

## The Optimists - FAQ's

1. *Where and when will the course be taking place?*

The course will be taking place online on Zoom from the 7th February – 30th March 2022

There will be **10 sessions**, taking place over 8 weeks. Please note that there are x2 sessions in the first and final week of the course.

Each session is from 6-9pm and includes two 5-10 minute breaks.

Dates are as follows:

Session 1: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> February

Session 2: Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February

Session 3: Monday 14<sup>th</sup> February

Session 4: Monday 21<sup>st</sup> February

Session 5: Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February

Session 6: Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March

Session 7: Monday 14<sup>th</sup> March

Session 8: Monday 21<sup>st</sup> March

Session 9: Monday 28<sup>th</sup> March

Session 10: Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March

2. *How much does the course cost?*

The Optimists online course costs **£360** (inclusive of VAT).

This breaks down as £300 + £60 VAT.

China Plate is a VAT registered company, and VAT is included in the fee. All participants are required to pay VAT, and it will be itemised on your invoice.

3. *Will I need to pay the fee in one go?*

You will receive an invoice for the full fee, and we will expect payment to be made prior to the course commencing.

Successful applicants can discuss payment plans with China Plate if required.

4. *What are the bursaries and who are they for?*

China Plate's aim is to nurture a more diverse group of producers/theatre-makers, widening the representation of arts managers, producers, leaders, and policy makers in the sector to reflect the communities we live and work in both on and off the stage.

Bursaries are for those who have faced racism, discrimination and/or cultural barriers due to their ethnicity, disability, D/deafness, gender identity or socio-economic background.

Bursaries cover the full cost of the course. We have bursaries available to cover 40% of the spaces.

5. *Where can I state that I would like to be considered for one the bursaries?*

There is a specific section in the application form where you can say whether you would like to be considered for a bursary and why.

6. *Who is the course for?*

The course is aimed at those **working across the arts sector** – this can include independent producers, artists, creative practitioners\*, members of theatre / arts companies and those working in arts organisations.

The course is open to both freelancers and those in part/full time employment.

\*including (but not limited to) stage managers, administrators, facilitators, event organisers, marketing assistants, etc.

7. *Am I qualified to apply?*

You should have at least **12 months of professional/industry experience in the arts sector.**

The course is not aimed at those who have recently graduated or at those who are completely new to working in the arts sector.

The 12 months experience refers to time spent working in the arts / theatre sector for or with professional theatre companies, artists, organisations and/or venues. This can include unpaid work or work done as a volunteer as long as the work undertaken was at a professional level. It can also include self-produced work and/or work with emerging companies/artists. However, it does not include work produced as a student.

It's fine for you to have been working in another field to fund your producing work. However, it is best if the producing work you have done has given you around 12 months experience in the industry.

As this is an introductory course, it is not aimed at those with more than 3 years (in total) of professional experience working as a producer.

8. *If there are two or more of us applying from the same theatre/arts company, do we each need to fill in an application form?*

Yes – each individual will need to submit an application form and state the company name in the application.

9. *How do you decide who gets a place (paid or bursary) on the course?*

We usually receive a large number of applications for our Optimists courses, and we aim to make the application process as fair and inclusive as possible.

China Plate works alongside an external, freelance consultant from the arts sector to select participants.

A shortlist is created based on the strength of the application. Final decisions are often based on how the applicants will work together as a group.

If bursary spaces are oversubscribed at shortlisting stage, spaces will be curated to ensure a diversity of experience within the group. Those who are not offered spaces through the bursary scheme due to oversubscription will still be considered for the remaining, paid spaces.

10. *What is the Shoot Festival partnership, and why are x7 spaces reserved for their Assistant Producers?*

China Plate have partnered with Shoot Festival to support the development of artists and producers in the Coventry/Warwickshire area during Coventry City of Culture 2021/22.

Shoot Festival have recruited x7 Assistant Producers to help plan and deliver their festival programme, and these producers are automatically offered a place on the course as part of this partnership. This means that there are x13 spaces available through this application process.

Recruitment for the Shoot Festival Assistant Producer roles is now closed.

11. *Is the course pre-recorded?*

No, the course will be delivered live on Zoom, and will include Q&A's with China Plate and guest speakers, as well as moments to connect with the other people on the course.

12. *Is there an expectation to attend all of the sessions?*

Yes – if there is a date(s) in the schedule you are unable to attend, please state clearly in your application.

There is almost always a waiting list of applicants every time we run the course. Successful applicants that miss two sessions may be asked to give up their space for an applicant on the waiting list.

While sessions are recorded for internal use by participants, these recordings are intended for access provision or for when participants are unwell/unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances.

13. *I need provision for access in order to attend the sessions. How do I let you know?*

China Plate will provide access provision for online learning where required.

All participants will be asked if they require access provision once offers have been made.

14. *There are certain barriers (financial or otherwise) that make applying for and/or participating in this course difficult for me. How do I let you know?*

There is a specific section in the application form where you can tell us about any barriers (financial or otherwise) that may prevent you from applying for, or participating in, the course. China Plate will follow this up with you directly.

You can also contact China Plate about this directly at [optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com).

Please be assured that this will not be taken into account during the selection process.

15. *I do not find it easy to / cannot provide written applications. Is there another way that I can apply?*

Yes - The application form includes the opportunity to upload or email video / voice files or filmed BSL sections if preferable.

If you need to provide the whole application via video / voice files or filmed BSL please contact [optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com) before applying, so that we can ensure that your files are received, and file the accompanying paperwork.

16. *Where can I find the equal opportunities form?*

It is available to download from our website here:  
<https://chinaplatetheatre.com/opportunities/>

17. *What is the deadline for applications, and can you extend it?*

The deadline for applications is **10am Wednesday 05<sup>th</sup> January 2022**.

Successful applicants will be notified on email by **Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

The deadline for applications cannot be extended.

*18. Will I get feedback on my application if I'm not successful?*

Spaces on our Optimists courses are usually oversubscribed, and due to the number of applications received we are unfortunately unable to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

*19. I can't make any of the links work...*

Here are links to cut and paste...

Application guidelines, FAQ's & equal opportunities form - [chinaplatetheatre.com/opportunities](http://chinaplatetheatre.com/opportunities)

Online application form -

[Click here for the online application form](#)

*20. I still have a question about the course / my application. How can I contact you?*

Please email [optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com) if you have any further queries. Please note that the China Plate office will be closed from 20<sup>th</sup> December 2021 until 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 and no one will be available to answer queries during this period.

Any queries that are emailed to China Plate during this time will be answered on 4<sup>th</sup> January.

**If you have any further queries please contact**

**[optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com](mailto:optimists@chinaplatetheatre.com)**