ALL ENGLAND THEATRE FESTIVAL

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ENTRANTS RULES & DECLARATION FORM 2027

Updated 16th September 2026

- Section 4 of the AETF Governing Document

ENTRANTS RULES

HOW DO WE ENTER?

1. Entry into the National Festival must be via a Preliminary Round Festival ("PRF"), either a local festival organised by the AETF or an independent local festival affiliated to the AETF. Groups entering an independent PRF are not obliged to enter the AETF competition and are not bound by these AETF Entrants Rules, but are required to adopt the Festival rules that may be similar.

2. A group wishing to enter the AETF competition must declare this on the completed AETF Entry & Declaration form, and submit it with the opting fee of £10 (per entry) to the festival organiser.

3. A Group may: -
   3/1. Enter and opt with any number of plays in a Preliminary Festival.
   3/2. Enter as many festivals as they like, but can only opt to go forward in the AETF competition from one, preferably their local PRF.
   3/3. Enter more than one AETF member Festival with different plays and opt to go forward at one of these for each play

4. By entering the AETF competition (opting to go forward) Groups commit themselves to performance at each level if selected and are expected to appear. Those pulling out at short notice without what is deemed reasonable cause will be refused entry for the subsequent year's competition.

5. A Group may not recast more than 25% of its roles unless it is from within the existing cast or by circumstances that are deemed extraordinary.

THE FOLLOWING POINTS ALSO APPLY!

6. Any copyright recorded speech or projection of film or TV material can be used as long as proof of permission is produced.

7. Curtain calls are not permitted.

The following are accepted by the 'British Final of One-Act Plays' governing body the United Kingdom Community Drama Federation (UKCDFF) and must be adhered to by all competing teams in the UK at all levels of the competition

ELIGIBILITY

8. Any bona fide adult **amateur** Drama Group, or recognised Youth Theatre (an amateur group performs as a hobby, unlike a professional group which performs to earn an income for itself (and / or its members and officers).

9. No one may receive any payment for their direct contribution to any competitive amateur drama.

10. No actor whose main income is from acting may participate in competitive amateur drama. Any actor who has a credited, paid-for role in a commercial production in the year ending September 1st. prior to a festival is ineligible to take part.

11. Professional Directors may direct amateur competitive productions, but may not receive any payment for their services.

12. A group's marketing must clearly demonstrate that it is an amateur group and not claim to be 'professional' or promote professional work.

13. A festival entry may be performed in advance to a paying audience for the sole purpose of raising funds to finance the production costs

NOTE : Preliminary Round Festivals, independent of the AETF, set their own entry criteria, but the AETF reserves the right for organisers of the next stages of the competition to check every group's eligibility to progress, with reference to the above criteria.

WHAT CAN WE ENTER?

14. All performances are subject to the Theatres Act 1968 and must comply with its provisions regarding plays, which might be considered obscene, seditious, or libellous, or likely to incite racial hatred or a breach of the peace.

15. The entry will be a One-Act Play or an extract from a longer play. The accepted definition of a one-act entry is a two-hander that must feature two characters who both make a substantial contribution to the dramatic action and who interact meaningfully throughout the piece. For clarity, a play will not qualify if it is essentially a monologue with a second performer used mainly as a listener, observer, narrator or occasional respondent. The roles do not need to be equal in size, but both performers must have a substantial dramatic presence and sustained interaction with one another.

16. No entry can be considered unless it is accompanied by an original copy of the play script, marked with any cuts or alterations (a photocopy will only be accepted if the play is solely published on the internet, out of print, or unpublished). Copies of plays will be available for collection at the end of the Festival.

17. No play in copyright may be performed without production of its performance licence and ***written*** permission must be provided ***in advance*** for any cuts or alterations.

18. Plays obtained over the internet are considered published and written permission to perform must be obtained, whether a fee is paid or not. Likewise, written permission to perform must be provided by the author of an unpublished play

19. The performance must be performed as per the script provided for the adjudicator, which must be with the adjudicator at least three weeks before the performance.

WHAT ARE THE TIME CONSTRAINTS?

20. The length of performance of the entry shall be not less than 20 minutes and not more than 55 minutes, including any time spent in changing a scene in the course of a performance or time used to set the mood by the cast or music before the house tabs open and up to the house tabs closing at the end of the performance

21. Each team will be allowed 10 minutes for setting and 5 minutes for striking their set.

22. Penalties for not keeping within time for performance, setting and striking are: -

Up to 1 minute	1 mark
Up to 3 minutes	6 marks
Up to 5 minutes	15 marks
Up to 2 minutes	3 marks
Up to 4 minutes	10 marks
Over 5 minutes	Disqualification

WHAT ARE THE STAGING CONSTRAINTS?

23. Any set or scenery must be free standing within the provided 'black box' acting area.

24. All set, scenery and furniture must be treated with a proprietary fire-retardant spray or similar to ensure that it is non-combustible

25. Any electrical equipment (including computers/laptops, screens, projectors, working kettles, toasters, working/feature lamps etc proposed to be provided and used by a group must be declared in their staging brief and a valid current PAT testing certificate supplied in advance for each item of equipment. Failing this, the equipment may not be permitted.

26. Groups have a duty to co-operate with the Festival Stage Director (or equivalent role) in adhering to the theatre's safety rules and attending all safety briefings as required. These requirements will vary between theatres.

27. Groups must give early advance written notice to the Festival Stage Director of any additional equipment, which must comply with the theatre's requirements, especially stage pyrotechnics, any effects such as naked lights or smoking on stage, use of replica fire arms, pistol shot etc SFX, knives or swords, strobes etc., If stage pyrotechnics (or similar effects) are accepted by the Festival Stage Director and/or Theatre, the group must provide evidence of relevant training for the person-in-charge. The group is responsible for obtaining Licences for imitation firearms and for providing secure storage for same. **Note that** the Festival Stage Director and/or Theatre stage manager may request changes and/or decline to accept any or all such additional equipment or effects.

28. Unless included in a Festival's Technical brief, projectors and projector screens must be provided by the Group and are not the responsibility of the festival.

These must be rigged in the 10-minute setting time.

29. The use of any kind of microphone will not be allowed to enhance an actor's vocal projection. Microphones may still be used as a sound effect. In the interests of inclusivity microphones would be allowed in order to facilitate a deaf or hard of hearing member of the casts use of an induction loop.

HOW WILL WE BE JUDGED?

30. AETF member PRFs will appoint a suitably qualified Adjudicator, such as an Associate or Full Member of the Guild of Drama Adjudicators ("GoDA") or similarly qualified and experienced adjudicator, to ensure consistency between festivals. All AETF organised festivals may only appoint a GoDA Associate or full member Adjudicator.

31. The adjudicator will give a public adjudication of each entry and at the end of the Festival give the organisers a copy of the marks awarded.

32. The adjudicator will use the following GoDA marking system: -

Acting 40
Direction 35
Stage Presentation 15
Dramatic Achievement 10.

The adjudicator's decision is final.

33. If time permits, the Adjudicator will usually offer to meet the groups (individually) after the session ends, for an informal discussion of the play, the Director's approach to staging and directing etc. This is not intended as an opportunity for the group to challenge the adjudication.

34. Audio recording and/or filming of Adjudications is strictly forbidden

35. A group's score and the winning group's score (only) is sent to each group by the lead organiser shortly after completion of the festival.

36. On written request in advance to the festival organiser, the Adjudicator may agree to produce a written adjudication for an additional fee, payable in advance by the group.

37. Groups must not, under any circumstances, contact the Adjudicator. Any queries and/or concerns regarding the Festival, adjudications, etc must be referred to the Festival organiser.

ENTRY & DECLARATION FORM 2026/2027

To be completed prior to the start of the festival by all Groups for <u>each play</u> that they wish to be considered as an AETF entry.

On behalf of (Name of Group) .....

Name of Play(s) .....

.....

I confirm that –

- We have read and will comply with the AETF rules, including the eligibility criteria.

- If selected to do so, we will be available to appear at
    - The quarter-final and/or semi-final of our Area (*please check with your Area/the AETF website for local dates)*

    - The English Final (5th June 2027, Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury) *<u>Please Note there will be no white cyc available at this theatre)</u>*

    - The British Final (2nd/3rd July 2027, The Ardhowen Theatre, Enniskillen)

- We have paid the £10 opting fee for each entry to our local festival.

- We have our own Public Liability Insurance with a reputable company

Any photographs supplied by you or taken during an AETF festival may be used for publicity purposes. Your consent is required --

Yes I consent	
No, I do not consent	

Signed .....

Date .....