

Submissions guidance for directors for 2025

Here are a few pointers to putting together your submission to direct a play at South London Theatre. If you're new to us, then we've included some information about our processes that we hope you'll find helpful.

You probably know this already, but we're a non-professional theatre so nobody is paid to take part in shows in whatever capacity. Everyone involved in putting on a show must be or become a member of SLT - this isn't negotiable.

1. Choosing a play

The play you choose should not have been performed at SLT for at least a decade (check the [SLT Wiki here](#)) We welcome submissions of plays which help to represent our diverse community in south London.

We have to apply and pay for licences to perform plays, so you do need to be committed to your choice if we approve your submission. It can be tricky to obtain rights for plays which rely on permissions coming from agents (often the case with new work) rather than publishers like [Nick Hern](#) or [Concord](#).

If you don't already have a particular play in mind, it's worth checking what's available via publishers, and we'd always recommend you have a back-up plan in case your favourite isn't available to us. The National Theatre bookshop is a great place to browse! If a play is currently playing or due to play in London, it's very unlikely that we'll be approved for performing rights if the dates coincide. We also have an extensive script collection in the Library room on the 3rd floor at the Old Fire Station - it's accessible all day on Sundays, and at other times via appointment with Bex Law, our building manager, as the room is often hired out on other days.

If you're not an experienced director, we'd recommend choosing a play that can be performed relatively simply so that you can focus on the actors rather than lots of special effects, set changes and so on.

To improve the gender balance of authors across the year, we would like to encourage submissions of works by female playwrights. We are also keen to ensure that the season reflects the diversity of our south London home and welcome submissions by directors of plays by authors of colour or other under-represented groups.

Please only submit full-length plays - so something that lasts at least one hour. We're open to considering double bills also though, so two plays that would form a cohesive production.

If you're a playwright with a new original play you'd like to have put on, please don't just submit the play - our submissions process is director-led. The submission must be made by someone who has read your work and is willing to direct it - that could of course be yourself, but you must have a vision for staging the play! We're sorry, but we don't have capacity to provide feedback on new writing.

2. Dates and timing

When submitting, bear in mind that the process for preparing a show is about 13 weeks from auditions to the end of the run. (See the table below for how the timeline works.)

If we like your submission, then we'll invite you to an interview to discuss it. (We will contact you with a reason if we don't think your submission is suitable.) Please be ready to give us notice of any time during the season (or days of the week for rehearsal scheduling purposes) when you know you'll have other commitments. We'll allocate the timing of your show to be at a time that suits your calendar, but as that can be several months ahead of time you do need to commit to the date allocated.

Our rehearsal schedule alternates between consecutive shows - you will either have Tues & Thurs evenings at 8pm plus Sundays at 1pm, or Wed & Fri evenings at 8pm and Sundays at 4.45pm. You may be able to negotiate the occasional swap or extra rehearsal, but to be fair to everyone these timings are fixed to make best use of our rehearsal spaces, and enable us to hold auditions or earn revenue from external hires at other times.

3. Cast

We'd recommend that you avoid choosing a play with a very large cast unless you're an experienced director or can see opportunities for doubling up cast members. A large cast, especially if it's an ensemble piece, can make rehearsal scheduling very challenging.

We have a flourishing Youth Group and should your play require child actors (under 18s) in the cast, you should be able to audition suitable candidates. However, our safeguarding policy legally enforces checks and balances for the protection of children in shows, including chaperoning at all times, and this may be a complication that you'd rather not face - in which case only choose plays with adult characters, or at least those that could be played by actors of 18 and over.

Our policy on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (currently being finalised - a copy will be available on request) should be an encouragement to you to be bold in your casting choices in terms of diversity if it works for your chosen play. Unfortunately though, some writers and agents expressly forbid cross-casting in their plays and you'd be wise to check this out before you submit with that in mind.

4. Crew

If your show is chosen and you're new to SLT or a new director, Theatre Committee, your Theatre Rep and other experienced members can help introduce you to a potential Assistant Director, Stage Manager and other crew members, but you'll be expected to recruit them on to your team and manage them. You're also welcome to bring people on board that you've worked with before elsewhere, but they will need to become SLT members along with you.

5. How we put on a show at SLT

When	What	Notes
At least 6 months ahead of the season commencing	Theatre committee (TC) invites directors to submit plays via the submission process - a 2-month window	TC is made up of 3 theatre directors who also sit on General Council
Submissions window closes	Submissions are read and if TC like them, directors will be interviewed	Takes a few weeks, depending on number of submissions
Up to 2 months later	Successful submissions are scheduled, performance rights applied for, and theatre reps will be appointed. Directors should recruit key crew such as assistant director, stage manager and lighting/sound designer	Directors don't have to be members to submit, but must join if play is accepted and scheduled. The show cannot go ahead if we can't obtain performance rights. Theatre reps help guide and support directors, acting as consultants
13+ weeks before the show date	Directors advertise and hold auditions, open to all by appointment. Audition formats vary depending on	Any pieces to prepare published on the SLT website Auditions page at least 2 weeks in advance.

	the director - assistant directors and reps may attend to support	
10 weeks before the show date	Directors have cast the show and seek any other crew members needed such as ASM and lighting operator	All cast and crew members must be SLT members, or must join before first rehearsal
10 weeks before the show date	Rehearsals start to take place. Reps will attend occasionally. Props and costumes sourced	3 times a week - 2 evenings + a Sunday (pre-allocated at the Old Fire Station)
8 days before the show date	Run-up week. Get-in and then rehearsals usually every night, plus at least one tech rehearsal	All cast and crew should be available every night if needed
Eve of show night	Dress rehearsal	Will be performed under show conditions - usually a Monday
Last show	Get-out follows either day after an evening show, or evening after a matinee show	All cast and crew should be available. Theatre space must be left ready for the next show to get in.
Post-show survey	TC send out to cast and crew to get feedback on show	Designed to help directors and assess processes
Archive	Directors are expected to complete a wiki entry for their show and to upload a selection of photos	Guidance notes will be provided