



Carla Denyer MP
Member of Parliament for Bristol Central
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Baroness Smith of Malvern
Minister for Skills

21st August 2025

By email

Dear Jacqui

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

Earlier this year Bristol Old Vic Theatre School (BOVTS) in my constituency announced that they will stop delivering undergraduate courses from September 2025. The primary reason cited for this was that the undergraduate training model is now “financially unsustainable”.

BOVTS is a hugely valuable asset to the arts sector, delivering high quality training in acting, directing, set and costume design and more. Unfortunately, the School now finds itself in the difficult position of having to cut many of these courses in order to stay afloat.

To give some context, when the Conservatoire of Dance & Drama (CDD) wound down in 2022, the six member schools all faced the loss of the then institution specific targeted allocation (ISTA) funding. For BOVTS this meant losing £800,000 per year. Due to their affiliated partnership with University of the West of England (UWE), they were unable to apply for the [specialist funding](#) which was distributed by the OfS to replace ISTA. The other five ex-CDD schools were eligible to apply, however only one was successful in securing an allocation of specialist funding. The four unsuccessful schools each received transition funding to support their grant income loss. BOVTS has not benefited from any transition funding, despite being in exactly the same position as its peer ex-CDD institutions.

Please will you take urgent action to support BOVTS and ensure we can continue to have a thriving, world-class arts education system? Will you please consider awarding BOVTS an historical transition fund to acknowledge the loss of ISTA funding, in line with their peer ex-CDD institutions?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Carla Denyer MP
Member of Parliament for Bristol Central

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