



BURSARY POLICY

Theatre and the arts should be accessible to everyone. This is one of the foundations on which Avocet Theatre Company was built upon and is why we are one of the cheapest theatre groups in the area to join. However, we know that there are some whose economic, social, geographical or personal situations do not allow for such activities.

The ATC Bursary is designed to assist those who face the previous mentioned barriers to ensure they have access to theatre and the arts.

This policy sets out the financial support available and the eligibility criteria for the ATC Bursary. The following should be noted when applying for an ATC Bursary:

- Avocet Theatre Company is not a funded organisation and may not be able to provide financial support to all applicants
- There is no automatic entitlement to bursary funding and we do not offer automatic funding based on set thresholds.
- All bursaries are reviews and awarded in accordance with this policy.

Introduction

1. The ATC Bursary was formally set up in 2019 as part of Avocet Theatre Company's '4 for 4' initiative – four announcements for ATC's fourth birthday.
2. At the same announcement, ATC revealed their plans to become a charity and the inclusivity and accessibility provided by the ATC Bursary was at the forefront of this charitable bid.
3. ATC aims to optimise the use of the ATC Bursary to provide meaningful support to prospective and current members facing financial and social barriers.
4. The ATC Bursary only covers a member's fee to join a production. Any other costs such as travel, personal items etc. must be covered by the applicant.
5. Before each production the Avocet Theatre Company committee, in consultations with the production team, set the quota of bursary funding available.
6. All bursaries are awarded on a discretionary basis and Avocet Theatre Company is free to decide which applicants, if any, should receive bursary funding and the amount they should receive.
7. If it is decided that there is no one eligible for The ATC Bursary, or there are no applicants, the set aside funding will go back into the production budget and used as the production team see fit.

The ATC Bursary Management

8. The ATC Bursary is overseen by the Avocet Theatre Company committee and managed by the Chairman and Treasurer.
9. The Avocet Theatre Company committee reserve the right to amend the bursary application process and criteria for eligibility at any time.
10. Bursary eligibility and criteria is reviewed prior to each production
11. The Avocet Theatre Company committee make decisions based on the information provided with each application and on the available funds

Eligibility

12. Applicants must have a clear intention to join Avocet Theatre Company for an upcoming production, or have been a member prior.
13. The applicant must be aged between 8 – 25 years of age.
14. The applicant must be a UK resident and have legal status in the UK
15. The applicant must be able to prove financial or social hardship.
OR
16. The applicant must be a potential member who is considered an underrepresented minority within amateur theatre.

Conditions

17. Applications are only accepted during the announced date ranges (shown on each application form prior to each production). Applications outside the advertised date range will not be considered.
18. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
19. Further evidence of financial hardship such as evidence of household income or proof of receipt of benefits may be requested.
20. A dialogue may be requested to further ascertain the reasoning for applying for The ATC Bursary and to clarify certain aspects of the application.

Payment

21. No money will be transferred by cash, cheque or bank transfer to any successful applicant.
22. Any amount awarded to an applicant of The ATC Bursary will go straight into the production budget to cover their contribution to joining said production.

Data Use

23. Avocet Theatre Company is compliant with GDPR Regulations and manages data according to current guidelines
24. Supporting documentation is deleted or destroyed at least one month after the application closing date.
25. Avocet Theatre Company acknowledges the sensitive nature of bursary applications, and only shares the information included in any application with those responsible in the allocation of bursary funds

The Review Process

26. The Avocet Theatre Company committee and the current production team review all applications after the closing date.
27. The decision of the review panel is final

Outcomes

28. Applicants are notified of their bursary outcome within one month of the application closing date.
29. Bursary outcomes are sent via the email provided with the application.

30. Applicants receive the outcome of their bursary application only.
31. Bursary outcomes are as follows:
 - a. All bursary funding applied for awarded
 - b. Part bursary funding applied for awarded
 - c. No bursary funding applied for awarded
32. Applicants will be asked to accept the bursary allocation within 5 working days of the award outcome being received.

Appeals

33. Applicants are entitled to appeal their bursary outcome for the following reasons:
 - a. A significant change of circumstances since the submission of the applications
 - b. Evidence that an application has not undergone a thorough review
 - c. Evidence of bias, prejudice or preferential treatment
34. All appeals must be sent to the Chairman of Avocet Theatre Company who will independently assess the appeal
35. If the applicant believes that the Chairman is not suitable to judge the appeal due to one of the above reasons, the Secretary and one other member of the committee will assess the appeal
36. If the applicant believes that neither the Chairman or Secretary are suitable to judge the appeal, a meeting will be held for the applicant to present their case and reasoning to the entire committee. If the dispute is not settled, an independent panel will be convened to assess the appeal.
37. Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their appeal within 5 working days of the appeal being received OR the appeal meeting.
38. Outcomes of appeal decisions are final.

Prohibitions

39. Applicants who are found to have made false statements or submitted fabricated evidence on their applications form will be barred from all future bursary funding and may have their ATC membership revoked.
40. Applicants who attempt to influence the bursary application process will have their ATC membership revoked and will be barred from all future engagements with ATC.
41. ATC does not permit or consider advocacy from any third party.

Feedback

42. Applicants to the ATC Bursary are welcome to provide feedback and constructive criticism at avocettheatrecompany@gmail.com or in writing to the Chairman of Avocet Theatre Company.