

# **Understudy, Swings, and Standby Protocol**

When casting productions in the Texas Tech School of Theatre and Dance, directors are strongly encouraged to consider the additional casting of understudies or swings for any and all roles that they see fit. In addition to providing a contingency plan should an actor become ill or suffer an emergency, understudy and swing tracks provide additional learning opportunities as the department continues its effort to serve as many students as possible.

## **What is an Understudy, Swing, or Standby?**

Understudies, swings, or standbys serve an important role in professional theatre. This article provides good descriptions of each job: <https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/difference-swings-understudies-standbys-2574/> Should a director choose to cast understudies, swings or standbys, they should consider the following protocol:

1. Understudies/swings must attend any rehearsals required of their main cast counterpart. It is the responsibility of the understudy/swing to take functional notes and be clear on all material covered during the rehearsal.
2. Any available member of the directorial staff (including but not limited to the director, assistant director, stage manager, assistant stage manager, or choreographer) is encouraged to hold a weekly brush-up rehearsal to allow understudies/swings the opportunity to work through scenes covered in recent rehearsals. Weekly brush-up rehearsals need not exceed one hour in length.
3. Understudies/swings may have the opportunity to perform their track in a full-length understudy rehearsal. This rehearsal is not guaranteed and will be held at the discretion of the director.
4. Understudies/swings are expected to memorize their material and should an understudy/swing be called on to perform during the run of the show, they are expected to do so without book in hand.

Once a student agrees to participate as an understudy or swing, they are expected to treat their commitment seriously. Failure to abide by the above guidelines will result in discipline at the discretion of the directorial staff and SOTD faculty.

## **Resources for Understudies, Swings, and Standbys:**

Tips from professionals who have performed these vital jobs:

<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/swing-standby-understudy-need-know-28/>

Reflection of a professional actor who understudies:

<https://www.backstage.com/magazine/article/awesome-understudy-6611/>