

# Acting for the Returning Professional Master of Fine Arts Degree

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FULL PROPOSAL

Submitted to: Chancellor's Council on Graduate Studies  
Ohio Department of Higher Education

Submit date: *to come*

Submitted by: College of the Arts  
Kent State University



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## Basic Characteristics of the Proposed Program

### 1. Brief description of the disciplinary purpose and significance of the proposed degree.

Since 1994, Kent State University's School of Theatre and Dance has offered a terminal M.F.A. degree in Theatre Studies with concentrations in acting and design and technology (the latter with emphases in costume, lighting and scene design and direction). Since 1997, the school has offered a track within the M.F.A. for seasoned professional performers who were not seeking a traditional M.F.A. degree, but one that gave them the opportunity for advanced work in theatre pedagogy and theory, as well as one that recognized their professional experiences. That track, Acting for the Returning Professional, became an official concentration within the Theatre Studies major in 2016.

The current concentration for the acting professional has proven to be successful for over 15 years, and faculty agree that separating the program from the design and technology curriculum will more accurately reflect the program as it has evolved. The three concentrations of the current M.F.A. (acting, acting for the returning professional and design/technology) no longer share a robust common core, have different entrance criteria and are offered in different cycles. "Theatre Studies" is too broad a term for the discipline.

Faculty suspended admission to the Acting concentration in 2018 and are only recruiting into the Returning Professional concentration. Along with this proposal, the School will bring forward another proposal to establish an M.F.A. degree in Theatre Design and Technology.

Theatre programs in the School of Theatre and Dance are accredited by the National Association of Schools of Theatre. The school offers a B.A. degree in Theatre Studies, B.F.A. degree in Musical Theatre and B.F.A. in Theatre Design, Technology and Production, in addition to numerous theatre-related undergraduate minors. In fall 2019 (15<sup>th</sup> day census) 340 students were declared in a theatre degree program in the school.

### 2. Definition of the focus of the program.

The proposed two-year terminal degree program provides the candidate a set of core classes centered around a variety of techniques and theories, within a flexible pedagogical laboratory model that allows the candidate to explore areas of interest. Students are offered ample opportunities to hone performance and teaching skills to align with their areas of interest. The curriculum will allow them to incorporate advanced teaching and mentoring through performance in the form of teaching and practicum.

### 3. Rationale for the degree name.

Per the National Association of Schools of Theatre, *"The Master of Fine Arts degree title is appropriate only for graduate-level programs that emphasize full-time, professionally-oriented study of some aspect of theatre practice that prepares the student as an advanced professional practitioner or a professional teacher of theatre practice."*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Association of Schools of Theatre (April 19, 2019). Handbook 2019-20. Retrieved from <https://nast.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/05/NAST-Handbook-2019-20-Current-08-30-2019.pdf> (page 119).

The proposed M.F.A. degree program aligns with that definition.

**4. Duration of the program.**

**a. Total credit hours for completion of the program:**

The degree program will be 60 semester credit hours.

**b. Normal or typical length of time for students to complete the program:**

Length of the program will be two years (four semesters and one summer term) for full-time students.

**5. Proposed initial date for implementation of the program.**

The proposed implementation is fall 2020.

**6. Admission requirements and admission timing.**

The program will admit a small cohort of students every two years in the fall semester, approximately six to eight students in each cohort. Applicants must hold a bachelor's degree, minimum 3.000 undergraduate GPA (on a 4.000-point scale) and submit a résumé, goal statement, three letters of recommendation and evidence of professional experience. In addition, they must complete an audition and interview.

**7. Primary target audience for the program.**

The audience for the program is theatre artists with substantial professional experience who seek a full-time, terminal degree program.

**8. Special efforts to enroll and retain underrepresented groups.**

**a. Plan to ensure recruitment, retention and graduation of groups underrepresented within the discipline.**

Kent State is a member of the University Resident Theatre Association and attends auditions to recruit both nationally and internationally on an individual basis. The School of Theatre and Dance has a vast alumni network in colleges and universities throughout the country and recruits competitively, offering a full tuition waiver, stipend and subsidized health coverage. The Acting for the Returning Professional concentration has been successful over the last 10 years in recruiting classes with between 10 and 33 percent African American or Latinx. Kent State's Division of Graduate Studies supports underrepresented students with a Graduate Dean's Travel Award (for recruitment travel) as well as the Graduate Dean's Award (additional to the assistantship).

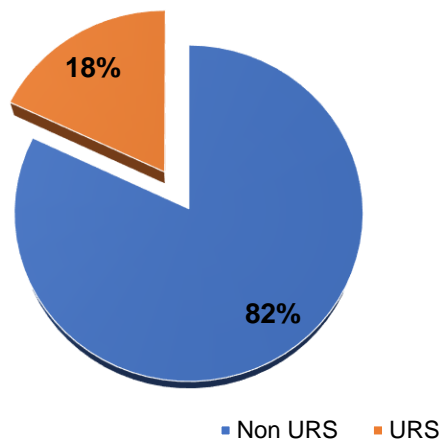
The school has also increased the diversity of the faculty over the past five years by 13 percent. Currently 29 percent of the faculty are from underrepresented populations.

- b. Provide as background a general assessment of the following: (1) institution and departmental profiles of total enrollment and graduate student enrollment of underrepresented groups within the discipline; and (2) comparison with nationally reported values from National Center for Educational Statistics, Council of Graduate Schools or other authoritative sources. Supply data by demographic group where available.

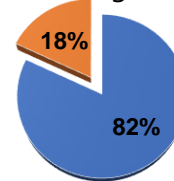
Kent State's Acting for the Returning Professional program has a 33-percent enrollment of underrepresented students (two out of the six students enrolled currently). Overall, 18 percent of underrepresented students made up the fall 2019 enrollment in Kent State's theatre degree programs, see figures below:<sup>2</sup>

Figures: Enrolled underrepresented (URS) students in theatre majors in Kent State's School of Theatre and Dance (Fall 2019 Semester)

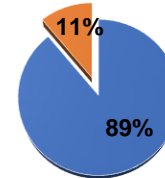
Theatre - All Degree Programs



Theatre - Undergraduate Majors



Theatre - Graduate Majors



## Institutional Planning for Program Change

### 1. What are the physical facilities, equipment and staff needed to support the program?

Physical facilities, staffing and equipment for the M.F.A. degree were determined as meeting accreditation standards from a 2019 review from the National Association of Schools of Theatre. The Center for the Performing Arts on the Kent Campus houses three theatres, performance and rehearsal space, a costume shop, an extensive scene shop with ventilation and dust collection, a prop studio with spray hood, a welding lab, a scenery construction studio, a dye room, laundry facilities and laboratories for costumes, drafting, lighting, scenery and CAD and other software. A performing arts library in the center provides students access to scores, scripts, audio and video recordings, journals, monographs and texts.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Kent State Office of Institutional Research based on student self-reporting of ethnicity/race at admission.

The School of Theatre and Dance oversees the professional venue Porthouse Theatre in Cuyahoga Falls. Porthouse Theatre operates in summers under an Actors' Equity Association agreement through the University Resident Theatre Association.

## **2. What is the evidence that a market for the new program exists?**

### **a. How has estimated program demand been factored into realistic enrollment projections?**

The School of Theatre and Dance has seen a marked increase in interest from professional actors desiring the M.F.A. degree. Seventy percent of returning professional graduates have procured full-time positions in higher education or in education departments in major organizations. The program seeks to meet the traditional demand for terminal degrees in performance areas and pedagogy sought by professionals looking to transition into a new chapter of their careers. The school recently reached out to unemployed professional Broadway actors and received strong interest in the program.

Other institutions offering similar degree programs for the returning professional include California State University at Long Beach (M.F.A. in Theatre Arts/Acting), University of Pittsburgh (M.F.A. in Performance Pedagogy) and Virginia Commonwealth University (M.F.A. in Theatre Pedagogy). Similar to Kent State's program, these are two-year programs. As this program is distinctive and one of few in the nation, Kent State anticipates meeting enrollment projections.

### **b. How has this evidence been used in planning and budgeting processes to develop a quality program that can be sustained?**

Over the past 10 years, the School of Theatre and Dance has developed the following to grow and sustain its programs:

- Construction in 2010 of a \$16-million facility expansion, which included three dance studios and two acting studios and renovations to existing shops, laboratories, theatres and classrooms and new black box theatre
- Upgrades to equipment and safety measures to include automated and LED fixtures and shop ventilation and dust collection
- Hires of three full-time faculty in sound, movement and stage management, respectively; and one full-time and one part-time faculty in costume technology
- Securement of an endowed guest director series to sustain one professional director per year for mainstage productions
- Approval of an arts fee for undergraduate students, which gives them free admission to all arts events and allows the school to maintain production budgets
- Development of a New York City showcase for Kent State undergraduate and graduate actors
- Provision of travel grants to students to encourage their participation and presentations at national conferences

- c. **Provide evidence of need for the new degree program, including the opportunities for employment of graduates. Examples of potential metrics of program need include: (1) Student interest and demand: potential enrollment; ability to sustain the critical mass of students; (2) institutional need: plan for overall development of graduate programs at the university; and (3) societal demand: intellectual development; advancement of the discipline; employment opportunities to meet regional, national needs and/or international needs.**

Since 2006, the school has successfully placed 70 percent of its acting students upon graduation, most of them in higher education. The School of Theatre and Dance subsidizes all returning professional graduate students for two years. Considering that the cost of living in Northeast Ohio is low, many students graduate with much lower debt than from other M.F.A. degree programs.

Regarding market trends for designers and technical directors, below are the few studies on the subject:

- The Theatre Communications Group estimates that, in 2017, 1,759 professional non-profit theatres nationwide employed artists as the majority of its workforce.<sup>3</sup>
- The Association for Theatre in Higher Education reports the market for college faculty positions in theatre has remained reasonably consistent between 1996 and the present.<sup>4</sup>
- The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that employment in entertainment and sports occupations will grow five percent between 2018 to 2028, about as fast as the average for all occupations. Employment of actors is projected to show little or no change from 2018 to 2028. The number of Internet-only platforms, such as streaming services, is likely to increase, along with the number of shows produced for these platforms. This growth may lead to more work for actors.<sup>5</sup>

Within the concept of artist/educator, there is a societal demand for practitioners of the discipline in all media. As a result, there is a demand for educators with significant professional experience to instruct within the crafts of acting, performance and theatre studies. The need is particularly significant on the national and international levels as performance disciplines continue to expand and diversify. This is evidenced by the number of positions available in performance disciplines at educational institutions and the high employment rate of recent graduates of Kent State's M.F.A. degree program. Kent State's program is unique as the only one of its kind in the Midwest.

<sup>3</sup> Voss, Z.G., Voss, G.B., Fonner, D., Rose, I.B. & Baskin, L. (2018) Theatre facts 2018. Retrieved from [www.tcg.org/pdfs/tools/TCG\\_TheatreFacts\\_2018.pdf](http://www.tcg.org/pdfs/tools/TCG_TheatreFacts_2018.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Bial, H. (n.d.) The new normal. Association for Theatre in Higher Education. Retrieved from [www.athe.org/page/About\\_Jobs](http://www.athe.org/page/About_Jobs).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (4 September 2019). Occupational Outlook Handbook. Retrieved from [www.bls.gov/ooh/entertainment-and-sports/home.htm](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/entertainment-and-sports/home.htm).

## Statewide Alternatives

### 1. What programs are available at other institutions, and how do they differ from the program being proposed?

Four universities in Ohio offer a graduate degree in acting (see table below). The primary difference between Kent State's program and the others is Kent State's program is for seasoned actors, while the other programs are preparing candidates for the acting profession. Kent State M.F.A. students begin developing a teaching portfolio in their first year. Graduate assistants in teach introductory acting and the Art of the Theatre course (general education) in their first year. As students matriculate, they have the opportunity to teach intermediate acting courses and/or special topics in an area of their choosing.

In addition, Kent State's program is two years with 60 credit hours, while the others are three years with more credit hours required. Another unique aspect of the program is Porthouse Theatre, Kent State University's professional summer theatre, where graduate students have additional opportunities to perform, assistant direct and teach.

Table: M.F.A. degree programs in acting in Ohio

University	Program	Career Objective	Characteristics	NAST Accredited
Case Western Reserve University	M.F.A., Acting	Prepares students for careers as professional actors	Three years, 82 credit hours, thesis portfolio	No
Kent State University	M.F.A., Acting for the Returning Professional	Prepares professionals with extensive acting experience for other careers in the field, primarily education	Two years, 60 credit hours, thesis project	Yes
Ohio State University	M.F.A., Theatre (Acting emphasis)	Prepares students for careers as professional actors	Three years, 69 credit hours, comp exam	Yes
Ohio University	M.F.A., Acting	Prepares students for careers as professional actors	Three years, 90 credit hours, performance thesis	Yes

### 2. Explain the appropriateness of the specific locale for the program.

The Kent Campus is located 40 minutes from downtown Cleveland and 20 minutes from Akron, both of which offer vibrant theatre and arts opportunities. The area is home to two League of Resident Theatres Equity theatres (Great Lakes Theatre and Cleveland Playhouse), a number of smaller Equity theatres and other theatres that provide Equity contracts. In addition, the School of Theatre and Dance produces Porthouse Theatre, a summer professional theatre program less than 30 minutes from the Kent Campus.

### 3. Are there opportunities for inter-institutional collaboration to offer the program?

Kent State does not foresee any collaborations with other universities at this time but welcomes an opportunity for partnerships with other NAST-accredited programs.



## Growth of the Program

### 1. What future growth do you anticipate over several years?

Enrollment in the program traditionally has been based on the availability of assistantships for students. Since fall 2018, there have been six students enrolled in the program, all with assistantships designated to the acting area. The expectation is the program will grow to eight students with assistantships.

### 2. How do you plan to manage this growth?

As the courses are existing and offered by existing faculty, current resources are sufficient for the initial year, with the expectation that if the program grows more than predicted, the college dean will evaluate additional full-time hires. The current facilities and staff serve existing students, with room to accommodate more.

### 3. When do you expect the program to be self-sufficient?

Per the fiscal impact statement in Appendix A, the program as a concentration has been operating with a small net loss, which is expected to decrease each year of implementation. The expectation is offering the distinct program as its own major will leverage more recruiting and fundraising opportunities.

## Curriculum and Instructional Design

### 1. Description of the proposed curriculum, including any concentrations, cognates or specializations within the major.

All courses in the proposed curriculum are existing and have been offered for the M.F.A. degree in Theatre Studies. For the full curriculum as well as admission and graduate requirements, see the catalog page in Appendix B. Course

Acting faculty determine the acceptability of the professional experience toward the degree program based on a developed evaluation rubric, see Appendix C. Through that rubric, a maximum of 16 credits is awarded through THEA 61098 Research. Requirements for the research course include a critical analysis of the student's professional activities.

Assignments for the research course may include the student completing a journal of the experience by documenting skills learned and application to current goals, a substantial paper tying the professional experience to classroom teaching and pedagogy, submission of an article for publication in a current professional journal or a significant presentation at a national conference connecting the experience to teaching, mentoring and/or pedagogy. Assignment details are determined by the faculty member supervising the research.

Slight modifications are being made to the curriculum as it transitions from a concentration to a separate major:

- The following elective choices are now required in the revised curriculum:
  - THEA 51303 Acting I Foundations/Stanislavski and Michael Chekhov
  - THEA 51304 Acting II: Scene Study - Modern American Realism

- THEA 51701 Movement, Form and Space I - The Actor's Physical Instrument
- THEA 51803 Voice and Speech I
- THEA 51808 Acting Styles I - Shakespeare
- THEA 61305 Acting Styles II: Greek and Comedy of Manners
- THEA 61701 Movement, Form and Space II - Neutral and Character Mask
- THEA 61803 Voice and Speech II
- Elective THEA 62392 Practicum: Performance Pedagogy is now required, of which students must complete three times (for a total of 3 credit hours)
- THEA 60199 M.F.A. Thesis Project is added as the culminating requirement, replacing THEA 61309 M.F.A. Comprehensive Project in Acting
- THEA 61094 College Teaching in Theatre is added as required for students who will be teaching assistants
- THEA 51010 Theatre and Social Change replaces THEA 61531 Period Style for Theatre Designers as one of the options with THEA 51113 Theatre in Multicultural America, THEA 51115 LGBTQ Theatre or THEA 51191 Variable Content Seminar: Theatre History, Literature and Theory.
- Requirement THEA 63192 Mentorship in Performance (or THEA 64192 Mentorship at Porthouse) is removed.
- THEA 51305 Professional Aspects: Performance is added as an elective.
- Elective THEA 51702 Movement and Dance for Actors is removed.

Course descriptions are in Appendix D.

## **2. Description of a required culminating, or integrated learning, experience.**

The culminating academic experience is a graduate thesis/creative project. Students completing the thesis project must illustrate what they have learned throughout their graduate education, while also delving deeper into an area of interest that allowed them to acquire new skills. This is a realized project of scale requiring either a performance role of significance or a significant production project. Students are encouraged to develop a project that will help to propel them into the academic market. These projects may take various forms depending on student interest and professional aspiration. As an example, multiple students have addressed technical challenges in creating a role of demand requiring significant performative skills. Additionally, multiple students have developed and presented original theatrical works. These works demonstrate knowledge acquired throughout their graduate education. The project also provides them with a creative, directorial, and pedagogical experience that translated directly into and facilitated successful migration into the academic profession.

In all cases, the thesis project encapsulates a public performance and a formal presentation. Documentation consists of a textual analysis, process journal, relevant research and other supporting materials (e.g., photos, links to the candidate's website). A committee of graduate faculty evaluates the project and reports the assessment to the College of the Arts.

The project serves not only as a capstone but also as a fully realized project of scale that demonstrates the artistry and skills learned in the program. The thesis project serves as the final step in the establishment of the student's academic/creative agenda and is assessed and measured by both students and a committee of graduate faculty.

Past culminating projects include:

- *Creation of original one-man work based on Meyerhold*, candidate Terrence Cranendonk
- *Performance and analysis of Lady Macbeth in "Macbeth."* candidate Jennifer Hemphill
- *Performance and analysis of Macbeth in "Macbeth,"* candidate Jim Bray
- *Performance and analysis of Fred Graham/Petruchio in "Kiss Me Kate,"* candidate Steve Cramer
- *Finding connections between three roles of significance*, candidate Tracee Patterson
- *Creation and direction of original production, "Love Is,"* candidate Mavis Jennings

## Institutional Staffing, Faculty and Student Support

1. **How many and what types of faculty (full and part time) will be employed in the program? Describe how number and type of faculty is sufficient to support the program (especially if the program contains a research or heavily mentored activity).**

Five full-time, tenured and tenure-track faculty and two part time faculty teach the courses in the program, see table below. Faculty CV are in Appendix E.

M.F.A. candidates are cast in theatre productions, directed by additional full-time faculty at Kent State. All faculty who are teaching or involved in the program also teach for other degree programs in the School of Theatre and Dance. Faculty capacity and credentials are appropriate for the program as a concentration current and projected for the future as a separate degree program. In addition to the following faculty who teach graduate courses in the program, there are four other faculty who support the program by directing and music directing.

Full-Time Faculty		
Faculty Member	Terminal Degree	Courses Taught and/or Proposed
<b>Courtney Brown</b> Associate Professor (voice, speech) <i>tenure track</i>	M.F.A., Acting, University of Southern Mississippi, 2008 Years teaching: 8 Certified Lessac voice and body trainer	THEA 51803 Voice and Speech I THEA 60199 Thesis Project THEA 61098 Research THEA 61303 Acting III Scene Study: THEA 61803 Voice and Speech II THEA 61804 Voice and Speech II THEA 61806 Singing for the Actor THEA 62192 Performance: Practicum THEA 62392 Practicum: Performance Pedagogy THEA 65192 Teaching Practicum

<b>Full-Time Faculty</b>		
<b>Faculty Member</b>	<b>Terminal Degree</b>	<b>Courses Taught and/or Proposed</b>
<b>Amy Fritsche</b> Associate Professor (acting, movement) <i>tenured</i>	M.F.A., Musical Theatre, San Diego State University, 2010 Years teaching: 9	THEA 51305 Professional Aspects THEA 51701 Movement, Form and Space I THEA 61098 Research THEA 61701 Movement, Form and Space II THEA 61703 Movement, Form and Space III THEA 61806 Singing for the Actor THEA 62192 Performance: Practicum THEA 62392: Practicum Performance Pedagogy THEA 65192 Teaching Practicum
<b>Paul Hurley</b> Assistant Professor (acting, movement) <i>tenure track</i>	M.F.A., Acting, University of Delaware, 2007 Years teaching: 4	THEA 51701 Movement, Form and Space I THEA 51808 Acting Styles I - Shakespeare THEA 60199 Thesis Project THEA 61098 Research THEA 61303 Acting III Scene Study THEA 61701 Movement, Form and Space II THEA 61703 Movement, Form and Space III THEA 62192 Practicum: Performance THEA 62392 Practicum: Performance Pedagogy THEA 65192 Teaching Practicum
<b>Yuko Kurahashi</b> Graduate Coordinator and Professor (theatre history and criticism) <i>tenured</i>	Ph.D., Theatre and Drama, Indiana University– Bloomington, 1996 Years teaching: 19	THEA 60992 Professional Theatre Internship I THEA 61000 Intro to Graduate Study in Theatre THEA 61094 College Teaching in Theatre THEA 61098 Research THEA 61992 Professional Theatre Internship II THEA 65000 History, Historicism, Theory and Practice in Theatre and Drama
<b>Daniel-Raymond Nadon</b> Professor (theatre history and criticism) <i>tenured</i>	Ph.D. Theatre, University of Colorado– Boulder, 1993 Years teaching: 26	THEA 51010 Theatre and Social Change THEA 51113 Theatre in Multicultural America THEA 51115 LGBTQ Theatre THEA 51191 Variable Content Seminar THEA 60992 Professional Theatre Internship I THEA 61098 Research THEA 61992 Professional Theatre Internship II THEA 62192 Performance: Practicum THEA 62392 Practicum: Performance Pedagogy THEA 65192 Teaching Practicum
<b>Fabio Polanco</b> Associate Professor (acting and directing) <i>tenured</i>	M.F.A., Acting, Case Western Reserve University, 1997 Years teaching: 16	THEA 51303 Acting I Foundations/Stanslavski and Michael Chekhov THEA 51304 Acting II: Scene THEA 51401 Advanced Directing THEA 51808 Acting Styles I - Shakespeare THEA 60199 Thesis Project THEA 61098 Research THEA 61303 Acting III Scene Study THEA 61305 Acting Styles II THEA 62192 Practicum: Performance THEA 62392 Practicum: Performance Pedagogy THEA 65192 Teaching Practicum

Part-Time Faculty		
Faculty Member	Terminal Degree	Courses Taught and/or Proposed
Michael Gatto Adjunct Instructor	M.F.A., Acting, University of Alabama, 2001 Years teaching: 7	THEA 51703 Stage Combat
Rohn Thomas Adjunct Instructor	M.F.A., Acting, Indiana University– Bloomington, 1980 Years teaching: 21	THEA 51301 Acting for the Camera I THEA 51302 Acting for the Camera II

**2. How many, if any, new faculty will be hired for the program?**

As the proposal is to elevate an existing concentration—taught by existing faculty—to a separate degree program, there are no anticipated new hires for the program.

**3. What are the administrative arrangements for the proposed program, including oversight at the program, department/school and college level?**

The theatre graduate coordinator oversees administration of the program, including curriculum design. The coordinator reports to the director of the School of Theater and Dance, who in turn, reports to the dean of the College of the Arts. The associate dean of the College of the Arts provides oversight of all graduate programs in the college. The School of Theatre and Dance is one of four schools in the college, with the others being the School of Art, School of Music and School of Fashion Design and Merchandising.

**4. Where will any needed financial support and staffing come from?**

All courses for the proposed degree program are existing, no new ones will be created. Faculty support both undergraduate and graduate programs in the school. Since the cohorts for this program are purposefully kept small, there is no anticipated need for additional resources.

## Academic Quality Assessment

**1. What are the admission criteria — in addition to the traditionally required transcripts, standardized test scores, letter of recommendation and personal statements of purpose — that will be used to assess the potential for academic and professional success of prospective students?**

In addition to submitting the standard requirements for admission to a Kent State master's degree, applicants must audition and interview with program faculty. The audition generally consists of a presentation of two contrasting monologues (one should be from Shakespeare and one contemporary) and one 16+ bar song (30 seconds to two minutes).

**2. Will there be special consideration of student experience and extant practical skills within the admission process? If so, please elaborate.**

In order to be eligible for admission to the program, students must meet the threshold of a returning professional, see the evaluation rubric in appendix C. Faculty reviewing applicants are seeking candidates who possess substantial professional experience that may include, but is not limited to, Broadway credits, major regional and/or international performance credits, film or television credits, awards of national recognition, professional union affiliation, publication in field of expertise and a significant record of mentoring. This information, meant to give a sense of a candidate's work, can be provided through résumé/CV, performance reviews, interviews and awards, among other artifacts.

**3. Is a field/clinical experience subsumed within the academic experience?**

There is a required internship.

**4. How are the qualifications of the faculty associated with the professional graduate degree appropriate? Provide the specific qualifications for such faculty.**

Each faculty member in the program holds a terminal degree in their field of expertise, and each faculty member maintains an active and significant creative research profile as well as professional performing career.

**5. How does accreditation by the appropriate professional organization relate to the academic curriculum and experience outlined in the program plan?**

- a. Describe the specific aspects of the program plan, if any, that are necessary to achieve professional accreditation.

The National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) accredits Kent State's M.F.A. in Theatre Studies and all its concentrations, including Acting for the Returning Professional. Once the program is approved as a separate degree, the School of Theatre and Dance will apply for NAST accreditation and submit a proposal for final listing once transcripts are available for the first cohort. NAST is aware of the proposal and acknowledged the intention in its 2018-19 accreditation report.

- b. Is completion of the degree program required for professional accreditation in the field?

No, graduates do not need to secure accreditation to work in the field.

**6. How are theory and practice integrated within the curriculum?**

Theory and practice are components of all courses in the curriculum. Students typically begin courses by exploring an acting theory or methodology and immediately putting it into practice in their in-class acting assignments. The students then explore pedagogical theories embedded in the teaching of the theory or methodology they just learned and put it into practice in-class and in their own teaching and assistant teaching. Students also integrate theory in their production work. In history and criticism classes, emphasis is placed on practical application of theory and acquiring the skills necessary for entering the academy.

**7. What is the national credit hour norm for this degree program?**

The National Association of Schools of Theatre requires the terminal M.F.A. degree to be at a minimum of 60 semester credit hours (or 90 quarter credit hours).<sup>6</sup>

**8. Describe the required culminating academic experience and how it will contribute to the enhancement of the student's professional preparation.**

See item 2 in the Curriculum and Instruction Design section (pages 10-11) for a full description of the culminating requirement.

<sup>6</sup> National Association of Schools of Theatre (July 2002). Advisory regarding credit hour requirements for the Master of Fine Arts degree in theatre. Retrieved from <https://nast.arts-accredit.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2016/03/NAST-Advisory-on-Credit-Hour-Requirements-for-the-MFA.pdf>.

## Appendix A: Fiscal Impact Statement

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
<b>I. Projected Enrollment</b>				
Headcount full-time	6	7	8	8
Headcount part-time	0	0	0	0
Full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment	6	7	8	8
<b>II. Projected Program Income</b>				
Tuition	\$101,154	\$112,920	\$124,686	\$124,686
Expected state subsidy	\$45,218	\$50,421	\$57,624	\$59,622
Externally funded stipends, as applicable	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Other Income	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
<b>Total Projected Program Income</b>	<b>\$146,372</b>	<b>\$163,341</b>	<b>\$182,310</b>	<b>\$184,308</b>
<b>III. Program Expenses</b>				
New personnel				
Instruction				
Full-time: 0	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Part-time: 0	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Non-instruction				
Full-time: 0	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Part-time: 0	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Current personnel				
Instruction				
Full-time: 5 (@ .333FTE <i>see note</i> )	\$102,595	\$106,392	\$110,887	\$112,544
Part-time: 2 (@ approx. .10 FTE-fluctuates)	\$1,500		\$1,800	\$1,500
Reduction in costs for part-time teaching at the undergraduate level	(\$72,000)	(\$74,000)	(\$76,000)	(\$76,000)
Non-instruction				
Full-time: 0	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Part-time: 0	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Benefits for all personnel ( <i>see note</i> )	\$13,785	\$14,010	\$14,457	\$14,660
New facilities/building/space renovation	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Scholarship/stipend support	\$48,000	\$52,000	\$56,000	\$56,000
Additional library resources	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Additional technology or equipment needs	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Other expenses (from below)	\$79,000	\$81,000	\$83,000	\$85,000
<b>Total Projected Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$244,880</b>	<b>\$253,402</b>	<b>\$266,144</b>	<b>\$269,704</b>
<b>Projected Program Net</b>	<b>\$(26,508)</b>	<b>\$(16,061)</b>	<b>\$(7,834)</b>	<b>\$(9,396)</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>				
Allocation of expenses covered by general fee	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000
RCM overhead - estimated at 50%	\$75,000	\$77,000	\$79,000	\$81,000
RCM tuition allocation to other colleges	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Professional development	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
Supplies (office, computer software, printing)	\$750	\$750	\$750	\$750
Telephone, network and lines	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250	\$1,250
Other info and communication pool	\$—	\$—	\$—	\$—
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$79,000</b>	<b>\$81,000</b>	<b>\$83,000</b>	<b>\$85,000</b>

*Note: Financial amount for the five full-time faculty represents 33% since all instruct in three programs.*



## Appendix B: Program Catalog Page

### College of the Arts

School of Theatre and Dance - Theatre Division

B141 Center for the Performing Arts

Kent Campus

330-672-2082

[theatre@kent.edu](mailto:theatre@kent.edu)

[www.kent.edu/theatredance](http://www.kent.edu/theatredance)

### Description

The Master of Fine Arts degree in Acting for the Returning Professional provides students with substantial performance experience an intensive preparation for diverse careers in the field, including teaching at the university level. The goal of the terminal degree program is to mentor professional performers who wish to focus on refining and articulating their acting process, while gaining sound pedagogical practice in performance-related subjects. These subjects may include acting, voice and speech, movement and musical theatre. The two-year program provides a set of core classes centered around a variety of techniques and theories, within a flexible pedagogical laboratory model that allows students to explore areas of interest while incorporating advanced teaching and mentoring through performance in the form of teaching and practicum.

#### FULLY OFFERED AT:

- Kent Campus

### Accreditation

National Association of Schools of Theatre

### Admission Requirements

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university for [unconditional admission](#)
- Minimum 3.000 undergraduate GPA on a 4.000 point scale for [unconditional admission](#)
- Official transcript(s)
- Résumé
- Goal statement
- Three letters of recommendation
- Evidence of professional experience<sup>1</sup>
- Audition
- English language proficiency - all international students must provide proof of English language proficiency (unless they meet specific exceptions) by earning one of the following:
  - Minimum 525 TOEFL PBT score (paper-based version)
  - Minimum 71 TOEFL IBT score (Internet-based version)
  - Minimum 74 MELAB score
  - Minimum 6.0 IELTS score
  - Minimum 50 PTE score

For more information about graduate admissions, please visit the [Graduate Studies](#) website. For more information on international admission, visit the [Office of Global Education](#) website.

<sup>1</sup> Required evidence in support of admission may include, but not limited to, Broadway, regional, and/or international performance credits; film and television credits; awards of national recognition; professional union affiliation; publication in the field of expertise; significant record of mentoring; and certifications and/or designations in areas such as acting, voice and speech or stage combat. Program faculty will evaluate the submitted documentation of professional experience and determine eligibility for the M.F.A. degree.

## Program Learning Outcomes

Graduates of this program will be able to:

1. Employ a broad range of acting knowledge and skills in the creation and presentation of roles.
2. Perform in plays of various types and from various periods.
3. Acquire advanced capabilities in acting, voice and speech, movement, theatre history and pedagogy.
4. Apply sound pedagogical practices to aspects of theatre or performance studies.
5. Demonstrate professionalism in an acting setting.

## Program Requirements

### MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

Major Requirements		
THEA 51010	Theatre and Social Change	3
or THEA 51113	Theatre in Multicultural America	
or THEA 51115	LGBTQ Theatre	
or THEA 51191	Variable Content Seminar: Theatre History, Literature and Theory	
THEA 51303	Acting I Foundations/Stanslavski and Michael Chekhov	3
THEA 51304	Acting II: Scene Study - Modern American Realism	3
THEA 51701	Movement, Form and Space I - The Actor's Physical Instrument	3
THEA 51803	Voice and Speech I	3
THEA 51808	Acting Styles I - Shakespeare	3
THEA 60992	Professional Theatre Internship I	6
or THEA 61992	Professional Theatre Internship II	
THEA 61000	Introduction to Graduate Study in Theatre	3
THEA 61094	College Teaching in Theatre <sup>1</sup>	0-3
THEA 61305	Acting Styles II: Greek and Comedy of Manners	3
THEA 61701	Movement, Form and Space II - Neutral and Character Mask	3
THEA 61803	Voice and Speech II	3
THEA 62192	Practicum: Performance ( <i>must be taken two times</i> )	6
THEA 62392	Practicum: Performance Pedagogy ( <i>must be taken three times</i> )	3
THEA 65000	History, Historicism, Theory and Practice in Theatre and Drama	3
Major Electives, choose from the following:		9
THEA 51095	Special Topics	
THEA 51191	Variable Content Seminar: Theatre History, Literature and Theory	
THEA 51301	Acting for the Camera I	
THEA 51302	Acting for the Camera II	
THEA 51305	Professional Aspects: Performance	
THEA 51401	Advanced Directing	
THEA 51703	Stage Combat	
THEA 61095	Special Topics	
THEA 61096	Individual Investigation: Theatre and Drama	
THEA 61098	Research	
THEA 61303	Acting III Scene Study: Naturalism and Absurd	
THEA 61703	Movement, Form and Space III	
THEA 61804	Voice and Speech III	
THEA 61806	Singing for the Actor	
THEA 65192	Teaching Practicum	
Culminating Requirement		
THEA 60199	M.F.A. Thesis Project	3
Minimum Total Credit Hours:		60

<sup>1</sup> THEA 61094 is required for graduate assistants only.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE EVALUATION

Students have the potential to earn a maximum 16 credit hours for their professional experience toward the degree. Program faculty will determine the acceptability of professional experience submitted and calculate the number of credit hours that can be earned. While applicant's creative activities may encompass more than 16 credit hours, a maximum of 16 credit hours may be applied to the plan of study. The professional experience will be evaluated and awarded through THEA 61098 as the candidate matriculates through the degree program.

Documentation to be submitted in support of returning professional qualification includes the following:

1. Copy of the contract(s) from a production company or theatre company
2. Theatrical playbills or programs which contain the applicant's name and role
3. Evidence of reviews and promotional materials
4. Awards, nominations and or certification documents
5. Written explanation of the professional experience presented, and its influence on current professional and educational endeavors

The documentation will be evaluated and approved by the acting area faculty, and the candidate will be notified of returning professional credit.

## Appendix C: Evaluation Rubric for Professional Experience for Admission as a Returning Professional

The following chart outlines the areas of professional experience used for admission to the M.F.A. degree in Acting for the Returning Professional. Faculty must determine a minimum of 6 points to qualify applicants for admission.

Creative activity	1 point awarded	2 points awarded	3 points awarded
Major performance credits with league theatres Broadway/ national tours	1 production	2 productions	3+ productions
Major performance credits with regional LORT/URTA credits- tier 1 and tier 2 opera companies	1 production	2 productions	3+ productions
Major international performance credits (e.g., European tours, world tours, London's West End)	1 production	2 productions	3+ productions
Major film and/or television credits	1 production	2 productions	3+ productions
Professional union affiliations (A.E.A., SDC, SAG-AFTRA, AGMA)	Apprenticeship or candidacy program	Established membership	Vested membership and/or record of service
Awards of regional or national recognition (credit awarded for each)	Regional award nomination (e.g., Jefferson, Barrymore, Ovation)	Regional award received (e.g., Jefferson, Barrymore, Ovation)	National award nomination or received (e.g., Tony, Grammy, Oscar, Emmy)
Publication in field of expertise	Peer-reviewed journal/article publication	Invited journal/article publication (e.g., <i>American Theatre</i> , <i>Theatre Journal</i> , <i>Drama Review</i> )	Researched publications (books, plays, scores)
Record of mentorship or service	University guest artist performance or Actor's Equity Association guest contracts with emerging nationally recognized venues	Professional vocal, movement, acting, fight captain and/or coaching with emerging nationally recognized venues	Work as director, music director or choreographer with nationally recognized venues
Certifications or designations in acting, movement, voice/ speech, stage combat, etc.	Level I certification or designation (if the certifier has a hierarchy)	Level II certification or designation	Level III or full certification or designation

## Appendix D: Course Descriptions

**THEA 51010 Theatre and Social Change** (3 credit hours) (Slashed with THEA 41010) The course interweaves the history, theory, practice and play text development in the field of theatre and social change.

**THEA 51095 Special Topics** (1-3 credit hours) (Repeatable for credit) (Slashed with THEA 41095) Offered irregularly when unusual resources permit.

**THEA 51113 Theatre in a Multicultural America** (1-3 credit hours) (Slashed with THEA 41113) A study of theatre and drama in the Native-American, Hispanic-American, African-American and Asian-American communities in the United States from 1980 to present.

**THEA 51115 LGBTQ Theatre** (3 credit hours) (Slashed with THEA 41115) Studies of various theatrical representations of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer people as seen through the frameworks of history, gender theory, identity, politics, psychology, law, and justice.

**THEA 51191 Variable Content Seminar: Theatre History, Literature and Theory** (3 credit hours) (Repeatable for credit) (Slashed with THEA 41191) Seminar focuses on selected topics in these areas, for example performance art, performance theory or theatre in a multicultural society.

**THEA 51301 Acting for the Camera I** (3 credit hours) (Slashed with THEA 41301) An introduction to the specific techniques used in film acting. The course provides students with the necessary tools to make the transition from stage acting to camera acting.

**THEA 51302 Acting for the Camera II** (3 credit hours) (Slashed with THEA 41302) Further development on the specific techniques used in film acting as applied to the graduate actor. The course continues to assist in making the transition from stage acting to camera acting.

**THEA 51303 Acting I Foundations/Stanslavski and Michael Chekhov** (3 credit hours) The Stanislavski and Michael Chekhov Techniques: A thorough exploration of Stanislavski's Method of Psycho-Physical Action, and the Michael Chekhov technique including atmosphere, psychological gesture, and qualities of movement.

**THEA 51304 Acting II: Scene Study-Modern American Realism** (3 credit hours) (Slashed with THEA 41304) The application of the Stanislavski and Michael Chekhov Techniques to in-depth scene study using the plays of Odets, Miller, Williams, Shanley and others.

**THEA 51305 Professional Aspects: Performance** (3 credit hours) (Slashed with THEA 41305) A study of the practical demands and requirements of a professional acting career with particular emphasis on audition skills. Also covered pictures and resumes, making rounds, professional unions, casting directors, agents and managers, the job market and career prospects.

**THEA 51401 Advanced Directing** (3 credit hours) (Slashed with THEA 41401) Advanced work in directing for the theatre. Topics include director as creative interpretative artist, the director and the actor. Students direct individual projects.

**THEA 51701 Movement, Form and Space I-The Actor's Physical Instrument** (3 credit hours) Development of technical skills emphasizing the physical components of expressive action through integration of breath, voice and body conditioning.

**THEA 51703 Stage Combat** (3 credit hours) (Repeatable for maximum 6 credit hours) (Slashed with THEA 41703) Introductory course focuses on creating the illusion of violence for the stage and screen. Basic instruction is given in unarmed and armed stage combat. Emphasis is on the development of technique; the process of the work; and the performance, with a focus on safety, accuracy and the fundamental techniques recognized by the Society of American Fight Directors (SAFD). Basic techniques are incorporated into short scenes to provide experience performing fights in production.

**THEA 51803 Voice and Speech I** (3 credit hours) Practical study and application of voice and speech production for the actor into various styles of verse and prose, including heightened language and text.

**THEA 51808 Acting Styles I: Shakespeare** (3 credit hours) (Slashed with THEA 41808) The application of acting, movement, and voice and speech techniques to sonnets, monologues, soliloquies, and scenes from Shakespeare.

**THEA 60199 M.F.A. Thesis Project** (3 credit hours) (Repeatable for credit) Students must register for course during the semester of their M.F.A. thesis project.

**THEA 60992 Professional Theatre Internship I** (3, 6 credit hours) (Repeatable once) Intensive advanced training in practical aspects of production. Periodic seminars, laboratory sessions and performance in the Porthouse Theatre Company.

**THEA 61000 Introduction to Graduate Study in Theatre** (3 credit hours) Orientation to bibliography and research in the field of theatre with emphasis on application of research to performance.

**THEA 61094 College Teaching in Theatre** (3 credit hours) (Repeatable for credit) Strategies for teaching, issues on implications of pedagogical practice and responsibilities of academic leadership.

**THEA 61095 Special Topics** (1-3 credit hours) (Repeatable for credit) Offered irregularly when unusual resources permit a topic different from existing courses. Topic are announced when scheduled.

**THEA 61096 Individual Investigation: Theatre and Drama** (1-4 credit hours) (Repeatable for maximum 6 credit hours) Independent study of an area or problem approved by divisional graduate coordinator in consultation with project director.

**THEA 61098 Research** (1-15 credit hours) (Repeatable for credit) Research or individual investigation for master's-level graduate students. Credits may be applied toward meeting degree requirements with school approval.

**THEA 61303 Acting III Scene Study: Naturalism and Absurd** (3 credit hours) In-depth scene study in the genres of Naturalism and Absurd theatre. Exploration of the works of Chekhov, Strindberg, Beckett and others.

**THEA 61305 Acting Styles II: Greek and Comedy of Manners** (3 credit hours) Application of acting, movement and speech techniques to these specific genres. Focus on style and physicalization using Greek and English Restoration playwrights as well as Molière, Wilde and others.

**THEA 61701 Movement, Form and Space II-Neutral and Character Mask** (3 credit hours) Advanced skills and conditioning focusing on the physical and vocal qualities of characterization achieved through performance in masks.

**THEA 61703 Movement, Form and Space III** (3 credit hours) Advanced skills and conditioning focusing on the physical and vocal qualities of characterization achieved through period movement. This course allows actors to effectively perform movement and styles from specific historical periods and genres.

**THEA 61803 Voice and Speech II** (3 credit hours) Ongoing study and application of voice and speech technique into various styles of text, and the analysis and development of accents for performance and presentation.

**THEA 61804 Voice and Speech III** (3 credit hours) Advanced study and application of voice and speech techniques, focusing on the extremes of vocal demands.

**THEA 61806 Singing for the Actor** (1 credit hour) A comprehensive study of performance techniques and repertoire appropriate to the singing actor.

**THEA 61992 Professional Theatre Internship II** (3,6 credit hours) (Repeatable for credit) Intensive advanced training in practical aspects of production. Periodic seminars, laboratory sessions and performance in a professional theatre company.

**THEA 62192 Practicum: Performance** (3 credit hours) (Repeatable for credit) (Cross-listed with KBT 62192) Practical experience for the graduate student in theatre performance under faculty supervision.

**THEA 62392 Practicum: Performance Pedagogy** (1 credit hour) (Repeatable for credit) Advanced practical experience in theatre performance pedagogy under faculty supervision.

**THEA 65000 History, Historicism, Theory and Practice in Theatre and Drama** (3 credit hours) Course covers the breadth of theatre history and historicism and application of theatre theory to practice by focusing on the six major stylistic periods: Greek and Roman, Medieval, Renaissance, Romanticism, Realism and Non Realism (symbolism, expressionism, surrealism, absurdism) and contemporary period (postmodernism, feminism and interculturalism, multiculturalism). Using lecture, scholarly articles, video viewing and practical writing projects, students learn about and practice each style, as well as apply the style to students' respective areas of graduate study (i.e. actor, director, designer).

**THEA 65192 Teaching Practicum** (3 credit hours) (Repeatable for maximum 6 credit hours) Application of strategies for teaching at the college level. Development of advanced skills in course preparation, classroom management and pedagogical practice. Major work done teaching or assisting with undergraduate classes.

## **Appendix E: Faculty Curriculum Vitae**

See separate attachment.