

The Julia Rausing Sky Arts Bursaries

Guidelines for Applicants (Year 1: Dance)

Large print version

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About the Sky Foundation's Julia Rausing Sky Arts Bursaries

The Julia Rausing Sky Arts Bursaries is a new bursary programme from the Sky Foundation, funded by The Julia Rausing Trust, for artists in the UK.

We will support 20 artists with the time, funding and opportunities they need to create ambitious new work and take the next step in their careers.

We know that talent alone isn't always enough. That's why the bursaries combine financial support with mentoring, professional development, industry connections and a national platform - giving artists the support they need to develop their ideas, create new work and reach new audiences.

The programme is about discovering and championing original voices, opening doors to opportunity and helping brilliant artists thrive.

It's about supporting new work that is unique, bold and reflects the richness and diversity of the UK, and in doing so helping to support a vibrant, inclusive arts sector.

For 2027, the Sky Foundation's Julia Rausing Sky Arts Bursaries will focus on dance

We're kicking off the programme in 2027 with a 'Year of Dance' and are looking for **professional artists whose practice is rooted in creating dance work**. Whether you are a choreographer, dance maker or an artist who places movement at the heart of your creative practice - we welcome applications across all styles, forms and approaches.

We're looking for ambitious dance makers with originality and vision who want **to bring a new creative dance project to life**. We're interested in bold ideas, original thinking and artistic potential. Your ideas don't need to be polished - what matters most is your creativity, ambition and vision.

We will work with you to develop your creative project whilst supporting you with what you need to build a sustainable career.

If you're a dance maker with professional experience and an ambitious new project you'd like to realise, we'd love you to apply.

Applications for the 2027 dance bursaries will be open at **9am on Wednesday 5th August 2026** and close at 9am on **Wednesday 9th September 2026**. The bursary year will run from 25th January 2027 to 24th January 2028.

What we're offering

If you're selected for a Julia Rausing Sky Arts Bursary, you will receive:

A personal grant of £30,000

This is to support your day-to-day living costs and help reduce financial pressure, giving you the time and space to focus on your creative project and participate fully in the bursary programme across the year.

A project grant of up to £40,000

We'll support you to develop and manage a project budget that can cover artist and collaborator fees as well as production and delivery costs.

Mentoring and Support

We'll create a tailored package of mentoring and support designed around what you need. You'll have access to industry experts, artists and practitioners to support you and your project.

Workshops and masterclasses

You'll have access to a series of sessions with leading artists and industry professionals to help build your skills and confidence. They'll also offer advice to support the development of your creative practice.

National profile and visibility

At the end of the year, you'll have the opportunity to showcase your work alongside your fellow bursary artists to an audience of industry leaders. We'll also provide you with a digital capture of your project and feature you on Sky Arts.

Future opportunities

To help you maintain a sustainable career, we're also offering you the opportunity to apply for further funding to continue your work after the bursary year is completed.

A cohort and alumni network

The opportunity to build lasting relationships with a cohort of fellow artists, learn and develop alongside peers through shared experiences and collaboration and become part of a growing alumni community with opportunities to stay connected after the bursary year ends.

Who can apply?

In 2027, we are looking to support artists whose practice is rooted in creating dance works — whether you are a choreographer, dance-maker, or work with movement as a central part of your creative practice.

We welcome applications from those working across all styles, forms and approaches, including:

- African diasporic dance
- Ballet
- Ballroom and Latin
- Circus (including aerial and acrobatics)
- Commercial Dance
- Contemporary
- Folk and Traditional (UK or international)
- Hip hop and street styles
- Jazz
- Musical Theatre
- Physical Theatre
- South Asian dance
- Other styles and interdisciplinary approaches

You must apply as an individual artist. While your project can involve collaborators, the application and bursary award must be in your name.

Eligibility

To be eligible to apply, you must:

1. Be aged 18 or over on 25 January 2027
2. Be a UK citizen, or have been ordinarily resident in the UK since 1 January 2022
3. Be currently working, or have recently worked, as a professional dance artist or dance-maker. A professional artist is someone who:
 - Since 1 January 2022 has received some income for this work, whether as an employee, freelancer or through grant funding and
 - Considers their arts practice to be their main profession or career. This applies even if their work in the arts is not their main source of income or they have other employment
4. Not already have a high professional profile, for example, you must not have prior experience of staging funded work for large audiences
5. Be available to take part in the selection process and programme, including:
 - If shortlisted:
 - Attendance at an online meeting with Sky Arts between 9th – 20th November 2026
 - Can create a short video about your project to be supplied by 7th December 2026.
 - If your application is successful you:
 - Plan to be resident in the UK from January 2027 to January 2028
 - Do not plan to be in full-time employment or education between January 2027 to January 2028
 - Can commit the required time to your project and participate fully in the 12-month programme
 - Are available to take part in the end of year showcase in London in January 2028

Your proposed dance project

As part of your application, you'll be asked to outline a creative idea that you want to develop into a dance project across the bursary year.

Your project:

- **Does not need to be a full proposal at application stage.**
You can share an idea, story, approach, or character you'd like to explore.
- **Can take any format that best expresses your creative vision**, including live performance, film, digital, interactive or multimedia work.
- **Must be rooted in dance practice**, but can be cross-disciplinary.
We welcome projects that blend dance genres or incorporate other art forms, especially where this expands your existing practice.
- **Must be your own original idea.**
It cannot be co-created or jointly owned by another individual or organisation, although you may work with collaborators to realise it.

We cannot fund work that has already been staged, screened or widely presented to a public audience.

However, we can support projects that:

- Have been shared in a prototype format (e.g. scratch night or work-in-progress)
- Build on ideas previously tested through short-form or digital work
- Have received early-stage R&D or seed funding

What we are looking for

We would like to support individuals who:

- Show **strong potential** and **have professional experience of choreographing work that has been performed for an audience.**
- Are at a point where this opportunity would have a **transformative impact on your practice**
- Have a **clear and compelling vision** for a new piece of work
- Have a **distinctive artistic voice** or bring an **innovative approach** to your artform
- Are motivated to **experiment, take creative risks and create bold work** that pushes boundaries and explores new forms, methods or technologies
- Demonstrate the **commitment and ambition** to develop a high-quality piece of work over the bursary year

Unfortunately, we won't be able to support you if:

- You have limited professional experience of creating dance work
- You already have a high professional profile, for example you are staging funded work for large audiences
- You already have access to a wide range of professional opportunities and support.
- You already have strong access to other funding or career development opportunities
- Your current commitments would make it difficult for you to fully participate in the programme
- Your proposed project has already been staged, screened or widely presented to a public audience
- You are applying on behalf of an organisation or collective

What being a bursary artist will involve

We understand that every artist's journey is different. Our aim is to support you to make the most of this opportunity in a way that is meaningful to you and your project.

If you're selected for a Julia Rausing Sky Arts Bursary, you will be expected to:

- Participate fully in the 12-month programme
- Develop and deliver your proposed creative project within the year, keeping us updated on your progress
- Share your work publicly at the end-of-year showcase
- Actively engage with mentoring and support opportunities
- Be open to collaboration, taking part in cohort activity and learning alongside other artists
- Contribute to documenting your journey, including filming and other storytelling throughout the year
- Act as an ambassador for the programme.

Time commitment

We expect that being a Julia Rausing Sky Arts Bursary holder, including delivering your creative project and participating in the end-of-year showcase, will require a significant time commitment across 2027.

The £30,000 personal bursary is designed to give you the time and financial support to focus on your creative practice, including helping to cover your living costs while you do so.

We understand that everyone's circumstances are different. However, this programme is not compatible with a full-time job. It will not be possible to fully engage if you are only available during evenings and weekends.

It may, however, be possible to take part alongside part-time work or other flexible commitments, depending on your situation.

How to apply

We know that applying for opportunities like this can feel daunting. We're not looking for polished or perfect applications - we're looking for clear ideas, creative potential and a genuine sense of what this opportunity would mean for you.

To apply, you'll first need to create an account on the website. This will allow you to save your application as a draft and return to it at any time to make changes. You can continue to edit and resubmit your application right up until the application deadline.

Once you submit your application, you will receive a notification confirming that we have received it.

You can apply online here **Apply**
(<https://juliarausingskyartsbursaries.com/application>)

The deadline for applications is **9am on Wednesday 9th September 2026.**

Application Form

In the application form, we will ask you for:

- Personal and contact details
- Information on your dance career so far and areas of interest
- A proposal for a dance project you would like to develop through the bursary, a sample from which will be part of a showcase at the end of the year
- Why this bursary would be transformative for your career
- Supporting links or materials that show us more about your dance practice and your project idea. These can be shared with us as a social link or one of the below:
 - A video file (max. 3 minutes and 500MB in one of these file formats: .mp4, .mov)
 - A document (max. 5 pages and 10MB in one of these file formats: .docx, .pdf)
- Optional diversity and accessibility information.

A question marked with an asterisk (*) must be completed before you can submit your application

You can see all the questions in a pdf version of the application form in our Guidance section.

Alternative application formats

We want to make this application process as accessible and supportive as possible.

If you need to submit your application in a different format because of an access requirement, then we will accept applications in video, audio or document format.

We have Easy Read, large print and audio versions of our key documents including the Application Form, Terms and Conditions and this Guidance For Applicants document.

We can also provide financial support for access needs, including funding support workers to support you to complete the application form — please get in touch to discuss what would best enable you to apply. You can contact us using the **Contact Form** on the website.

(<https://juliarausingskyartsbursaries.com/contact>)

If you're selected for the bursary programme, we'll also work with you to understand any access needs you may have and ensure you can fully participate in the opportunities and activities offered through the programme.

How your application will be assessed

We are looking for applicants who can demonstrate:

- **Talent and creative potential**
Evidence of your talent and potential, based on the quality and ambition of your past work
- **Fresh perspective and approach**
The extent to which your work and/or project brings forward distinctive voices or stories, or demonstrates a bold and innovative approach to the artform
- **Project ambition**
The ambition of your proposal, including your creative vision, the originality of the work and its potential to engage audiences
- **Growth potential**
Whether participating in the programme is likely to support meaningful development in your career as a dance artist
- **Project feasibility**
Whether your project can be realistically developed and delivered with our support within the 12-month bursary period (25th January 2027 – 24th January 2028).
- **Programme alignment**
How well the bursary fits your needs and circumstances, including:
 - Whether this opportunity provides development you might not otherwise access
 - Whether we can offer the mentoring and support that best matches your project
 - Your ability to fully participate in the programme

Alongside the core selection criteria, we will also consider the overall balance of the cohort to ensure it reflects the diversity of the dance sector. This may include:

- Geographic spread across the UK
- Range of dance styles and practices
- Diversity in project themes and formats
- A mix of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives

After you apply – what happens next?

Date: Immediately after submitting your application

Activity: You will receive an email confirming that your application has been received. If you do not receive this, please contact us using the contact form on the website.

Date: Early October 2026

Activity: You will be notified if your application has been longlisted. You will also be notified if you have not been longlisted.

Date: End October 2026

Activity: You will be notified if your application has been shortlisted. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to take part in the next stage of the selection process. You will also be notified if you have not been shortlisted.

Date: November 2026

Activity: Shortlisted candidates will attend an informal Zoom meeting with members of the Sky Arts team. They will be offered feedback on their application and proposed project idea and given the opportunity to ask questions.

Following this, you will be asked to prepare a short video pitch on your proposed project idea. This will be reviewed by the selection panel as part of the final decision-making process.

More information and guidance will be given about this stage to shortlisted candidates.

Date: Mid December 2026

Activity: The 20 bursary recipients will be notified that they have been successful.

The 20 unsuccessful applicants will also be notified.

We aim to communicate decisions as clearly and promptly as possible. Where timelines change (for example, due to the volume of applications), we will keep you informed throughout the process

What happens if you are unsuccessful

We know that not being selected can be disappointing and we recognise the time and care that goes into each application.

Demand for places is expected to be high, and many strong applications may not be successful.

Due to the volume of applications, we expect to receive, we will not be able to provide individual feedback to applicants. However, shortlisted applicants will receive feedback following the selection process.

What happens if you are successful

If your application is successful, you will receive an offer setting out everything you need to know about your bursary - including the funding, the support available and what taking part will involve.

We will invite you to an onboarding session, where we will:

- Talk through your project
- Agree a plan for the year
- Make sure you have what you need to make the most of the opportunity

If you have access support needs, we will work with you to understand what support will best enable you to take part.

You will then begin the 12-month programme, developing your project with access to mentoring, professional development and connections across the industry.

How and when the bursary grants will be paid

The personal bursary

The **£30,000 bursary** will be paid in instalments across the year.

Please note: bursary payments are likely to be considered taxable income. You are responsible for managing any tax liabilities associated with the award, and we encourage you to seek independent financial advice if you are unsure.

The project grant

The awarded project funding will be paid in stages throughout the year, aligned to key moments and deliverables in your project.

We will work with you to agree a set of realistic milestones that reflect your creative process and when funding will be most needed.

Payments will be made as these milestones are reached, ensuring you are supported at each stage of developing your work. This approach is designed to be flexible and responsive, recognising that creative projects evolve over time.

We understand that creative processes are not always linear, and milestones can be reviewed and adapted where needed, in discussion with the programme team.

What is the showcase?

At the end of the bursary year, we will hold a showcase for dance sector leaders and press to watch samples of the work of all our bursary holders.

The event will take place in a professional performance venue, and your work could be shared in a range of formats, for example:

- An extract of a live performance
- A short film or extract of a filmed work
- A demonstration or presentation of an immersive or digital project
- Other formats, depending on the nature of your work

We will work with you to agree the most appropriate way to present your project.

The showcase will be funded separately from your project budget and produced by our team, ensuring you are fully supported to realise and share your work.

Questions?

If you have any questions about the Julia Rausing Sky Arts Bursaries or the application process, please contact us using the **Contact Form** on the website.

(<https://juliarausingskyartsbursaries.com/contact>)