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I. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

GRADUATE STUDIES

Graduate degree programs in the Department of Theatre are designed to provide advanced work for persons preparing to teach or enter professional theatre. Currently, the department offers a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree program. A graduate degree in theatre from MSU can prepare one for a career as a professor or administrator at major colleges and universities throughout the United States or for a career in professional theatre. The MSU Department of Theatre is affiliated with the Arts Council of Greater Lansing, the American College Dance Association, the American Society for Theatre Research, the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, the Greater Lansing Visitors Bureau, the Michigan Stage Technician Apprenticeship Program, the National Alliance for Musical Theatre, the United States Institute for Theatre Technology and the University/Resident Theatre Association. Visiting professional artists and scholars augment the design curriculum and provide further opportunities to learn from some of the best in the business.

The Williamston Theatre and Michigan State University Department of Theatre have entered into a partnership that will ensure collaborative projects between the two producing units. The purpose of this alliance is to continue the successful mingling of academic and professional theatre artists.

MSU offers a variety of acting and design assistantships with very competitive stipend levels, and the graduate program works in tandem with a thriving undergraduate theatre program.

MFA ACTING

The Master of Fine Arts in Acting is designed as a terminal degree providing rigorous training in theatrical performance to students preparing for careers in the professional theatre and future academicians. Extensive training in voice, movement and acting provide a foundation for student's development as both artist and educator. Given the program’s unique focus on preparing the artist and educator, an emphasis on the student as teacher is fundamental in most classes. Prior to graduation, MFA Acting students will receive exposure to the professional theatre world as well as academia.

The MFA acting program at Michigan State University offers individualized and challenging advanced actor training. Intensive scene study and studio work cover a wide range of theatrical materials from the classics to contemporary. Training in voice and movement is an integral part of the program. All MFA students must complete at least six required performance credits in order to receive the degree.

Acceptance into the program is contingent upon a completed application to the Michigan State University Graduate School as well as the successful completion of an audition/interview. All acting candidates must demonstrate their potential at either larger
unified auditions or through an audition before the Acting/Directing faculty while visiting Michigan State University.

MSU offers numerous performance opportunities for graduates in a 3,100-seat concert auditorium, a 600-seat thrust, a 450-seat proscenium, a 200-seat arena, a 150-seat endstage, a 100-seat studio and MSU’s popular outdoor 400+ seat Summer Circle amphitheater. While casting is not guaranteed in Department productions, MFA Actors are required to perform in an approved project each semester. A performance based major final project must be completed in the MFA Actor’s final year of study.

All Master of Fine Arts Actors must audition for all departmental productions even though there are no guaranteed roles in these productions. If a student is not cast in a production, the MFA Actor must perform in an approved performance project. One exception to this casting policy is the major final project which will be chosen in consultation with the student’s guidance committee to be completed in the MFA Actor’s final year of study.

MFA Actors will meet each semester with their chosen committee to evaluate the work over the semester. (See section IV)

**MFA DESIGN**

The Master of Fine Arts in Design is offered as a terminal degree for a graduate student preparing for a professional career as a scene, costume, lighting, sound, or media designer. Importance is also placed on acquiring technical skills in these areas. Students will study multiple areas of theatre design with the expectation that they will become proficient in at least two areas. The rigorous three-year program places equal emphasis on classroom studies and production program activities. The program of study contains course work in all the areas of theatre and related fields that inform and enrich the area of design selected. Because of the equal importance given to academic and practical experiences within the program, a graduate is well suited for teaching in a college or university in addition to being an articulate and capable theatre artist.

MFA Designers receive personally tailored instruction in a well-rounded theatre context which includes courses in the theory and history of theatre craft, as well as a carefully developed program of practical training put together under professional guidance with the student’s career goals in mind. Small design classes assure a high degree of one-to-one response to projects and course work, and the department’s position within a large university enriches the opportunities available from other departments and disciplines. Design labs provide the necessary design and production software to allow familiarization with many of the most common professional practices in this growing component of the theatre industry.

MFA Designers develop portfolios by accepting a minimum of six design or technical assignments for fully realized departmental productions as members of the production team. The student will work closely with their guidance committee to determine these
assignments. Students must participate in production activities during each semester of enrollment in the program by accepting experiential learning assignments in addition to the design assignments.

MSU offers numerous design/technical opportunities for graduates in a 3,100-seat concert auditorium, a 600-seat thrust, a 450-seat proscenium, a 200-seat arena, a 150-seat endstage, a 100-seat studio and MSU’s popular outdoor 400+ seat Summer Circle amphitheater.

Students interested in careers in academic theatre may teach introductory classes in their specialty.

MFA Designers will meet each semester with their chosen committee to evaluate the work over the semester. (See section IV)

**ADVISING AND MENTORING IN THE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE**

The Department of Theatre operates under the GUIDELINES FOR GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISING AND MENTORING RELATIONSHIPS: [http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/docs/guidelines.pdf](http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/docs/guidelines.pdf). In addition, each graduate student experiences a mentor/apprenticeship relationship for each production assignment.
II. PROGRAM COMPONENTS/PLAN OPTIONS

GRADUATE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE

The Graduate Guidance Committee is formed from faculty in the student’s degree program. Students are required to select this committee with the approval of the Area Head no later than the completion of the first semester (see section IV).

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF FINE ARTS DEGREE IN THEATRE

The program is available only under Plan B (without thesis). A total of 60 credits are required for the degree. The student's program of study must be approved by the Graduate Guidance Committee. (See section III)
III. DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

ADMISSION INFORMATION

Applicants must meet the general requirements for consideration for admission to master's and doctoral degree programs in the College of Arts and Letters referenced in the College statement.

An international applicant is required to have fulfilled the University's English Language Proficiency requirement as described at http://grad.msu.edu/internationalstudents/.

Audition/Interview Policy for the MFA - Acting Degree

All acting candidates must demonstrate their potential by auditioning, either through unified national auditions or they may make an appointment through the Graduate Acting Program Director to audition before the Acting/Directing Faculty on campus. In both cases, an interview will be part of the audition process. Applicants should be prepared to present an audition according to the U/RTA Guidelines for Acting Auditions. Furthermore, applicants should be prepared to demonstrate additional skills upon request and to respond to direction. Applicants should not apply to the MSU Graduate School until they have been conditionally accepted to the MFA program.

Audition/Interview Policy for the MFA – Design Degree

All candidates must demonstrate a potential for growth in design through a portfolio presentation and interview, either through unified national auditions or they may make an appointment through the Graduate Design Program Director to interview before the Design Faculty. Applicants should be prepared to present a portfolio interview according to the U/RTA Guidelines for Design/Tech. In addition to theatre design work, an applicant is encouraged to include any work which demonstrates creativity and design skills – such as photography, sculpture, paintings, textiles, collage, graphic design, animation, and web-based information technology. Applicants should not apply to the MSU Graduate School until they have been conditionally accepted to the MFA program.

PROVISIONAL ACCEPTANCE

An applicant for the MFA program may be accepted provisionally if, in the judgment of the department chairperson and advice from faculty, the student has sufficient promise of success in the graduate program but lacks the requisite entry academic credits in theatre. The Graduate Program Director will recommend specific courses or experiences for the student that may be achieved concurrently with graduate course enrollment. When the specific provisions of the admission are accomplished, the student is moved to regular status.
PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF FINE ARTS – ACTING

A minimum of 60 graduate credit hours must be completed for the MFA in Acting. Please see the university academic programs catalog for requirements.

Academic Standards
The student must:

1. Maintain a grade-point average of 3.30 or higher in courses in the Department of Theatre.
2. Accumulate no more than six (6) credits with a grade below 3.0 in courses that are to be counted toward the degree.
3. DF-Deferred grades: The required work must be completed and a grade reported within 6 months with the option of a single six-month extension. If the required work is not completed within the time limit, the DF will become U-Unfinished and will be changed to DF/U under the numerical and Pass-No Grade (P-N) grading systems, and to DF/NC under the Credit-No Credit (CR-NC) system. This rule does not apply to graduate thesis or dissertation work.

Each entering student will be assigned a Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson. (See section IV)

A minimum residence of three (3) academic years (excluding summers) must be devoted to graduate work at Michigan State University.

Students holding Graduate Assistantships are required by the Department of Theatre and the MSU Graduate School to register for a minimum of six (6) graduate credit hours per semester, excluding summers when a minimum of three (3) graduate credit hours is required if a fee waiver is utilized. Students holding Graduate Assistantships will receive a tuition waiver for a maximum of ten (10) graduate credit hours per semester, excluding summers when a maximum of five (5) graduate credit hours is available.

Receipt of externally funded fellowships by students who have written their own grant applications worth at least $20,000 (direct costs) now makes the student eligible for in-state tuition. The in-state tuition rate applies only to the semesters during which the student is supported by the fellowship. This policy applies only to grants funded through a competitive process by a US institution/agency/foundation. Funds obtained through non-competitive processes (e.g., need-based fellowships) or from international sources do not qualify the students for in-state tuition. For more information: go to Chittenden Hall; 466 W. Circle Dr. 2nd floor. http://grad.msu.edu/

Additional Program Requirements for the MFA - Acting Degree

Students must enroll in THR 894: Special Projects in Theatre for each major performance project. In the judgment of the student’s Graduate Guidance Committee and those faculty
directly related to the THR 894 credit, the student must present evidence of growth in each project. Acting students must audition for all productions and be eligible for casting in these shows during their three years of residency. If a student is not cast in a production, the MFA Actor must perform in a committee-approved project. With approval, such projects may include:

- Original performance piece
- Graduate student directed production
- Professional theatrical production
- Other approved theatrical event

One exception to this casting policy is the major final project role to be completed in the MFA Actor’s final year of study. In consultation with the student’s Graduate Guidance Committee, the student will be assigned a role to be performed in a departmental production or the student may create an original performance piece for public presentation. Both projects require significant, detailed research and a report to the Graduate Guidance Committee. Details on requirements will be provided by the Graduate Guidance Committee.

Students are subject to formal reviews by the Area Faculty with regard to performance in both the classroom as well as their performance in departmental productions and independent projects. (See section V)

**Transfer Credits**

Transfer credits must have been completed within the time limit for the degree. A maximum of nine (9) credits can be accepted to a master’s degree program from transfer courses through lifelong education, or in transfer from another institution. In rare circumstances the Department of Theatre may accept more than nine (9) credits in transfer, but not more than one-third of the total number of credits required for the MFA degree.

**Independent Study Credits**

MFA in Acting candidates are limited to eight (8) THR 890: Independent Study credits which may count toward their degree requirement.

**PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MASTER OF FINE ARTS – DESIGN**

A minimum of 60 graduate credit hours must be completed for the MFA in Design. Please see the university academic programs catalog for requirements.

**Academic Standards**

The student must:

1. Maintain a grade-point average of 3.30 or higher in courses in the Department of Theatre.
2. Accumulate no more than six (6) credits with a grade below 3.0 in courses that are to be counted toward the degree.

3. DF-Deferred grades: The required work must be completed and a grade reported within six (6) months with the option of a single six-month extension. If the required work is not completed within the time limit, the DF will become U-Unfinished and will be changed to DF/U under the numerical and Pass-No Grade (P-N) grading systems, and to DF/NC under the Credit-No Credit (CR-NC) system. This rule does not apply to graduate thesis or dissertation work.

Each entering student will be assigned a Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson. (See section IV)

A minimum residence of three (3) academic years (excluding summers) must be devoted to graduate work at Michigan State University.

Students holding Graduate Assistantships are required by the Department of Theatre and the Graduate School to register for a minimum of six (6) graduate credit hours per semester, excluding summers when a minimum of three (3) graduate credit hours is required if a fee waiver is utilized. Students holding Graduate Assistantships will receive a tuition waiver for a maximum of ten (10) graduate credit hours per semester, excluding summers when a maximum of five (5) graduate credit hours is available.

Receipt of externally funded fellowships by students who have written their own grant applications worth at least $20,000 (direct costs) now makes the student eligible for in-state tuition. The in-state tuition rate applies only to the semesters during which the student is supported by the fellowship. This policy applies only to grants funded through a competitive process by a US institution/agency/foundation. Funds obtained through non-competitive processes (e.g., need-based fellowships) or from international sources do not qualify the students for in-state tuition. For more information: go to Chittenden Hall; 466 W. Circle Dr. 2nd floor. http://grad.msu.edu/

**Additional Program Requirements for the MFA – Design Degree**

MFA Design candidates develop portfolios by accepting a minimum of six (6) design or technical assignments for fully realized departmental productions as members of the production team. Students must participate in production activities during each semester of enrollment in the program by accepting experiential learning assignments in addition to the design assignments.

Students are subject to formal Process Portfolio Reviews by the Design Faculty in both the classroom and the production program. (See section V)

A comprehensive portfolio review is conducted at the end of the year of study.
Transfer Credits
Transfer credits must have been completed within the time limit for the degree. A maximum of nine (9) credits can be accepted to a master’s degree program from transfer courses through lifelong education, or in transfer from another institution. In rare circumstances the Department of Theatre may accept more than nine (9) credits in transfer, but not more than one–third of the total number of credits required for the MFA degree.

Independent Study Credits
MFA in Design candidates are limited to eight (8) THR 890: Independent Study credits which may count toward their degree requirement.

EXIT SURVEY FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS
All students who have applied for graduation will have access to the survey. The survey asks questions about educational experiences in MSU graduate programs, as well as about immediate professional plans. The MSU Graduate School uses data from this survey when reviewing graduate programs and to guide decisions about services and initiatives for graduate students.

The identity of all respondents will be kept confidential and only aggregate information will be made available to faculty and administrators. The students will receive an e-mail message from the Dean of the MSU Graduate School with a link to the survey. However, students do not need to wait for that e-mail message to complete the survey after applying for graduation. Instructions for completing the survey and they are also available from http://grad.msu.edu/etd/

GRADUATE DEGREE CERTIFICATION CHECKLIST

_____ ALL PROGRAMS complete Application for Graduate Admission: http://admissions.msu.edu/admission/graduate.asp

_____ ALL PROGRAMS complete Department of Theatre: Graduate Guidance Committee Form with appropriate faculty signatures: http://www.theatre.msu.edu/ (Academics: Forms)

_____ ALL PROGRAMS complete Department of Theatre: Record of Completion of Requirements: http://www.theatre.msu.edu/ (Academics: Forms)

_____ ALL PROGRAMS complete Application for Graduation: http://www.reg.msu.edu/StuForms/GradApp/GradApp.asp

_____ ALL PROGRAMS review University Commencement Information: http://commencement.msu.edu/

_____ ALL PROGRAMS complete the MSU Masters Destination Survey: https://www.egr.msu.edu/masters/survey/
IV. FORMATION OF THE GRADUATE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE

MFA – ACTING GRADUATE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE

The Graduate Guidance Committee consists of three members of the Faculty: the student's assigned chairperson, another member of the Acting Faculty chosen by the student in consultation with their chairperson, and a third member outside of the Acting Area of the Department of Theatre Faculty chosen by the student in consultation with their chairperson. A fourth, rotating, member of the committee may be appointed as needed. The student's Graduate Guidance Committee must be constituted by the end of the student's first semester of enrollment in the program and the composition of the Graduate Guidance Committee will be submitted to the Head of Acting for approval. The intention is that this committee remains consistent throughout the student’s tenure at MSU. Any changes must be approved by the chairperson.

MFA – DESIGN GRADUATE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE

The Graduate Guidance Committee consists of three members of the Faculty: the student's assigned chairperson, another member of the Design/Technology faculty chosen by the student in consultation with their chairperson, and a third member outside of the Design/Technology Area of the Department of Theatre Faculty chosen by the student in consultation with their chairperson. A fourth, rotating, member of the committee may be appointed as needed. The student's Graduate Guidance Committee must be constituted by the end of the student's first semester of enrollment in the program and the composition of the Graduate Guidance Committee will be submitted to the Head of Design for approval. The intention is that this committee remains consistent throughout the student’s tenure at MSU. Any changes must be approved by the chairperson.

ALL PROGRAMS

It is imperative that the student and the Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson meet during the first semester to map out an overall curriculum plan based upon the degree requirements and options. The plan must be approved by the Graduate Program Director in the area. This plan may be modified due to specific developments in the student's academic career, but it will provide a guide for the student to the degree program. Each semester, the student should meet with her/his Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson not only to select elective and required courses, but also to assess the student's progress toward completion of the degree.

Change in Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson

A change of chairperson may be initiated by the student or by the chairperson. The student must secure the agreement of the change from the proposed new chairperson before informing the Graduate Program Director in the area. The Program Director will review this request for procedural compliance with both Departmental and MSU Graduate School rules and guidelines. If the request is not in compliance, the Program
Director will refer the matter back to the Department Chairperson and, if applicable, the Graduate Hearing Board for review.

**Change in Graduate Guidance Committee Member**
If a change of committee member becomes necessary it may be initiated by the student or by the committee member. The student must secure the agreement of the change from the proposed new committee member before informing their chairperson. If their chairperson sees any problems with the assignment, the matter will be reviewed by the Graduate Program Director in the area who will review this request for procedural compliance with both Departmental and MSU Graduate School rules and guidelines. If the request is not in compliance, the Graduate Program Director will refer the matter back to the Head of Area for review. (Refer to GSRR 2.4)
V. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

ALL PROGRAMS

SEMESTER ACADEMIC REVIEW OF ACCEPTABLE ACADEMIC STANDARDS

The Department Chairperson monitors the semester reviews of all graduate students. It is the responsibility, however, of the Graduate Guidance Committee to conduct semester reviews. The Graduate Program Directors in turn, consider these semester evaluations in order to determine that students are making reasonable progress within their course of study. A student who does not maintain reasonable progress towards the degree or does not fulfill other Departmental and MSU Graduate School requirements may be denied funding support and/or denied further registration in the program. Departmental and Graduate School procedures apply in all cases. All students must maintain a 3.30 or better grade point average. Academic review recommendations are forwarded to the Graduate Program Director for review and assessment. In a timely manner, the Graduate Program Director informs the Department Chairperson of the results of the semester academic review.

ALL REVIEWS

The MFA student will prepare a bullet point list of feedback from the Graduate Guidance Committee meeting and send it to the committee members and Graduate Secretary within 24 hours of the meeting. The committee chairperson will provide a written critique of the student's work if the bullet list does not align with the discussion of the semester review. This critique will be placed in the student's file. The student will receive a copy of the critique and may make an appointment with her/his committee chairperson or committee to discuss the critique and recommendation of the faculty. The student may also respond in writing to this critique. The student’s response will be added to the file and copied to the Graduate Guidance Committee and Department Chairperson. After a negative review, the committee chairperson will notify in writing the Department Chairperson, and include a statement about the student's continuance in the program. This notification, along with the individual evaluation sheets, will be placed in the student's academic file.

Reasonable progress toward a degree is defined as the timely completion of the requirements of the student's graduate degree program. The timetable for the completion of requirements is established by the Department and by general University standards. The Department defines timely completion of the MFA as completion of all coursework and the major final project within three years.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Under special conditions, graduate students may be granted one leave of absence. A maximum leave of one (1) year may be granted to master’s students. The length and rationale for the leave of absence must be stated in advance, recommended to the Dean of
the College of Arts and Letters by the Department Chairperson, and approved by the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters.

**ACADEMIC REVIEW**

Following each academic review, the Graduate Guidance Committee will make one of the following recommendations as to the student's progress in the program: Proceed in Program, First Warning, Second Warning, Denial of Further Registration. In addition, if the student’s GPA falls below a 3.30 average, the Department will place the student on probation, with the possibility of removal from graduate study if the course work does not improve under conditions communicated to the student at the time of notification.

Recommendations may be made for any or all of the following reasons in each category. The student has the right to be informed of the recommendation. The committee chairperson will provide the student with a written explanation of the overall recommendation as reflected in the Graduate Guidance Committee review critiques and evaluations. Recommendations are based on academic and artistic progress as demonstrated in oral and written performance and participation in the classroom and laboratory. The student is also evaluated to be sure that they meet the requirements of the GA assignment. The six types of recommendations are defined below:

1. **Proceed in Program**
   The student's performance meets or exceeds the criteria established within the degree program. The student is making satisfactory progress towards the degree.

2. **First Warning**
   The student will be placed under observation by the Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson to determine progress toward meeting the review criteria. The student will be provided with specific written reasons for the First Warning and will be given suggested corrective actions. The Graduate Program Director will oversee the process, in coordination with the Graduate Guidance Committee, and will keep the MSU Graduate School informed, as needed. The Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson will notify the Department Chairperson at the mid-term review on the status of the corrective action. If these have been taken successfully, first warning status is dissolved. If not, a second warning will be given. The student may respond in writing to this process.

3. **Second Warning**
   The student will be placed under observation by the Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson to determine progress toward meeting the review criteria. The student will be provided with specific written reasons for the Second Warning and will be given suggested corrective actions. The Graduate Program Director will oversee the process, in coordination with the Graduate Guidance Committee and will keep the MSU Graduate School informed, as needed. The Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson will notify the Department Chairperson at the mid-term review, if and when the Second Warning status is to be lifted. Without sufficient improvement as
determined by the Graduate Guidance Committee, the student will be placed on probation.

4. Probation
The Department imposes probation if the student’s GPA falls below a 3.30 average. A student may be dismissed from graduate study if the GPA fails to rise to 3.30 or better. The student will be under observation by the Graduate Guidance Committee to determine progress toward meeting review criteria in the degree program. The student will be provided with specific written reasons for probation and suggested corrective actions. The MSU Graduate School will be officially notified of the recommended probation status by the Department Chairperson. The Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson will notify the Department Chairperson at the end of the semester when probation status is to be lifted. (Refer to GSRR 4.2.4)

5. Denial of Further Registration and/or Employment
When the student has not satisfactorily addressed the areas in need of improvement cited in the Second Warning or Probation reviews, the student will be denied further registration in the degree program. The Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson will notify the Department Chairperson of denial of further registration. The Department Chairperson will in turn notify the MSU Graduate School.

6. Disciplinary Action and Dismissal
The MSU Graduate Employees Union recognizes the authority of the Employer (MSU Department of Theatre) to discipline, suspend or discharge employees and/or graduate students for just cause. Discharge is the termination of employment and/or registration, initiated by the employer, prior to a previously stated appointment end date, for serious misconduct or unsatisfactory performance. Discipline and Discharge may result from an accumulation of minor infractions as well as for a single serious infraction.

**ARTISTIC/ASSISTANTSHIP REVIEW**

The artistic review will consist of review of the graduate student’s performance in the GAship and performance/production involvement. The Graduate Guidance Committee will make one of the following recommendations as to the student’s progress in the program: Proceed in Program, First Warning, Second Warning, Probation or Denial of Further Registration and/or Employment.

Recommendations are based on artistic progress demonstrated in the assistantship duties and production process. The student will be informed of any requirements that need to be met for Warning or Probationary status to be lifted.
The six types of recommendations are as follows:

1. Proceed in Program
   The student’s performance in the classroom/laboratory/shop meets or exceeds the criteria established within the Department and the GA appointment. The student is making satisfactory progress.

2. First Warning
   The student will be placed under observation by the Graduate Guidance Committee and immediate supervisor to determine progress toward meeting the review criteria. The student will be provided with specific written reasons for the First Warning and will be given suggested corrective actions. The committee chairperson will notify the Department Chairperson at the mid-term review on the status of the corrective action. If these have been taken successfully, First Warning status is dissolved. A Second Warning may be given. The student may respond in writing to this process.

3. Second Warning
   The student will be placed under observation by the Graduate Guidance Committee and immediate supervisor to determine progress toward meeting review criteria. The student will be provided with specific written reasons for the Second Warning and will be given suggested corrective actions. The committee chairperson will notify the Department Chairperson at the mid-term review if and when the Second Warning status is to be lifted. Without sufficient improvement as determined by the Graduate Guidance Committee the student will be placed on Probation.

4. Probation
   The Department of Theatre imposes Probation if the student fails to perform the duties of the assistantship or artistic assignment adequately. The student will be provided with specific written reasons for the Probation and suggestive corrective actions. A student may be removed from assistantship or enrollment if the terms of the Probation are not met. The committee chairperson will notify the Department Chairperson after the mid-term review as to whether or not probationary status is to be lifted.

5. Denial of Further Registration and/or Employment
   When the student has not satisfactorily addressed the areas in need of improvement cited in the Second Warning or Probation reviews, the student will be denied further registration in the degree program. The Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson will notify the Department Chairperson of denial of further registration. The Department Chairperson will in turn notify the MSU Graduate School.

6. Disciplinary Action and Dismissal
   The MSU Graduate Employees Union recognize the authority of the Employer (MSU Department of Theatre) to discipline, suspend or discharge employees and/or graduate students for just cause. Discharge is the termination of employment and/or registration, initiated by the employer, prior to a previously stated appointment end
date, for serious misconduct or unsatisfactory performance. Discipline and Discharge may result from an accumulation of minor infractions as well as for a single serious infraction.

**MFA – Acting: Academic and Artistic Review Criteria**

**Graduate Guidance Committee Review**
At the end of each semester the student will meet with the Graduate Guidance Committee. This meeting must be scheduled well before the last week of classes. This meeting is a chance to examine progress throughout the semester and assist in preparing for ultimate success upon graduation. At least 48-hours prior to the meeting the student must deliver to the Graduate Guidance Committee members an updated CV, professional resume, and a reflective written evaluation of 5-7 pages that addresses the following:

1. THR 894
2. Performance and process evaluation
3. Progress as actor
4. GA Classroom self-evaluation
5. Progress as educator
6. Goals for next semester

At this meeting, the Graduate Guidance Committee will review all paperwork and check credits and graduation status. It is also a chance for the Graduate Guidance Committee to constructively evaluate the student’s work at Michigan State University. Students should consult their committee chairperson regarding any questions they may have about the review.

At the semester review the work will be discussed using the following criteria:

1. Flexibility
   a. Willingness to take direction
   b. Commitment to in-class work
   c. Willingness to take risks and demonstrate inventiveness

2. Preparation: Work Outside of Class
   a. Practice of skills
   b. Reading
   c. Memorization
   d. Development of material
   e. Development of original material or original approaches

3. Classwork
   a. Performance of scenes and exercises
   b. Written work
   c. Performance of other assignments and exercises
4. Contribution to Classroom Community
   a. Ability to collaborate
   b. Discussion skills
   c. Appropriate critical commentary and constructive criticism
   d. Adherence to classroom etiquette (as established by instructor)

5. Professional Comportment
   a. Punctuality
   b. Preparation
      i. Warm up
      ii. Timely memorization and analysis
      iii. Appropriate attire
   c. Respect
      i. Courtesy for fellow workers
      ii. Care of rehearsal hall, theatre, props, costumes, etc.
      iii. Demands of the profession

6. Artistic Ability
   a. Believability or Compelling Performance: The quality of truthfulness in a performance by which an audience recognizes the character's actions to be genuine and consistent within the context of the play. The ability to connect emotionally and intellectually with an audience in the exploration of the ideas and emotions set out in the performance.
   b. Playing moments/discoveries where required. Full engagement in a sequence of actions, discoveries and responses that are linked to create a varied, engaging performance.
   c. The creative use of language and visual ideas through the invention of approaches to new performance.
   d. The ability to clearly articulate ideas to an audience or clearly present challenging and difficult ideas to an audience.

7. Techniques
   a. Physical
      i. Physical characterization
      ii. Presence
      iii. Physical ease and grace (elegance of execution)
      iv. Specific demands of the role: dance, acrobatics, combat, etc.
   b. Vocal
      i. Vocal freedom and expressiveness
      ii. Audibility
      iii. Clarity
      iv. Vocal characterization
      v. Dialect
   c. Emotional
      i. Meeting the emotional demands of a role
      ii. Easy and expressive use of a wide emotional range
8. Text analysis:
   a. Depth and quality of text analysis as demonstrated in specific, well-justified line readings and phrasing, well-conceived objectives and appropriate character choices.

9. Completion and respect of teaching assignment related to evaluation and student review.
   a. Successful class preparation.
   b. Completion of duties
   c. Positive growth as educator

**MFA – Design: Academic and Artistic Review Criteria**

**Graduate Guidance Committee Review**

At the end of each semester students will meet with the Graduate Guidance Committee. This meeting must be scheduled well before the last week of classes. This meeting is a chance to examine progress throughout the semester and assist in preparing for ultimate success upon graduation. At least 48-hours prior to the meeting the student must deliver to the Graduate Guidance Committee members an updated CV and a reflective written evaluation of 5-7 pages that addresses the following:

1. THR 894
   a. Initial discussions with the director and production team
   b. Research process: primary and secondary sources
   c. Determination of concept/idea
   d. Personal creative process
   e. Collaborative experience with director and production team
   f. Execution of concept/idea; problems and solutions
   g. Self-assessment of effectiveness: process, execution and final product

2. Progress as designer
3. Progress as educator
4. GA self-evaluation
5. Coursework self-evaluation
6. Goals for next semester

At this meeting, the Graduate Guidance Committee will review all paperwork and check credits and graduation status. It is also a chance for the Graduate Guidance Committee to constructively evaluate the student’s work at Michigan State University. Students should consult their committee chairperson regarding any questions they may have about the review.

The student should make a presentation of and be prepared to discuss and evaluate his or her work to-date accompanied by proper documentation (papers, drawings, renderings, projects, animations, portfolio/website, etc.).
Portfolio Standards and Overall Content:

1. All designs are to be neatly and clearly labeled. The name of the show, character, or scene (if applicable), the date of the design and the designer's name should appear on each work.

2. Visual materials will suggest an understanding of a range of periods and styles assembled in a method appropriate to the given text, music and/or performance.

3. Visual materials must demonstrate the ability to conduct research and present findings in a method that communicates the design approach.

4. Visual documentation (photographs, and/or computer or web-based visualization) of all realized designs will be included.

5. All drafting necessary for the creation and execution of the design: ground plans, sections, elevations, perspective drawings, light plots and pattern drafting may be included.

6. All organizational paperwork necessary for the implementation of the design, including but not limited to, budget statements, crew assignments, costume analysis, lighting paperwork, digital storyboarding, etc. will be included.

7. Demonstration of related graphic abilities in the arts, including painting, drawing, sketching, compositing, etc. may be included.

GRADUATE STUDENT ACADEMIC FILES AND VIEWING PROCEDURES

Typical Inventory in Academic File*:

1. Original Admission Application
2. Official Academic Transcript
3. Graduate Guidance Committee Form
4. Special Projects’ Forms including project descriptions
5. Semester Graduate Guidance Committee Reviews

*GAs will have a separate “personnel file” required by the GEU/MSU contract.

Viewing Policy of Academic File:

A graduate student shall have the right to inspect her or his own academic record and shall also have the right to inspect reports and evaluations of her or his conduct.

All viewing must either be in the presence of their Graduate Guidance Committee Chairperson, Graduate Secretary or Department Chairperson.
VI. DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES: INTEGRITY AND SAFETY IN RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

MSU POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND ORDINANCES REGARDING ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

The Office of the University Ombudsperson: http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/

The Research Integrity Office: http://rio.msu.edu/about

The Graduate School Policy on Research and Scholarly Integrity: http://grad.msu.edu/researchintegrity/

VIOLATION OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Department of Theatre will initiate a review by the Graduate Hearing Board based on the following which may result in removal from the activity in question, probation and/or dismissal:

- Attempting to function in rehearsal, meetings or performance under the influence of abusive substances (i.e. alcohol, illegal drugs, etc.).
- Abusive behavior (including but not limited to inappropriate language) to peers, colleagues, collaborators, etc.
- Lack of punctuality for deadlines, rehearsal, performances, public relations demands, etc.

APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH PROTECTION PROGRAM

If you would like more information about the Human Research Protection Program or to schedule a presentation or session for your group, please email hrpp@ora.msu.edu.

University By-laws and Guidelines: http://hrpp.msu.edu/

Activity in this category is supervised by the Graduate Guidance Committee and the Department Chairperson.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY (EHS)

EHS supports the mission and guiding principles of Michigan State University through leadership, guidance, education and partnership to promote and establish programs in health and safety, protection of the environment and regulatory compliance.

General training information can be found at: http://www.ehs.msu.edu/training/training_general_info.htm
VII. STUDENT CONDUCT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Graduate students in the Department of Theatre operate in two separate but connected spheres: the classroom and the production process.

In both spheres, all participants are expected to be collegial and non-abusive, respectful of others' viewpoints and never disparaging.

Professional academic behavior includes punctuality, sincere and deeply motivated attempts to master the subject matter and a willingness to share and cooperate with others.

In the event of transgressions or lapses, the student is advised by the immediate supervisor with recommendations for altering the objectionable behavior. If necessary, the area head is consulted, then the student's Graduate Guidance Committee and finally the Department Chairperson. At all stages, an informal resolution is preferred.

Production conflicts are resolved at the lowest possible level by the persons involved through goodwill and the guiding principle that priority is accorded to the most immediate production. The Department Chairperson with the advice of the faculty is the final arbiter of these conflicts.

The grievance procedure is outlined in the department bylaws; appeals are addressed by the college and university bylaws governing grievances.

Excerpt from Department of Theatre Bylaws:

2.2.3 Graduate Hearing Board
   2.2.3.1 Composition
   The Graduate Hearing Board shall be composed of three faculty members elected by the voting faculty and three graduate students. Graduate student representatives to the Hearing Board will be elected yearly from the total body of graduate students in the Department of Theatre.
   2.2.3.2 Function
   Procedures shall be in accordance with University policies and procedures pertaining to academic hearing protocol.

Refer to the Office of the University Ombudsperson’s for additional information regarding MSU policies: http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/
VIII. WORK RELATED POLICIES

CRITERIA FOR DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS

ALL PROGRAMS

Refer to MSU/GEU Contract for specific policy regarding University Procedures that are respected by the Department of Theatre: http://commons.grd.msu.edu/

GEU Website: http://geuatmsu.org/

All GA job opportunities are available at:
http://theatre.msu.edu/index.php/academics/graduate-studies/

Each academic year the Department of Theatre appoints Graduate Assistantships (one and two semester appointments), at up to 50% full time equivalent, to perform duties in teaching, production, research and administration. Some work in theatre research; some teach small-group recitation sections in conjunction with large service courses principally IAH 241D; some teach in introductory Department of Theatre courses; others serve as laboratory assistants in design and technical production. Preference for departmental appointments is given to returning students and to applicants whose admission is completed by April 15.

Appointment as a Graduate Assistant is based on the qualifications of the applicant, the evaluation of the applicant via audition, interview, portfolio review and letters of reference. Faculty in the areas in which GA positions are available review all applicants and make recommendations to the Department Chairperson. Appointments are determined by funding availability and are renewed on the basis of progress toward degree as determined by the student's Graduate Guidance Committee.

Graduate Assistants receive bi-weekly stipend payments. In addition to the stipend, Graduate Assistants receive remission of general and instructional fees and, as applicable, resident tuition for each semester of registration. Summer appointments are made separately from the regular academic year.

Area faculty recommend students for graduate assistantships based on student experience, abilities and interests. Recommendations for new students are based on admission materials. Recommendations for continuing students are based on semester reviews. Graduate Assistant assignments are based upon the needs of the Department and upon an educational philosophy that graduate students should have experience in a range of theatre activities. Graduate Assistant (50% appointment) assignments are for an average of 20 hours per week throughout the semester. Specific assignments may vary from week to week, semester to semester, during the academic year.

The 20 hours are not assigned for work on any individual research or production assignment that the Graduate Assistant may be given as partial fulfillment of the degree
requirements. Those individual assignments should receive specific credit under THR 894: Special Projects in Theatre. Graduate Assistant assignments are made each semester by the Department Chairperson in consultation with the area faculty. Once the assignments are announced for the upcoming semester, the Graduate Assistant should make an appointment with the immediate supervisor of the assigned areas to establish the precise work schedule for the upcoming semester. Specific assignments may vary within a semester.

Department of Theatre GAs are given a written review of their assistantship performance by their designated supervisor. All responses will be sent to the Guidance Committee and kept in the GA personnel file.

Training and Professional Development
The Department of Theatre will offer an orientation training program in the fall of every year for all graduate assistants. During this orientation, graduate GAs will be provided training in the teaching of specific subject matter, an introduction to course goals, grading criteria and practices, and classroom and/or shop procedures. All GAs shall, as part of their regular duties, participate in such programs.

While such programs are important for all graduate assistants, attendance will not be required for any employee who is determined by the Department of Theatre already to have the skills and experience equivalent to those provided in the program.

Required training during the defined orientation period of a graduate GA’s employment, will be included as part of the hourly semester total.

Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct
All GAs must complete the on-line training about the Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct Policy. To Access the training, login to the ORA training website at: http://goo.gl/pLh01o. If you need assistance, contact the Helpdesk at 517-884-4600 or train@ora.msu.edu.

Outside Employment and Work for Pay
A Graduate Assistant (50%) who is considering additional employment outside the Department or the University must first obtain the permission of his/her committee chairperson. The committee chairperson must evaluate the impact of the additional employment commitments on the student's academic progress and on his/her GA responsibilities. Once decided, Area Program Director must be informed.

Early Departure
It is expected that all theatre students will remain on campus, attend classes and complete all course work for each semester. All teaching and non-teaching assignments held by graduate students run until each is released individually by the faculty supervisor of the area in which the assistantship or employment is located or as defined by the GEU contract (see GEU Article 10). Requests for early departure must be made in writing and approved by each instructor, work supervisor, and the Graduate Guidance Committee.
**Professional Meetings**
Graduate students may request from their immediate supervisor accommodation to attend career-significant professional meetings, interviews and auditions not to exceed one working week. Preference is given to final year graduates.

**Religious Holidays**
Students who miss classes because of the observance of religious holidays should not be penalized on this account and should be given ample opportunity to make up the missed work. Faculty should not schedule examinations in their courses on the designated religious holidays or on the calendar day following the designated holidays.

**Illness**
Each professor sets her/his own policy regarding absence from class. Instructors may or may not honor an Olin physician's request, or any other physician's request, for an excused absence. This decision should be based on the instructor's attendance and make-up policies, as stated in the course syllabus.

**Grief Absence Policy**
For master’s (Plan A), master’s (Plan B) with research responsibilities, and doctoral students, it is the responsibility of the student to: a) notify their advisor/major professor and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student’s initial knowledge of the situation, b) provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the advisor/major professor and faculty, and c) complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the advisor/major professor and faculty. It is the responsibility of the advisor/major professor to: a) determine with the student the expected period of absence – it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances, b) receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student’s return, and c) make reasonable accommodations so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence. If employed as a RA or TE, the graduate student must also notify their employer. Both employer and student will swiftly communicate to determine how the student’s responsibilities will be covered during their absence. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the bereavement policy in the MSU GEU CBU Article 18. Students in the graduate professional colleges (CHM, COM, CVM, LAW) with their own grief absence policies are excluded from the above and should follow their own policies. Students who believe their rights under this policy have been violated should contact the University Ombudsperson.

**Summer Appointments**
Summer appointments are separate from the regular academic year appointments and positions to be available are announced in the Spring Semester. Selection of graduate assistants for the summer term will be made by the Department Chairperson in consultation with area faculty.
English Language Proficiency Level
Refer to section III of this handbook for GA expectations.

Refer to Criteria for the Appointment of a Graduate Assistant regarding a checklist of Procedures that are respected by the Department of Theatre: http://www.vps.msu.edu/graduate-assistant-information

CRITERIA AND PROCEDURES FOR REAPPOINTMENT

ALL PROGRAMS

It is the policy of the Department of Theatre that Graduate Assistant appointments will be awarded according to enrollment in particular programs. Continued departmental support is not assured and is dependent upon semester by semester reappointment. Funding depends on satisfactory progress toward the degree as referenced in section VII of this Handbook, and is not guaranteed.

DEPARTMENTAL RESOURCES AND POLICY

All Graduate Assistants will have access to the following:

1. An office (single or shared) to conduct office hours.
2. Copy machines with the approval of the Office Manager.
3. Office supplies with the approval of the Office Manager.
4. A mailbox located in the central office; 113 Auditorium.
5. Access to a telephone.
6. Digital Design Lab if a computer is not provided in the individual’s office.
IX. UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Michigan State University
http://www.msu.edu/

MSU: The Graduate School
http://grad.msu.edu/Default.aspx

Career and Professional Development (PREP)
http://grad.msu.edu/prep/

MSU Teaching Assistant Program
http://tap.msu.edu/

GEU/MSU Contract
http://www.msu.edu/user/gradschl/geu/agree.pdf

College of Arts and Letters
http://www.cal.msu.edu/

MSU Department of Theatre
http://www.theatre.msu.edu/

Summer Circle Theatre
http://theatre.msu.edu/index.php/productions/summer-circle-theatre/

Program for Interdisciplinary Learning through the Arts
http://teachart.msu.edu/pila/

Department of Art and Art History
http://www.art.msu.edu/

Broad Art Museum
http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/

MSU Museum
http://museum.msu.edu/

MSU Office of the Ombudsman
http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/

MSU Librairies
http://www.lib.msu.edu/

MSU Libraries Magic
http://magic.lib.msu.edu/
Counseling and Support Services/Public Safety and Health Information
http://www.msu.edu/user/gradschl/all/health.htm

Housing Information
http://www.liveon.msu.edu/

Campus and Community Information
http://www.collegelifeel.msu.edu/

Career and Professional Development Resources
http://www.msu.edu/user/gradschl/career.htm

Student Organizations
http://studentlife.msu.edu/student-organizations-activities

Graduate Student Survey Results
http://grad.msu.edu/survey/graduatetestudent.aspx