**The Worcestershire Theatre Festival Rules 2025**

### **Aims**

* **Celebrate amateur theatre:** Showcase the creativity and passion of local amateur theatre groups.
* **Foster community and collaboration:** Bring together amateur theatre groups from across Worcestershire to share experiences and support one another.
* **Promote diverse theatrical forms:** Encourage a variety of theatrical expressions, including plays, dance, mime, music, and monologues.
* **Nurture local theatre culture:** Contribute to the growth and development of amateur theatre within the Worcestershire community.
* **Provide a pathway to national recognition:** Offer a stepping stone for talented amateur theatre groups to participate in the All England Theatre Festival as an approved local festival.

**Rules**

1. The Worcestershire Theatre Festival is an independent Stage One festival that serves as a gateway to the national All England Theatre Festival. Companies wishing to advance to the national level, if selected, must declare their intention on their entry form. However, participation in the national festival is optional.
2. All members of the competing company must be amateurs (professionals are defined as those whose primary income comes from performing or who have been employed as professional performers within the two years prior to the festival).
3. Entry forms must include details of the performance and a copy of the script. The organising committee reserves the right to refuse an entry. Entrants must ensure they can obtain a performance licence if required. The licence and the technical questionnaire must be submitted to the festival stage manager at least two weeks before the performance. The licence must include specific permission for any cuts or significant alterations to the original script.
4. An entry fee of £25 per production is required, along with a refundable £25 performance guarantee. The guarantee will be refunded after the company performs.
5. All entrants must comply with the provisions of the Theatre Act 1968, and are responsible for understanding the Act’s implications regarding the performance of plays that may be considered obscene, seditious, defamatory, likely to incite racial hatred, or cause a breach of the peace. **While adult themes are permitted if declared, we will not accept performances that promote racism, extremism, or any form of discrimination.**
6. To enter the All England Theatre Festival, you must participate in a local festival approved by the Western Division of the All England Theatre Festival committee. The Worcestershire Theatre Festival is an approved festival.
7. No company may present the same performance at the festival more than once within a five-year period.
8. Companies intending to advance to the national festival must ensure their production adheres to the All England Theatre Festival rules, which may differ from those of the Worcestershire Theatre Festival.
9. Companies may enter multiple productions in the festival. Non-competitive entries must comply with Worcestershire Theatre Festival rules and will be adjudicated.
10. Youth groups eligible for youth awards must consist entirely of cast members under 18 years old on the performance date. Cast members who are full-time school students are permitted to perform even if they are 18. Compliance with current regulations concerning the safeguarding of children and young people is the responsibility of the group.
11. The Worcestershire Theatre Festival Committee is not liable for any injury, loss, or damage to scenery, props, costumes, or theatrical equipment belonging to competing groups. Companies are advised to secure appropriate insurance.
12. Entries may take the form of any theatrical presentation, including monologues. There is no upper limit on the number of performers, but only performances with at least two participants are eligible for The All England Theatre Festival.
13. An entry may be an extract from a longer presentation, provided permission from the copyright holder is obtained and the extract is understandable to an audience member who has not seen the full performance. However, only one extract per company may be performed in any given festival.
14. Performances must last between twenty and fifty-five minutes, not including the time required for setting and striking the stage. Timing begins with the first "image" and ends with the last "image" presented to the audience, which can include sound, visual, or mood setting.
15. Companies have ten minutes to set the stage before the performance and five minutes to strike the set afterward.
16. Penalties for exceeding or falling short of the allotted times for performance, setting, or striking are as follows:

**Time Over/Under Penalty Marks**

Up to 1 minute 1

Up to 2 minutes 3

Up to 3 minutes 6

Up to 4 minutes 10

Up to 5 minutes 15

More than 5 minutes Disqualification

1. The decision of the festival stage manager is final in all backstage matters.
2. The company must obtain permission from the copyright holder for each performance and pay the necessary licence fee. This licence must be submitted to the festival stage manager at least two weeks before the festival and must specifically permit any cuts or significant changes to the original script.
3. The use of live microphones to enhance a performer's voice on stage is not allowed. Non-connected microphones may be used as props. Live microphones are permitted for voice-overs or other off-stage effects.
4. The performance licence must include full details of any music used, including playing time, composer, title, and recording details. Companies are responsible for any resulting fees.
5. The company must provide all scenery, props, and special lighting. All scenery, sets, and props must be fireproof. Any special lighting, sound equipment, pyrotechnics, or practical props (including firearms) brought by the company must comply with Health & Safety regulations and be used only with prior agreement from the festival stage manager.
6. The company is responsible for ensuring that lights are set to their requirements, the set is correctly positioned, and the performance starts and finishes as intended. The theatre will make every effort to accommodate all reasonable requests.
7. Curtain calls or bows are not permitted.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Organisational issues and unnecessary expenses have arisen in the past due to companies withdrawing from the festival without adequate cause after their entries were accepted. Companies are reminded that by entering the festival, they commit to giving a public performance. By tradition, they are expected to perform even if, for example, a principal role must be read. If the committee believes a company has withdrawn without sufficient cause, it may decide to bar the company from future festivals.

**Revised September 2024.**