

# Alumni Profile

## Charlotte Cole

Development Officer, Royal Court Theatre



Since throwing herself into the drama extracurricular scene while completing her degree, Charlotte has gone on to work in a variety of roles focused on theatre, events, and arts groups. Charlotte's current role is at the Royal Court Theatre. Her career journey into the arts sector highlights the many routes into these competitive industries.

### Why did you choose to study English at Royal Holloway?

I liked the range of courses available for study throughout my three years of being there. I wanted to expand what knowledge I already had to learn something entirely new about English Literature, which is what swayed me.

### What have you been doing, since you graduated?

The summer after graduation, I volunteered with Haringey Shed Theatre during their showcase festival, before working as a Drama Practitioner with NCS The Challenge. Then I went to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival with a theatre company of Royal Holloway students,

after having supported their work as a Producer that year. I began my internship in September with Poet in the City, working as their Events & Marketing Assistant. Following that, I worked with NCS The Challenge again, this time as the Staffing Coordinator, before being promoted to Delivery Staffing Associate and managing staff over two boroughs. Although I really enjoyed the work I was doing, I knew that I wanted to work within the arts sector, which is what led me to apply and accept the role of Development Officer at the Royal Court Theatre.

### How would you describe your job?

I manage the cultivation and stewardship of all members donating between £250 - £5000 year, supporting my manager with those who donate £10,000 plus. I find prospective donors, support events and ensure the maintenance of the theatre's relationship with the donors.

### What attracted you to this industry or role?

I wanted a role that was very people focused, which is key in fundraising and donor

## Industry

- Arts Administration & Fundraising

## In a nutshell...

**Degree:**  
English & Drama (Joint Honours)

**Year of graduation:**  
2015

**Further study:**  
N/A

### Core skills used from degree study:

- Speaking skills
- Learning how to listen
- Ability to interpret information
- Writing persuasively
- Research
- Task prioritisation
- Self-reflection
- Presentation skills

**Mantra:**  
"Say yes to new opportunities!"

## Useful links

**Arts Council England**  
[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

**Institute of Fundraising**  
[www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk](http://www.institute-of-fundraising.org.uk)

Plus, see special interest groups on  
[www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

*"If you are interested in something,  
always go for it; write the application,  
sign up to the audition, go for the interview."*

relationships. Not only am I meeting new people regularly, I am encouraging them to support great work for the stage and community of playwriting.

**What is the best thing about your job?**

There are so many opportunities to be creative and have fun with my role, which I don't think many people know about. From meeting with playwrights, actors and directors, to attending press nights, galas and dinners, there are so many ways that I can keep a relationship strong with a donor that does not involve just a phone call.

**Are there any drawbacks that you wish you'd known about?**

None that I had not already expected, such as knowing when I need to bite my tongue.

**What are the main qualities and/or skills that you need in your role?**

You need patience, confidence and authenticity to build these kind of relationships. You also need a keen eye to see and understand what would make a donor want to support the work.

**Did you/do you need any further qualifications to do your job?**

I did not complete any further qualifications but there is the option to do a Masters in Fundraising or Arts Administration.

**Do you have any tips for the application and interview process?**

Always be honest in an application and try to think of what transferable skills you have to offer.

Prior to the interview starting, take a moment in private to yourself to relax. When answering questions, take your time, try not to rush through the answers, and be confident! If they have put you through to the interview stage, then they have already seen something that they like.

**Where do you want your career to be in five years' time?**

I really want to start working with an organisation that works specifically to increase and create opportunities for young people to get into the arts, providing career access, funding and a space where work can be created. I want to incorporate what I have learned as a fundraiser with my experience in events to support this kind of work.

**Of your time at Royal Holloway, what did you find most valuable?**

The extra-curricular activities available. I wanted my three years there to be more than my degree; I took up positions on committees, produced theatre and went to the Fringe Festival, was a Deputy Editor for The Orbital, and volunteered on and off campus. These opportunities allowed me to delve into my interests and use what I had learned to apply for roles that I was unqualified for previously.

**If you could have your time again, what would you do the same and what would you do differently?**

I wish I had done more independent study to aid the work I was doing. It would have helped massively to have additional knowledge on the subjects I took: perhaps looking more at the recommended reading list to get started!

**What's the best career advice you have been given?**

If you are interested in something, always go for it; write the application, sign up to audition, go for the interview. Don't regret not going for it and wondering what might have happened.

**If you could travel back in time to give your younger self some great career advice, what would you say?**

Have confidence in your qualities and skills; do not underestimate what you are capable of; and accept that you'll change your mind about what you want to do.

**Do you have any final words of wisdom for anyone thinking of following a similar career path to you?**

Do something that you enjoy on the side to your studies. Not only will this keep you balanced, but if you can show something that you are genuinely passionate about besides your work, you'll have an edge over the next person going for the same roles. You'll be all the more interesting for it!

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For more Department of English Alumni Profiles see:

[royalholloway.ac.uk/english/alumniprofiles](http://royalholloway.ac.uk/english/alumniprofiles)

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