

UNDERSTUDIES & SWINGS

INFORMATION SHEET

UNDERSTUDY

A person who learns another performer's role in a live stage production in order to be able to act at short notice in their absence - sometimes referred to as a **Cover**.

Understudies receive a weekly allowance for learning and maintaining the role and are paid an additional allowance on the occasion they are required to perform the role. These respective rates are set out at Table D of Schedule 1 of the *Performer's Collective Agreement 2017* (The PCA).

There are various types of understudies:

- **Understudy star role** - the person is required to learn the, (or one of the) lead roles (**entitled to minimum additional fee \$58.25¹ per/ week and \$124.82² per performance - 'understudy allowance'*)
- **Understudying leading role** - the person is required to learn one of main roles (**entitled to minimum additional fee \$41.64³ per/ week and \$83.21⁴ per performance - 'understudy allowance'*)
- **Understudying supporting role** - the person is required to learn a role that speaks solo (40+ words); or sings solo (40+ bars); or dances solo (40+ bars). A supporting role includes characters that perform as part of a duo, trio or quarter (**entitled to minimum additional fee \$24.96⁵ per/week and \$49.93⁶ per performance - 'understudy allowance'*)
- **Understudy minor supporting role** - the person is required to learn a role that speaks solo (under 40 words); or sings solo (under 40 bars); or dances solo (under 40 bars) (**entitled to minimum additional fee \$19.97⁷ per/ week and \$39.94⁸ per performance - 'understudy allowance'*)
- **Understudy plot** - the person is required to learn a plot instead of a specific role/s. Understudying a plot may require a person learning all of, or parts of, one or more roles of different types (** minimum additional fee per/week⁹ and per performance¹⁰ the person is entitled to is calculated on the highest role/s the performer is understudying - 'understudy allowance'*)

Under the Performer's Collective Agreement 2017 (PCA), a performer is entitled to be paid an additional fee for each role they understudy.¹¹ For example, if a person is required to understudy 1 leading role and 1 support role, they are entitled to an additional fee of \$66.60 per week (i.e \$41.64 + \$24.96) and will receive an additional payment for each performance they perform. Refer to the PCA Table D of Schedule 1 for a full list of the minimum fees payable.

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SWING

A person who plays or learns the role of multiple ensemble characters in a production.

There are two types of swings:

- **Onstage swing** - engaged primarily to play or understudy multiple ensemble roles in the production, as well as having their own plot to perform. The onstage swing usually appears in costume on stage, whether in their own plot or the understudied ensemble role. An ensemble role does not speak/sing/dance solo. (***entitled to 'swing allowance' \$24.96 per/week, but no additional allowance if required to perform an ensemble role¹²⁾*
- **Offstage swing** - engaged primarily to understudy multiple ensemble roles in the production, but does not appear costumed on stage to perform their own plot. An ensemble role does not speak/sing/dance solo. (***entitled to 'swing allowance' \$24.96 per/week, but no additional allowance if required to perform an ensemble role¹³⁾*

****** Under the Performers Collective Agreement 2017 (PCA), if a swing is required to also work as an understudy for supporting role, leading role or star role, the onstage and offstage swing is entitled to their 'swing allowance' plus the 'understudy allowance' that is applicable.¹⁴ For example, if an off stage swing is also required to understudy a leading role, their total allowance is \$66.60 per week (i.e \$41.64 leading role understudy allowance + \$24.96 the swing allowance) plus the performance fee of \$83.21 if they are required to perform the leading role.

References

- [1] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 Sch1, Table D Allowances, Clause No. 22.6.1 Star Role, Column 1 August 2016.
- [2] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 Sch1, Table D Allowances, Clause No. 22.6.2 Star Role, Column 1 August 2016.
- [3] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 Sch1, Table D Allowances, Clause No. 22.6.1 Leading Role, Column 1 August 2016.
- [4] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 Sch1, Table D Allowances, Clause No. 22.6.2 Leading Role, Column 1 August 2016.
- [5] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 Sch1, Table D Allowances, Clause No. 22.6.1 Supporting Role, Column 1 August 2016.
- [6] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 Sch1, Table D Allowances, Clause No. 22.6.2 Supporting Role, Column 1 August 2016.
- [7] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 Sch1, Table D Allowances, Clause No. 22.6.1 Minor Supporting Role, Column 1 August 2016.
- [8] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 Sch1, Table D Allowances, Clause No. 22.6.2 Minor Supporting Role, Column 1 August 2016.
- [9] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 at 22.6.1 "Where an Employee is engaged to understudy a plot which comprises more than one role, the Employee shall receive one weekly allowance only for understudying all or part of that plot - that being the highest allowance applicable for the role or roles understudied" - see minimum amounts in Sch1, Table D Allowances.
- [10] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 at 22.6.2 "If an Employee is required by the Employer to perform a plot in which he/she is acting as understudy the Employee shall be paid an additional amount per performance not less than as set out in Table D of Schedule 1" - see minimum amounts in Sch1, Table D Allowances.
- [11] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 - 22.6.1 "Where an Employee is required by the Employer to act as understudy, the Employee shall be paid an additional amount for each role not less than as set out in Table D of Schedule 1."
- [12] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 Sch1, Table D Allowances, Clause No. 22.7.1 Swing Allowance, Column 1 August 2016.
- [13] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 Sch1, Table D Allowances, Clause No. 22.7.1 Swing Allowance, Column 1 August 2016.
- [14] Performers Collective Agreement 2017 - 22.7.1 "Onstage and offstage swing performers will be entitled to a weekly 'swing allowance' separate to any understudy allowances set out in 22.6 above."