

Applause Youth Dance Festival

Your U.Dance Regional platform for the Midlands

Application Guidance

A simple guide for dance groups and individuals who would like to apply to perform at Applause Youth Dance Festival 2027, Fabric's Midlands regional platform for U.Dance.

1. What is U.Dance?

U.Dance is a national programme led by One Dance UK, which creates performance opportunities for children and young people across England.

Regional U.Dance platforms take place across the UK, giving young dancers the opportunity to perform and share their work.

2. What is Applause Youth Dance Festival 2027?

Applause Youth Dance Festival (AYDF) is the Midlands regional platform for U.Dance, led by Fabric.

As part of the festival, young people can:

- Perform their dance work on stage
- Take part in professionally led workshops
- Hear from people working in the dance industry
- Explore different careers through our dance-career marketplace
- Meet and connect with other young dancers and professionals
- We will select up to 20 groups from across the East and West Midlands to perform at the festival.

3. What can I apply for?

You can apply for:

AYDF 2027 only

or

AYDF 2027 & U.Dance National Festival 2027

If you choose to be considered for the National Festival, your work may be selected by a professional panel following the regional festival.

Please note that groups selected for the National Festival will need to cover their own travel and accommodation costs.

4. Who can apply?

We welcome applications from:

- Youth dance companies
- Schools and school dance groups
- Community dance groups
- Individual young dancers/soloists

You can apply in **any dance style** and from a range of settings, including schools, youth centres and community groups.

We particularly encourage groups that include disabled dancers, including young people with physical or Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), to apply.

5. What are we looking for?

Our selection panel will be looking for work that:

- Shows strong performance skills and passion for dancing
- Has engaging choreography
- Gives young dancers a clear sense of ownership of the work
- Is appropriate for the dancers' age and experience
- Shows respect and consideration for others

There is no particular style of choreography or preferred choreographer. Work can be created by young people, teachers, group leaders, professional choreographers or through a combination of approaches.

We are interested in seeing excellent, authentic and varied dance work from young people across the Midlands

6. Can my group apply?

To be eligible:

- Your group can have a maximum of **30 dancers**
- Dancers must be aged **11–19 and up to 25 years old for dancers living with a Disability**
- Your piece must be between **2 & 7 minutes long**

This also applies to those submitting a solo

7. What does the group leader need to do?

Group leaders are responsible for organising things such as:

- Consent forms – only when all these forms are complete will you secure your place at AYDF 2027.
- Communication with parents/carers
- Technical information (lighting cues, sending and/or mixing music)
- Chaperone arrangements

Group leaders and/or support staff should hold a chaperone licence accredited by their local council.

There should be **one chaperone for every 12 children under the age of 16.**

8. How do I apply?

You will need to:

1. **Complete the online application form.**
2. **Submit a video of your dance piece.**

Your piece does not have to be finished when you apply.

If you are still creating the work, tell us as much as you can about:

- The idea behind the piece
- How you are developing the movement and choreography
- How young people are involved in making decisions
- What you hope the finished piece will be

You can submit a rehearsal or an extract of your proposed piece.

Application deadline is Wednesday 18 November 2026, 9pm

All applications will be assessed by a panel of youth dance experts, and we will let successful groups know by **Monday 30 November 2026**

9. Filming your dance piece

Don't worry about making a professional film. We just need to clearly see and hear your work.

When filming:

- Make sure the space is well lit
- Make sure the whole group can be seen
- Clear bags, chairs and other clutter from around the space
- Make sure we can hear the music clearly
- Film from the front
- If using a phone, film in landscape
- Check the video is the right way up
- Check your video link works before submitting
- Include the password if your video is password protected

Please use a **password-protected** Vimeo/You Tube link where possible.

If this isn't possible, get in touch and we can discuss other options.

If you don't receive an automatic email confirmation that we've received your video, please contact us. **You won't be pestering us – we'd rather know that your application has come through safely.**

And if you have any questions, please just get in touch. **We don't want the application process to feel stressful.**

10. How much does it cost?

There is **no fee to apply** for Applause Youth Dance Festival.

If you are selected, you will need to consider the costs of:

- Travel to and from the festival
- Food and refreshments
- Group leader costs
- Chaperone licences, if required
- Some travel bursaries and access funding will be available.

If your group is selected for the U.Dance National Festival, you will need to cover the costs of:

- Travel
- Food and refreshments
- Accommodation
- Group leaders and chaperones
- Chaperone licences/training, if required

11. Access support

We have a small access fund to help groups attend Applause Youth Dance Festival.

Priority will be given to groups travelling longer distances or those who need additional support to make it possible for their performers to attend.

More information about how to apply for this funding will be shared if your group is selected.

12. Good Practice Guide

We've created a **Good Practice Guide** to support group leaders working with young people towards AYDF.

Please read the guide and use it throughout the creation of your work.

Ready to apply?

We'd love to hear from you and see what you're creating.

[Click/tap here to be taken to the online application form.](#)

If you have any questions about the festival or application process, please get in touch with Chelsea G from the AYDF team at:

Email: applause@fabric.dance

Phone: +44 (0)333 091 3782

Monday–Friday, 10am–5pm