

Department of Theatre
Understudies: Policy and Procedures

Definition:

The role of an understudy in the Department of Theatre, University Theatre production program refers to a performer who learns the lines, blocking, and choreography of a regular actor/actress in a play and is expected to attend all rehearsals. Should the actor assigned to the role be unable to appear at rehearsal or performance due to illness or other unforeseen circumstance, the understudy takes over the part. This definition applies only to students assigned as an understudy during the regular academic year in the Department. It does not apply to understudies for Kansas Repertory Theatre (KRT).

Purpose:

- 1) The purpose of understudies is pedagogical. Being an understudy provides students an opportunity to hone their skills through observing rehearsals, to work on character development and work under the mentorship of a faculty or guest director.
- 2) The purpose of understudies is to provide a backup for specific roles so that if the actor/actress in the play is unable to perform the understudy will be able to serve the show.

Standard Operating Procedure:

- Prior to auditions, directors will determine their interest/willingness to cast understudies. This decision will be based on what roles they perceive might need an understudy and the director's availability/time to support the needs of a student(s) in an understudy role.
- The director of theatre, associate chair/artistic director and the technical director of theatre will determine the number of understudies based on how it will impact crewing and other personnel needs of the production.
- When the students apply for auditions through the Accepted program, they will be asked whether or not they are interested/willing to serve in understudy roles. There are no expectations that the student will say yes.
- Once the student accepts the role as an understudy, they will be expected to fulfill the commitment.

Additional Notes:

- Understudies will not have a costume.
- Understudies will not have a performance unless they replace an actor.