

STAG NTN Directors Pack

This pack will hopefully answer any questions you have surrounding what is required/expected when you take on the role of directing a New Talent Nights play in STAG to ensure your experience and play is the best it can be! If you have any further questions, feel free to contact a member of the Board for clarification.

Pack Outline

- The Script
- Production Team
- Auditions and Call-backs
- Rehearsals
- Room Booking
- Budget/Finance
- Socials
- Show/tech day

The Script

You will have already proposed your ideas during the interviews, and it's good to get as much as you can written over the summer. Usually, the general secretary will ask for at least the first act a month before freshers. This is to help decide the running order of the plays, flag potential welfare concerns early and also to ensure that you have material to draw audition pieces from. The board understands that many NTN parents may be new to writing and are always available if you need any advice or support.

Pointers

- It is supposed to be a maximum of an hour and a half over 2 acts, so keep this in mind when thinking of storylines and scenes.
- Depending on your proposal, you may write your second act once the plays have been cast to allow for more collaboration and have your script tailored to your cast size. If this is the case, keep in mind the limited rehearsal time that you have and please try to make sure that members who are unable to make rehearsals as frequently (generally home students) do not end up with diminished parts
- Make sure it has the potential to be adaptable, as you don't know how many people are going to be in your cast, and things might change in the process. Ensure every member of your cast has at least a few lines and things to do (ideally in both acts)

Your Production Team

You and your **Co-Director/Co-Writer** who you interviewed alongside.

You will be given a **Production Manager** from the STAG Board who will be the link between your performance and the rest of the society. PMs are responsible for monitoring the welfare of your cast, crew and production team as well as helping you with admin tasks such as arranging rehearsals. They will attend rehearsals once a week and can help with any queries you may have throughout the rehearsal process. Make sure they are known to your cast members and given the opportunity to introduce themselves!

You will be assigned a **Stage Manager (SM)** and **Assistant Stage Manager (ASM)** by the Backstage Manager. Your SM will work closely with you and the cast and other crew members of the production. They are responsible for the props, costumes and set of your show and for bringing the practical aspects of the show to life! During rehearsals, your SM should note down any props, costumes or set required as well as any other relevant aspects of the show. It is their job to source, purchase or make any of the practical elements required for your show. With this in mind, as much as an SM should do their best to do what is asked of them, please keep in mind the limitations of student theatre.

Your **SM** and **ASM** will also be assisted by a number of **stagehands** who will help make/source props and costumes and move set on the night.

Your **Tech Team** will be assigned to you and will be in charge of all the technical aspects of your production. This is divided into lights and sound. Occasionally, you may have a different person operating e.g. lights in act 1 and 2 depending on demand.

You will work closely with your Tech team to create your desired atmosphere and really bring the show together. You will need to write a Tech script for your performance, which your Tech Team should have well in advance of your show along with any audio or film files you want to use. If you've not written a Tech Script before or simply want a refresher please check the Tech Pack available here: https://docs.google.com/document/d/12Ys52GqIP7Lml_sxwgPh5se3xnV4UCjs/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114533535770396285330&rtpof=true&sd=true.

NOTE: Many directors lack tech and backstage experience, but you should also keep in mind that your crew may be new to their roles as well. It's advisable to meet with the tech and backstage teams separately to discuss your vision and their expertise. If you ever need any help coming up with or executing ideas, remember that our board backstage and tech manager are always able to help!

Auditions and Callbacks

Auditions

For the past few years, NTN has gravitated towards workshop-style auditions. These will be arranged for you and you'll be told what time/venue these will take place. There is a separate document on this that the general secretary will provide you close to the time.

For now, note that you and your co-director will run an hour-long workshop, primarily dividing auditionees into groups and giving them time to rehearse the audition pieces, before the auditionees in that workshop audition in front of all 6 NTN directors. You will need to be at each of the three audition slots that occur after each of the three workshops. The general secretary will be with you throughout the day and, ideally, your PM will also be present during your workshop slot.

There should be a Facebook event and Instagram post where you can publicise your auditions.

For these auditions you'll need to:

- Foster a friendly and encouraging atmosphere! It can be really nerve-wracking to audition, so make sure to be friendly and welcoming. This will put your actors at ease and lead to the best performances.
- Remain confidential and neutral. It's important to make sure that you are sensitive, don't discuss people's auditions in a negative way and don't informally offer anyone a part.
- Confirm everyone's pronouns and ensure they are respected throughout the audition process.

Callbacks

Soon after the auditions, you will hold callbacks for all the people who you've been allocated. During this time, you can try them out for different parts or test the chemistry between different actors. This process will also inform which roles you want to keep/remove/add to your script.

After the callbacks call/send everyone a message to tell them who you've cast them as. Often this is done by emailing a list to the entire cast and posting a cast list on your NTN family Facebook group. Often people tend to drop-out in the early stages of NTN so don't be disheartened, but in this case, re-cast the character or edit the script. Give everyone a part with a name, and we would recommend also giving them a character trait or two as it would help to make all your cast members feel welcome and appreciated.

At this point, it's a good idea to set up a Facebook page where important information can be posted and a group chat for more informal communication. Add your entire Production Team, the Backstage Manager, the Tech Manager and the Venues Manager as well as the Festival Director (if necessary) and anyone else who will be involved in the production to the Facebook page. (Your PM will help with this and may even make the page for you!). Sometimes it may also be helpful to have a separate group chat just for backstage and tech.

Make sure that your crew are just as involved in the process as your cast and all communications reach everyone involved!

Rehearsal Process

We would also suggest doing a read-through of as much as you have written as a first rehearsal, giving the cast a chance to get to grips with the text and meet each other. You should introduce your Production Team and explain what each of their roles entails. Make the cast/crew aware of the PM role as they will be their point of contact if they are having any problems or points of concern during the rehearsal process. It's also a good idea to let your cast and crew know that if they wish to raise any concerns anonymously, they can do so through the Anonymous Feedback/Complaints form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfELyWovrq0-LXihZ9i33HXUwj5fpAjhAgGMBsGgU9Ok_OC3g/viewform.

Confirm the pronouns of your cast and crew and make these known to the whole team as soon as possible. This can be done simply by asking people to say their pronouns when they are introducing themselves. If you notice someone forgetting to use the correct pronouns, flag this to your PM or privately remind them of the importance of respecting others' pronouns. If the problem persists, do not hesitate to contact your PM, the Community and Welfare Officer or the President.

Scheduling rehearsals is a task for your PM who may choose to do so using a Doodle forms: <https://doodle.com/>). It may be worth finding a few minutes during rehearsals to allow the cast/crew to fill in the Doodle poll or give their availability to the PM. You have the creative freedom to run rehearsals in any way that you like. Every production is different and will require different levels of rehearsal time/different methods of directing. You should make sure to lay out your desires as a Director at the beginning of the rehearsal period, what you expect from your actors and how you want to go about blocking/creating your performance. Remember that your actors are giving up their time to be part of your show, so you want to make sure that coming to rehearsals is fun and that you make it an enjoyable/safe place for actors. Especially since for most NTN actors this will be their first STAG show make sure to keep things light and fun!

Room Booking

Please try and have your availability polls filled out early so that your PM can have your rooms booked for rehearsals. The board **Venue Managers** will generally help them where they want to book a larger room or one that isn't a common study area (e.g. a QMU committee room) or a booking needs to be done for later in the evening.

Occasionally, your PM may need your help and ask you to book a room as well. This will be done through the UoG life app.

Budget/Finance

You will have a budget of £15 at the discretion of the Finance Secretary. It is generally the responsibility of your SM to make purchases for the show. They should keep their receipts- even if they are online receipts or only for 1 small item! If they don't, they will not be able to get their money back. They can claim back money as the show goes along if they prefer, but most SMs claim it back at the end of the production in one go.

Constitutionally, you can only claim money back within 28 days of any purchase, or the end of the production. You should strive to keep accurate and complete spending records. If you have any questions regarding money, don't hesitate to ask the Finance Secretary who will be happy to help you.

Socials

Having socials with your cast and crew is a great way to get to know each other. Encourage your cast to come to socials such as Family Night and any other events so they can get to know the other NTN casts and more people in the society. If you have time, organise your own one as well, even if it is just a get-together at the pub after a rehearsal. Make sure that you are encouraging integration between the cast and the backstage team.

Show/Tech Day

- Make sure you are present and on time for the Get In and the Get Out to move all your set and props to/from the venue if you can. **You, your co-director, SM and ASM will be needed at both!**
- Please remember to be early. This will make the tech and show days run smoother.
- Be organised and prepared. Come with everything you need and know what you need to be done and have all your set and props ready. Directors are encouraged to take a hands-on approach (without overstepping into the SM's responsibilities) to make sure these days go well.
- Lead your team! It's a stressful time and all your hard work is about to pay off, so rally your team to work hard and make sure everyone is doing what they need to be doing at the right time.
- If you don't know what you are meant to be doing/where you are meant to be, please ask!
- NTN is a great time for everyone, have a lot of fun!

