



Pen Pals International - What is it?

Pen Pals International is a new initiative in a partnership between Box of Tricks in the UK and Centre 42 in Singapore.

We will be matching 6 UK playwrights with 6 Singaporean playwrights to for an international playwriting exchange. Writers will work together over a 6-month period from January until June 2025. Each pair will send each other work-in-progress and maintain regular contact through online meetings.

Box of Tricks and Centre 42 will introduce Pen Pals online, discussing their ideas at the start of the process, and meet again for a midway catch-up. We will host an online scratch event halfway through the process to allow writers to hear extracts of their work in progress and receive feedback from their peers.

At the end of the exchange, all 12 Pen Pals will send their drafts to Box of Tricks and Centre 42 to be read ahead of a final debrief and feedback session. To celebrate our first international Pen Pals exchange we will present live events in Manchester and Singapore after the exchange to showcase the work of our 12 writers.



Am I eligible?



Applicants must meet the following Criteria:



- 1. Writers must be aged 18 or over.** There is no upper age limit.
- 2. UK 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.* **Singapore writers must be Singapore residents and/or are residing in Singapore.**
- 3. Writers must have some playwriting experience.** We define that experience as having written at least one full length script (60mins+), although this does not need to have been professionally produced.

Criteria Definitions





UK playwrights, we define the North of England as the following areas:

 Cheshire
 County Durham

 Cumbria
 Greater Manchester

 Lancashire
 Merseyside

 Northumberland

 North and North East Lincolnshire
 Tees Valley
 Tyne and Wear
 Yorkshire

How do I apply?

The Pen Pals International Submission window will be open from **7/10/2024 to 10:00am BST (17:00 UTC) on the 31/10/24**. Submissions made outside of the window will not be considered.

Writers will be asked to complete an online **Application Form**. The application consists of the following:

1. A short example of your playwriting (up to 15 pages). This can be a short play or an extract from a longer piece.
2. An indication of your level of writing experience. Please don't worry if you don't have a traditional CV - just let us know what you have done to date.
3. A short statement expressing what inspires you to write for theatre, why you'd like to be a Pen Pal and what you'd hope to gain from the experience. UK playwrights please also indicate where in the North you are based or are from.
4. A brief pitch/treatment/outline of the piece you'd like to develop with your Pen Pal. If you've already started writing the script, feel free to include a short extract.

Full details are available on www.boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk and www.centre42.sg. Interested writers are advised to join Box of Tricks' [PlayMakers Network](#) for up-to-date information and additional content relating to Pen Pals.

What's the timeline?

October 2024: Application window.

November 2024: Pen Pal selection and matchmaking process.

December 2024: All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

January 2025: Introductory meetings between UK and Singapore writers.

February 2025: Full cohort zoom meetup.

April 2025: Midpoint meetings between writers and members of the Box of Tricks and Centre 42 teams.

May 2025: Online scratch. 6 writers will have the chance to hear up to 10 minutes of their script read aloud by other members of the Pen Pal cohort.

June 2025: Drafts submitted.

July 2025: Debrief meetings.

July-Aug 2025: Live showcase.

FAQs

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

In order to apply, we ask that you have written at least one full length play (60 mins+). This play does not have to have been performed.

What should I send as a script sample?

Your writing sample should be a maximum of 15 pages of script written for stage (i.e., not for film, TV or radio.) It may be a standalone piece or an extract from a longer work. It should be a single extract (i.e., not 10 pages of excerpts from multiple pieces.) It should be a sample that you feel best reflects your voice and ability as a playwright.

When will the pair meetings be?

It is up to you and your Pen Pal to decide how often, and at what time you want your online meetings to be. You will agree on your preferred means of communicating and giving feedback. There will be 3 Zoom meetings throughout the programme where you will be joined by representatives from the Box of Tricks and Centre 42 Teams – the timing of these meetings will be agreed between you, your partner and those teams.

Do I need to write a new script 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.

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.

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 2024.

Will I get feedback on my script and pitch?

Unfortunately, we cannot provide feedback on writing samples or 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 playmakers@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk or info@centre42.sg and we will do everything in our power to facilitate you applying.

What is the PlayMakers Network?

Box of Tricks' [PlayMakers Network](#) 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 been selected for a previous Pen Pals cycle - can I still apply?

Yes. Writers who have previously taken part in any of Box of Tricks' schemes to support playwrights are eligible to apply, as long as you meet the eligibility Criteria.

I've been selected for previous Centre 42 open calls – can I still apply?

Yes. Writers who have previously taken part in any of Centre 42's schemes to support playwrights are eligible to apply, as long as you meet the eligibility Criteria.

I've submitted a script to Box of Tricks or Centre 42 previously – can I still apply?

Yes! The submissions will be read by readers from Box of Tricks and Centre 42, so previous/current applications for other playwriting opportunities will have no bearing on the outcome of 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 playmakers@boxoftricktheatre.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 Pen Pals?

Pen Pals International will be as accessible as possible. Pen Pals writers will submit an access rider ahead of the programme starting and Box of Tricks and Centre 42 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 playmakers@boxoftrickstheatre.co.uk or info@centre42.sg and we'll get back to you ASAP.