PART II: THEATRE SPECIALIST PAGES

In the following section ATHE provides “specialist pages” based on many of the job titles often found in theatre departments. Each specialist page has a brief description of a specialty and the fundamental knowledge that the job requires, as well as a list of some of the specific questions that external evaluators may wish to ask as they evaluate a candidate’s portfolio for tenure or advancement in rank. The specialist pages are meant to supplement the material in Part I.

Faculty members involved in theatrical production are best evaluated by experienced peers in their disciplines, along with other theatre professionals who can contextualize the candidate’s work for a tenure and promotion committee. However, recognizing that portions of the evaluation process of theatre faculty in academic institutions are also often the responsibility of those unfamiliar with the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities of those involved in theatrical production, the following sections seek to contextualize this labor. It is essential that the institutional leadership has a complete understanding of the nature of the field.

It must be stressed that it is common for a faculty member in theatre to perform several roles in a department. The smaller the institution, the more likely it is that one person will perform several roles as a teacher and artist. Some of these roles may be consistent with the faculty member’s training or professional preparation; other roles may be less familiar, or contingent upon another faculty member’s temporary reassignment or absence.

In other instances, many theatre professors engage in creative production and teaching across two or more specialties. ATHE recommends that those involved in the tenure and/or promotion process draw from all of the candidate’s areas of specialization in evaluating such cases. Such combinations can include, but are not limited to:

- Actor/Director
- Actor/Fight Director/Intimacy Director
- Actor/Vocal Coach
- Costume Designer/ Costume Technologist
- Director/ Choreographer
- Director/ Dramaturg
- Lighting Designer/ Sound Designer
- Producer/Director
- Properties Director/ Technical Director
- Scenic Designer/ Costume Designer
- Scenic Designer/ Lighting Designer
- Scenic Designer/Technical Director
- Scenic Designer/Properties Designer
- Technical Director/ Lighting Designer/ Sound Designer
- Theatre Historian/Dramaturg
- Theatre Historian/ Director

The combination of specialties depends to a large degree on the individual institutional resources and needs. Many theatre professors are also expected to teach and produce creative work across the full spectrum of theatre specialties. When these creative and teaching areas are combined, care must be taken to ensure that evaluation criteria are equitably applied. When evaluating the creative work of
these combined positions, reviewers should use criteria appropriate to each specialty. The weight accorded each area should be commensurate with the distribution of time spent working in that area. Many institutions schedule annual meetings between faculty and institution administrators to discuss workload assignments and to make explicit how the faculty member will fulfill the appropriate teaching, service, DEIJ, and research/creative activity requirements of the department. During such meetings it is also appropriate to ascertain how such activities will be valued in the progress toward tenure/promotion and how they might best be documented. Tacit understandings and oral agreements can be blurred or even negated by change, so it is important that agreements are documented, approved and kept in the candidate’s personnel file for future reference. It is essential that theatre faculty and administrators understand and agree upon how such various and overlapping responsibilities will be assessed and what effect they will have on the tenure/promotion process.