



URTA CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

All participants at URTA events, both in-person and virtual, (including URTA staff, members, non-members, candidates, vendors, panelists, and others) are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner both in their public behavior and personal interaction, displaying common courtesy to all, and respect for private property. Harassing or offensive behavior will not be tolerated.

Conduct found to be in violation of these policies and may result in an individual's expulsion from the event and/or disciplinary action against the program, institution, or business they represent.

URTA recognizes that personalities and working styles may differ but, notwithstanding these differences, all are accountable for their own behavior and the impact it may have on others.

What is Unacceptable Behavior?

Unacceptable behavior (including bullying and harassment) may involve actions, words or physical gestures that could reasonably be perceived to be the cause of another person's distress or discomfort. Bullying or harassment may be by an individual against an individual or involve groups of people.

URTA defines unacceptable behavior as:

- It is unwanted by the recipient.
- It has the purpose or effect of violating the recipient's dignity and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, and
- Having regard to all the circumstances, including the recipient's perception, it was reasonable for the behavior to have such an effect.

Unacceptable behavior need not be face-to-face, and may take many forms such as written, telephone or email communications or through social media.

Some examples of unacceptable behavior are:

- Unwanted physical contact. URTA recommends no physical contact unless the professional purpose of the contact has been explained, permission has been sought, and permission has been given.
- Aggressive or abusive behavior, such as shouting or personal insults.
- Spreading malicious rumors or gossip about, or insulting, either an individual or other participating institution.
- Discrimination or harassment related to an individual's race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, age, religion, gender, gender identity, disability, or other similar personal characteristic.
- Offensive comments/jokes or body language.
- Coercion, such as pressure to subscribe to a particular political or religious belief. Recruiters must be mindful that, for the candidate, this pressure may be unspoken. Candidates, in their eagerness to succeed, may not feel empowered to say "no." It is unethical for recruiters to take advantage of their positions of power to pressure a candidate to participate in techniques or engage in interview questions that cause distress.

It is important to note that behavior considered acceptable by one person may be considered offensive to another. Therefore, everyone has an obligation to be proactively and judiciously cognizant of how their words or actions may reasonably create a hostile environment for others.

A recruitment process naturally involves legitimate, constructive, and fair feedback of a candidate's work. Although these sentiments may be difficult for the candidate to hear, they should never be given in a demoralizing or insulting tone. Ethical behavior extends to all forms of actor and character communication. This includes a principled use of



acting methods and personalization techniques during text coaching, improvisation, and actor/character inquiries and explorations.

Isolated incidents of behavior such as abruptness, sharpness or rudeness, which will hopefully be avoided, will generally not be considered to amount to bullying.

Persons finding themselves in a situation where they feel their safety is at risk or who become aware of an attendee not in compliance with this policy should contact an URTA staff member as soon as possible. A complaint may also be made at any time prior, during, or after an URTA event via email to theurtas@urta.com, so that the matter can be handled in an expeditious manner.

All URTAs participants are also reminded to review the URTA policies governing offers of admission.



URTA POLICY ON OFF-SITE COMMUNICATION

The URTA Board of Directors has adopted this policy in order to codify expectations for communication between recruiters and candidates prior to the URTAs event. As recruiters and candidates make increased use of Acceptd and other digital information sharing prior to organized URTA events, expectations for conduct related to such sharing and communications are necessary. This policy expands on the official URTA Code of Professional Conduct, which should be reviewed as a basis for all URTA activity.

Candidate information is made available to recruiters once they have registered for the URTAs. Registered recruiters are expected to attend the URTAs, and contact with candidates in advance is not a substitute for attending the event in person.

URTA allows the following use of candidate information received on Acceptd prior to the URTAs events:

- Review of candidate materials
- Sharing of candidate information with relevant faculty in the recruiting program that has been given access to it
- Pre- and post-event contact with candidates using the email address or phone number provided on Acceptd
- Pre- and post-event interviews and portfolio reviews with candidates

URTA prohibits the following uses of the candidate information and types of contact:

- Sharing of candidate information with anyone outside of the recruiting program that has been given access to it, without written permission from the candidate
- Repeated or high-pressure attempts to contact candidates who have chosen not to engage with the recruiter prior or following the URTA event
- URTA defines “high pressure” contact as more than two attempts by one institution to contact a candidate who has not reached out to the recruiter or has not responded to contact attempts, or has expressed a desire for the contact to stop.
- Any communication with a candidate that directly or indirectly offers the candidate admittance or financial assistance prior to URTA’s published offer date and time for that recruiting cycle.

These rules apply to all candidates participating in URTA whether they attend URTA recruiting events in person or not. If a candidate is a “no show” to an URTA event they have registered for, or if they are participating in virtual or hybrid programs, the same offer and acceptance deadlines apply.

Conduct found to be in violation of these policies may result in an individual’s expulsion from the event and/or disciplinary action against the program, institution, or business they represent.



URTA INTERVIEW/CALLBACK GUIDELINES

Providing a safe and positive environment for both candidates and recruiters is of the utmost importance to URTA. As such, URTA has established a Code of Conduct, included in this packet, which all candidates and recruiters must abide by, as well as guidelines for conducting callback interviews at the URTAs, found below.

For all in-person Acting callbacks - recruiters may opt to utilize the public space arranged by URTA for interviews, at no cost. This public space will be in a large conference room, set up with rows of tables and chairs (similar to a college fair) which recruiters may utilize to conduct individual or small group interviews. Reservation of a table in this public space will be on a first come, first served basis. A program may only reserve one table, and may put school materials/branding at that table. However, set up must be minimal as the space has multiple uses throughout the day and minimal turn over time. Given the public nature and close proximity to other recruitment interviews, this location may not be conducive to working performance pieces, and we ask that all parties consider this and are respectful of their colleagues and neighbors.

If a program prefers not to utilize the Public Space, the following options are available:

- In Chicago, URTA is holding a floor of meeting rooms which programs may reserve through URTA to hold their callbacks. Reservations are free for Members for use during the evening callbacks and at a reduced rate for Members that wish to reserve a room all day for direct-apply auditions. Guest (non-member) programs may reserve a room through URTA at a reduced rate as well.
 - **NO callbacks will be permitted in suites or guest rooms at the Palmer House in Chicago.** URTA has secured an affordable private meeting room option for schools on the URTA Callback floor, which maximizes safety and convenience.
 - Programs should contact Sara Ross at SRoss@URTA.com to reserve a private meeting room space in Chicago. Space on the URTA callback floor is available on a first come, first served basis. Please do not contact the hotel directly to book a meeting room space, as you will not be located on the URTA callback floor and will not receive the reduced rates.
- In Philadelphia, recruiters may make their own arrangements for alternate callback locations at the URTA hotel, such as private meeting conference rooms or a suite. **Callbacks may NOT be held in a hotel sleeping room.**
 - URTA will permit the use of suites for callbacks in Philadelphia as long as the bedroom space is completely closed off by a door from the living room in which callbacks will take place. In addition, the living room space where callbacks will take place must be empty of any personal belongings, and maintain a professional, meeting room atmosphere. Recruiters will also be required to post callback and code of conduct signage (provided by URTA) on the exterior door, to make clear to participants the location of the callbacks.
 - Programs interested in booking a meeting room or approved suite should contact Sara Ross at SRoss@URTA.com in order to be connected to the appropriate contact at the hotel. Space availability is limited and all rates and reservations will be handled directly by the hotel.

In all locations, if a program chooses to make use of a private callback interview location, they are required to have two people physically present at all times when candidates are in the room. This could be two recruiters, or a recruiter and another representative of the program, such as an alum,



additional instructor, etc. In addition, URTA strongly suggests that these interview teams be of mixed gender, and that programs consider interviewing candidates in pairs or groups. URTA also asks all programs to hang identification signage and the code of conduct on the door to clearly identify the callback location for candidates if it is being held in a private room location. URTA will provide these signs for programs on site in each city.

By no later than December 4, 2023, recruiters will be required to inform URTA of which callback interview locations they will utilize - public space or private location. Please keep in mind that public space locations and the discounted Chicago meeting rooms are available on a first come, first served basis, so if you plan to utilize either of these options, we encourage you to send your request in as soon as possible. Please send callback interview information to Director of Education Programs, Sara Ross at SRoss@URTA.com.

For all in-person interviews in Design/Technology – recruiters will conduct interviews solely in the public exhibition hall at the candidates’ stations according to the assigned schedule created by URTA and emailed out in advance of the event.

For all live-virtual interviews in any discipline – interviews will take place online through Zoom. Since you will be engaging candidates via video conferencing, we will not be enforcing the requirement that you have two persons in the interview room.

However. We strongly encourage you to still have two individuals from your institution taking part in the live, online interview; whether both people are viewed on a single camera, or logging in from different places. As ever, they need not both be faculty members. Alumni, current students, and other representatives of your program are welcome.

We would also ask that you not let the perceived “distance” of the online interview make you any less cognizant of your conduct in the interview. Please remember, regardless of whether you are physically in the room with the candidate, or speaking with them over the internet, you are strangers to them. In our field, it is easy to become overly familiar with one another very quickly. After all, that’s part of how we make a successful play happen in just a few weeks of rehearsal. But in these situations, the student is not your cast-mate or collaborator. You have no way of knowing how they will receive your inquiries, direction, or other actions during the interview, both because their lived experience will be different from yours, and due to the inherent power dynamic in play.

This should not be a source of anxiety. Simply remain aware of your words and actions, and consider how they might be received in a way in which you do not intend.

Recruiting faculty at virtual events (excluding Design/Technology) will be responsible for setting up their own Zoom room for callback interviews, and providing the room links to URTA in advance of the event. Detailed instructions on Zoom room set-up and requirements for the URTAs, as well as deadlines for providing Zoom details to URTA will be included in the faculty information shared throughout the fall.



URTA POLICY ON OFFERS AND ACCEPTANCE

URTA recruiting events support an equitable offer process between schools and candidates. It is the responsibility of all parties to communicate honestly, quickly, and professionally. The following policy applies to all participants at URTA recruiting events, including URTA members, non-members, guest institutions, and candidates in all areas.

Recruiting programs may not extend formal offers until the conclusion of URTA recruiting in their discipline. The first dates that offers may be extended for each recruiting discipline are:

- Acting: February 12, 2024 (12:00 am eastern time)
- Design & Technology: February 5, 2024 (12:00 am eastern time)
- Directing/Stage Management/Arts Leadership: February 12, 2024 (12:00 am eastern time)

All offers must be made in writing. A verbal offer must be followed by an official offer in writing.

Offers must include the specifics of any financial commitments made by the organization, such as tuition waivers, stipends, housing, travel and assistantships.

Candidates must email a verification they have received the offer in a timely fashion.

The dates above indicate the earliest date that any program may extend an offer, however programs are not required to make offers on these dates. Programs have different internal timelines, and offers may be made on any date after those listed above.

Candidates cannot be required to accept or decline an offer for two (2) weeks from the above dates. The first dates that programs may require a candidate to provide a formal decision on the offer are:

- Acting: February 26, 2024 (12:00 am eastern time)
- Design & Technology: February 19, 2024 (12:00 am eastern time)
- Directing/Stage Management/Arts Leadership: February 26, 2024 (12:00 am eastern time)

Candidates are free to accept or decline an offer prior to these dates, if they wish.

After this 2-week period, recruiters may rescind their offer if a candidate has not formally responded. Additionally, after this date, offers may be made and responses required on a timeline of the program's choosing, though it is essential that the recruiting programs make these deadlines clear to candidates in writing and provide reasonable time for a candidate to receive and respond to correspondence.

In advance of the offer/acceptance period, recruiters should clearly communicate their specific application process, including the procedure and costs. They should also reiterate the date by which an answer is required, and advise whether a campus visit will impact the candidate's prospects for a formal offer.

Wait list policies must be clearly articulated. If a candidate is to be put on a wait list, there should be a date agreed upon when the candidate will be informed of an opening.

At the time that a candidate accepts an offer, the recruiter must positively inquire as to whether the candidate has previously accepted an offer from another institution subject to this policy and, if so, whether they have informed that program of their change of intent.

Candidates are free to accept or reject an offer at any time during the 2-week offer/acceptance period (see dates above). Should a candidate accept an offer and then change their mind during this period, they must immediately email this decision to the recruiter, and they will be released.



If the candidate changes their mind after the 2-week period, they must immediately request a written release from the recruiter, and should not be admitted to another program until this step is completed.

In late spring, URTA will send recruiters an offer/acceptance survey to complete. You are required to complete this survey, as providing this data allows us to retain records of success or challenges faced in the process and to track trends in MFA admittance. URTA is constantly adapting to changes in the field, in order to best serve our constituents. Your input is a vital part of this process. URTA maintains strict confidentiality of this information.

RECRUITING FOR SUBSEQUENT YEARS

A school recruiting at the URTAs for the academic year beginning in the fall, but who formally offers a candidate a place in the following, or subsequent year's class, must guarantee that offer until the date in the next year (designated by URTA) when candidates may be asked to respond to offers made in that year's cycle of recruiting.

A candidate is free not to respond to such an offer until the referenced date. A candidate is free to accept the offer but may change their mind over the course of the intervening year. The candidate must advise the school of any change in their plans. A school making such an offer must inform a candidate of their rights regarding the offer and provide them a copy of the related URTA memo on the policy. To avoid confusion, the offer should be memorialized in writing.

APPLICATIONS AND PROCESSING FEES

A primary intention of the URTA Auditions and Interviews is to provide candidates with a financially fair and equitable means of pursuing graduate training. However, some school administrations require a potential candidate to submit an application and pay a related application fee prior to allowing a department to consider the candidate for a position. URTA strongly urges member programs operating under such strictures to act responsibly and ethically in identifying candidates of serious interest to them before encouraging candidates to submit applications and pay application or processing fees in advance of program reviews and/or formal offers.



URTA PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

The undersigned voluntarily agrees to participate in the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** program sponsored by **The University Resident Theatre Association** from any date between January 13 – February 4, 2024.

The participant recognizes that **The University Resident Theatre Association** has not undertaken any duty or responsibility for their safety and the undersigned agrees to assume the full responsibility for all risk of bodily injury, death, disability, and property damage as a result of participating in the **URTA Auditions & Interviews**. The participant recognizes that some risk be assumed in participation.

The participant hereby states the following: I understand the risks involved in participating in the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** and willingly and voluntarily accept these risks including all risks related to exposure to COVID-19; I hereby surrender any right to seek reimbursement from **The University Resident Theatre Association** and its directors, officers, employees, volunteers and other agents for injury sustained and liability incurred during my participation in the activity described above; I warrant that I am not relying on any oral representations, statements or inducement apart from the statements made on this form.

Notice of Photography/Videography:

Photographs and/or video recordings may be taken at the **URTA Auditions & Interviews**. By taking part in this event, you grant the event organizers full rights to use the images resulting from the photography/video recording/screen captures, and any reproductions or adaptations of the images for fundraising, publicity, educational programming, or other purposes to help achieve the group's aims. This might include (but is not limited to), the right to use them in their printed and online publicity, social media, press releases and funding applications. If you do not wish to be photographed or filmed please inform an event organizer.

Virtual Event Technology:

In the event of virtual recruitment, participants in the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** will be required to download and utilize a variety of free virtual event technologies and communication systems, including but not limited to, Zoom, Acceptd (application system) and AuditionRoom (virtual auditions), and have access to stable internet, and a device with video/audio capabilities. The extent of these technology needs will be dependent on the participant's selected application area. Those with questions or concerns should reach out to an event organizer.

Data/Info Waiver:

By taking part in the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** you agree to your application materials, including your contact information, being shared with recruiting institutions participating in URTA, partners/sponsors of URTA, and for URTA's educational programming purposes. These organizations must make known their association with URTA when first making contact with you, and must provide an opt-out option for you to select for any future communication from their organization.

Health & Safety – COVID Protocols:

All in-person participants at the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** agree to adhere to masking and other health mitigation policies to be set by URTA, local governing authorities, and hosting venues. In addition, **URTA requests that all participants at in-person URTA Auditions & Interviews be fully vaccinated against COVID-19.** For individuals who are not vaccinated, please consider participating in the live-virtual URTA recruiting events.

URTA retains the right to shift the **URTA Auditions & Interviews** to a fully live-virtual event if URTA determines that health and safety concerns will prohibit an in-person gathering.

**Force Majeure:**

The University Resident Theatre Association (URTA) will not be held liable for loss or damages due to any delay or default in the delivery of and participation in the URTA Auditions & Interviews program, if such delay or default is caused by conditions beyond the control of URTA including, but not limited to, acts of God (such as severe inclement weather), fire, pandemic, wars, acts of terrorism, insurrections, labor union strikes, Government restrictions (including the denial or cancellation of necessary licenses, permits, exports, or other necessary documents), denial of travel, and/or any other causes beyond the reasonable control of URTA. Should any URTA program or event be canceled, postponed, or otherwise adversely impacted as a result of a force majeure event, URTA shall be under no obligation to refund payments already received. URTA will make all reasonable efforts to work with Clients to produce the program or event at a later date, in a different venue, and/or through a different delivery-method, subject to availability and feasibility to be determined by URTA. In the event of rescheduling, additional fees or requirements may be necessary and due to URTA and/or other event Vendors.

Candidate Changes/Cancellations:

Change Requests: Candidates are given the opportunity to provide schedule conflicts within the URTA application in order to avoid changes to their scheduled URTAs date. If a candidate should need to make a change to their scheduled URTAs date, requests should be made promptly in writing to theurtas@urta.com. While URTA makes best efforts to accommodate change requests, scheduling is based on availability, therefore not all requests can be accommodated. Any change requests received within 30 days of the start of the URTAs will incur a \$10 change fee. For the 2024 URTAs, this date is December 14, 2023.

Cancellation Policy: All cancellation requests must be made in writing to URTA at theurtas@urta.com. Cancellations made more than 30 days prior to the start of the URTAs will be refunded 100% of the amount paid, minus a \$32 cancellation fee. Cancellations made within 30 days of the start of the URTAs, or during the event (including no-shows) will not receive a refund. For the 2024 URTAs, 30 days prior occurs on December 14, 2023. All donations made to the Pay It Forward Candidate Award are non-refundable.

By registering for the URTAs, the participant confirms that they have read, understand, and consent to the terms of this participant agreement.