

# ROYAL CENTRAL

SCHOOL OF SPEECH & DRAMA · UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

## Production Policy

### 1 Introduction

At The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (Central) we produce over 20 public productions each year in our performance spaces; the Embassy Theatre, the Webber Douglas Studio, and West Block Performance Studios. Much indoor and outdoor work is also made for performance beyond the school campus. Additionally dozens of productions and presentations are staged through the year for internal consumption. This production policy is designed to guide students in their learning process towards producing theatre that is artistically excellent as well as being mindful of its impact on the environment.

Central is working to embed sustainability at the heart of the school's buildings, curriculum and theatrical productions. This ongoing journey means students, faculty and staff collaborating and innovating new ways of working to future-proof performing arts practice.

This policy is based on artistic and environmental best practice developed by the UK and international theatre sector, and Central's own practical research into theatre production. It will prepare you for work within a creative sector that is rapidly adapting to Arts Council England's environmental funding requirements, and in which more and more organisations and individual practitioners are concerned with the sustainability of the work that we make and tour.

Staff and students should read and apply the guidance included in this policy for every show you produce at Central, and use it as a resource to inform your professional career.

For any questions about this policy please contact: Peter Bingham, Director of Operations [peter.bingham@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:peter.bingham@cssd.ac.uk)  
Susanne Page, Environment & Safety Manager [susanne.page@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:susanne.page@cssd.ac.uk)

This policy has been developed in association with Julie's Bicycle: [www.juliesbicycle.com](http://www.juliesbicycle.com)

## 2 Aims

The aims of this policy and procedures are to:

- Lead, educate and inform Central students on best practice in theatre production, and Central's approach to theatre production.
- Create theatre productions that enable students to develop skill whilst minimising the consumption of natural resources.
- Introduce an appropriate framework for the consideration of sustainable design initiatives into all Central productions.
- Monitor and evaluate the environmental performance Central productions.
- Contribute reductions to Central's carbon footprint.

## 3 Definitions

**Sustainability:** Development that meets the needs of the present without negative consequences for environmental, social and economic stability, and without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

**Sustainable production initiatives:** Ideas that support commitments such as reducing green house gases, increasing the use of renewable energy, conserving energy and water, minimising waste, recycling, using materials resourcefully, supporting local sourcing, ensuring that materials and products are not produced by workers in unfair conditions, and increasing the sustainability of Central's productions overall.

**Carbon footprint:** A measurement of the impact human activities have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced, measured in units of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2e</sub>).

**Greenhouse gases:** Gases released into the atmosphere that contribute to climate change. The current IPCC inventory includes six major greenhouse gases: Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), Methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), Nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), Perfluorocarbons (PFCs), Sulphur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>).

For a more comprehensive glossary of environmental terminology see: [www.juliesbicycle.com/resources/glossary](http://www.juliesbicycle.com/resources/glossary)

## 4 Application

This policy applies to all aspects of production at Central including company behaviour, sets, props, costumes, lighting and sound covering the pre-design, construction, post production, strike and disposal phase.

Individuals can use the Julie's Bicycle Sustainable Production Guide to develop their knowledge of sustainable production best practice in more detail towards practically applying this policy: [www.juliesbicycle.com/resources/practical-guides/production](http://www.juliesbicycle.com/resources/practical-guides/production)

## 5 Commitments

1. To apply this policy to all Central productions, including those made on campus and at other indoor and outdoor locations.
2. To measure the carbon footprint of all Central productions using the Julie's Bicycle IG Tools: [www.ig-tools.com](http://www.ig-tools.com)
3. To engage all practitioners (student and professional) and company members involved with the principles of sustainable production at Central.
4. To embed sustainability into all production meetings and processes using this policy and the Julie's Bicycle Sustainable Production Guide.
5. To test, explore and develop new methods of working that reduce negative environmental and social impacts.
6. To embed sustainability into production communications.

## 6 Responsibilities

### 6.1 Academic Staff (commissioning production work)

- ☑ Ensure that all visiting professional and external directors and designers are aware of this policy from the outset, through inclusion in contracts and contract negotiations.

### 6.2 Director

- ☑ Take a leadership role in encouraging creative, sustainable approaches with the design team through inclusion of this policy in discussions during the design phase.

### 6.3 Head of TSD (or production budget holder)

- ☑ Budget to allow for the purchase of sustainable materials and goods that cannot be sourced second hand.
- ☑ Ensure that the Production Manager(s) and Heads of Departments (HODs) have been made aware of this policy and the Sustainable Production Guide, and have been provided with appropriate knowledge and support to engage with designers on this policy.

### 6.4 Production Manager

- ☑ Ensure that all (student) Heads of Departments have been made aware of this policy and provide opportunity in design parameters meetings, design presentations, construction meetings and production meetings to discuss and trouble-shoot sustainable design initiatives.
- ☑ Monitor the production's key environmental impacts using the IG Tools ([www.ig-tools.com](http://www.ig-tools.com)):
  - Stage lighting energy consumption (calculated using FocusTrack's PowerTrack function)
  - Rehearsal rig energy consumption

- Timber used
- Steel used
- Production deliveries
- Company travel
- Theatre space energy consumption (heating, cooling and ventilation, and house lighting)

The IG Tools are a suite of carbon calculators developed for use by productions, tours, venues, festivals and offices. The above can be monitored using the IG Tool for Production (materials and stage electrics) and the IG Tool for Touring (all transport related elements).

- ☑ Delegate responsibility for data collection to HODs by including “delivery distance” and “item source” columns on budget spreadsheets.
- ☑ Document green design initiatives implemented for productions in Production Meeting minutes.
- ☑ Ensure that designers are aware of Scenery Salvage collecting waste, and encourage them to design and build to ensure easy dismantling, especially if different materials are being combined.

## 6.5 Heads of Departments

- ☑ Provide support and information to designers on green products and processes that will assist the overall sustainability of the design during pre-design, design and construction. Use resources such as the Julie’s Bicycle Sustainable Production Guide and Green Arts Marketplace.  
[www.juliesbicycle.com/resources/practical-guides/production](http://www.juliesbicycle.com/resources/practical-guides/production)  
[www.greenartsmarketplace.com](http://www.greenartsmarketplace.com)
- ☑ Where possible, from a cost and time perspective, actively research alternative eco products that could be used to complete the design.
- ☑ Where applicable, provide samples of sustainable materials to be considered for use.
- ☑ Encourage student designers to use stock set elements from sets, props and costumes stores to reuse/upcycle into new elements.

## 6.6 Designers

- ✓ Consider sustainable design initiatives in the development of any designs for Central. Consult the Production Manager, HODs and suppliers about any sustainable products and processes that may be available for use/tried and tested at Central to minimise the carbon footprint of the design.
- ✓ Consider the impact the design may have on the environment, including materials, construction processes, transport and delivery impacts, operation and maintenance during use, and end-of life disposal options.
- ✓ Research and investigate the use of sustainable materials in the design. Prioritise the re-use and upcycling of existing stock items stored at Central, and/or items sourced second hand.
- ✓ Adopt the use of sustainable materials and processes in the construction phase of the design in consultation with the Production Manager, and HODs.

## 7 Procedure

This policy should be taken into account at the earliest phase of the design as possible, and shared with every member of the company upon project commencement.

This policy should be revisited and considered at the following stages of the production process:

- ✓ Design Feasibility Meeting(s)
- ✓ White Card Model Presentation
- ✓ Final Design Presentation
- ✓ Build Period
- ✓ Get-out and Disposal

For more support with meeting the aims set out in this policy, see the Julie's Bicycle Sustainable Production Guide:

[www.juliesbicycle.com/resources/practical-guides/production](http://www.juliesbicycle.com/resources/practical-guides/production)

## 7.1 Set Designer

### Materials

- ☑ All timber built scenery will be constructed from non-old growth timber (timber from forests that have attained great age without disturbance, have unique ecological features and serve as a crucial habitat for many species of plant and animal life). Central is committed to using only FSC certified timber with a chain of custody, which ensures that timber is sourced from sustainably managed forests with a good standards for workers. Preference should also be given to UK and European products to minimise transport impacts.
- ☑ Stock materials that can be adapted or upcycled for use should be used in preference to buying new materials.
- ☑ Steel should be used for metal framing in preference to aluminium.
- ☑ Steel and other metal framing should be substituted with timber where possible.
- ☑ Sustainable alternatives must be considered for the application of set dressing and aesthetic treatments, i.e. plaster should be used as opposed to polystyrene.
- ☑ The Mo'olelo Green Theatre Choices Toolkit can be used to identify the most sustainable material options available to theatre designers: [www.moolelo.net/green](http://www.moolelo.net/green)

### Set construction

- ☑ Limit the creation of toxic/chemical treatments, use of excessive transport, or sending non-biodegradable and / or chemical waste to landfill.
- ☑ Build with disassembly in mind to ensure that different composite materials can be recycled or reused effectively after use.

### Set operation

- ☑ Where the set requires the use of excessive amounts of water or consumable materials for the run of the production, with the Production Manager to consider implementing processes to limit excessive materials going to waste.

## Props

- ☑ Designers must consider the re-use or recycling of suitable stock materials, or materials sourced second hand locally, that can be adapted for use in the design.
- ☑ Alternatives to unrecyclable and/or toxic treatments should be researched and tested to find reliable and sustainable methods of construction.
- ☑ Limits should be put on the purchase of new reproduction furniture that is supplied without a chain of custody and predominantly constructed from old growth rainforest timbers.

## Scenic Art

- ☑ Designers must consider the use of non-toxic paint finishes and coatings, especially low VOC (volatile organic compounds) paints. Low VOC paints and finishes reduce the emission of harmful compounds into the environment through the manufacturing and painting process, and reduce the level of harm in waste water at the clean-up stage.
- ☑ Where possible, paint should be applied by roller and pressurised spraying should be limited to specialist applications.
- ☑ Always use the Central paint cleaning unit to wash brushes, and dispose of the waste content responsibly into a general waste bin.

## 7.2 Costume Designer

### Materials

- ☑ Designers must consider the re-use or recycling of suitable stock materials, or materials sourced second hand locally, that can be adapted for use in the design including costumes, undergarments, shoes, wigs, and accessories.
- ☑ For new purchases, fabric certified with the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), Global Recycling Standard, OKEO-TEX Standards, and other marks that ensure sustainable manufacturing and organic produce, should be prioritized. Designers are encouraged to explore the use of predominantly UK or European-made fabrics and to explore other sustainable fabrics, such as bamboo textiles.

## Wigs

- ✓ Wigs should be constructed from recycled stock items where possible. New wigs will only be constructed if current stock cannot meet design criteria.

## Costume construction

- ✓ Procedures that require excessive use of water, chemicals, or highly unsustainable materials must be assessed and managed appropriately to limit the creation of harmful emissions and waste water, use of excessive transport, or sending non-biodegradable and / or chemical waste to landfill.
- ✓ Machines should be switched off when not being used to conserve energy.
- ✓ Threads and other materials should be used resourcefully and recycled where possible.

## 7.3 Lighting Designer

- ✓ Designers are encouraged to be as energy efficient as possible when designing show lighting.
- ✓ Use the most energy efficient bulb for the job, such as tungsten rather than discharge moving lights.
- ✓ Use Central house stock for design as much as possible.
- ✓ Research, test and explore new LED and low energy lighting fixtures where appropriate.
- ✓ Monitor the energy use of lighting rigs on a nightly basis throughout the show period using FocusTrack's PowerTrack function.

## 7.4 Sound Designer

- ✓ The Sound Designer must consider all areas of sustainability in the process of developing the sound composition for the production, including minimising the use of excessive high energy audio equipment.

## 8 Balancing Sustainable Practices and Creative Freedom

This policy is designed to guide your practice to ensure the highest artistic and sustainable standards. It is designed to enhance the skills that students are learning, whether operational or artistic, and is not intended to create unrealistic constraints or excessive inflexibility which may lead to significant compromise of artistic vision and creativity. Using this policy, we hope that you will be able to create ambitious and skilled creative work that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable.

## 9 Policy Review

This is a dynamic and evolving policy that will be reviewed annually. If you have any feedback relating to this policy, please contact: [peter.bingham@cssd.ac.uk](mailto:peter.bingham@cssd.ac.uk)

