receive notice. The faculty will meet with the student and discuss the problems in the work. The student will receive a formal letter from the School of Drama also outlining the substandard work, and advise the student of his/her probationary status.

The student may be placed on "Warning," "Probation" or "Final Probation." A student on Final Probation may not register for courses in the following quarter without the expressed consent of his/her faculty. If lack of improvement by the end of the current quarter warrants termination from the program, the graduate student will be so advised by the faculty within forty-eight (48) hours after his/her end of quarter review, and the Graduate Program Coordinator will immediately notify the Graduate School of the faculty's recommendation that the student be dropped from the program. Students making satisfactory progress after being placed on Warn or Probation will be advised of their new status by the faculty after their quarterly conference at the end of the quarter as well.

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