



Royal Academy of Dramatic Art

Scholarships Policy and Process – for students studying in 2026-27

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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 2026-27 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 usually 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 2025-26 we have set a student living cost of £15,000 (approximately £1500 per month, based on 10 months of study, 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 students needing to have their student loan income assessed (and supply the appropriate parental/own income evidence to Student Loans Company). This also includes Master’s Loans, where applicable. We will also be sympathetic to students from religious backgrounds which preclude the use of traditional loan finance e.g. Sharia-friendly loans.
6. In general, students may be able to choose whether they wish to offset some of their tuition fee loan debt with their RADA award or use it for day-to-day living costs. This will depend on the terms of the award.
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 specific support for students who would not otherwise be eligible for any financial assistance.
8. We may create a 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.

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.
10. 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.
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 wanting to study at RADA for their third (or more) Higher Education qualification with us (e.g. someone already holding a Master's level degree), we would expect the student to be able to fund their own training and will not consider an application for financial support.

General Eligibility – undergraduate programmes (FdA/BA TTSM, BA Acting)

12. Students must meet ALL the general eligibility criteria, which are:
 - 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 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 at point 5, above.
 - 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 – all programmes

13. Priority Criteria will be applied when considering named scholarships (where there is no alternative formal criteria) and may be used to inform decisions between applicants where there is limited funding available. In such cases, students should also meet **at least one** of the following criteria:
 - a) Household income is under £25,000 per year
 - b) Ethnicity – students from a Black or Global Majority background
 - c) Disabled students
 - d) Student is a care leaver/looked after or 'estranged' (see point 15)
 - e) From a low participation area/area of multiple deprivation ([IMD Quintiles 1&2](#))

Allocation

14. All students meeting the above criteria, will receive an automatic award of £3000
15. Students who are care leavers/looked after or estranged, and who meet all the general criteria, will receive £1000 in addition to the automatic award. More information on the definition of Care Leaver can be found [here](#)
16. 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.

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

17. Students who do not meet the General Eligibility criteria listed above may be considered for a Discretionary Award of up to £2000, if they meet any of the following criteria (and funds allow):
 - 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.
18. In the case of several students meeting these conditions, and a limited scholarship budget, we will refer to our Priority Criteria listed above

Named scholarships - General

19. 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.

22. 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
23. Students in receipt of a named scholarship may be asked to meet with their sponsor
24. 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.

International Student Scholarship

(incoming students on undergraduate programmes only)

25. We have one £10,000 scholarship available for an incoming undergraduate international student. The award will start in year one and be available for the duration of their course (3 years for BA Acting, 2 years for FdA Technical Theatre and Stage Management).
26. The award is only available to students who are liable to pay international student fees.
27. All incoming international undergraduate students will be invited to apply, and will be asked to provide:
 - a. proof of household income
 - b. a financial overview outlining how they plan to pay the remainder of their fees and
 - c. must also meet the [UKVI requirements](#) in respect of financial evidence.
28. 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.
29. In the case of several students meeting these conditions, we will refer to our [Priority Criteria](#) listed above to prioritise funding.
30. Awards will usually be allocated to tuition fees first, unless otherwise specified.

MA Technical Scholarship (MA Performance Lighting/ Stage Management/ Theatre Costume)

31. We have one £10,000 scholarship available for an incoming technical Postgraduate student.
32. If the award is allocated to a student on the Theatre Costume course, this can be applied in full to year one or split over the two-year programme.
33. each. All incoming Technical MA 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'.

34. 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.
35. In the case of several students meeting these conditions, we will refer to our Priority Criteria listed above to prioritise funding.
36. Awards to postgraduate students will usually be allocated to tuition fees first, unless otherwise specified.

MA Theatre Lab Scholarship

37. 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:
 - e) Must have taken all finance available to them as outlined at point 5, above.
 - f) Household Income should be under £45,000 per year
 - g) Must be able to provide proof of their household income (parental or partner) OR
 - h) 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'.
38. 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.
39. In the case of several students meeting these conditions, we will refer to our Priority Criteria listed above to prioritise funding.
40. Awards to postgraduate students will usually be allocated to tuition fees first, unless otherwise specified.

MA Playwriting scholarship

41. We have one scholarship of £5,000 available for a student on the MA in Playwriting. 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.
42. In the case of several students meeting these conditions, we will refer to our Priority Criteria listed above to prioritise funding.
43. Awards to postgraduate students will usually be allocated to tuition fees first, unless otherwise specified.

Student Hardship Fund

44. A fund of £8,000 is held against emergencies. All full-time students are eligible to apply for up to £250 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.

45. 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/taxis or expensive clothes shopping/hobbies)
46. The Registrar/Deputy Registrars/Assistant Registrar can make awards of up to £250 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.
47. 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 £250. Any further requests for financial support (over £250) should be submitted as a Scholarship Application and will be reviewed by the Scholarship Committee at the earliest opportunity.

Annual reporting

48. 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.
49. 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)
50. A summary of hardship requests will be presented to LTSE Committee.

Reports to the Committee

51. 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

52. 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.
53. 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.

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Allocation and reporting process



Composition and Terms of Reference

RADA's Scholarship Committee reports to the Senior Leadership Team and its activities may be included in the Access & Participation reports to Academic Board. Activities may also be included in reports from the Director of Development or Director of Finance to the Finance and General Purpose Committee, and RADA Council.

Membership

Interim Registrar (Chair)

Access & Participation Lead (Vice Chair)

Assistant Registrar (Clerk)

Head of Grants & Fundraising Services and/or Trusts Manager

Director of Finance (or their nominee)

Director of Actor Training

Director of Technical Training

Director of Equity

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.