

# **Grants – eligibility and decision making process**

The purpose of this document is to describe the process by which grants are considered and awarded by the Theatre Development Trust. It also provides the Grant Application Panel with clear and concise eligibility criteria in which to inform decisions on grant applications.

## **Process**

### **1. What is and who serves on the Grant Application panel?**

The Grant application panel is formally tasked by the TDT Trustees to review and make recommendations (against set criteria) as to which grants should be supported. The panel meet to discuss the applications and a formal paper is presented to the Trustees at their next formal meeting. The panel is made up of all 3 independent trustees and 2 additional trustees (who are also directors of SOLT).

### **2. What is the process for deciding the budget available for grants each year?**

The TDT Trustees set and agree the annual budget for grant giving.

### **3. The Laurence Olivier Bursary scheme**

TDT currently runs this bursary scheme which focuses on supporting students at drama school from underrepresented groups who are experiencing financial difficulties. The scheme is part funded by restricted donations.

## **Eligibility criteria for decision making**

### **1. Funding objectives – our 3 core goals**

Any grant awarded needs **to advance at least one of the following three core goals:**

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**Registered Charity No 292559 and Company No 1928541**

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1. **Audience Development** – including encouraging younger theatre goers and improving the diversity of audiences by becoming more inclusive of under-represented groups, including new theatre goers across all sectors of society.
2. **Theatre Workforce Training and Career Development** – including widening access to careers in theatres for under-represented groups, addressing skills shortages, entry routes, in career training and supporting organisations to be fully inclusive.
3. **Access Requirements** – exploring sustainable models to make theatre more accessible for d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people.

In 2025, the TDT Trustees will be prioritising applications which meet Objective 2 - **Theatre Workforce Training and Career Development**. This is in response to current industry need and a recognition of the volume of work being achieved and funded in the space of Access and Audience Development across the sector. The TDT is therefore encouraging applications which achieve this objective with applications using robust data and clearly defined benefits.

## **2. Further definitions – what do we mean by Audience, Access and Workforce?**

### **Audience Development**

**Purpose:** Audience development refers to retaining, growing and improving the diversity of audiences by becoming more inclusive of under-represented groups. Our vision is to see audiences that reflect the demographic of the UK as measured by ONS census data (<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census>).

We want to see applications which deliver the following:

- Growing the audiences of the future by enabling children from all backgrounds to experience theatre

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- Ensuring that audiences are more representative of the UK, by dismantling barriers to attendance.
- Schemes that support the development of good practice in relation to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

This could include working with schools, other charities, local authorities to collaborate and increase impact.

### **Theatre Workforce Training & Career Development**

**Purpose:** To fund activities to support and develop the theatre workforce (especially in technical and freelancer roles). The activities / programmes and/or research should be scoped in response to robust data. Our vision is to create and support a workforce which is resilient, fit for the future and more inclusive of those groups who are currently under-represented in our sector (as measured by the [2024 Policy and Evidence Centre report on Arts, Culture and Heritage: Audiences and Workforce](#)).

We want to see applications which deliver the following:

- Focus on development of skills and training
- Look at ways to support workers to remain in the industry and build their careers long-term
- Break down barriers to those wishing to access or even explore a career in the arts

### **Access**

**Purpose:** To support theatres and productions in delivering wider access programmes for d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people using best practice and with sustainable models.

Our vision is to see an equitable offering across access performances throughout the sector.

We want to see applications which deliver the following:

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- Schemes which enable equitable access to the theatre for d/Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people.
- Projects that are backed by a long term strategy
- An understanding of the barriers and practical ways of overcoming them

### **3. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

We expect all our applications to deliver robust and considered programmes with clearly articulated goals related to improving Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the sector and/or among audiences

### **4. Responding to current need**

The TDT will prioritise grant applications which can demonstrate delivery to address a current concern and/or need in the wider sector. The grant panel will use their industry knowledge and given data to identify which grants are delivering a need not being addressed or supported elsewhere.

### **5. Who can apply and what you can apply for?**

As a registered charity, the TDT is able to support applications from charities and arts organisations who produce or present theatre. The TDT are able to support individuals studying drama via the Laurence Olivier Bursary Scheme.

We do not fund grants towards production costs.

The majority of grant applications will be project or scheme based with clear recipients identified.

We will consider grants to conduct research but they must be evidence based.

The TDT will on occasion fund a % of core costs of an organisation to deliver projects and or workstreams towards the charitable objectives. This percentage is not expected to be more that 20% of the total grant.

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## 6. Which geographical locations can TDT support?

TDT can support applications across the UK and it prioritises areas currently underserved.

## 7. What level of grants does the TDT fund?

Grant request range	Type of application	Metrics of grant beneficiaries	Impact
£2 – 10k	Drama student hardship grant (via Laurence Olivier Bursary Scheme)	Underrepresented groups	Enabling graduation and career progression in theatre
£10,000 and under	<b>Kick-start:</b> Short to mid-scale project or piece of research	At least 20 individuals or 5 organisations	Short to mid-term – to kick-start or to enhance a project
£10,001 - £50,000	<b>Mid-scale:</b> Medium term project or piece of research	Medium cohort 100+ 10+ organisations	Mid to long-term scale/scope deliver substantial benefits to large cohort / wider industry
£50,001 - £100,000	<b>Significant:</b> – mid to long term project or piece of research	Large cohort 250+ 25+ organisations	Significant impact to a specific cohort / industry need
*£100,000+	<b>Exceptional</b> - Long term project expected to take >1 year	Industry wide	Sector wide impact and long-term change

\*The TDT may from time to time consider supporting exceptional grants of amounts above £100,000. These must, following robust research and relevant data, fund activities or a scheme which has significant sector-wide impact and affect long-term change.

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## 8. Multi-year funding

Subject to the Trustees feeling satisfied with the financial position of the charity, the panel are able to consider funding grants across multiple years (3 years max). This could be to deliver the same project year on year or a longer-term project in phases. The ongoing support will be subject to all reporting requirements being met and the project deemed to be achieving its goals.

## 9. Balance of grants across the 3 core objectives

There is no obligation or expectation that grants awarded should be spread evenly across the 3 objectives. The grants in receipt of funding should be the strongest in terms of identifying the purpose and a robust plan to deliver and measure success.

## Criteria used to assess and measure

Criteria	Yes	No	Unclear/NA	Comments
Does the application meet at least one of the funding objectives?				
Is the application for a project (not core costs)?				
Is the work taking place in a geographical area that is currently underserved?				
Is the long term impact of the project clear?				
Is this organisation well positioned to undertake this work?				
Is it clear how the applicant has identified clear measures of success?				
Is it clear how participants from diverse background will be reached?				

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<b>Is there a risk of duplication? i.e. there is similar work already being done that targets the same group of people?</b>				
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<b>Metrics</b>	
<b>No. of days of activity funded</b>	
<b>Cost per person (amount of funding/no of participants)</b>	
<b>Percentage of match funding</b>	

These above metrics are to be used as a guideline only.