

## University of Washington School of Drama Design Assistant Guidelines

We as the design faculty see assisting as an important part of a student's education. Through assisting, students will observe an experienced designer in production and prepare themselves for their own productions. They will also gain experience with our design/production process and shops. Assistant Designers are also an important part of the creative team and their support of the Designer is invaluable in creating the show.

We acknowledge that there are inherent power dynamics involved in this process and we have created these guidelines to help facilitate a common understanding among designers, assistants, and professors.

### Expectations:

- The School of Drama aspires to create a community that is welcoming to people of all cultures, races, sexes, abilities, sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions, ages, religions, and economic statuses.
- We expect everyone to contribute to a culture of respect and inclusion
- If you have an experience within the department that does not reflect our goals of respect and inclusion, if you need support around a conflict you are having with someone in the department, or if you'd like help gaining clarity around a challenging situation, please let us know. Feel free to contact anyone on this list, or if you may follow the UW process for voicing a concern:  
<https://drama.washington.edu/process-voicing-concerns>
  - Costume Professor: An-lin Dauber - [adauber@uw.edu](mailto:adauber@uw.edu)
  - Scenic Professor: Sara Walsh - [swalsh1@uw.edu](mailto:swalsh1@uw.edu)
  - Lighting Professor: Andy Smith - [ads7@uw.edu](mailto:ads7@uw.edu)
  - Sound Professor: M.L. Dogg - [mld321@uw.edu](mailto:mld321@uw.edu)
  - Costume Shop Manager: Ricky German - [ragerman@uw.edu](mailto:ragerman@uw.edu)
  - Interim Production Manager: Jeff Larson - [jlars1@uw.edu](mailto:jlars1@uw.edu)
  - Undergraduate Advisor: Eloise Boyle - [emboyle@uw.edu](mailto:emboyle@uw.edu)
  - Graduate Advisor: Megan Gurdine - [mgurdine@uw.edu](mailto:mgurdine@uw.edu)
  - Executive Director: Geoff Korf - [gkorf@uw.edu](mailto:gkorf@uw.edu)

### Hours & Course Credit:

- Student Assistants are assigned course credit for assisting. Each credit is 30 hours over the course of the quarter. The Assistant and Faculty Mentor will decide together how many credits they will take based on their class schedule and other commitments.
- Students can work less than the full hour count, but should not go over the hour count without discussion with their faculty mentor and undergraduate or graduate advisor
- It is the responsibility of the assistant to track their hours and to keep the designer updated
- It is the responsibility of the designer in conjunction with the faculty mentor to determine how best to utilize the assistant's time and divide up their hours accordingly (ie, if the Designer intends to have the Assistant in tech with them, they should consider that when assigning them tasks leading up to tech)

### Grading:

- Professors in the respective areas are the faculty mentor for the student assistants. Designers do NOT determine grades.
- Professors will assign grades based on conversations with the Designer, Shops, and Production Manager
- Grading is based on effort and engagement with the process

### Learning Goals:

1. Assistant will observe the Designer and learn how to work with the UW production shops and the process of putting a show into production
2. Assistant will observe the Designer work with the creative team and learn best practices for collaboration and communication
3. Assistant will build the necessary skills and information to be the head designer on future productions at UW
4. Costume Design Specific Requests for the Lead Designer:
  - a. Include the assistant in at least one fitting
  - b. Share and talk through your paperwork
  - c. Include the assistant (when possible) in hands on craft work
  - d. Invite the assistant (when possible) to listen to design conversations, tech, etc
  - e. Invite the assistant (when possible) to listen to conversations on wigs/hair/makeup
5. Lighting Design Specific Request for the Lead Designer:
  - a. Share conceptual goals for the production and how the lights serve those goals.
  - b. Share paperwork, plot and magic sheet with the ALD.
  - c. Invite the assistant when possible to listen to design meetings, production meetings or rehearsal.
  - d. Invite the assistant when possible to listen to design conversations in tech.
  - e. Establish clear duties for the ALD. Example: updating cue lists, taking work notes, tracking follow spots, etc.
6. Scenic Design Specific Request for the Lead Designer:
  - a. Share conceptual ideas, research (and sources), and model making discoveries
  - b. Include assistant when possible to listen in on design conversations, production meetings, etc
  - c. Include assistant when possible to rehearsal visits
  - d. Include assistant when possible in shop visits and discussions
  - e. Walk assistant through complete drafting package (during finals or afterward)
  - f. Spend at least one full day with assistant in tech, and talk to them about what you do in (what you look for, when/how you engage with the rest of the team, when/ how you take notes)

### Costume Design Specific:

- We acknowledge that Costume Designers sometimes must work after hours in the costume shop and it can be beneficial to have an Assistant at those times. In this scenario, the Costume Designer can ask the Assistant to work after normal shop hours, **but it is in no way required.**
- If a Designer and Assistant choose to work together on weekends or after hours, they should find another person to be in the space with them or choose another time to work when there will be more people in the building
- Doors should be propped open when pulling from stock
- Any fittings should always have at least 3 people in them – the actor, the designer, and an assistant/draper/costume shop manager, etc.
- We ask both Designers and Assistants to help us to foster a culture of safety and respect by communicating their own needs and boundaries.

#### Lighting Design Specific:

- Most work between LDs and ALDs takes place in the theatre between focus, tech and notes for a production. Unless otherwise arranged the ALD will be present for Light Over, Tech rehearsals and previews. The ALD could also attend focus or notes, which are generally held from 2-6pm on weekdays, but this will be dependent on the ALD's schedule.
- ALDs learn best when they are involved in the creative process, meaning they can overhear design conversations in meetings and in tech rehearsals.
- If there is disagreement about the scope of work, assigned tasks or timing of work, please consult your faculty mentors.
- We ask both Designers and Assistants to help us to foster a culture of safety and respect by communicating their own needs and boundaries.

#### Scenic Design Specific:

- Scenic Designers Can use Assistants in a variety of ways. Some things that are most needed are the most “boring”. Try and find a balance so that both designer and assistant are benefiting from this process together.
- Some work may want to take place in the design studio late at night. If you choose to work together on weekends or after hours, you should find another person to be in the space with you or choose another time to work when there will be more people in the building
- Some possible areas assistants can be helpful: building model box, building finished model pieces, helping with drafting, making prop list, doing prop research, following and responding to rehearsal reports, interfacing with props department, checking in to the shop/ load in, coming to tech (taking notes, being a second set of eyes), and doing hands-on properties or scenic work (making paper props, doing specific research, spec'ing items to buy, painting).
- If there is disagreement about the scope of work, assigned tasks or timing of work, please consult your faculty mentors.
- We ask both Designers and Assistants to help us to foster a culture of safety and respect by communicating their own needs and boundaries.