Bloomsbury Studio UCL Department Usage Application Guide

This document contains important information for UCL Staff applying to use the Bloomsbury Studio under the UCL Usage arrangements for public events. Please read it carefully. It is unlikely that your application will be successful if you do not follow this advice.

What's in these guidelines?

1. What is on offer

The Bloomsbury Studio Theatre is a Black Box performance space (separate to the Bloomsbury Theatre) which seats up to 70 people Theatre style (other layouts including filming available but at a lower audience capacity). Its purpose is to host events for, and by, the UCL Community with a bias towards public events and/or events which showcase UCL research. It is also used for external hire events which are charged at a significantly higher Commercial hire rate to that of the UCL Usage rate.

Examples of successful UCL Usage proposals include:
- Public screenings of UCL student films related to their department/research.
- Workshop for theatre and research-based performances with UCL student participating/leading and invited external none UCL students attending.
- Internal UCL body language classes – lead by external theatre practitioners using performance techniques to improve UCL Staff research presentation skills.
- Plays performed for the public by UCL students based on UCL research.

Examples of rejected UCL Usage proposals include:
- UCL Staff hosting non-UCL/ 3rd party companies with no obvious connection to UCL or relationship with research.
- Lecture/Presentation space for standard UCL teaching (for these contact UCL Room Bookings).
- Party/drinks reception space (for these contact UCL Room Bookings).
- UCL Staff private performances of their personal hobbies e.g., film screenings of private projects, singing/dance recitals.

Finance:
- LCCOS: Bloomsbury Theatre is pleased to offer UCL Staff a heavily reduced room hire rate of £150 or 25% of ticket sales, (whichever is greatest) for a day access to the Studio. This must be paid in advance of your event to secure the booking.
- For UCL staff led events any surplus ticket income (minus VAT and a 5.25% box office fee) and donation income will be sent to a UCL project code only.
- Charges are made internally so ensure your Head of Department/relevant budget-holder is aware of your application and that they have allocated appropriate funds from their budget to cover this. ****NB Payment should not be made by an external company as this reduced rate is only for internal usage****
- 'Free' public ticketed events usually result in a 50-70% no show rate with public audiences, so tickets must be sold (suggested minimum £2 a ticket) to encourage attendance (the venue will not over sell ticket capacity). There is an option to do a 'show + free drink' ticket, please discuss this when making your application. Events with a private audience/guestlist should also be discussed within the application.
- If there is box office income, this is returned to a UCL project code minus fees after the event. ****NB Payment cannot be made to an external company as this reduced rate is only for internal usage****
- It is likely that there will be some costs over and above the initial room hire fee to cover consumables and if additional time is required, particularly past 11pm. Any time to be paid for is charged at a heavily discounted rate.

Applicants can apply for time between the hours of 10:00 – 23:00 on Monday-Saturday. The standard usage is 1 day, generally of 8 consecutive hours, with one public event but multiple days are available, do highlight this in your application.

Our technical staff require a one-hour break at least every five hours throughout the hire. These breaks are included in the hire time.

UCL Users of the Studio get the following:
- Use of the studio (maximum capacity of 70 seated audience, different layouts reduce this) and its 1 dressing room.

- Box office staff and support (see below Ticketing/Box Office).
- Front of House staff including Ushers and Duty Management.
- Preshow and interval Studio bar for public shows.
- One technician to assist in the presentation of events and to supervise preparations. If you require additional technicians this must be requested in advance and subject to availability with costs recharged to the hirer.
- Use of all the studio's technical equipment (not including consumables).
- Access to theatre staff for advice and guidance.
- Access to marketing advice and guidance.
- Maximum eight consecutive hours including technical breaks.

UCL Users of the Studio do not get the following:
- Technical support and equipment for filming/streaming – hirer must arrange and pay for this separately.
- Marketing support including poster/flyer printing and online support.
- Security staff as standard. If any event requires security e.g., bag searching/VIP attendees this must be discussed at the point of application and the fees for this will be recharged to the hirer.
- UCL Ticketing will not oversell ticketing capacity i.e., sell 90 tickets for a 70 seat capacity.

Ticketing/Box Office
A requirement of using the Studio is that you **must operate any ticket sales (including free/complimentary tickets) through the Box Office (UCL Event Ticketing)**. This allows UCL to capture customer information on your behalf, within the GDPR legislation rules, and ensures room capacities/H&S is adhered too. Events found not to be using UCL Event Ticketing will be cancelled and refused access to the reduced use rates in the future.

Catering/Bar
The Studio has its own bar for public performances. This is staffed and operated by UCL with all profits being retained by the Theatre. If you require a post-show bar or any other form of catering, this needs to be requested within your application. This is organised via the Bloomsbury Theatre team and recharged to your department. Food is not allowed unless pre-agreed with the venue and only drinks in plastic cups can be taken into the Studio.

Please note that Front of House and Technical staff must approve all aspects of events to ensure that licensing as well as health and safety regulations are met. If you are proposing something which is unusual or may include something that is dangerous or potentially dangerous e.g., laboratory/chemical demonstrations, seek advice prior to making an application – see section 6. NB: pyrotechnics can never be used in the studio.

2. How Successful Applications are chosen

Applications are based on 3 considerations which include:

Does it meet the following 5 Strategic and Artistic aims of the Theatre…

- Does the project involve performance/film or is it otherwise appropriate to the space?
- Is there sufficient collaboration/involvement of UCL staff and/or students?
- Does the project engage with public audiences?
- Is the project likely to attract an audience number of 500+ at all performances?
- Will the event share research in innovative ways?

Additionally, from time-to-time the LCCOS: Bloomsbury Theatre may issue further guidance.

Logistical
Does the application provide assurance that the people involved are capable (with support) of making the event happen? Is there adequate funding in place?

Timing
Is it possible to fit the project into the Studio schedule around other successful projects?

3. A step-by-step guide to the application form

Potential applicants are strongly advised to discuss their proposal with the Venue Hire & Bookings Manager in advance of applying. See Section 6 for details.

Below are tips to help you complete the application form successfully.

See **Section 5** below for a link to the form. Completed forms must be no longer than four sides of A4 in 11pt font. This rule will be strictly adhered to.

Basic details
At the start of the form, we ask for information about you, your planned project, and how we can contact you. This information will help us to administer the project if it is successful, and to monitor whether we are receiving applications from a cross-section of the UCL population.

Question 1

Please give a short description of what the event(s) will be. This is your opportunity to 'sell' your event to the decision makers and give them a real idea of what the audience, participants and others involved will experience.

Detail the activity e.g., a film screening of a short film for UCL Community with tickets on public sale, a private singing workshop for UCL Students with no tickets.

Give the approximate number of performers/speakers, as this will influence the performance space you require, also the audience capacity.

Also specify of you plan to film/live stream this event.

Question 2

You may want to use bullet points to answer this question. What are you hoping to achieve? This may be around artistic excellence, but don't forget what originally made you want to apply – this is probably related to an aim in itself. Is there a clear teaching or research objective? Does the event fit into your department or faculty strategic plan? Or, if you are an individual, will this develop your skills? Is this event a trial to see if more events could be beneficial in your area of work?

The decision makers want to see that you have thought through what this is actually all about – don't assume that they can see clearly what you want to achieve – spell it out clearly!

Question 3

Is this aimed at UCL Students, UCL Staff, the general public, specific academics/groups etc.

Are you expecting under 18s to attend? or persons with access requirements e.g., wheelchair users or possibly a D/deaf audience who may require a BSL signer etc

How will you market the activity to these groups?

Are you limiting the attendee capacity in any way?

The Studio seats up to 70, there is an expectation that you will have at least 50 people in for the events – explain who they are going to be and how you will get them to come.

Putting an event on is never simply a case of 'if I do it, they will come'. The decision makers want to see that you have a marketing plan that fits in with the event and your aims.

Question 4

There is an expectation that all applicants will involve performance (or film) in their event, or it will otherwise be an appropriate use of the space – clarify that this is the case.

The second part of this question is the key – this is a fully functioning performance venue with equipment and staff – explain how you are going to use it to meet your aims. If your event could take place in a centrally bookable lecture theatre or seminar room it probably isn't a great use of the space!

Question 5

Please give a short summary of relevant experience held by the project team. This answer tells the decision makers why you are the right team to run this project. For example, have you done

work in theatre or events before? Give a very short description of the team's relevant experience. There's no need to list publications or talk about your research/teaching achievements unless they are relevant to the project.

If, as most successful project leaders do, you plan to work with other people please tell us who they are. What relevant experience they bring, and what involvement they'll have? Are there people from outside UCL involved in planning and delivering the project? Are representatives of your target audience involved in planning and delivering the project? What relevant experience do they bring to the project?

Question 6

It is likely that there will be costs associated with the event such as costumes, additional equipment, props, venue costs (see above) marketing costs etc.

For this question draw up a basic budget and show how the costs will be covered. You can include ticket income but don't forget that VAT will be deducted and there are some small charges (see above).

Show that the project can fund itself even if ticket sales are significantly lower than expected. The decision makers want to know that if they offer time in the theatre the event will be able to go ahead.

Question 7

The theatre can only host one event at a time! However good your application is, if another is considered more suitable by the decision makers, or is requested earlier, and neither of you have any flexibility of dates then you may lose out.

Be as flexible as you possibly can. If there is a good reason for wanting a particular date or range of dates (for example, an anniversary) explain that in this box.

The Bloomsbury Theatre staff need to ensure that events in the Studio don't affect the main theatre and vice-versa. Sometimes Studio events will be required to start earlier in the evening (for example).

Question 8

How will you assess whether your project was a success? This answer shows the decision makers how you'll know that you've achieved your aims. We don't expect evaluation and monitoring to take up a large proportion of your time. However, we expect you to have a clear idea of what success looks like, and for your plans to include reflection by the audience, as well as the project team, on the activities, including planning if appropriate.

Question 9

UCL is committed to presenting and hosting events that challenge and question perceptions. However, if you are aware there are topics, themes or speech/images that is likely to cause offence or is insensitive to the diversity of UCL's inclusive community or external communities beyond please alert them to us as early as possible.

Please be as accurate and transparent about the nature of your event at this early stage for us to determine if this contravenes our guidelines and how we can assist (where possible) to make the event fit within the guidelines.

Please also keep us updated throughout your planning as to any changes to the content – so we can reassess your event. Any event/s which contravene UCL Guidelines may led to the event being cancelled and a formal inquiry into the person/s organising or department.

Should your event include external speakers you are responsible for complying with relevant UCL policies:
UCL visitor code of conduct (link)
Procedure for the management of events that include external speakers (link)
UCL code of practice on freedom of speech (link)

If you have any further questions, please contact our **Venue Hire & Bookings Manager.**

4. **What happens if you're successful?**

You will be contacted by email within 3 weeks of your application submission as to whether you have been successful or unsuccessful.

Successful applications will be told what date/s and access hours are available. You will be invited to visit the Bloomsbury Theatre and meet with the Theatre team to discuss your requirements.

If your event is felt to require it, you will be asked to attend a mandatory training session.

The Bloomsbury Theatre is not able to financially support or underwrite your project so all costs associated with the event must be paid from elsewhere. Following the event the theatre will tell you how much money was taken at the box office, detail any extra costs and then send you what is left after deduction of VAT.

Post-event evaluation
To review your event and ensure that the event meet the proposed criteria outlined in your original application, we require that you send us a brief evaluation document. This does not need to be long or detailed, but we want you to revisit the answers to the questions and tell us how you did, particularly referencing questions 2 and 8. Include any advice you would give to yourself before you ran the event! This should be emailed to the Venue Hire & Bookings Manager no more than 1 month after the event.

Failure to provide post event evaluation, evidence that the final event varied from the originally proposed application and therefore didn't qualify for the UCL Usage allocation or did not follow Theatre procedures will result in unsuccessful future applications.

5. UCL Departmental Usage application form

Follow the link below to download the UCL Departmental Usage application form.

[UCL Departmental Usage application form](#)

6. Where to get more guidance

If you have any queries or you want to discuss UCL Usage in the Bloomsbury Theatre then please contact the Venue Hire & Bookings Manager (Ellen Frost) via theatre@ucl.ac.uk or UCL internal extension 32911.

You are strongly advised to have an informal conversation with the Venue Hire & Bookings Manager prior to submitting any application.

We are happy to put you in contact with recent successful applicants who can share valuable advice on using the theatre and we strongly advise that you attend shows in the Theatre to get the best sense of how the space can be used.

If you are enquiring on behalf of **Students' Union,** please note that SU societies have pre-arranged access for student societies. Contact the Students' Union UCL directly for advice on this.