

Production Response Worksheet - KCACTF Region IV (Southeast)

Title of Production _____

Producing College/University _____

Choose ONE: Participating Entry / Associate Entry

Is this an original script? YES / NO **Is this a student original script?** YES / NO

Author (if original or student original) _____

Author's email address (if original or student original) _____

Director	_____	Student Faculty	Guest
Choreographer	_____	Student Faculty	Guest
Voice/Dialect Coach	_____	Student Faculty	Guest
Dramaturge	_____	Student Faculty	Guest
Costume Designer	_____	Student Faculty	Guest
Scenic Designer	_____	Student Faculty	Guest
Lighting Designer	_____	Student Faculty	Guest
Sound Designer	_____	Student Faculty	Guest
Makeup Designer	_____	Student Faculty	Guest
Technical Director	_____	Student Faculty	Guest
Stage Manager	_____	Student Faculty	Guest

STUDENT AWARD NOMINEES

Irene Ryan Acting Award Nominee by respondent: _____

Student Directing Nominee by respondent: _____

Stage Management Nominee by respondent: _____

Dramaturgy Award Nominee by respondent: _____

Barbizon Costume Design Nominee by respondent: _____

Barbizon Scenic Design Nominee by respondent: _____

Barbizon Lighting Design Nominee by respondent: _____

Alcone Makeup Nominee by respondent: _____

KCACTF Sound Nominee by respondent: _____

FACULTY CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Nominee: _____ **Award Area:** _____

Director, Designer, Technologist, etc.

Nominee: _____ **Award Area:** _____
Director, Designer, Technologist, etc.

NOTE: Certificates of Merit should be awarded to faculty who demonstrate only the highest standards of excellence through their work. The certificate program is not a competitive program. Certificates will be awarded to faculty at the regional festival or mailed to them afterwards.

Date of Attendance/Oral Response _____

Does the KCACTF sponsorship billing appear in the program? YES / NO

Production Evaluation (For PARTICIPATING ENTRIES ONLY):

- _____ Strongly Recommended for Regional Festival
- _____ Recommended for Regional Festival
- _____ Not Recommended for Regional Festival

IMPORTANT: After viewing the performance and providing oral response, please visit www.kcactf4.org/response.html to file your nominations and narrative response online within 72 hours. Your online response submission will generate an automated email of your response to the regional chair. The chair will be responsible for forwarding your response to the show's director and for soliciting the director's/school's nominations for Irene Ryan and Design nominees.

REIMBURSEMENT: Once you have submitted your response online, you will be directed to an online respondent reimbursement form. KCACTF Region IV will reimburse you for mileage at a rate of \$0.35 per mile. The school should provide you with a meal and hotel accommodation, if necessary due to long distance travel. Please inform the school in advance if you will require a hotel and work with the school in making arrangements for reimbursement paperwork.

If you have questions about the process, please contact:

Shelly Elman
KCACTF Region IV Chair
University of West Georgia
Martha Munro Building
Carrollton, GA 30018
678.839.4704 (Phone)
678.839.4708 (Fax)
relman@westga.edu

Oral and written production response guidelines

Responding is:

1. Respectful of the work and the process: Theatre is a collaborative art, and as such implies that artists working as a unit are built around mutual respect. Artists, individuals and companies are vulnerable, especially before a respondent. We must respect and acknowledge this vulnerability without deferring to it.
2. One person's response, not a definitive word: Respondents can reduce initial tension by assuring the company that they are going to share their personal, professional experience of the company in one particular night, and that those experiences have validity based on experience and individual truth. To that end, respondents must respond, not pontificate to what they see, not what they expected to see. They should avoid phrases such as, "What I wanted/needed to see." Instead, they should use, "This is what I saw" or "This is what you presented" or even the ask the question, "Is this what you wanted me to see/feel?" If "yes," the respondent discusses the choices the company made that got them there. If "no," the respondent and the company discuss the choices that interfered and other options. Respondents must avoid the temptation to redirect the work. Toward that end, a "disclaimer" of sorts has been developed to help frame a context for every response:

KCACTF Oral Response Disclaimer (please say this or something very much like it in preface to every KCACTF response)

I'm here representing the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival and I'm charged to respond to the performance I just experienced. I was not a part of the process that helped bring the play life, and I cannot comment on your growth in the work during that process but I can respond to what I just experienced as an informed member of the audience with a certain amount of training and experience as an artist and a teacher. I am not the art police, the oracle of theatre or the supreme authority on how this play works best in performance. Hopefully some of the things I'm about to say will resonate with the very fine training you are already receiving, and if so, please take my words to heart as the gifted and insightful comments of a remarkably astute theatre professional. On the other hand, if I say something you don't agree with or you hear something that doesn't resonate with what you've been hearing all through rehearsals, for heaven's sake dismiss my remarks as the lunatic ravings of a sadly misguided schmuck with no discernable taste whatsoever. No matter what we say here in this session, you should in no way alter the choices that you and your director have so carefully built.

3. Being cognizant of problems during the production: If audience members laugh inappropriately or exhibit signs of restlessness, respondents may focus on the sort of participatory response the work should evoke, including considering whether the response received is consistent with that which the playwright intended. The experience of the respondent of a production is always grounded in the company's understanding of the script, or the company's ability to find its truth (basic conflict, polar attitudes, major metaphors, structure, music, imagery, etc.), and then to transfer that truth to the stage.
4. Retaining your sense of humor and personality: Make certain to use your own experiences and your personality to guide you and to help you create bonds and deliver information.

Responding is NOT:

1. Disrespectful;
2. Adversarial;
3. Focused on the respondent (past experience, research, ideas);
4. Condescending;
5. Redirective;
6. Generic;
7. Vague or unclear;
8. Effusive;
9. Comparative;
10. Personal;
11. Dishonest;
12. Humorless;
13. Self-important;
14. Or prejudiced by previous performances or expectations.

Possible Approaches:

PROBLEM SOLVING METHOD: Respondents develop individual methods of responding to productions depending upon their training, experience, personalities, and souls. The problem-solving method of responding has been proven successful for many respondents because it is non-threatening: respondents pose questions about the problems and traps solved in a production (or not, as the case may be). Together, with the director and company, they seek and evaluate solutions. For example, respondents may begin by considering the traps inherent in the script/theatre space; what this company did to avoid the traps; where the company stumbled; the level of choices made by the company (original? clear? effective?); or whether the company took risks or played it safe.

CHRONOLOGICAL METHOD: Or a respondent can detail what he or she experienced from the moment of entering the theatre through the curtain call, a method that is easy to facilitate by taking good notes throughout often marked by quotes, moments in the play, or visual elements. This often provides the company with a thorough and thoughtful journey through the entire play.

TRUTH AND CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM: Respondents can say almost anything about a play if they are connected with and not isolated from the company; they are perceived as truthful, sensitive, and knowledgeable; and they organize effectively the information they wish to present. It's important to begin positively and to try to reduce anxiety. Respondents should give the message that they are there to share one personal, informed view of one performance that does not take process into account. Respondents can often give tougher advice to a company with a strong production than one with a weak one. And they can often be more specific at the end of a response than at the beginning, especially if they work at first to be heard. The respondent's job immediately is to discover what the company can and cannot hear—and when to best present information in the course of a response. The trick is to open up each company and to remove defenses and find language to make an audience receptive.

Organization:

You want to cover all five areas—choice of play, directing, acting, design, and execution of design—but you can do this in any order you want. Let the response or the play guide you, and by all means, you do not have to discuss each element in a vacuum. They all cross over. You DO NOT have to talk to each actor, but do not rely on the old “ensemble” fallacy, where a good ensemble means you don't have to talk to individual actors. You make the call based on the play. Many respondents begin with directorial choices to set up environments, aesthetics, climate, and mood.

Written Responses:

Written responses are required for ALL Associate and Participating productions in Region IV. Written responses are to be filed online at www.kcactf4.org/response.html within 72 hours of oral response whenever possible. They can be organized any way you feel comfortable, but the following prompts under each main area offer an excellent framework for a very thorough and complete response.

1. **Choice of Play:** Is this play appropriate for college/university production and a good choice to be advanced in the festival? List your criteria and explain how or if the production met this criteria.
2. **Direction:** Define the director's concept and explain whether this was viable for the play. Was it successfully and consistently realized? How was the play cast? How did the director work with actors? Did he or she illustrate adequate control over the play, create a good stage pictures, define movement, etc.?
3. **Acting:** Address in small casts each of the actors and in large casts, the feel of the ensemble, especially looking at technical ability, interpretation of character, ensemble performance, movement, period, dialect, etc.
4. **Design Elements:** Speak about whether the design elements contributed to the production. Look for artistic excellence and how the design elements functioned within the context of the play. Were these elements on the same page as directorial concept and acting choices etc.?
5. **Technical Elements:** How were the design elements executed? How did the show run? What improvements would help the show itself?

Written responses NEED NOT BE LENGTHY. It's better to be timely than to take months finding just the right phrase.

Always back what you say or write with specific choices, particular moments, transactions, colors, timing, textures, etc. Share with the company choices and executions that may have been weak or questionable, and indicate why a choice did not work in detail. Ask questions. Expect specific answers. Create an atmosphere that encourages this exchange.

Specifics and Procedures:

The following is a snapshot of how a typical response assignment goes from start to finish:

1. The chair or another member of KCACTF may contact you about responding to a show by email or by phone.
2. Please respond as soon as you can - either positively or negatively.
3. If you agree to respond, you will be given the phone number and/email address of the host school and contact person, and they will be given your number. Although it doesn't matter who contacts whom first, the host school generally should. But don't stand on ceremony if you haven't heard from them and need to make plans.
4. Agree upon a date that you can see the show. KCACTF Region IV will reimburse you for mileage at a rate of \$0.35 per mile after you provide written response to the show. You should work out arrangements with the school with regards to potential hotel overnight stays, meals, etc. A host school should reimburse for and agree to pay for at least one meal and a hotel room if the guest has traveled far. If the host school cannot afford this, it's best to decide in the initial conversation and then try to find another respondent closer by or to work with the regional chair to make alternative reimbursement arrangements.
5. Make sure to get good directions, obtain phone information in case of an emergency, and establish an agreed upon meeting time and place.
6. Try to come in early enough for dinner, and the host school should also try to arrange a dinner with a director, designer, coordinator, etc.
7. Learn a bit about the school and its theatre program: Is there a major? Is there a big budget? Does the school have a theatre history?
8. Before entering the theatre to respond to a performance, ask for the host school's Irene Ryan candidate

and whether any students are eligible for design nominations. Try to obtain Irene Ryan and design nominees' email addresses.

9. Watch the show and take notes.
10. Give the cast a few minutes to change and get ready. You can take 15 or so minutes to collaborate with your fellow respondent in a participating response or to gather your own notes in an associate response before beginning.
11. Aim at 45 minutes to an hour, if possible, covering as many specific aspects of the five categories as possible.
12. Always leave room for questions.
13. Before you leave, give the host school your SSN, hotel bill, receipts, etc. as agreed upon in your initial conversation. Find out when the reimbursement is likely to occur.
14. Try to complete the worksheet as soon as possible, and always bring a program with you. If at all possible, complete the online nominations and written response within 72 hours by visiting www.kcactf4.org/response.html
15. When you file your online report, an automated email of the response is sent to the regional chair. The regional chair will forward the report to the show's director. In this exchange, the regional chair will ask the show's director to submit the school's nominations online through the Director's Response form. Never send a copy of your response to anyone other than the director of the production and the regional chair. KCACTF responses are NOT to be used for tenure and promotion purposes by a department without the consent of the director.

Other Considerations:

1. Associate entries normally get two Irene Ryan nominations, one from the host school and one from the respondent. Participating get three, one from each respondent and one from the host school. Make sure you look for Barbizon and Regional Design candidates, Makeup award candidates, and even potential critics, directors, stage managers and playwrights. Look also for faculty designers, performers, technologists, choreographers and directors worthy of special commendation.
2. Associate entries are not recommended for advancement to the regional festival.
3. Participating entries are strongly recommended, recommended, or not recommended for the festival. Please see www.kcactf4.org/response.html for guidelines on making these participating entry recommendations. Do not recommend lightly. Schools with productions that are recommended will have to put together packets and apply to the regional festival. No school should be encouraged unless you as respondent are committed to recommend the show and defend this recommendation specifically.