# **Guidelines for a Lakeside Theatre Homegrown Proposal**

Thank you for considering applying to our Homegrown season! New for 2024, we have introduced two levels of production for consideration:

* **First Steps** – a First Steps production will take place in our Studio Theatre, will command a smaller budget, and will be suited to first time productions or productions in the early stages of development. First steps can be used for R&D, feedback, and workshopping in front of a live audience.
* **Next Level** – a Next Level production will take place in our Main House Theatre (unless stated otherwise), will command a greater budget, and will be suited to more established productions which require a larger stage to express the artistry of the piece.

As part of your application, you will need to indicate which level you believe your proposal falls under. We would advise reading more about the two news levels of Homegrown production at: <https://lakesidetheatre.org.uk/getinvolved/homegrown/>

## Introduction

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 are a current Essex student we suggest you ask other students to be part of your technical 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 to 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 images and show ‘copy’ or ‘blurb’ to put on the Lakeside Theatre website, for use on social media and any other marketing material.

**Images**

You will need a lead image which will be the main image you use to promote your show. You should have a ‘clean’ version of this (with no graphics or copy etc overlaid as a graphic), as well as a designed version with show info etc.

This image or graphic will be your audience’s first encounter with your show, it is their first impression so it is important to make it count!

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 also work well.

Have a look through theatre website that produce shows similar to yours for inspiration and see what catches your eye.

Note, you can use Canva to design a show graphic, or speak to our marketing team about design support on arts@essex.ac.uk.

We would also recommend additional images which could be used in other promotions, such as rehearsal photography, staged photography, or photography which represents themes in your show.

**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.

We would recommend producing blurb or show copy in the following formats:

* 250 words (long)
* 180 words
* 100 words
* 50 words

**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.

In your flyer, you should include what the show is, when the show is, how much tickets cost and most importantly where the show is. Your flyer should look similar to your lead show graphic and can be designed in Canva.

PLEASE CHECK WITH THE LAKESIDE THEATRE TEAM ON APPROPRIATE FLYERING LOCATIONS BOTH ON AND OFF CAMPUS.

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 socials, 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.

Get friends to help you promote and speak to any SU student staff who might be able to help you get the word out too!

## 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?**

Lay out 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: <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 (your show will be put on Lakeside Theatre’s website and box office, and we will commit to some social media marketing for your show).
* Insurance.

## Frequently asked questions

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

**A:** No! We’re open to a variety of 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 alumni!

**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: <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

**Q:** Wat is the seating capacity of the main stage?

**A:** 180 - 198

**If you have any questions about this document, please email Kanyinsola Olanrewaju (Lakeside Theatre Manager) or Samuel Bell (Lakeside Theatre Assistant Technical Manager) on** **arts@essex.ac.uk** **and we will endeavour to help.**