



Fact Sheet

Screen/Play Award - what is it?

Box of Tricks' Screen/Play Award is a new initiative in partnership with Sky Studios to award two Northern writers a bursary to develop a 70-minute stage play and a 20-minute screenplay through dramaturgy and workshopping.

Applicants will submit a one-page pitch for an idea that could be developed for both stage and screen, a personal statement and an example of their writing. Submissions will be read by a diverse pool of readers representative of the breadth of stories we're looking to explore and celebrate.

A shortlist of 15 writers will have their submissions considered by Box of Tricks, Sky Studios and the reading pool to identify 5 finalists whose script samples and pitches will be read by our industry panel. The panel will meet with all finalists to discuss their pitches and decide on the two writers who will be awarded bursaries to develop their ideas.

The winning writers will write their scripts throughout 2021 with dramaturgical support, R&D workshop days and a table read/rehearsed reading. The shortlist of 15 writers will also be invited to free masterclasses with industry professionals to develop their craft as screenwriters and the 5 finalists will meet with Box of Tricks and Sky Studios to discuss their future relationship and support their ongoing development.

Am I eligible?

Applicants must meet the following Criteria:

- 1. Writers must be aged 18 or over.** There is no upper age limit.
- 2. Writers must be resident in the North of England.** If not currently resident, writers must be able to demonstrate strong links to the North and a commitment to making work in the region.
- 3. Writers must have no professional screenwriting experience.** That is, writers must have never been paid to write for television/film.
- 4. Writers must be from a community currently underrepresented on our stage and screen:**
 -  *D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent writers*
 -  *LGBTQ+ writers*
 -  *Writers of colour*
 -  *First generation migrant writers*
 -  *Writers from a low socioeconomic background*



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Criteria Definitions

Northern

If you currently live in - or are originally from - one of the following areas, then we would define you as a Northern writer:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cheshire | <input type="checkbox"/> Northumberland |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County Durham | <input type="checkbox"/> North and North East Lincolnshire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cumbria | <input type="checkbox"/> Tees Valley |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Greater Manchester | <input type="checkbox"/> Tyne and Wear |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lancashire | <input type="checkbox"/> Yorkshire |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Merseyside | |

LGBTQ+

LGBTQ+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning and “plus,” which represents other sexual identities including pansexual, asexual and omnisexual. For clarity, we welcome applications from individuals who identify as non-binary irrespective of their sexuality.

Disability

A disability is defined as a physical or mental condition which has a substantial and long-term impact on your ability to do normal day-to-day activities. The term disability covers a very wide range of conditions which are sometimes referred to as impairments, long-term health problems, mental health, chronic health conditions and sensory conditions.

Neurodiverse/Neurodivergent

Neurodivergent means having a brain that functions in ways that diverge significantly from the dominant societal standards of ‘normal’. Neurodivergence includes conditions such as autism, Aspergers syndrome, ADHD, Tourette Syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Low socioeconomic background

Socioeconomic background relates to a combination of an individual’s income, occupation and social background. Socio-economic background is a key determinant of success and future life chances. Individuals from a low socioeconomic background would generally identify with at least two of the following criteria:

- Spent time within the care system
- Registered as a young carer as a child
- First generation of their family to attend university (or another Higher Education setting), or no one from your family has attended university or another HE setting (including yourself).
- Attended a non-selective state school from age 11-16
- Eligible for free school meals (if attending school after 1980)
- Have been in receipt of Universal Credit (or equivalent state benefits e.g. housing benefit, income support, working tax credits, job seeker’s allowance)

First generation migrant

An individual who was born in a country other than the one in which they’re currently resident.



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How do I apply?

The Screen/Play Award submission window will be open from **Monday 19 October – Friday 6 November 2020 until 5pm**; submissions made outside of the window will not be considered.

Writers will be asked to complete an online **Application Form** and submit a **sample of their writing** (up to 30 pages), a **personal statement** (up to 500 words) alongside a **one-page (500 word) pitch** for their Screen/Play idea.

Full details are available on www.boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk and interested writers are advised to join Box of Tricks' [PlayMakers Network](#) for up-to-date information and additional content relating to Screen/Play.

What's the timeline?

14 October 2020 12pm	Online Screen/Play Launch Event and Q&A
19 Oct – 6 Nov 2020	Submission Window open
December 2020	Following reading process, shortlist of 15 writers announced
January 2021	5 Finalists announced. Panel meets Finalists to hear their online pitches
Early 2021	Two successful Screen/Play writers announced publicly Script development of stage play and screenplay begins
Summer/Autumn 2021	Workshop days with actors
Autumn/Winter 2021	Table Read / Rehearsed Reading of first-draft scripts

FAQs

I've never had a play performed - can I apply?

Absolutely! There is no minimum writing experience requirement, however we do ask that you send us an example of your scriptwriting (for stage, screen or radio) – anywhere from a few pages up to 30 pages – whether or not that work has been performed.

Can I send several shorter scripts as an example of my writing?

Totally! As long as they don't exceed 30 pages in total, we're happy to accept more than one script.

I've never written a full-length play - can I apply?

Yes. There is no minimum writing experience requirement and the Screen/Play writers will be fully supported by Box of Tricks to write a full-length play during 2021.



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I'm part of a writing duo, can we apply together?

Yes. We're happy to accept submissions from writing partnerships so long as both writers meet the Award Criteria. The pitch and personal statement should be a joint submission and the writing sample be a joint piece. Please note: if chosen, the bursary of £10,250 would then be split between the two writers.

Do I need to write a new script especially for the Award as an example of my writing?

No. We're looking for an existing script – or even something you're currently working on – that you feel best reflects your voice as a writer. It does not need to reflect your Screen/Play pitch in tone or content and doesn't need to be brand new.

Does my sample script need to be in a particular format?

No. We don't need the sample scripts to be formatted in a particular way, it's just important that they are clear and easy to read; so for example, make sure that stage directions are distinct from dialogue.

Does my pitch need to be an original idea, or can it be based on something I've already written?

The Screen/Play Award is an opportunity to explore an original idea and go on a creative journey with Box of Tricks and Sky Studios. As such, writers are encouraged to pitch completely original ideas.

Does the screenplay idea I'm pitching need to be for a series or just a one-off?

The pitch should convey your story idea as clearly as possible, including any thoughts you have about the realisation of that idea. So if you feel your story would best translate to screen as a 10 part mini-series, or a 90 minute one off drama, then let us know. The screenplay writers will develop during 2021 will be a 20-minute script.

When will I hear about the success of my submission?

All applicants will receive an acknowledgement of their submission. Everyone will receive a decision either way by December 2020.

Will I get feedback on my script and pitch?

We cannot provide feedback on writing samples or pitches. However, the 15 shortlisted writers can receive feedback on their applications.

I have specific access needs and find written applications difficult. Can I submit my Personal Statement and Pitch in an alternative format?

Yes. If your access requirements mean writing them down is difficult, we welcome submissions in video or audio format (files accepted: mp3, wav, aiff, mp4, wma, wmv, mpg, flv, avi, mov – maximum 50mb). If you encounter any difficulties whatsoever, and you have additional access requirements, please get in touch with us at screenplay@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk and we will do everything in our power to facilitate you applying.

Will my play/screenplay get made?

The two Award winners will develop their screenplay and stage play with dramaturgical support from Sky Studios and Box of Tricks as well as workshops with actors during 2021, culminating in a table read/rehearsed reading to an invited audience in Autumn/Winter 2021. Following the showcase, Box of Tricks will meet with both writers to discuss the future of their play and the possibility of production. Sky Studios will meet with both writers to discuss their future development as screenwriters and their ongoing relationship with Sky.



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What is the PlayMakers Network?

Box of Tricks' [PlayMakers Network](https://boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk/playwrights/playmakers) is an ambitious programme for Northern playwrights and theatremakers to connect, collaborate and create. If you haven't already, we'd love for you to join our community to access our free activities, events and resources for writers at every stage of their career. More information can be found at boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk/playwrights/playmakers.

Does my writing sample and pitch need to be in a specific format / file type?

Our Application Form accepts documents in Word (.doc / .docx) and PDF formats. If for accessibility needs, you would prefer to submit in alternative format, we welcome video and audio submissions (up to 3 minutes long; maximum 50mb) in the following file formats: mp3, wav, aiff, mp4, wma, wmv, mpg, flv, avi, mov.

Can I submit an adaptation/musical/monologue?

Yes. The writing sample should be something that best exemplifies your voice as a writer.

I've lived in Newcastle for 10 years but I'm originally from Kent can I apply?

Yes. We're looking for writers who call the North home. As long as you've made a commitment to living and working in the region, it doesn't matter if you were born or grew up elsewhere.

I'm originally from Huddersfield but I'm living in London for work, can I apply?

Yes. You can take the writer out of Yorkshire but you can't take Yorkshire out of the writer!

I've written screenplays but they've never been produced, can I apply?

Yes. As long as you've haven't been paid to write a professional screenplay, then you are eligible to apply.

I've been selected for Pen Pals - can I still apply?

Yes. Writers who are currently taking part in any of Box of Tricks' schemes to support playwrights are eligible to apply, as long as you meet the Award Criteria.

I've submitted a script to Box of Tricks previously (e.g. for PlayBox, open submissions or Pen Pals) – can I still apply?

Yes! The Screen/Play submissions will be read by a diverse pool of readers from outside of Box of Tricks, so previous/current applications for other Box of Tricks' playwriting opportunities will have no bearing on the outcome of your submission.

I've never written a pitch before, where do I start?

Don't worry, this opportunity is for writers with no professional TV experience, so we recognise you might not be confident in pitching. We want writers to be free to create pitches that best convey their passion for an idea and express their individual voice. We're not looking for a one-size-fits-all approach to presenting your story. As long as the pitch is up to one page of A4 (or 500 words), the pitch itself can take any creative form you wish to convey your central story and how you imagine it being realised in a 70-minute stage play and a 20-minute screenplay. We will be hosting an [online launch event and Q&A on 14 October at 12pm midday](#) – including advice and top tips on pitching from professional Northern screenwriters. Keep an eye on our website and the PlayMakers Network for full details and to book onto the event. A video recording will be made available on our website for those who are unable to attend.



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What should I do if I've made a mistake on the application form?

If you've made a mistake during your application, or with the attached documents, don't worry! Just drop us an email at screenplay@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk and we can make sure the readers have the correct information for your submission.

Due to a sensory impairment I can't complete the online application form, is there another way for me to apply?

Yes! We welcome applications in any format that works best for you. Just drop us an email at screenplay@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk and we can discuss your access requirements and find the best mode of submission for you and your work.

I have specific access needs. Will these be accommodated if I am selected as one of the Screen/Play writers?

The Screen/Play programme will be as accessible as possible. Screen/Play writers will receive an access rider ahead of the programme starting and Box of Tricks and Sky Studios will endeavour to ensure any access needs are met throughout the programme.

If you still have a burning question, and its not answered above, feel free to drop us a line at screenplay@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk and we'll get back to you ASAP.