



ALRA Anti-Racism Guidance for Casting

Anti-Racism in Rehearsals Guidance:

This plan relates to existing policies and procedures forming a living document that can be revised as and when we need to. The policies and procedures it will relate to and inform future revisions of are listed in brackets after the bullet points. The owner of this document is currently the EDI Cohesion Lead & Acting Principal. The future owner of this document will be the Director of Culture and Creativity in September 2021.

“It’s not our differences that divide us. It’s our inability to recognise, accept and celebrate those differences.” Audre Lorde

1. Anti-Racism in Rehearsals

- 1.1. The embodiment of another’s race is wholly inappropriate, ethically unacceptable, and largely irrelevant to actors in the contemporary theatre, radio, and film climate.
- 1.2. White students are not permitted to explore parts from Black or Asian communities in any circumstance other than a play reading in Contextual Studies (BA) or Performance (MA).
- 1.3. In rehearsal or acting projects White students are allowed to play ensemble communities who have experienced racial oppression who are not named as having an ethnic origin, such as Greek, in the texts or contemporary political pieces.
- 1.4. White actors may explore Hispanic texts but due to the prejudice faced by the Latinx communities and the exoticism created in adapting the embodiment of a culture they will not perform these for assessment or publicly. *Lorca* can be used for pre-project explorations in the Research project and Heightened text with a specific focus on scenes involving dance.
- 1.5. Equally we encourage pre-project explorations of White-European characters for our white community in pre-project but given the short space of time for rehearsal and ALRA’s focus on temporised texts we expect performance to be focused on appropriate castings.
- 1.6. When directing a piece about race, if the director is not a member of the Global Majority, it is advisable to have a co-director who is. This must be navigated using discretion relative to the piece e.g., seeking to collaborate with a South East Asian person if the piece relates to racial experiences within the South East Asian community. For such collaborations, further consideration must be given to relevance of experiences that may be specific to individuals from different countries within a region, as above.



Texts

- 2.1. Exploration of white classical text can be engaged in and American, Australian, Russian, and other European countries can be explored in performance modules by white students. We will not allow for non-indigenous exploration of Asian, African, Middle Eastern or Arabian texts in rehearsal assessment.
- 2.2. The use of films engaging in many cultures and play readings looking into this work is important. By selecting plays that engage with the communities of your learners, they will also be exposed to contrasting scripts within the rehearsal module, therefore fulfilling our educational duty to expose learners to a range of world views.
- 2.3. Research must be undertaken to source a range of work suitable for emerging ALRA cohorts, with texts applicable to the range of individuals learning with us, as well as future learners.

2. Colour Blind Casting and Rehearsal Projects

- 3.1. At ALRA we ask that students of the Global Majority be considered for colour blind casting, where plays are being used with a limited number of roles written for these students.
- 3.2. This means that students from the Global Majority can play White parts. However, this is not the case conversely. Due to a legacy of historical appropriation of Global Majority characters by White actors, and the recognition of this as completely unacceptable practice, we do not allow White students to play Global Majority parts.
- 3.3. There are sufficient plays and roles for these students to select from. In future planning, rehearsal projects will need to be structured in a manner that re-thinks the experience of performance in terms of time rather than the completion of a whole play.
- 3.4. This will mean curating texts and possibly devised scores in order to incorporate the heritage and lived experience of the learner to play parts that are appropriately balanced and not singularly placed within a western cannon. We must move away from every student experiencing Classic American, Chekhov and Shakespeare.
- 2.5 It is likely that rehearsals will now be thematic, drawing from numerous authors, allowing the ensemble to establish new forms of theatre based on the solid performance practices that have been established. We are provisionally calling this approach 'Diffractive'.

3. Text selection

- 4.1. Text selection committee is now part of the governance structure and all proposed Rehearsal and Production texts or devised score ideas must be submitted to them



within three weeks of their meeting date. This committee is made up of the Chairs of the working groups, the Dean, Associate Deans and Heads of Live and Recorded Performance. The project directors will use the Text Selection submission form (appendix 1) that outlines the theme and suggests content warnings. If a play is flagged as having triggering or harmful text then a full read will take place by all members. If there is no flag then one other member must read and approve the text.

- 4.2. The text selection committee must meet in the middle of the proceeding term to approve a script and prepare the casting processes.
- 4.3. Where possible all learners will be involved in their own casting decisions.
- 4.4. If a clear decision cannot be made, external artists will be drawn into the conversation to support equitable decision making that protects the autonomy of ALRA's academic staff to be guided through multiple stakeholders. If a decision cannot be made this will be reported to the Equity and Inclusion Sub Committee of the Board of Trustees who will make the final decision.



Appendix 1:

Text Selection Submission Form

Title and Author:

Accessible link:

Key themes:

Summary of text:

Potential content warnings:

Casting processes to be mindful of:

Request full panel read: Y / N