

Bloomsbury Theatre - UCL Department Usage - Application Guide

This document contains important information for UCL Staff applying to use the Bloomsbury Theatre 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
- 2) How successful applications are chosen
- 3) A step-by-step guide to the application form
- 4) What happens if you're successful
- 5) Where to get more guidance

1) What is on offer?

The Bloomsbury Theatre is a 541 seat theatre. 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 Commercial hire rate to offset the costs of running the theatre.

Examples of **successful** UCL Usage proposals inc

- Public screenings of films related to their department/research.
- Plays or other artistic events being produced by a department utilising academic research and student performers

Examples of **rejected** UCL Usage proposals inc

- UCL Staff found to be hiring the space directly to host none UCL/ 3rd party companies.
- Lecture/Presentation space for 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 eg singing/dance recitals

Finance

- UCL Culture is pleased to offer UCL Departments access to the theatre during the advertised times at a complimentary rate
- For UCL Department led events, any surplus ticket income (minus VAT and a 5.25% box office fee) will be sent to a UCL project code only.
- Recharges (eg box office revenue) are also made via Internal Department Transfers so ensure you send us the relevant Project Code to return this money to. ****NB Payment should not be made to an external company as this reduced rate is only for internal usage****
- It is likely that there will be some costs 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 but multiple days are available, do highlight this in your application.

UCL Users of the Theatre get the following:

- Use of the theatre (capacity of 541 seated audience) and dressing rooms.

- Box office staff and support (see below Ticketing/Box Office)
- FOH staff including Ushers and Duty Manager.
- Pre show and interval bar for public shows.
- Technician(s) to assist in the presentation of events and to supervise preparations.
- Use of all the Theatre's technical equipment (not including consumables)
- Access to theatre staff for advice and guidance
- Access to marketing advice and guidance

Ticketing/Box Office

A requirement of using the Theatre 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 also 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 Theatre rate in the future.

Catering/Bar

The Theatre 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 and only drinks in plastic cups can be taken into the Theatre.

Please note that Front of House and Technical staff must approve all aspects of a Theatre event in order 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 5.

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, it is expected that from time to time UCL Culture SMT will 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 Theatre 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 and Bookings Manager in advance of submitting an application. See Section 5 for details.

Basic details

Completed forms must be no longer than three sides of A4 in 11pt Calibri font. This rule will be strictly adhered to.

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.

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

The decision makers want to know that this will be a worthwhile use of the Theatre. The Theatre seats up to 70, there is an expectation that you will have at least 60 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 – UCL has access to a fully functioning Theatre 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, Theatre 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 to be a little better by the decision makers, or is requested earlier, and neither of you have any flexibility of dates then you will 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.

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 in order 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 are able to reassess your event. Any event/s which contravene UCL Guidelines may lead to the event being cancelled and a formal inquiry into the person/s organising or department.

4) What happens if you're successful?

You will be contacted by email by the end of the current academic year 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 Theatre and meet with the Technical 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 in a position 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.

After the event

In order 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 Ellen Frost no more than 1 month after the event.

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

5. Where to get more guidance

If you have any queries or you want to discuss UCL Usage in theatre then please contact Ellen Frost via e.frost@ucl.ac.uk or UCL internal extension 32911.

You are strongly urged to have an informal conversation with Ellen 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 enquiring on behalf of **Students' Union** please note that SU societies have pre-arranged access for student societies. Contact the SU direct for advice on this.