



FESTIVAL RULES & GUIDELINES

Aspire@Festivals | September 2025 – 2026

ENTRY IS DEEMED TO BE AN ACCEPTANCE OF THESE RULES

ENTRIES

- Detailed genre descriptions have been developed by AED. Teachers and choreographers must review these thoroughly to ensure their routines align with the published criteria, available on the AED website and included in the Aspire@ syllabus.
- The festival reserves the right to:
 - Combine or divide classes depending on entry numbers.
 - Amend or interpret rules as necessary.
- **Entry fees are non-refundable.**
- Entry does not guarantee performance on a specific date.
- In cases of over-subscription, the festival
- may return entries from affected classes. In such cases, fees will be refunded.
- Competitors must perform in the published order, report to the stage at least 20 minutes prior, and be ready when called. Absence may lead to disqualification.
- **Group sizes:**
 - Small Group: 5–10 dancers
 - Large Group: 11–30 dancers
- **Substitutions:**
 - Solo dancers: no substitutions allowed.
 - Duet/Trio/Quartet: 1 substitution permitted.
 - Small Group: up to 2 substitutions.
 - Large Group: up to 3 substitutions.

DANCERS

- This Festival is for **amateurs and students** only (those not earning their primary income from dance performance or teaching).
- **No assumed names** are allowed.
- Age is determined as of **31st August** prior to the competition (e.g., for October 2024, use age as of 31st August 2024). Incorrect age submissions may result in disqualification. Proof of age may be requested.
- Soloists must perform in their correct age category.
- For duets, trios, quartets, and groups, the age of the **oldest dancer** determines the age category.
- Dancers under **13 years old** may not be entered into **Contemporary or Modern Ballet** classes. If a younger dancer is included for artistic reasons, the group must be entered in the **Classical** section.
- **No pointe work** is allowed for dancers under 13.
- Rosin use must follow any venue-specific guidelines.
- Teachers and parents must inform organisers of:
 - Any performer with additional needs or physical limitations (preferably at the time of entry).
 - Any information that may impact adjudication (e.g. relevant background circumstances).

ADJUDICATORS

- Alternative or additional adjudicators may be appointed as needed.
- **No communication** with adjudicators is permitted by competitors, teachers, or others before or during the competition.
- The **Adjudicator's decision is final**. No discussion or correspondence will be entered into.
- Awards may be withheld if:
 - The performance lacks sufficient merit.

- Rules are infringed.
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TIME LIMITS

- AED–set time limits must be strictly followed.
- Performances exceeding the time limit by more than 15 seconds will receive feedback but:
 - **No score will be given.**
 - **The piece will not qualify** for AED Regional Finals (in qualifying years).
- Timing begins with the first movement or sound (whichever occurs first) and ends with the final movement.
- A musical exit is permitted if it falls within the time limit.

MUSIC

- The festival is not liable for copyright, recording, or performance rights issues.
- The festival holds a Group Licence for recorded music use. However, teachers using music from commercial recordings must seek permission from the relevant recording companies.
- The festival is not covered by blanket copyright for songs from musicals. Teachers/performers must obtain a separate licence from **Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL)**. Contact: 020 8068 1054.
- Adjudicators consider:
 - Music selection and interpretation
 - Recording quality
 - Vocal appropriateness
- **Pre-recorded vocals are not permitted** in:
 - Any **Song & Dance** routines

- Any **Tap** routines (no recorded tap or similar sound effects)

PROPS

- **Scenery, sets, and staging are not permitted.**
- Props are allowed under the following conditions:
 - No on-stage assembly
 - No glass or breakable items
 - Maximum weight: **10kg**
 - Must be flame-resistant
 - No strobe lighting, smoke, pyro, or open flames
 - Must be delivered before and removed after the relevant session (no storage available)
 - Setup/removal time: **20 second's max**
- Props are the sole responsibility of the teacher; AED accepts no liability for accidents caused.
- **Strictly prohibited:** talc, oil, or any substance that leaves residue on the floor.

AWARDS & TROPHIES

- Trophies must be returned in clean, good condition by the date requested. Lost/damaged trophies must be replaced or repaired.
- Engraving is permitted at the winner's own cost.
- Placings:
 - 1st 2nd & 3rd Place: medal (ties are permitted)
- If not collected, reports can be posted for a £2 fee (with a stamped addressed envelope left with admin).
- Overall Trophy winners will be notified before the awards ceremony.

- A group routine that places 1st at Nationals may be re-entered **once** in a future competition. After that, it cannot be entered again for two competitions, regardless of age group or genre changes.

MISCELLANEOUS

- **Unacceptable behaviour** toward organisers or team members may lead to disqualification and future entry refusal.
- **Only authorised personnel** are allowed backstage and in the wings.
- **No photography, filming, or mobile phone use** is allowed during performances.
 - However, competitors agree to be filmed/photographed by official Festival media or agents.
- Mobile phones are permitted backstage but must be used responsibly. No disruption or misuse will be tolerated.
- **Photography or filming is strictly prohibited** in dressing rooms, changing areas, and toilets.
- Audience should show their appreciation equally for all competitors at the end of each performance, not during.