

About Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, the role of role of Youth, Summer & Short Courses Specialist, and the application process

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School's vision

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School will continue to be an exemplar in modern international drama training, preparing exceptional young professionals to forge their careers in tomorrow's creative industries.

Our values:

Belong: we are sincere, we accept uniqueness and we adapt to include everyone who is part of our diverse and welcoming cultural community.

Challenge with a safety net: we are always learning in a practical and dynamic way; creating and collaborating within a forward-looking, safe and caring environment.

Identify great talent: we look to all backgrounds and communities to find the creative potential who will join us in setting the tone for excellence in our industry.

Inner confidence: we are proud of our expertise and passionate about passing it on to the next generation of industry professionals, knowing they will make a difference.

Work productively & properly: we are efficient, respectful and collaborative and understand that everyone needs down-time.

Our strategic priorities:

1. **Staff development:** by September 2021: To encourage and resource our staff to be dynamic in their roles, enabling professional development and ensuring that they are supported, happy and healthy in their work.
2. **Delivering excellence:** by September 2022: delivering courses that reflect our vision and progressing with changes that ensure our students' training adapts to the fluidity of the creative industries' landscape.
3. **Raising profile & building relationships:** by April 2022: To have started our partnership with UWE Bristol. To be an integral part of Bristol's cultural and creative heritage, celebrating and reflecting the diversity of our city. To enhance our local, national and international partnerships in order to create opportunities for our students, share our expertise, learn from our global peers and broaden our multi-cultural perspectives.

4. **Financial Health:** by September 2023: To sustain, grow and embed a robust and responsible business model.
5. **Professional Working Environment:** by September 2024: To occupy spaces that we can learn, thrive, innovate and create in, and that help us to deliver our exceptional conservatoire training.

Background to the School

The Theatre School will celebrate its 75th year anniversary this year. The School trains students in acting, design, costume, technical skills, writing and directing. It operates across three sites in Bristol: the main Downside Rd site in Clifton, the centre for Film, TV and Audio production at Christchurch Studios, and the scenic workshops in south Bristol.

Student productions take place across the City: along with those at Bristol Old Vic Theatre (our main partner), they are also performed in local venues, including the Tobacco Factory theatres, Circomedia in St Pauls, the Redgrave Theatre in Clifton, and the Wardrobe Theatre in Old Market.

Until the present academic year, the School presented over 200 public performances each year in Bristol and on tour; including to primary schools in Bristol, playing to some 16,000 young people, and the West Country tour performed in 22 venues within a two-hour drive of Bristol.

For further information about the School, please visit oldvic.ac.uk.

Delivery of the youth, summer & short courses programme

The School also has a thriving Sunday Youth Theatre group and runs a range of summer short courses in acting; it is a BFI academy, regularly running short courses in Film Production training for 16-18 age students.

Some of the above has been less possible during the 2020-21 and 21-22 academic years due to the effect of Covid-19; the School recognises how important these activities are to raising its profile and is committed to continuing their delivery.

In previous years the School has tasked delivery of all its non-degree courses to external providers, who have, without doubt, maintained a positive and profitable addition to School life. With the re-evaluation of the School's vision, values and strategic priorities, it is important to now develop and grow our non-degree offer, and to make sure that offer is relevant and reflective of the changing and evolving creative industries.

Governance at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

In addition to the Council of Trustees there are sub-committees of the Trustees – the Audit Committee and the Finance Committee. Terms of reference can be found at: oldvic.ac.uk/about-us/staff-governors.

Through its membership of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (cdd.ac.uk), there is a direct reporting line to the CDD Board of Governors in terms of academic standards, internal audit and financial year-end reporting. CDD is the Higher Education Provider registered with the Office for

Students that enables BOVTS and the other five CDD member schools to operate within higher education. Information about the CDD strategy can be found at: cdd.ac.uk/about-us/how-we-work/strategic-plan-2019-24.

The School's current higher education courses are validated by the University of the West of England (UWE). The validation relationship with UWE is governed by an academic agreement renewed every five years and subject to regular reporting on academic standards. The School is an associate school of UWE, and sits within the [Arts, Creative Industries and Education faculty](#).

In July 2020 the Theatre School's Board resolved that the Theatre School would leave CDD with effect from July 2022. The Board and Principal & CEO have identified that UWE are their preferred Higher Education Provider and are in the latter stages of discussion over the shape and model for our enhanced future collaboration. The shared vision:

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (BOVTS) and UWE, Bristol will form an enhanced strategic partnership with a shared vision to deliver sector-leading performance skills and training.

More information about BOVTS

The School is a busy and vibrant place with experienced and committed tutors and talented students. Students are told that their first day at the Theatre School is the first day of their professional career, and their training reflects this.

With the appointment of the current Principal & CEO, Fiona Francombe, in August 2020, this is a time of positioning and planning the Theatre School for its future. There are challenges and opportunities in equal measure and every aspect of the School will need to adapt and be open to positive change.

Fiona will be leading on this work, working closely with Trustees to take the School in the direction it needs to go, realising the strategic objectives and negotiating the partnership with UWE, whilst also running the School on a day-to-day basis.

The Artistic Director, Jenny Stephens, will continue to develop the School's creative work – appointing visiting directors and designers, choosing the productions and supporting the School's strategy.

The Finance Director, David Lawton, will maintain oversight of the School's financial health, focusing his attention on a future with reduced Institution-Specific Targeted Allocation (ISTA) funding, and supporting Trustees from the Company Secretary point of view.

The successful candidate will have a taste for change. They will need to be able to think laterally and creatively. They will be driven by delivering financially to the School, as well as attracting, training and developing the non-degree provision.

You will be highly organised, adaptable, flexible, patient, self-motivated and happy to step into a busy, chaotic and friendly workplace. All our staff are dedicated, hard-working and supportive of each other at all times. They are accepting and welcoming to everyone and are innate problem solvers and enablers. Their commitment has given the students a very high level of training during lockdown and a level of support and care that enabled those students to remain happy, healthy and engaged.

Our students are very talented, dedicated, and challenging of the School and of themselves. Our student reps make sure student voices are heard. Task and finish groups ensure progress is made in key areas. Regular meetings and open and robust discussion have led to changes and to insight into all aspects of School life from mutual perspectives. This provides opportunities for our students to experience how to challenge in a professional way, to listen and to continue the journey towards becoming valued members of the wider industry.

Work arrangements

The Theatre School is committed to helping its employees achieve a balance between their working life and other priorities such as parental and caring responsibilities, leisure activities, charity work and other interests. We will, as far as possible, support employees in suitable roles to work more flexibly – whether in the hours they work or where they work. In return we ask that careful consideration of the impact of working flexibly is given, and that a mutual agreement is reached that works well for both the Theatre School and the employee.

The School supports flexible working as far as the organisation can support it. There will, however, be an expectation and requirement for the postholder to forge strong working relationships within the School and with external networks and contacts and, due to the nature of the work, a minimum amount of in-person delivery of the role will be negotiated.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The School recognises that its Trustees and staff cohort is not representative of Bristol, and the 91 languages spoken in the city. On the student body, the acting courses have a 30% representation, however, technical and creative courses have as low as 5% representation.

Over the last few years the School has changed a lot of its practices, which include (but aren't limited to) introducing more visiting external tutors and lecturers from diverse backgrounds, discovering more modern and representative writers for the students to study, and providing extensive training to staff on helping under-represented groups express themselves whilst training in a creative environment.

The new Principal is most concerned that all students, but particularly those who are unrepresented in the School, feel that they belong in a City that is facing its own challenges through BLM and its history. They must also know that the School accepts that it has its own journey to take, and that we want and need them to join us on that journey.

An Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Group has been established, made up of staff and members of the Student Representation Group to work towards bringing about genuine, effective and long-standing change. Three sub-groups (Race, Gender & Sexuality and Neurodiversity & Disability) have also been set up for the start of this academic year.

The application process

We hope you find this pack provides all the information you need in order to consider your application for this post. If, however, you have any further questions please e-mail

Fiona.Francombe@oldvic.ac.uk

Applications must be received by **Monday 22 November 2021 at 12 noon**. If you decide to apply for this post, please download a copy of the Application Form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form from **oldvic.ac.uk/jobs**.

Application forms, with a covering letter of no more than one side of A4 describing what attracts you to this role, your experience and how it relates to the opportunities and challenges presented by this post and the Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form should be returned by email to **jobs@oldvic.ac.uk** or by post to:

Recruitment Office
Bristol Old Vic Theatre School
1-3 Downside Road,
Clifton,
Bristol
BS8 2XF

Shortlisting

To ensure the fairness of the selection process, shortlisting will be based upon the information which you provide in your application and assumptions will not be made about your experience or skills. We will look for demonstrable evidence that you meet the criteria set out in the job description.

Please also refer to the Equal Opportunities section of the job description, which explains the Theatre School's recognition of the positive value of diversity, promoting equality and challenging unfair discrimination.

All applicants will be notified of the outcome of the shortlisting process.

The interview process

Interviews will take place over Zoom / at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, 1-3 Downside Road, Clifton, Bristol BS8 2XF in the week beginning **29 November 2021**.

It is anticipated that second stage interviews will take place at Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in the week beginning **6 December 2021**.

Both these timescales are subject to change. The appointment will be subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks.