

Bristol Old Vic  
Theatre School

# PROSPECTUS 2024



[oldvic.ac.uk](http://oldvic.ac.uk)

# WELCOME

“BOVTS possesses a real sense of community. It is a home from home, and we all strive to look after each other.”

Laura Jennifer Banks (below)  
BA (HONS) ACTING



**I AM DELIGHTED THAT YOU** are considering applying to Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (BOVTS). For over 75 years, we have led the way in training the next generation of theatre, film and television professionals – in acting, creative and production disciplines.

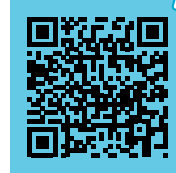
This prospectus will give you a taste of what our full-time degree courses offer you: in short, high-quality teaching, delivered in a supportive and professional working environment. We are fortunate to be based in one of the UK's most exciting and free-spirited student cities, with a thriving arts scene to match. I hope you'll be inspired to find out more – by visiting us in person, coming along to a show, or connecting with us online, you can see for yourself what makes the Theatre School such a special place.

**Fiona Francombe**  
Principal and CEO

Ed Felton

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SCAN THE QR CODE  
FOR AN INTRODUCTION  
TO BOVTS FROM  
OUR STUDENTS. 



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This prospectus contains information for students planning to start their course in September 2024. We have made every effort to ensure that course details are correct at the time of going to print (September 2023). However, details of teaching and course delivery may vary depending on staffing, production schedules, student numbers and other timetabling constraints. You are advised to check the School's website, [oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder](http://oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder), for the latest updates.

"The training that I undertook at BOVTS was invaluable in preparing me to tackle the demands of the acting profession. I always look back with both gratitude and fondness for the time I spent there."

Naomie Harris, OBE  
PROFESSIONAL ACTING ALUM

# ABOUT THE SCHOOL

## ABOUT THE SCHOOL

**BRISTOL OLD VIC THEATRE SCHOOL (BOVTS)** has led the way in training theatre, television and film professionals for over 75 years. Our courses are recognised nationally and internationally as a benchmark of quality in acting, creative and technical arts. By choosing BOVTS, you are joining a school with a world-renowned reputation, based in one of the UK's most lively and creative student cities.

### A distinguished history

Since its opening by Sir Laurence Olivier in 1946, the School has established a leading reputation for training the next generation of arts professionals. The current premises, a series of elegant Victorian villas on the edge of Clifton Downs, were purchased in 1954 following the West End success of Julian Slade and Dorothy Reynolds' hit musical *Salad Days*. In recent years, the School has continued to expand through the acquisition of new specialist teaching spaces and via unique partnership opportunities.

### Teaching excellence

All BOVTS degrees are validated and awarded by the University of the West of England (UWE Bristol), one of the South West's largest universities. Our established relationship with UWE Bristol is continually evolving and presenting new opportunities for collaboration. BOVTS is also a member of the Federation of Drama Schools, a group that helps establish best practice in conservatoire training.

### Celebrating diversity

We select students based purely on creative potential and firmly believe an arts education should be open to all. There is no 'typical' Theatre School student. Our students come from all over the UK – and the world – and from all kinds of educational and cultural backgrounds. We are working hard to remove barriers to training – be they social, financial or geographic – and are committed to making our courses and culture fully inclusive.

For further information and to find out more about our vision and values, please see: [oldvic.ac.uk/about-us](http://oldvic.ac.uk/about-us).

### IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UWE BRISTOL



"BOVTS is a creative and modern community of exceptional emerging professionals, who are passionate about shaping tomorrow's creative industries."

Ali de Souza  
DIRECTOR OF DRAMA

# TEACHING AND LEARNING



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

**AS A STUDENT AT BOVTS**, you will have exceptional opportunities to work on a variety of theatre, film and audio productions throughout your training. Our public productions regularly receive five-star reviews in the local press and we firmly believe there is no better alternative than honing your craft working on professional-standard performances at a multitude of venues.

### Conservatoire training

All our courses are vocational and career-focused. The majority of teaching takes place in small groups, workshops or in individual tutorials. Learning is immersive and you will have a busy timetable throughout each term; in production weeks there is some evening and weekend work, as theatre shows are staged for the public. Our focus is on learning through practice; for course-specific details of teaching, learning and assessment, please see the relevant page of our online course-finder at [oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder](http://oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder).

### Our expert staff

Our teaching staff are experienced industry professionals and leaders in their respective fields. In addition to the full-time staff, many part-time and specialist tutors teach bespoke modules or masterclasses. This ensures your training is both broad and specialised where needed and you will have the opportunity to work with a diverse range of practitioners. You will benefit from our favourable staff to student ratio which ensures you have individual attention to flourish in your chosen subject.

### Facilities

Downside is the School's main site, housing rehearsal studios, technical and craft workshops, costume and design studios, along with student facilities including common rooms and open-access computer suites. Our recorded media department houses digital audio and film editing suites. You'll also benefit from access to a range of facilities such as libraries, events and clubs at the UWE Bristol. We also regularly teach in theatre venues and other spaces across central Bristol.

**110+**  
PERFORMANCES  
EACH YEAR

**13k**  
ANNUAL AUDIENCE  
2022-23 ESTIMATE



SCAN THE QR  
CODE TO FIND OUT  
MORE ABOUT THE  
SCHOOL'S WORK  
IN PROFESSIONAL  
THEATRE VENUES.

# STUDENT LIFE

"The depth with which we explore, paired with the most knowledgeable, passionate, expert tutors is what makes the Theatre School's programme one of the finest around."

Rachel McVay (right)  
PROFESSIONAL ACTING ALUM



## STUDENT LIFE

**CONSERVATOIRE TRAINING REQUIRES A** significant commitment and often a willingness to work long hours. In turn, BOVTS provides a nurturing and fun environment in which to learn, with support provided by specialist teaching and support staff to ensure you reach your potential. The School is a close-knit community and outside of learning time there are lots of opportunities to socialise with your fellow students, enjoying all that Bristol has to offer.

### A supportive environment

The small size of the School, with just over 220 students in total, ensures we can provide you with a supportive environment in which to flourish. The School's support team can assist you in accessing learning and student support services, should you need them, including counsellors and other city-wide services that are available to you. We aim to help you develop a proactive and positive approach to managing your well-being.

### A busy social calendar

From organising film nights and pub quizzes, to day trips and outings, the SU reps coordinate the School's varied social calendar. The highlight of the year is the annual Grad Ball, celebrating student achievements and bidding farewell to those finishing their course. Situated in the suburb of Clifton, the School is ideally located to enjoy the best of Bristol. Our students take advantage of the abundant surrounding green spaces for relaxing on well-deserved lunchbreaks, or our proximity to the buzzing Park Street and slow-paced Clifton Village to catch up with friends after the working day.

### Accommodation

Whilst the School does not own halls of residence, Bristol is a student city and a range of high-quality accommodation can be found within walking distance of the School. Many of our students choose to rent with fellow BOVTS coursemates. Our admissions office can provide guidance to new students about living in the private rented sector - for example advice on fair rents, landlord relations, and council tax exemption.



8 MINUTES TO  
WHITELADIES  
ROAD CAFES  
AND SHOPS //  
15 MINUTES TO  
CLIFTON VILLAGE  
//25 MINUTES  
TO BRISTOL  
HARBOURSIDE

**220**  
FULL-TIME STUDENTS AT BOVTS  
(AND AROUND 40,000 IN BRISTOL)

# THE CITY OF BRISTOL

“Being so close to Clifton Downs and the Observatory is incredible. After a hard day’s work, it is so refreshing to go for a long walk with such amazing views.”

Em Lawrence  
MA SCREEN ACTING

## THE CITY OF BRISTOL

**BRISTOL IS ONE OF THE UK’S** most exciting student cities and has even been voted as the best place to live in the UK (*The Sunday Times*, 2017). Bristol is well known as the city of Banksy, balloons and Brunel’s suspension bridge. But there’s so much more to discover – a thriving arts culture, the buzzing harbourside, lush green spaces and an edgy music scene. It’s easy to see why so many of our students fall in love with the city’s free spirit and laid-back attitude.

### An independent city

As the gateway to the South West of England, Bristol plays host to all the shops, attractions and nightlife you’d expect from a vibrant, regional capital. Despite this, Bristol retains a strong community feel and has even been voted as the UK’s kindest city (52 Lives, 2019). The city is easily walkable, from the old-world charm of St Nicholas’ markets to the independent high streets of Gloucester Road or Clifton Village, and from the ancient woodland of Leigh Woods to the thriving artistic and cultural hub of Stokes Croft.

### A diverse city

Bristol is a city for all seasons, with an endless supply of festivals: the International Balloon Fiesta, St Paul’s Carnival, the Harbour Festival, Europe’s largest street art festival, one of the UK’s biggest Pride events, a Shakespeare festival and new comedy, gourmet food, craft beer, nature, and film festivals, to name but a few. Bristol is also culturally diverse: its citizens come from 187 countries, speak 91 languages and practise at least 45 religions.

### A creative city

Bristol’s arts culture is rich and lively and the city plays host to a limitless supply of independent music, theatre, film and museums. Film and TV production has also become a major part of Bristol’s economy. From Aardman Animations to the Bottle Yard Studios, and from the BBC’s Natural History Unit to the Watershed’s Pervasive Media Studios, the city is a hub for the creative industries. More than 130 production and post-production companies call Bristol home. Channel 4 established a new creative centre in Bristol in 2019 and streaming giant Netflix regularly film in the city.



**BRISTOL HAS BEEN NAMED AS THE UK’S MOST ARTISTIC CITY, BASED ON THE QUANTITY OF THEATRES, GALLERIES, MUSEUMS, LIVE MUSIC AND STREET ART, RELATIVE TO ITS SIZE\*.**

\*Survey conducted by Premier Inn, 2019

“The interview was a really friendly and positive experience. It felt more like talking to a friend about theatre I like and the work I want to make.”

Hannah Ali Khan (right)  
MA DRAMA WRITING



## HOW TO APPLY

**APPLICATIONS FOR ALL OUR** full-time courses are made directly to the School. You will be asked to provide details of your qualifications, including any that you may still be studying. You'll also need to write a personal statement. Check our course pages at [oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder](http://oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder) for any deadlines that you need to bear in mind and for course-specific requirements.

### Auditions and Interviews

For BA Acting, auditions are a three-stage process consisting of the submission of a self-tape, followed by an online audition and finally, recall days at the School. For production and creative courses, we initially review your application to explore your interest in the course, with a subsequent interview to further discuss your experience or portfolio (where relevant). We aim to make auditions, recall days and interviews as relaxed and as informative as possible – you can ask questions to our staff and find out more about what makes the School an inspiring place to train.

### Waiting for a decision

We aim to make a decision on your application as soon as possible. Because auditions and interviews are held over several months, we may need to put your application on a shortlist, in order to guarantee fairness to all applicants. Our admissions team will let you know when you can expect to hear back from us, and if you do receive an offer, you will be informed of the date by which you need to respond.

### Confirming your place

In most cases, we make unconditional offers, which means you do not have any further offer conditions to meet in order to accept your place. If your offer is subject to meeting other requirements (for example, obtaining an English language qualification), then you must send evidence to the admissions team before your place can be confirmed. You can find further information about applying, waiting for a decision, and confirming your place on our website.

**5** OSCARS FOR BOVTS-  
TRAINED ACTORS  
– OLIVIA COLMAN,  
JEREMY IRONS AND  
THREE FOR SIR  
DANIEL DAY-LEWIS!



# MONEY MATTERS: FEES AND FUNDING

"The name of the School and its reputation opens doors to opportunities I wouldn't have had before coming here."

Lydia Cook (above)  
MA DRAMA DIRECTING



## MONEY MATTERS: FEES AND FUNDING

**DEGREE-LEVEL STUDY IS ONE** of the most significant investments you'll make. If you have the talent to succeed at the School, then concerns about financing your training should not stop you from applying. A range of sources of funding are available to you.

### Loans from the Government

**Undergraduates** – Eligible UK students can apply for a loan from the government to cover the full cost of tuition fees, regardless of household income. It is paid directly on your behalf, meaning you won't have to worry about paying your fees upfront. You can also apply for a loan to cover your accommodation and day-to-day living expenses. How much you can borrow is normally dependent on your household income. You will not start repaying your loans until you have graduated and are earning over the threshold for repayment. For further information, please see: [gov.uk/student-finance](http://gov.uk/student-finance).

**Postgraduate** – UK students may be eligible to apply for a postgraduate Master's Loan to assist with tuition fees and living costs. The loan is paid directly to you and the amount available to borrow is dependent on where you live. To check your eligibility and find out more, visit: [gov.uk/masters-loan](http://gov.uk/masters-loan).

### Bursaries and Scholarships

Each year, the School and UWE Bristol administer a range of bursaries and scholarships. If you are called to interview or audition, staff will explain more about the funding options available. Bursaries are available to students from low income backgrounds or those who have spent time in care. For further information, visit: [oldvic.ac.uk/fees-funding\\*](http://oldvic.ac.uk/fees-funding*).

### Managing your money

Further details about living expenses and the costs that you may incur outside of your tuition fees – for example, equipment or specialist clothing – are available on our website. Many of our students choose to work during the vacations and the School operates a hardship fund if you find yourself in severe financial need. The School's support team can also offer you guidance around managing your money.

\*Tuition fees for 2024 entry will be published on the School website in summer 2023. Fees are dependent on whether you are classified as a UK or international student and are subject to review in line with government policy.



**THREE BOVTS GRADUATES HAVE PLAYED THE ROLE OF MISS MONEYPENNY IN THE JAMES BOND FRANCHISE – CAROLINE BLISS IN THE 1980S, SAMANTHA BOND IN THE 1990S AND NAOMIE HARRIS SINCE 2012!**



"The industry professionals we worked with have given us invaluable insights. Working with people who are so renowned in their field gives us an unparalleled level of learning."

Alice Sales (right)

MA PERFORMANCE DESIGN

# ALUMNI AND EMPLOYABILITY



## ALUMNI AND EMPLOYABILITY

**OUR GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT RECORD** is exceptional. Our alumni can be found in all sectors of the arts, from designing the costumes of the latest West End show to producing high-end TV dramas, and from starring in Hollywood blockbusters to stage managing the opening ceremony of the Olympics.

### Professionals in training

We regard your first day at the School as the first day of your career: you will begin networking and develop the transferable skills prized by employers from the very start of your course. Our courses are all highly vocational for example, graduating acting students perform in showcase events for agents and casting directors, costume students undertake a specialist work placement and design students exhibit their work to industry professionals. You will have the opportunity to work with a range of visiting industry professionals throughout your course.

### Ready for industry

Our graduates leave the School confident in their creative and technical skills, but also with tenacity to succeed in building a sustainable, varied and fulfilling career. Staff on your course will help you prepare for further auditions or interviews and where appropriate, advise on developing your portfolio. Our training will prepare you to enter professions that at times can be physically and mentally demanding and help you understand and anticipate the challenges of working in a competitive industry.

### Made in Bristol

There is a strong collegial ethos at the School with collaborative working on productions meaning you will work closely with students from outside of your course and year group. Many of our students develop lifelong friendships whilst at the School, which often form the basis of productive working relationships too. We encourage all alumni to stay in touch with the School; our graduates are keen to share their experiences and can offer you advice on career opportunities or mentoring. Find out more about the success of our alumni at [oldvic.ac.uk/alumni](http://oldvic.ac.uk/alumni).



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW BOVTS WILL PREPARE YOU TO LAUNCH YOUR CAREER.**

# OUR COURSES

"The standard of excellence at the School enables you to evolve both as an individual and as an actor."

Ricardo Hernandez-Morgan (right)  
MFA PROFESSIONAL ACTING



Craig Fuller

## OUR COURSES

### FOUNDATION DEGREE IN ARTS (FdA)

This is a two-year course at undergraduate level, designed to prepare you for a vocational career. Sometimes, graduates may take an FdA to retrain.

### BACHELOR OF ARTS WITH HONOURS (BA HONS)

This is a full three-year undergraduate degree. This level of study is often required to progress to postgraduate training or by certain employers in order to enter graduate schemes.

### MASTER OF ARTS (MA)

This is postgraduate taught degree. At BOVTS, these are taught over one academic year, usually starting in September and finishing in June or July.

### MASTER OF FINE ARTS (MFA)

This is also a postgraduate master's degree. It often includes more substantial independent study and provides advanced vocational training.

Because they are vocational, BOVTS degrees are awarded on a pass or fail basis, meaning you won't receive a degree classification. All our degrees are awarded by UWE Bristol. Full information about all our courses can be found at [oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder](http://oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder).

SCAN OUR  
COURSE CODES  
FOR FURTHER  
INFO

### PROFESSIONAL ACTING BA (HONS)

On this exciting course, you'll learn advanced level skills in acting for all media including theatre, television, film and radio. You'll be part of a close-knit ensemble, working together on in-house projects before performing in professional-standard productions across Bristol.

"The School wants all students to become the best versions of themselves, not stereotypical actors."  
Ebubechukwu Chukwuma, student

**COURSE LENGTH** 3 years, full-time

**TYPICAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS** 28

**SELECTION PROCEDURE** 3 round audition – self tape, online audition and in-person recall auditions for applicants with greatest potential.



### ACTING SUMMER FOUNDATION COURSE

The ten-week foundation course is aimed at anyone over the age of 18 who is interested in beginning a career in acting, improving their acting skills, or learning from industry professionals. This is a non-credit bearing course.

"Taking part in the course gave me a new-found sense of freedom. I feel even more confident in my acting choices." Bastian Calva

**COURSE LENGTH** 10 weeks, full-time

**TYPICAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS** 24

**SELECTION PROCEDURE** Online interview and monologue

# OUR COURSES

SCAN OUR  
COURSE CODES  
FOR FURTHER  
INFO 

## SCREEN ACTING MA

This course has been designed for actors with some experience who wish to refine their skills for screen media. You'll experience industry-standard 'on-set' conditions, and gain insight into camera work, sound and editing.

*"The atmosphere at BOVTS is joyous and supportive; it enables you to be confident in your own abilities."* Em Lawrence, student

**COURSE LENGTH** 3 terms, full-time

**TYPICAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS** 20

**SELECTION PROCEDURE** Multiple-round audition with self-tape.



## COSTUME FOR THEATRE, FILM & TV FdA/BA

This practical course will prepare you for a career in creating and supervising costume for theatre, TV and film. You'll get to construct costumes and run the wardrobe department for the School's professional-standard shows.

*"There are amazing links to industry professionals with opportunities for placements."*  
Amber Bowerman, alum

**COURSE LENGTH** 2 years (FdA) and 1 year (BA top-up), full-time

**TYPICAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS** 8

**SELECTION PROCEDURE** Interviews and portfolio of work. Subsequent entry to the top-up is non-guaranteed.

## PERFORMANCE DESIGN MA

This course provides specialist training to prepare you for a career in designing for performance. You'll engage in project and production work, equipping you with a broad range of practical, creative and technical skills.

*"I thoroughly enjoyed my time collaborating with other creatives during the Summer Season shows. Each production had a distinctive charm."*  
Chen Chen, student

**COURSE LENGTH** 3 terms, full-time

**TYPICAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS** 8

**SELECTION PROCEDURE** Interviews and portfolio of work.



The School is currently reviewing our production and stage management courses, and will not be recruiting to FdA or BA Production Arts for 2024 entry. Please check our website for the latest updates.

## PROFESSIONAL VOICE STUDIES MFA

This unique course provides specialist training in teaching and coaching voice and dialects for actor training, professional theatre, film and recorded media. You'll collaborate with acting, directing and other students on professional-standard productions.

*"Working on BOVTS productions allows you to see immediate applications of your learning in practice. It's so much fun!"* James Gillen, student

**COURSE LENGTH** 3 terms, full-time

**TYPICAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS** 8

**SELECTION PROCEDURE** Interview and assessment.



## DRAMA DIRECTING MA

This course covers the artistic, creative and collaborative skills needed to become an effective drama director, capable of leading your own projects. You will work on realised productions staged in professional theatre venues.

*"It has been an absolute joy to see my work come to life on stage. These have been my proudest moments."* Lydia Cook, student

**COURSE LENGTH** 3 terms, full-time

**TYPICAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS** 8

**SELECTION PROCEDURE** Multiple round interviews.

## DRAMA WRITING MA

This course is designed to nurture you in finding your distinctive voice as a writer for stage, screen and audio. You'll develop your writing craft and see your work explored practically by acting students.

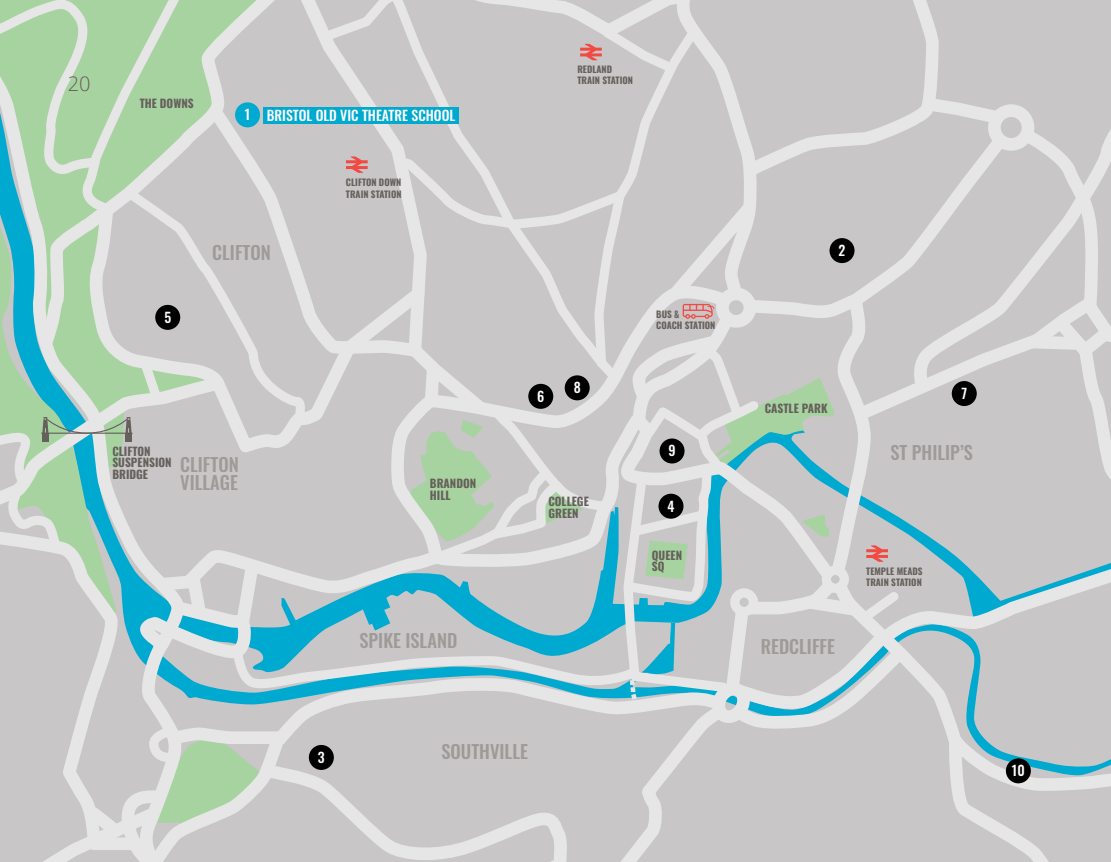
*"The course is really supportive and I got to learn so much in such a short space of time."*  
Hannah Ali Khan, student

**COURSE LENGTH** 3 terms, full-time

**TYPICAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS** 8

**SELECTION PROCEDURE** Interviews and submission of an example of drama writing.





## FIND OUT MORE

We hope this prospectus has given you a feel for the School, our city and our courses. This year, to reflect our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, we have minimized the length of the course pages in this prospectus. You can find full details of each of our courses by scanning the respective QR codes or visiting [oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder](http://oldvic.ac.uk/course-finder).

There are lots of ways to find out more about what our training offers you.

- Meet us in person either by coming along to one of our open days or meeting our staff at careers events we attend across the country.
- If you are a teacher or a careers adviser, you can reach out to us to give a talk at your school or college. Contact us at [student-recruitment@oldvic.ac.uk](mailto:student-recruitment@oldvic.ac.uk).
- Come and see one of our shows or exhibitions at venues throughout Bristol. Find out what's on at [oldvic.ac.uk/events-shows](http://oldvic.ac.uk/events-shows).
- Sign up for our prospective student mailing list at [oldvic.ac.uk/mailling-list](http://oldvic.ac.uk/mailling-list) or follow us on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok or YouTube.

MAP KEY	
1	Bristol Old Vic Theatre School
VENUES*	
2	Circomedia
3	Tobacco Factory Theatres
4	Bristol Old Vic
5	The Redgrave Theatre
6	Wickham Theatre
7	The Wardrobe Theatre
8	The Mount Without
9	The Station
10	Paintworks Event Space
*Venues of BOVTS professional productions and graduate exhibitions from the last two academic years. Venues are subject to change from year to year.	

## SHORT COURSES

If you are still exploring future career paths or not sure if full-time conservatoire training is for you, we offer a wide portfolio of short courses in the acting, creative and technical fields. Our short courses are run by experienced industry professionals who can help you navigate the next steps of your career or hobby. Visit [oldvic.ac.uk/short-courses](http://oldvic.ac.uk/short-courses) to find out more.

## YOUTH COURSES

We offer a range of courses for under 18s from across the South West. From weekly classes during term-time, to week-long film camps, these opportunities will help you develop your performance and production skills. We also provide financial support via a bursary scheme on many of our youth courses. Find out more by visiting [oldvic.ac.uk/young-artists](http://oldvic.ac.uk/young-artists).

Unsplash

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# WORLD-CLASS TRAINING MADE IN BRISTOL

[oldvic.ac.uk](http://oldvic.ac.uk)

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United Kingdom


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 [facebook/BOVTS](https://www.facebook.com/BOVTS)

 [instagram/bovtsbristol](https://www.instagram.com/bovtsbristol)

 [twitter/bovts](https://twitter.com/bovts)

 [youtube/bovts](https://www.youtube.com/bovts)

 [tiktok/bovtsbristol](https://www.tiktok.com/bovtsbristol)

Set designer: Vyshnavi Krishnan  
Costume designer: Abigail Manard  
Photo: Ed Felton  
Design: [pelotondesign.co.uk](http://pelotondesign.co.uk)

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