



Royal Academy of Dramatic Art

Scholarships Policy and Process

Introduction	2
Rationale and core principles	2
General Eligibility	3
Priority Criteria	3
Allocation	3
Discretionary awards criteria – undergraduate programmes (FdA/BA TTSM, BA Acting).....	4
Discretionary awards criteria – PgDip in Theatre Costume.....	4
Named scholarships.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Student Hardship Fund	4
Annual reporting.....	6
Reports to the Committee	6
Timing of allocations	6
Allocation and reporting process	8
Composition and Terms of Reference	9
Membership.....	9
Terms of Reference.....	9

Introduction

In this document, “you” and “your” means the student; “we”, “us” and “our” mean RADA.

This document outlines our approach to awarding financial scholarships to students during the 2024-25 academic year. We have, in the past, referred to scholarships and bursaries whilst using the terms interchangeably. As we do not distinguish in terminology between a bursary (usually means-tested) and a scholarship (usually awarded on merit), from 2021-22 we will refer to all funds distributed as ‘RADA Scholarships’ for simplicity.

Rationale and core principles

1. We wish to make it possible for its students to take up the opportunity of a place at the Academy and to benefit from the training it offers.
2. Students from all our higher education courses validated by Kings College London (KCL) may be considered for scholarships, although in the case of limited funds, we will focus our awards on those on undergraduate programmes and students who meet the priority criteria as set out in our [Access and Participation Plan](#)
3. RADA Scholarship Funding is generally only open to UK or IRE students. International students from other countries may only be considered for Scholarships in exceptional circumstances or if there are dedicated awards for these students.
4. To assess student need for maintenance support, we determine a living allowance on an annual basis. This is arrived at by an analysis of average student finances, coupled with research from other institutions and funding councils about the cost of living in London. For 2024-25 we have set a **student living cost of £15,000** (approx. £1500 per month, based on 10 months) in which it is difficult for our students to hold down part-time work whilst studying.
5. We require that students take all publicly financed support available to them including fee and maintenance grants and loans (depending on local arrangements). This includes Master's Loans where applicable. We will also be sympathetic to students from religious backgrounds which preclude the use of traditional loan finance (in the current absence, for example, of Sharia-friendly loans).
6. In general, students may choose whether they wish to offset some of their tuition fee loan debt through financial aid or use it for day-to-day living.
7. We reserve the right to allocate funds to a Student Hardship Fund to assist individuals in particular, immediate and/or unexpected need. This can include the allocation of funds to pay for particular support for students who would not otherwise be eligible for any financial assistance.
8. We may create a specific stream of Scholarships associated with students on access and participation programmes, short courses or other non-subsidised courses, especially where this helps us to achieve our access and participation aspirations and/or where funds have been raised for this specific purpose. We will consider students eligible for financial support if they have a joint parental (or personal income, as applicable) of between £0 and £45,000.
9. For Irish students the upper threshold will be £60,000, due to lack of access to funding. Scholarships may be awarded to students with personal/family incomes higher than this, but it will be on an exceptional basis. Students with a family income in excess of £60,000 are unlikely to receive scholarship support. We will always aim to match financial eligibility with the SLC threshold.

10. Each year, we will usually award two fully-funded fees scholarships of £9,250 and two fully-funded scholarships of £9,250 plus maintenance support (usually £15,000 as cash payment, paid directly to the student, split equally over 10 months). Each of these commitments is usually made for students on undergraduate programmes (ideally one Acting and one TTSM student) for the duration of their course. These awards may be used for students who have either completed, or partially completed, a previous Higher Education qualification. The awards will be targeted at students from lower-income backgrounds who might not otherwise be eligible for student financial support.
11. We will consider applications from students who have studied for a previous degree level qualification. However, students new to Higher Education will be prioritised. In the case of a student studying at RADA for their fourth (or more) Higher Education (or above) qualification with us, we would expect the student to be able to fund their own training and will not consider an application for financial support.

General Eligibility

12. Students must meet ALL the following criteria:
 - a. Be registered on a higher education programme at RADA validated by KCL and be classed for funding purposes as a 'RADA student'.
 - b. Must be a UK/IRE student undergraduate student who is new to Higher Education (ie does not already hold a degree)
 - c. Must have taken all finance available to them as outlined above at point five.
 - d. Household Income should be under £45,000 per year
 - e. Must be able to provide proof of their household income (parental or partner) OR must be able to provide proof of their own personal income to determine if they meet the government agency definition of being an ['independent student'](#).
 - f. Students new to RADA are required to provide evidence of their own attempts to raise additional finance to contribute to the cost of their courses.

Priority Criteria

13. Where we have limited funds, competitive awards* and/or must nominate students for specific named scholarships, we will use additional criteria to prioritise students as per the targets set out in our Access and Participation Plan:
 - a. Household income is under £25,000 per year
 - b. Ethnicity – students from a Black or Global Majority background
 - c. Disabled students
 - d. The student is classed as a care leaver/looked after or 'estranged' and is thus eligible for an additional annual financial award of £4,000 per year (on top of the income derived award – see point 14) for each year of study.
 - e. Students studying on our FdA in Technical Theatre and Stage Management

*competitive awards are named scholarships which students are invited to interview/audition for

Allocation

14. All students meeting the [General Eligibility](#) criteria will be allocated an 'automatic award' of £4000 per year for the duration of their programme.
15. Awards are usually allocated to daily living (maintenance) costs and paid directly to the students' bank account. The allocation is split into six equal instalments which are paid twice per term.

16. The rationale for a flat, not stepped, award is that in scrutinising student circumstances it is generally those in the middle-income bracket between £25,000 and £45,000 who have the largest shortfalls between the income they can receive through loan, maintenance support and parental/personal contribution and the average cost of living in London.
17. As RADA wishes to retain all its students, not just those on the very lowest incomes, this is the fairest way of ensuring parity across the student body. Those on the lowest incomes may receive additional support through discretionary awards including named scholarships.

Discretionary awards criteria – undergraduate programmes (FdA/BA TTSM, BA Acting)

18. Students who do not meet the General Eligibility criteria listed above may be considered for a Discretionary Award, if they meet any of the following criteria:
 - a. UK/IRE second degree student – ie have started, or completed, a Higher Education programme and are therefore ineligible for further government funding (see [point 11](#) above)
 - b. International student already studying at RADA whose financial circumstances have changed since joining the course
 - c. An independent student who is aged under 25
 - d. Household income is over £45,000 but there are exceptional family circumstances (ie a dependent child, caring responsibilities)
 - e. Specific criteria associated with named scholarships.
19. In the case of several students meeting these conditions, we will refer to our [Priority Criteria](#) listed above

Discretionary awards criteria – PgDip in Theatre Costume

20. We have some funding available for Postgraduate students in their second (final) year at RADA. It is unlikely that an award will cover the full cost of tuition fees or full living costs (maintenance). You should meet the following criteria:
 - a. In your second (final) year of study at RADA

AND

 - b. From any UK/IRE background in your second OR an international student whose financial circumstances have changed since joining the course
 - c. Meeting any specific criteria associated with named scholarships.
21. In the case of several students meeting these conditions, we will refer to our [Priority Criteria](#) listed above to prioritise funding.

Named scholarships – General

22. A variety of named and competitive awards are available to students, based on specific sets of criteria. These can be of higher value than the automatic award. The Scholarship Committee will nominate students based on the criteria of the award (and our Priority Criteria), as circulated by the Development Department.
23. A Named Scholarship is usually allocated as part of the total funding allocation for the year in which it is specified. It is unlikely to be given in addition to any previously agreed funding.

24. The process for nominations is as follows:
- a) Student and Academic Services will prepare the nominations (usually requiring a CV and liaison with the student).
 - b) The Development Team (usually Trusts Manager) will liaise with any relevant external contacts, communicating final nominations.
 - c) The Course Leader may be required to write a supporting statement for the nominee(s) outlining any particular skills/achievements.
25. The process of becoming a scholar can involve an interview/audition and consequent scholar reports throughout training. Students can opt out of being nominated for a Named Scholarship, but this may result in them missing out on an enhanced award
26. Students in receipt of a named scholarship may be asked to meet with their sponsor
27. An overview of scholarships and nominations criteria will be circulated by the Clerk to the Committee at the start of each academic year, as compiled by the Head of Trusts and Foundations.

Named scholarships – MA Theatre Lab

28. We have been awarded two Leverhulme scholarships worth £10,000 each. All MA Theatre Lab students will be invited to apply but priority will be given to UK/IRE students who meet the following criteria:
- a) Must have taken all finance available to them as outlined at point 5, above.
 - b) Household Income should be under £45,000 per year
 - c) Must be able to provide proof of their household income (parental or partner) OR
 - d) must be able to provide proof of their own personal income to determine if they meet the government agency definition of being an 'independent student'.
29. Students new to RADA are required to provide evidence of their own attempts to raise additional finance to contribute to the cost of their courses.
30. In the case of several students meeting these conditions, we will refer to our Priority Criteria listed above to prioritise funding.
31. Awards to postgraduate students will usually be allocated to tuition fees first, unless otherwise specified.

Named scholarships – MA Playwriting

32. In 2025-26, we were fortunate to receive funding for one scholarship of £5,000 to a student on the MA in Playwriting. If this continues into 2026-27, all MA Playwriting students will be invited to apply but priority will be given to UK/IRE students who meet the following criteria:
- a) Must have taken all finance available to them as outlined at point 5, above.
 - b) Household Income should be under £45,000 per year
 - c) Must be able to provide proof of their household income (parental or partner) OR must be able to provide proof of their own personal income to determine if they meet the government agency definition of being an 'independent student'.
 - d) Students new to RADA are required to provide evidence of their own attempts to raise additional finance to contribute to the cost of their courses.
33. In the case of several students meeting these conditions, we will refer to our Priority Criteria listed above to prioritise funding.
34. Awards to postgraduate students will usually be allocated to tuition fees first, unless otherwise specified.

Student Hardship Fund

24. A fund of £7,000 is held against emergencies. All full-time students are eligible to apply for up to £500 per academic year, regardless of their funding status. Students must apply using the [Student Hardship Application Form](#) and submit three months' bank statements for review.
25. Bank statements are submitted for review to enable SAS to identify any potential budgeting concerns and offer advice and guidance. We may refuse, or reduce, a Hardship request if we consider the request unreasonable based on evidence of spending (ie if bank statements show high levels of socialising/overspending on takeaways/taxi's or expensive clothes shopping/hobbies)
26. The Assistant Registrar can make awards of up to £200 to individual students for crisis situations (which must be documented).
27. The Registrar/Deputy Registrars can make awards of up to £500 to individual students for crisis situations (which must be documented). Any award higher than this would require sign off by another member of the Senior Leadership Team.
28. Students can make more than one application for Hardship Funding in the same academic year, as long as the total amount requested does not exceed £500. Any further requests for financial support (over £500) should be submitted as a [Scholarship Application](#) and will be reviewed by the Scholarship Committee at the earliest opportunity.

Annual reporting

29. Throughout the year the Higher Education Courses team within Student & Academic Services will maintain records of progress for each student in receipt of a scholarship. These will be supplemented towards the year end by reports from Course Directors and submitted following the July Assessment Boards to the Development Department for despatch to supporters.
30. The Deputy Registrar (Admissions and Student Services) will submit information relating to financial allocations to individual students as part of the HESA Student Return (Data Futures)

Reports to the Committee

31. The Deputy Registrar will report annually to the Committee, usually at the September meeting, on the previous year's activity. The Scholarships Committee will receive regular updates on expenditure against the scholarship fund throughout the year.

Timing of allocations

32. Incoming students will be invited to apply in May for the forthcoming academic year. Continuing students will be invited to apply for new or additional support in June for the forthcoming academic year.
33. The Committee endeavours to agree the bulk of awards for the academic year by no later than the end of Week 3 of the autumn term (usually end of September) for all students who have completed and returned an application form, with the supporting documentation, by the first submission deadline.

Original Policy created	October 2015
Policy Updated	June 2024
Document Approved by	Scholarship Committee
Date Approved	
Version	2.0
Review Date	Annually June 2025

Allocation and reporting process



Composition and Terms of Reference

RADA's Scholarships Committee reports to the Senior Leadership Team. Its activities may be included in the Director of Access & Participation's regular report to Academic Board. Its activities will be included in the Director of Development's report to Finance & General Purposes Committee (of Council, the trustees).

Membership

Deputy Registrar (Admissions & Student Services) (Chair)
Access & Participation Lead (Vice Chair)
Registrar and Secretary
Head of Grants & Fundraising Services and/or Trusts Manager
Director of Finance (or their nominee)
Director of Actor Training
Director of Technical Training

Terms of Reference

- 1 To oversee, on behalf of the Senior Leadership Team, RADA's strategy for financial aid for students.
- 2 To set RADA's policy and criteria on the distribution of student scholarships.
- 3 To receive and approve proposals for scholarship distribution.
- 4 To monitor the effectiveness of the scholarship strategy.
- 5 To ensure appropriate reporting to sponsors, HESA and any other agencies for scholarship expenditure.

Frequency of meetings

As needed, likely to be once per term.

Quorum

50% of the membership present, always to include the Chair or Vice Chair

Clerk to the Committee

The Assistant Registrar acts as Clerk to the Committee.