

Training Center Student Handbook

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Approved Catalog

The contents of this catalog have been approved by the staff of the Philly Improv Theater Training Center. Students interested in a fuller understanding of how the PHIT Training center works, and the classes offered here are encouraged to read this approved school catalog.

Hours of Operation

The PHIT Training Center, is currently housed at Arden Theater's Hamilton Family Arts Center **62 N 2nd St, Philadelphia, PA 19106**. Students will be able to enter the building approximately twenty minutes before the start of their class until five minutes before the class begins. Students who arrive after this time frame may not be able to enter the building without contacting their instructor. Students who arrive more than fifteen minutes late will not be admitted to the building.

Enrollment Policies

All students applying to enroll in the Training Center must agree to our Terms & Conditions of Enrollment. Students must attest to and acknowledge they have read the Student Handbook, and Code of Conduct, and Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy stating that they understand and agree to all of the following:

1. Students have signed (either electronically or digitally) the enrollment policy and, by doing so, are agreeing to our terms and conditions.
2. Students must be 18 years of age or older.
3. Students have agreed to pay tuition in full for the course in which they are enrolling before that course begins. Placement is not secure until payment is received in full. A payment plan may be available for some courses, and must be completed by the first class date. Students who have not completed their payment plan payments risk the loss of their deposit, may

not be allowed to continue in a course, or may be unable to enroll into a future course until their balance is paid in full.

4. Students agree that they will be held financially responsible for the whole course tuition or some portion thereof should they decide to drop the course within a three (3) business days following the first class date. (see Tuition & Fees) Unless otherwise noted in the course description.
5. Students must attend the full duration of the 8 or 6 week course (16 training hours) in order to move to the next level. Participation in the class showcase is encouraged but not required to advance to the next level.
6. Students must be on time to class. On time is defined as arriving not less than five minutes before the listed start time.
7. Students are expected to see at least two live long form improvisation performances during their improv class session.
8. Students agree to adhere to the expected behavior outlined in our Code of Conduct.
9. Students understand to be eligible to enroll in higher-level courses, elective courses, workshops, and master classes they must meet all stated prerequisites and, in some cases, receive approval from their instructor and/or PHIT Education Director before gaining admittance to the class.
10. Students understand and agree that in Core classes the instructor may not recommend a student advance to the next level. This may be due to excessive absences, not making progress with skills on pace with peers in class, or other reasons disclosed to the student. In such circumstances, the student will be advised by the instructor and the Education Director copied on this communication, that moving forward to the next level of class is not recommended and what class or classes they may suggest instead. If requested to repeat a level, the student understands PHIT does not offer any discount, refund, credit, or other financial compensation for repeating a class. Repeating a level is the choice of the student and they will be required to pay the cost of the class in full as listed in the course catalog.

Enrollment

Courses are offered on a session basis, with four sessions held each calendar year. Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall.

Most Core courses meet on weekdays in the evening, for two hours, once a week, for eight weeks, with a class showcase generally scheduled the week following the last class. Occasionally, Core courses may be offered once a week, for six weeks, for two hours forty-five minutes. Both eight and six week classes consist of 16 training hours and cover the same course material. Some courses may be available in the afternoons, particularly on weekends. Not all classes are offered at all times. Not all classes include a showcase performance. Details for each class are listed in the Course Catalog.

Please check your schedule carefully to ensure that you can attend all class dates. If you expect to miss more than two of the eight classes in the session, you should wait until the next session to take a class. Students who miss more than two class sessions of any class must re-take that class, at their own expense, before advancing to the next level. Students who miss three or more classes in a session may be dropped from the class at the instructor's discretion; no refund or credit will be issued.

On occasion, our training center will offer special workshops or intensive classes that meet once for a half or full day, or multiple times a week over the course of one to four weeks.

All course enrollment occurs on a first-come, first-served basis. Students are responsible for choosing the course date and time that fits into their schedule and making either a payment in full to secure their space in a class, or take advantage of any payment plan payment offered to hold their space in a class. Payment in full must be made before the start of the course.

Course offerings are based on the availability of instructors. Instructors assigned to a specific class may be changed without advance notice. Classes that do not meet full enrollment will be canceled and students will be given an opportunity to transfer into a different class or receive a refund of any tuition already paid.

A full list of courses currently enrolling is available at: [Philly Improv Theater CourseStorm Catalog](#)

Release of Liability

You understand that participation in improvisational theater involves the risk of personal injury or loss due to the physical, mental, and emotional challenges in the programs and activities offered by Philly Improv Theater. You also understand that participation in these programs or activities is entirely voluntary and requires participants to follow instructions and abide by all applicable rules and the standards of conduct. You are not aware of any conditions that increase your likelihood of experiencing a personal injury or loss while engaging Philly Improv Theater's programs or activities.

With appreciation of the risks associated with Philly Improv Theater's programs or activities, you hereby fully and completely release and waive any and all claims for personal injury or loss, including costs and attorneys' fees, that may arise against Philly Improv Theater, including its teachers, staff members, volunteers, students, or other persons associated with its programs or activities. This release and waiver apply to any personal injury or loss that may occur as a result of any other program or activity of Philly Improv Theater.

Participation in classes involves the recording and preservation of an improv performance by your class. As a participant, you give permission to record the performance of your class show. You are not required to participate in this class show and it has no impact on your eligibility to take future classes. The main purpose of recording this class show is to provide students with the ability to share their performance with people who are unable to attend the show in person. However, Philly Improv Theater reserves the right to use this performance for promotional material.

You release and hold harmless Philly Improv Theater and its agents from any and all liability or claims in connection with and arising out of the performance, including but not limited to claims for invasion of privacy, right of publicity violation, copyright or trademark infringement, slander, libel, or misappropriation. You hereby grants, assigns, and transfers to the Philly Improv Theater a

world-wide, perpetual, nonexclusive, royalty-free license to use, in whole or in part, all of the rights, including all literary, publicity and property rights, to publish in any media, language or technology now known or later developed, to duplicate, remix, edit or otherwise use and dispose of the recorded and/or transcribed performance.

Evaluation

Students are evaluated on a pass/fail basis. Promotion to the next level of study is contingent on the following criteria:

- Attendance.
 - Students may not miss more than 2 classes. Participation in the class showcase is not mandatory, nor required to advance, however, missing the final class will automatically disqualify the student from participating in the showcase performance.
 - Students who miss three or more class sessions may be dropped from the class at the instructor's discretion; no refund or credit will be issued.
 - Students are expected to arrive before the scheduled start of class. Being more than 30 minutes late to class will count as an absence.
 - Students who are continually more than 15 minutes late to class may be asked to repeat the level at the instructor's discretion. It is your responsibility to contact your teacher if you are going to be late.
 - If you must miss a class, for any reason, please check in with your instructor to see what you missed. You are responsible for your own learning.
- Ability to work well with others.
 - This means the student abides by Code of Conduct, contributing positively to a warm and welcome environment, has a positive attitude toward class work and performance, willing to participate

with all students in the class, displays a positive approach to looking silly and/or “failing” in front of others and to try again, is open to receiving and applying notes given by the instructor.

- Attend 2 live long form improv shows.
 - Students must watch at least two live, long form improv shows while enrolled to pass the level. You are encouraged to see the shows produced at PHIT. It’s incredibly helpful for your growth as a student and your enjoyment of the craft in general.
 - Talk to your instructor about non-PHIT shows that count towards your two-show minimum. Seeing other styles and formats is a good way to reflect on the skills you are learning at PHIT.
 - Be able to speak about the concepts and forms of the shows as they apply to the skills, techniques, and forms being taught in your class.
- Demonstration of ability to use the skills, techniques, and concepts as observed by the instructor through application in classroom exercises and scene work.

Students are limited to repeating a level twice. After 3 Fails of a course, continuation in the Training Center will require permission from the Education Director.

Instructors evaluate students throughout the course – looking for the demonstration of an understanding, or the application of concepts within the curriculum from each student during in-class exercises, games, and performances. Students demonstrate their understanding through discussion or the application of these concepts within the curriculum in improvised scenes for improv and performance classes.

The instructor uses proficiency scales to keep track of each student’s progress with course concepts. If the instructor feels that a student has not demonstrated a passable understanding of the concepts, the student will not be able to advance through the program. These students will be instructed to repeat the level (or another lower level course) if they want to continue their studies with the PHIT Training Center.

Students who receive a Fail in a course will be notified by the Training Center via email. Students are given feedback why they are not being advanced. If the decision is based on work in class, they are told the skills and concepts that need improvement. A specific course may be recommended to address these areas of improvement. That may mean repeating the same course or repeating a lower level course.

Attendance / Enrollment

Consistent and timely attendance is important to the success of individual students and the class as a whole. Absences and lateness are disruptive to the team dynamic we strive to achieve in all of our classes. Students are expected and encouraged to attend all eight classes and arrive at each class before the scheduled start time.

Listed below are the guidelines for Attendance and Lateness during training classes:

- Email your teacher if you are going to be late.
- Students are permitted a maximum of two absences during a course. If you expect to miss more than two of the eight classes in the session, you should wait until the next session to take a class.
 - EXCEPTIONS
 - Students who miss the last class may not participate in the class showcase.
 - Students who miss three or more class sessions may be dropped from the class at the instructor's discretion; no refund or credit will be issued.
 - Students who miss three or more classes will be required to repeat the level before being advanced to the next.
- Students are expected to arrive to class before the scheduled start time ready to participate in warm-up exercises.
- Being more than 30 minutes late to class will count as an absence.
- Leaving class 30 minutes early will also count as an absence.

- Students who are 15 minutes late to class four or more times may be asked to repeat the level, or dropped from the class at the instructor's discretion. No refund or credit will be issued.

Students may appeal decisions resulting in their removal from the course by contacting the Education Director by email. Circumstances that could result in having the removal waived include documented death in the family, severe injury or illness, etc. The decision to reinstate a student is solely up to the discretion of the Education Director. There is no guarantee explicit or implied that a student will be reinstated,

In certain serious cases, and at the sole discretion of the Education Director, a student may be approved for a leave of absence if they are able to demonstrate the need for a leave of absence is imperative. Students who are requesting a leave of absence should do so by emailing the Education Director with a detailed explanation for the request. All requests for a leave of absence will be addressed on a case by case basis.

Students who return from an approved leave of absence within one year of the request, will be placed in a course at the same level in which they left. The student will be expected to start this new course on the first week in the session, regardless of how far along the student was in the previous course when the leave of absence began.

Failures

We are happy to say the majority of our students successfully complete their respective levels. There are some scenarios however, where a student can fail a course and will have to repeat the course at their own expense if they so choose and/or are permitted to continue with the training program.

- Students who have three absences or who do not attend two PHIT or other long form performances during their course may be subject to failure. In these instances, students are allowed to repeat the level (at their own expense).
- Maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust in the classroom is critical to providing a successful learning environment. Students who

exhibit any type of inappropriate behavior as described in this catalog, or behavior not described here, but that would be deemed inappropriate by a reasonable person, may be removed from the class and receive a failing grade. The Education Director will conduct an investigation to determine if the student's behavior rises to the level of failure and if the student will be permitted to continue with PHIT's training program in the future.

- Students who are unable to grasp the key course concepts, resistant to instructor feedback and in class notes, or who demonstrate a consistent lack of understanding may be subject to failure. The instructor will make every effort to work with students to improve their understanding provided the additional attention required does not severely hinder the progression of the other students and the group as a whole.
- The Training Center will notify students of failure via e-mail after the final graduation show of the session.

Make Up Work

Effective June 2022 Make-up classes are currently not offered

Transcripts

The Training Center maintains digital student transcripts, attendance records, personal information, and other records, as deemed necessary, in order to keep records of the progress of individual students who study with the Philly Improv Theater Training Center.

Code of Conduct

Every student at the Philly Improv Theater Training Center has a right to learn in a safe, respectful environment. Creative pursuits require trust and support, and

our first job before all others is to create this type of environment so that the learning, creation, and performance we each come here to pursue can occur.

The Training Center does not shy away from controversial topics, and all students have the right to express themselves without a fear of censorship or judgment. That stated, all content including but not limited to dealing with race, gender, gender expression, sexuality, age, body image, religion, politics, police etc. must treat these topics (and the individuals affected and impacted by them) in a creative, intelligent manner that embraces PHIT's values (found in [our mission statement](#)), and demonstrates empathy – and never in the spirit of hurtfulness or mockery.

If a student is ever uncomfortable with the subject matter displayed, performed or referenced or is given an assignment that makes them uncomfortable, they may pause or step away in the moment, raise these concerns with their instructor, or contact the Education Director or another member of the Philly Improv Theater Senior Leadership.

Separate from our Student Handbook, Philly Improv Theater maintains a Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy which may be [accessed on our website](#).

In order to create a safe, open, and respectful creative environment, students are asked to agree to certain ground rules in regard to class conduct before enrolling in a class.

Inappropriate class conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Engaging in discriminatory behavior related to an individual's sex (gender), race, national origin, ancestry, color, religion, age, genetic information, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, education status, socio-economic status; or disability, or the use of a guide or support animal for disability, or relationship to a person with a disability, with other students or the the course instructor. Notwithstanding, Philly Improv Theater recognizes that greater tolerance is necessary for verbal or non-verbal expression or language pertaining to a protected characteristic made during the course of an artistic performance or theatrical production when such expression or language is related to the theme or message of the

performance or production and not devoid of any literary, artistic or political value.

- Inappropriate verbal, physical or sexual conduct with other students, guest instructors, guest performers, or PHIT staff including the class instructor.
- Consumption of drugs, alcohol, or use of tobacco products (including e-cigarettes) during class.
- Participating in class, or class performance under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.
- Destruction of the physical classroom space, including but not limited to: ceilings, walls, floors, chairs, lights, doors, and other Training Center property.
- Bringing uninvited guests to class
- Eating in class when not on a break (*exceptions may be made verified medical necessity*)
- Talking or otherwise pulling the attention of others while the instructor is talking or while your classmates are performing
- Giving notes to other students on their performance.
- Using electronics in class – including audio and/or video recording devices and cellular phones (this includes reading or writing text messages or emails, or using the internet in class).

Inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated and will result in removal from class and a FAIL at the discretion of the instructor. No refund or credit will be issued to students who are removed from a class due to conduct.

Students who wish to appeal their removal from class should follow the appeals procedure detailed below.

Suspension & Termination

Students who exhibit any type of inappropriate behavior as described in this catalog, or behavior not described here, but that would be deemed inappropriate by a reasonable person, may be subject to suspension or termination.

The expectation to treat each other with mutual respect is not limited to the classroom alone. Therefore, any incidents of inappropriate behavior that involve

another student, instructor, or company member that take place outside the classroom may also rise to the level of suspension or termination.

The Education Director, in conjunction with PHIT Senior Leadership, will conduct a thorough investigation of all reported incidents to determine if the student's behavior rises to the level of suspension and or termination. Depending on the circumstances a student may be removed from the classroom during the course of the investigation.

Suspensions will last for a period of one calendar year from the date of the suspension. Incidents related to violent, criminal, or inappropriate, hostile or harassing behavior may result in immediate permanent termination. Terminations are final and the student will not be permitted on the PHIT premises for any reason.

Students may appeal Suspensions and Terminations in accordance with the Appeals process outlined in the Appeals section of this catalog.

Appeals

Students who have been terminated or placed on suspension are eligible to appeal those decisions. Listed below are the guidelines for filing an appeal:

- All appeals must be emailed directly to the Education Director, within 7 calendar days of the negative action taking place.
- The written appeal should contain the student's full name, phone number, and clearly state the reason for the appeal.
- Appeals should include any supporting documentation or names of witnesses that may support the appeal.
- Some examples of circumstances that may qualify for appeal:
 - The circumstances were temporary in nature.
 - The circumstances were beyond the student's immediate control (health problems, death in the family, etc.)
 - The circumstances are to be appropriately resolved by the time the negative action is to be lifted. In the judgment of the Education Director and the Senior Leadership, the student has demonstrated

an understanding of the inappropriate nature of the behavior that resulted in their suspension, and they have expressed a desire, willingness, and ability to change this behavior.

The Education Director and Senior Leadership will review the student's appeal and respond via email, with a decision within four to six weeks after receiving the appeal. Decisions reached by the Education Director and Senior Leadership are final and not subject to further review.

If a student's appeal is approved they will be reinstated and permitted to continue at the training center, but may be subject to contingencies related to their behavior in the future. If the appeal is denied, the student will be dropped from any courses in which they are enrolled in for the current session. If the student has registered for courses in the upcoming cycle, they will be removed from those classes.

Credit For Previous Training

PHIT encourages students who have studied improv, or acting at other institutions, to apply for Advanced Standing at PHIT. The Education Director will review all requests for Advanced Training on a case by case basis. Students who are approved for Advanced Training will be eligible to skip PHIT's level 101 class and start their training at level 201. No student will be given Advanced Standing beyond level 201.

The Philly Improv Theater Training Center considers offering Advanced Training to students who have studied within the previous 24 months of registering for class at PHIT at the following institutions who have similar training styles to PHIT:

- Annoyance Theater Chicago
- Annoyance Theatre NY
- ComedySportz/Philadelphia School of Improv (long form program)
- Crossroads Comedy Theater Philadelphia
- DSI Comedy
- ImprovBoston
- IO Chicago

- IO West
- Second City Chicago
- Second City Hollywood
- Second City Toronto
- The Peoples Improv Theater (The PIT)
- Upright Citizens Brigade LA
- Upright Citizens Brigade NY
- Washington Improv Theater

Students who have studied at other training centers may apply for Advanced Standing by contacting the Education Director and will be considered on a case by case basis. There is no guarantee that students will be granted Advanced Standing.

Students who wish to apply for Advanced Training should send an email to the attention of the Education Director (classes@phillyimprovtheater.com) outlining your previous training from one of the above mentioned institutions. PHIT will contact institutions to confirm attendance and obtain character references to ensure students are not in violation of that institution's Code of Conduct or Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy. Decisions regarding Advanced Standing will be communicated within four (4) weeks of the request.

Cancellation & Refund Policies

In all cases students are encouraged to check their schedules carefully BEFORE committing to register for a course. In some circumstances there will be NO refunds, exchanges, transfers, and no credit regardless of when a student chooses to withdraw. This will be indicated in the course description. If a student wishes to withdraw from a course, they should inform the Training Center in writing immediately. When available, refunds may be issued under the following provisions:

8-WEEK COURSES

Processing fees are non refundable in all circumstances.

- A full refund (minus processing fees) up to 5 business days (defined as Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm) prior to the first scheduled class date. *When available.*
- A 50% refund (minus processing fees) is available **less than** 5 business days (defined as Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm) *and before the first scheduled class date. When available.*
- There are no refunds and no credits offered starting with the first scheduled class date regardless of student attendance.

INTENSIVES AND ELECTIVES

[Full week, 2, 4, 6 week courses]

- A full refund (minus processing fees) is available up to 5 business days (defined as Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm) prior to the first scheduled class date. *When Available.*
- A 50% refund (minus a \$25 processing fee) is available *less than* 5 business days (defined as Monday - Friday 8am - 5pm) *and before the first scheduled class date. When Available.*
- There are no refunds and no credits offered starting with the first scheduled class date regardless of student attendance.

WORKSHOPS, DROP-INS, SKILLS LAB, PRACTICE GROUPS

Workshops, Drop-Ins, Skills Lab, Practice Groups are non-refundable. All Sales are final. You are encouraged to check your schedule carefully before committing to attending one of these types of course offerings.

COURSE TRANSFERS

Transfers are contingent on availability. Transfers are not guaranteed.

Procedure For Obtaining A Refund

All refund requests must be submitted in writing via email to the Education Director (classes@phillyimprovtheater.com).

Students seeking a refund or a partial refund, assuming that their withdrawal from class follows all provisions outlined in our Cancellation and Refund Policies, should send an e-mail to the Education Director as soon as they have decided to withdraw. Under no circumstance will a refund, partial refund, or course credit be offered on or after the scheduled start date of a course.

Complaint Procedure

It is the primary goal of PHIT to offer training in a safe and supportive environment. We encourage and expect all students and instructors to treat each other with mutual respect at all times and to follow Philly Improv Theater Values ([Mission Statement](#)).

Students who feel they have been wronged in any way by a fellow student, or any Staff member or person employed by PHIT of the training center have the right to file a written complaint with the Education Director. For the purposes of a thorough, effective, investigation, timeliness of reporting complaints is critical. Ideally complaints will be received within seven calendar days of the alleged violation.

All formal complaints must be submitted in writing, via email to the Education Director and should include specific facts and details outlining the nature of the complaint. The Education Director will respond acknowledging receipt of the complaint and requesting further information if necessary.

The Education Director and PHIT Senior Leadership will conduct a thorough investigation, including interviewing all persons involved. If necessary, disciplinary action will be taken against any faculty, staff members, or students involved and found in violation of Training Center policy.

Within four (4) weeks of the receipt of a written complaint, the Education Director will issue a written finding to the student who filed the complaint and any other

individuals who may have a need to know. Once a resolution is reached all parties involved will be notified.

Calendar

Philly Improv Theater operates on a “seasonal” calendar from October to July. In some cases classes and programs may fall outside these dates, but generally PHIT operates at a lower capacity during the months of August through September and late December through mid January.

The Philly Improv Theater Training Center office is closed on the following days though we may refer to them differently (in parentheses). Classes, workshops, and other public programming may still take place. If you are uncertain your program is running please contact your instructor, coach or director:

- Christmas Eve through New Year’s Day
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day,
- President's Day (Washington's Birthday)
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day (July 4th)
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day (Indigenous People's Day)
- All Election Days
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day following

Tuition & Fees

Tuition and fees are subject to change without advance notice. You are responsible for checking the registration page of the course for which you are registering for the most accurate price.

Faculty

Faculty assigned to instruct are listed in the details of class, elective, workshop, or master class descriptions. *Our instructors are working artists and as such their availability may be impacted by other projects. Assigned instructors are subject to change without notice - refunds will not be issued if an instructor is substituted.* A complete list of the Philly Improv Theater Training Center's Faculty and Guest Instructors is available upon request.

Administration

Kelly Jennings Education Director

CONTACT INFO

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Email: contact@phillyimprovtheater.com