

A Guide for Applying For Starter

Starter 2018 will be the National Theatre of Scotland's third year of the programme.

To help give you the strongest chance of being selected, below is a quick guide on how to excite us about your application.

1. Clearly, and quickly, articulate the idea at the heart of your proposed project

In previous years, we have received over 170 applications, so competition is fierce.

With so many applications to long and then short list, you need to be able to grab our attention within the first paragraph of information about your idea.

Remember, you're not trying to sell a show to us – you're explaining what you're interested in exploring. Try to avoid writing marketing copy for an idea. You're not trying to intrigue us but explain really clearly what your idea is: what's the story you want to tell? The process you want to explore? The theme you want to research?

When articulating your idea, it might be worth considering asking yourself:

- What idea or question is really at the core of this project?
- What forms might the idea take?
- Why is this idea exciting to you?
- Will you work with collaborators? Who are they? What do they bring?
- What is your personal relationship with this project and why are you the right person to develop this idea? Do you have a personal connection, a specific knowledge base or skill?
- What are the questions you want to answer about the idea, through the support of a Starter Bursary?

2. Make your proposal as exciting as possible

The long and short list selection panels will be made up of members of the Company's artistic team and external arts workers who will all bring their own varied experience and taste to the selection process but, as a general rule, panels have tended to be more excited by ideas that focus on something we've not seen before. This might include:

- A unique collaboration
- The bringing together of different art-forms
- Work that is formally interesting, that pushes the art-form of theatre forward
- A collaboration with artists outside of your peer group
- A theme or story that we've not previously seen on stage
- An idea that feels urgent and relevant for contemporary audiences
- A project that seeks to integrate marginal experiences, skills, voices in the creation of new forms and new work

3. Try to be specific about how the opportunity will benefit your practice

We understand the challenges for any artist in securing financial support to develop new ideas, and we know that a key benefit for artists selected for *Starter* is therefore the opportunity to pay themselves and their collaborators, and to have access to other expertise from the Company.

So, take it as read that we know this is a benefit.

Think instead about:

- How will being able to bring in paid collaborators allow you to work in new partnerships? Who will you be able to get access to? What questions about your idea and/or processes would new relationships allow you to answer?
- Think about the physical and emotional environments in which you have previously made work. What is your ideal environment, how might the bursary allow you to create that?
- Think about how you interrogate your ideas. Do you usually spend time researching an idea? Do you allow yourself to make work slowly, over a number of periods, allowing for reflection? Or do you just run at a project? How might having time to research and interrogate your ideas enrich your practice?
- How might the new connections that you will make with the National Theatre of Scotland and other Starter artists benefit you?

Remember: the Starter residency is not funding or a seed commission. It is a supported and resourced opportunity to develop an idea and your practice. We are interested in supporting bold new ideas and artists who are ready to be ambitious and imaginative about how they approach making work.