L. Sound Designer

The Sound Designer is an artist/scholar whose primary responsibility is designing sound for the theatre to enhance a given production. The sound should express the stylistic interpretation unique to the production.

When evaluating documentation in a tenure dossier, external reviewers, administrators, and the tenure and promotion committee may ask themselves whether the candidate’s tenure portfolio demonstrates the ability to teach and use their practice to explore:

**Production Expertise**

- Excellence in sharing ideas and concepts with other artistic staff (i.e., director, other designers, dramaturg, etc.)
- Ability to collaborate with artistic staff and support the direction of the production within an aural environment
- Ability to share sound design ideas with others through both verbal and aural means
- Knowledge and ability to manipulate current audio technology and systems, both reinforcement and recording/playback
- Knowledge of technology and system analysis and equipment assembly processes for both reinforcement and recording/playback
- Knowledge of acoustics
- Knowledge of psychoacoustics
- Knowledge of basic rigging, electrical, and electronic techniques/technologies as related to sound design
- Understanding the techniques and skills of directing as they relate to sound design
- Understanding related production design areas (costume design, lighting design, scenic design)
- Knowledge of relevant standard safety procedures and regulations, as well as those prescribed by related professional organizations such as Actors’ Equity Association (AEA), United Scenic Artists #829 (USAA), the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDCS), Society of Fight Directors (SAFD), and the American Federation of Musicians (AFM), as appropriate.
- In-depth understanding of equitable practices in the theatre through a display of cultural competency and the techniques necessary (consent based and trauma-informed practices) for honoring the professional and personal boundaries of students

**Historical Context**

- Knowledge of dramatic literature across the globe, including historic and contemporary genres
- Knowledge of the history of theatrical production
- Knowledge of music history and music genres
- Understanding of basic musical composition principles
- Knowledge of economic and social history
Collaborative Skills

- Excellence in oral, written, and aural communication skills needed to sensitively translate designs into reality
- Ability to work and collaborate effectively with artists and technologists in a variety of professional and academic settings
- Knowledge of financial management of audio production, acquisitions, and maintenance
- Ability to assess the accuracy of the technical execution and operation of the auditory elements of the production
- Understanding sound studio personnel management and scheduling
- Excellence in higher level planning required in seasonal and repertory contexts
- An understanding of ethical practices associated with the field of professional and academic theatre and performance
- An understanding of how DEIJ is considered when selecting research projects for students
- An understanding of how DEIJ informs the recruitment of students, in cases where that is part of the candidate’s labor
- An understanding of how DEIJ issues impact their life at the university and an ability to think about their own implicit biases

Overall excellence from the Sound Designer requires the ability to integrate knowledge in the areas noted above. Sound designers must work with an understanding of the conceptual requirements of a production to create sound designs that are both artistically and technically proficient and can be realized with the constraints of the budget and available labor of the producing organization. Such expertise is demonstrated by participating in realized production both on and off campus. The Sound Designer is best evaluated by attending a live performance of a production for which the designer is responsible. Whereas the inclusion of audio files & associated paperwork is essential as support material detailing the process of the designer, it does little to evaluate true ability. Audio files, charts, and other paperwork should be evaluated but they cannot substitute for the viewing of an actual production. Still or video photography might add some useful information to an evaluation but, again, are inferior to a live production. If recorded media are used for evaluation of a candidate, the circumstances of the recordings must be clearly stated.