

**If you are a playwright looking to submit your play (unsolicited script) to the Traverse Theatre, please find below a list of guidelines for submission as well as some frequently asked questions which should contain the answer to queries.**

**If your play has already produced and the company wants to bring their production to the Traverse, please do not send the play to the Literary Department, but contact the Traverse's Programme Administrator Sarah Murray (details below).**

**Q. How does the unsolicited script stream fit into the Traverse's programming?**

A. We are a commissioning theatre, so most of the productions we stage through the **Traverse Theatre Company** are world premieres of plays which we have commissioned the playwrights to write especially for the Traverse. As we are the only building-based exclusively new writing theatre in Scotland, we do tend to prioritise commissioning writers who live and work in Scotland. But if you are an individual writer wanting your play to be considered by the Traverse Theatre Company, then you can send it to the Literary Department as an unsolicited script. We always remain open to getting to know new writers and their work - from Scotland and elsewhere. Scripts which have come through the unsolicited script stream have on occasion gone on to have a further life at the Traverse, either through development work, readings or productions. We also provide written feedback to writers after reading their work, which we hope is useful to them in developing their writing.

**NB.** Alongside our own Traverse Theatre Company productions of new plays, the theatre also programmes select Visiting Company productions by independent theatre companies. If you have a play which has already been produced and you would like the production to tour to the Traverse, there's a possibility it could come to our theatre as a Visiting Company production – if the company or a producer has financial backing for this, and the play fits with our artistic programme. The Traverse's Programme Administrator, Sarah Murray, will be able to tell you more about this (separate) programming of Visiting Company productions – you can e-mail her on [Sarah.Murray@traverse.co.uk](mailto:Sarah.Murray@traverse.co.uk).

**Q. What sort of plays do you accept to the unsolicited script stream?**

A. We accept unproduced original plays from all writers, and also accept UK premiere plays from international playwrights. We consider all such full-length plays as unsolicited script submissions. Shorter plays may be read as an example of your writing style, but we do not generally accept these works for consideration for production (there are details of any writing events for which we solicit shorter scripts in the [What's On](#) section of our website.) The only major exception is adaptations, which at present we hardly ever produce as a theatre: so we ask you not to send us plays which are adaptations of a novel, film, TV series, play or any other sort of pre-existing work. And we rarely produce monologues, so whilst you would be welcome to submit a piece of this nature as a sample of your work, it is extremely unlikely that we would go on to produce it. We accept plays from all around the world, though we ask all writers based in North America to send us a synopsis of their work first before being invited to submit their script. We may also ask North America-based writers to send us a short extract of their play. Finally, we ask all writers not to send us any screenplays, as these will be returned without being read.

**Q. How do I submit my script to the Traverse?**

A. You can post one double-spaced, single-sided hard copy of your play to the Traverse Theatre address: TRAVERSE THEATRE, 10 CAMBRIDGE ST, EDINBURGH EH1 2ED. It should be marked for the attention of Louise Stephens, the Traverse's Literary Assistant, and accompanied by a cover letter. We are not able to accept e-mailed copies or compact discs containing documents under any circumstances. You do not need to send an SAE for reply, but if you would like your play to be returned, please include an SAE with adequate postage (or an IRC if you live overseas) with your submission. Please do not send us the only copy of your script, or supporting materials of value. All scripts sent without an SAE will be recycled at the end of the process.

**Q. What should I include in my cover letter/with my script?**

A. It is helpful if the cover letter gives us a bit of background about you as a writer (for example, any productions you've had, or other relevant experience. This information is never used to judge your script – it's just so we can get a sense of where the play is coming from. If you particularly want feedback, it's worth stating this in your letter. Remember to include your contact details! And although there is no necessity to do so, it's always useful to include a dramatis personæ with your play, and if you wish you can send a **short** synopsis; these can be useful to our readers. Though we wouldn't encourage you to send extended treatments or character analyses with your script. Writers do not need to send an SAE for reply letters, but if you would like your play to be returned, please include an SAE with adequate postage (or an IRC if you live overseas) with your submission. Please do not send us the only copy of your script, or supporting materials of value. Any scripts sent without an SAE will be recycled at the end of the process.

**Q. Does it cost anything to receive feedback on my script?**

A. No, it's free.

**Q. What happens next?**

A. When we have received your play, we will send you an acknowledgement. This is done when the scripts are processed (usually within a month of receipt), so if you want acknowledgement of the script's safe receipt sooner than this, we advise that you send it via recorded delivery. Next, the play is read by an experienced member of our script reading panel. They report back on the play to the core members of the literary department, who in turn reply to the writer. You'll then receive a letter with feedback and details of any further involvement we might like to have with you and your play.

**Q. How long will the process take?**

A. At present, it takes about 6 months to read and respond to a script. This reflects the amount of time it takes to process each script and assign it to a reader; for the reader to read and report on the play, and feed back to the literary department; for us to process the result, and compose and post a reply to the writer. We currently receive around 450 submissions a year which undergo this process.

**Q. You've had my script for longer than 6 months. What's happening?**

A. Sometimes we are unable to reply within 6 months, which is our self-set guideline for the length of time it should take us to reply to most of the plays we receive. When we exceed this, it is generally due to circumstances beyond our control. We might have received an unusually large number of scripts that month, for example, or we might want to have a script read by a second reader or by the Artistic Team at the Traverse, which adds time to the process (though we will try and inform you if this is the case). We'd ask you to bear in mind that the literary department at the Traverse is small and that we manage a large number of projects and commissions all year round alongside the unsolicited script stream. It's also worth noting that the whole theatre is especially busy in August due to the Edinburgh Festivals. We'd ask you to bear with us if more than 6 months has elapsed since the receipt of your play and we will be in touch as soon as we can.

**Q. What sort of play does the Traverse present?**

A. You can get a good idea about the sort of work we produce, and the Visiting Company work we present, from looking at our past brochures, which are available from our website ([www.traverse.co.uk/downloads.html](http://www.traverse.co.uk/downloads.html)). You can browse these and read about previous plays the Traverse Theatre Company has produced (look for those marked "Traverse Theatre Company Production/Presents"). Or you can see the Traverse's Archive on the website [www.traverse.co.uk/traverse\\_archive.html](http://www.traverse.co.uk/traverse_archive.html).

**Q. Can I send you my trilogy of plays, or several of my works?**

A. We generally ask that you send us only one play at a time. If the play is part of a larger cycle and that's important to how it is understood by our readers, you can mention this in your cover letter.

**Q. My play has been produced by a student or amateur group. Can I still send it in?**

A. Yes. The Literary Department only doesn't read plays which have already been professionally produced in the UK because like many UK theatres the Traverse Theatre generally only produces works which are World, European or UK premieres, but if you've had a production by an amateur or student group, you can still send us the play. If you've had a rehearsed (or 'staged') reading of the play, we'll also still consider it. If you have a play which you feel is right for us artistically, but which has already been produced, there's still the possibility it could come to our theatre as a visiting company production – if the company or a producer has financial backing for this. Our programme administrator, Sarah Murray, will be able to tell you more about this (separate) programming of Visiting Company work – you can e-mail her on [Sarah.Murray@traverse.co.uk](mailto:Sarah.Murray@traverse.co.uk).