**Guidelines for a Lakeside Theatre Homegrown Studio Season Proposal**

The Lakeside Theatre prides itself on providing a spotlight to a diverse range of people and forms of creative expression. We need to receive an idea for a production/event and be persuaded that it is viable. It does not have to be an original play written by you it can be but not limited to; spoken word, singing, music, comedy, and dance! We want you to find a team to work with, a director, a technician\* and a producer at least. The director will have overall artistic vision of the project and will direct rehearsals, the technician will be responsible for the lighting, sound, and any other technical elements as well as liaising with the Lakeside Theatre technicians. The producer will be responsible for scheduling the project and for the budget. Those people should get together and write a pitch. Please note that one person may end up filling multiple roles if necessary.

\*Our Technical Team can provide assistance, if you’re a student we suggest you ask other students to be part of your tech team to be assisted by the theatre technicians.

**How to write a pitch**

The pitch is a way of communicating what the production will be like, what it is, how it will look, why it is relevant and what the audience will get out of it. In about 200 – 250 words introduce your idea, describe it and define your angle. Here are some pointers:

* Explain why your idea is timely, unique, or important, and/or of interest to Lakeside Theatre audiences and how it will complement our programme. Take a step back and think “*What’s interesting about this? What am I adding to the cultural conversation that’s not already out there?”*
* Describe the performance concept – how you will use the space?
* Estimated length for your piece.
* How many cast members will you need? How will you find them?
* Give some sense of the physical scale of the piece.
* Describe what the audience will experience.
* Create a vision which describes exciting snapshots of the performance
* The best pitches offer a concise, provocative vision for a performance.
* You can also attach images or sketches or any other visual material which helps to convey the mood of your project.
* Any specific technical/staging requirements

Please note: Preference is given to projects that are thoroughly planned, that respond to University of Essex curriculum texts, that are staging’s of classics or contemporary classics, are original work; or which fill a gap in our current programme this could range from poetry to dance. **With original work please attach a script as an appendix to the application.**

**Marketing**

In order to promote the show you will need an image and some ‘copy’ or ‘blurb’ to put on the Lakeside Theatre website, for use on social media and any other marketing material.

**Image**

The image is your audience’s first encounter with your show. It is their first impressionIt’s important that you don’t make it their last. The most effective images have faces, figures and movement in them. Images that are high contrast, that are simple and bold and have a link to the theme of the show are the most effective. Have a look through websites of theatres that produce shows similar to yours and see what catches your eye.

**Copyright**

It is illegal to use an image for which you don’t have the copyright. Either you can make your own image or there are plenty of royalty free stock images online from websites such as Shutterstock some of which you which you may have to pay for.

**Blurb/Copy**

Blurbs are short descriptions to promote the show. The blurb needs to grab the attention of the reader and get them to see the show. They are short and catchy and use informal and engaging words. They have emotional impact and are relevant. Look on theatre websites and in brochures at blurbs for shows that you have seen to see examples.

**Flyering/Notice boards**

Flyers should be A5 size (half an A4), and you should try and get a low amount (100) printed to avoid wasting paper. You should include what the show is, when the show is, how much tickets cost and most importantly where the show is. There are many notice boards around campus that anyone is free to put flyers on so we would encourage you to put them in high foot traffic areas. Also keep In mind that you can print on both sides of flyers (usually for no extra cost).

**Social Media**

Social media is a vital tool to use when promoting you show. Make sure to post across every social media platform, whilst we will post about the event on our social medias, a wider coverage is always important so by sharing our posts or creating your own you’ll be able to increase the likelihood of people seeing you post and therefore potentially coming to the show.

**Word of mouth**

How you talk about your show to another person is important so make sure you have a good description of the show ready to go if/when you bring it up in conversation so that you can encourage any potential audience members.

**Budget**

Unless you have access to separate funds the production costs should be kept to a minimum. There is no fixed pre-determined amount allocated to each show. We will negotiate this with you upon a successful application. Also Consider/include items you’ll be able to source for free.

**What to put in your budget?**

Layout all the costs you can foresee and give us the breakdown and total.

As guidance, consider if the following applies to your show:

* Set materials
* Furniture hire
* Props – (don't forget food and drink)
* Costume materials
* Costume hire
* Posters and fliers (these are not created by Lakeside Theatre for studio shows)
* Performance Rights Fees\*
* Hire of scripts, scores, or band parts
* Musicians’ expenses
* Special effects (sugar glass, break away furniture etc)
* Hire costs **plus** delivery and collection costs.
* **Don't forget to include VAT in your figures!**

\*Performance rights are required for any play (or novel if you are adapting it) which was written less than seventy years ago as a rule of thumb, but you will always need to check with the publisher, you will be looking to obtain amateur performance rights. You’ll be able to find prices for reference here: [Plays | Concord Theatricals](https://www.concordtheatricals.co.uk/perform/plays)

**What you don’t need to put in your budget**

Lakeside Theatre will cover the following things:

* Venue Hire costs
* Electricity, gas, water
* Rehearsal room hire
* Replacement light bulbs for our standard stock equipment
* Basic publicity costs (you’ll be put on Lakeside Theatre’s homepage and box office)
* Insurance

**Frequently asked questions**

**Q:** Does my proposal have to be a piece of theatre?

**A:** No! We’re open to a variety events and encourage you to apply whether it’s poetry, music or anything else!

**Q:** Do I need to be a drama student or current student to apply?

**A:** No! If you’ve got an idea for a show then we want to hear it! Anyone is welcome from any department, postgrad or undergrad, lecturer or if you’re from the Essex area!

**Q:** How can I book a rehearsal space?

**A:** If you’re a student you’ll be able to book a room with your department. If you are a member of a Students union society you may be able to book a room with their assistance. Please follow the link below for more details

[Student room bookings | University of Essex](https://www.essex.ac.uk/student/event/student-room-bookings)

**Q:** What spaces can I book to rehearse?

**A:** This is something that you’d primarily discuss through whichever avenue you book a room through. The studio can be available as a rehearsal space, but this will need to be discussed with the theatre staff in advance.

**Q:** What dimensions should posters be?

**A:** A4 and A3, ensure that the picture quality is high to prevent blurry posters.

**Q:** When will my get in and tech be?

**A:** As studio slots are typically on a Tuesday and Wednesday the tech/get in slots are on the Monday. This is something which could be changed if cast/production members aren’t available, but this would need to be discussed with the technical staff in advance.

**Q:** What changing facilities are there for the studio?

**A:** Due to the location of the studio the changing facilities are limited but flexible, this would be something you discuss with the technical team during your meetings.

**Q:** What are the technical capabilities of the studio

**A:** The studio has a wide range of lighting, sound, and video capabilities. Please follow the link below for more detail. If you have any specific requests include those in your proposal or discuss with the technical team.

<https://essexuniversity.box.com/s/mwsle6ly3eh485dmhv71hs19mybg8myn>

**Q:** What Is the seating capacity of the studio?

**A:** 30 – 35

**If you have any questions about this document email Kanyinsola Olanrewaju** [**kolanr@essex.ac.uk**](mailto:kolanr@essex.ac.uk) **and Samuel Bell** [**sb16463@essex.ac.uk**](mailto:sb16463@essex.ac.uk) **as far in advance of your submission deadline as possible and we will endeavour to help.**