



Guidelines for participation

In the Spotlight Dance Festival 2025



The Gili Dancers

Contents

In the Spotlight Dance Festival 2025

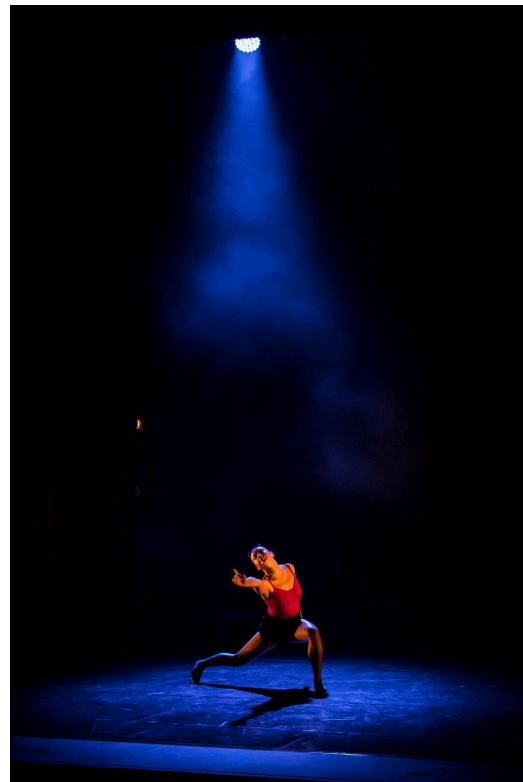
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Welcome

In the Spotlight Dance Festival is an event for schools across the Metropolitan South Directorates and beyond. The festival promotes dance education to engage students in rigorous and comprehensive syllabus based learning in NSW public primary and high schools.

Showcasing 4000 Kindergarten to Year 12 students, over 200 dance items in 18 programs across 9 evenings. Each performance displays the passion, skills and creativity of students and teachers as they explore the art of dance.

ITSDF25 offers support to schools preparing for the festival and incorporates student workshops with dance industry professionals throughout the duration of the production weeks. The festival committee are proud to present the talents of our students and teachers; the dancers and choreographers from our public schools NSW.



Newtown Performing Arts High School

COVID-19 advice

The ITSDF is committed to offering a COVID safe event in 2025.

The festival committee works in conjunction with the Department of Education and supported by The Arts Unit to ensure that the operation of this program is contingent on the [COVID-19 advice](#) provided by the department in consultation with NSW Health.

Dates and times

Festival dates

Monday 16 – Wednesday 25 June 2025 (Term 2 Weeks 8 and 9)

[ITSDF25 - Participation Application Form](#)

Due Date: Monday 7 April 2025 (Term 1 Week 11) by 4:30 pm

Performances

Due to constant ticket shortages experienced each year of this production there will now be 2 separate programs each evening.

These will be identified as Performance 1- 14, your nominated item will only perform in one program.

Please note that there are 2 different starting times each evening:
6:15 pm and 8:15 pm.

Program 1 - 6:15 pm Monday 16 June
Program 2 - 8:15 pm Monday 16 June
Program 3 - 6:15 pm Tuesday 17 June
Program 4 - 8:15 pm Tuesday 17 June
Program 5 - 6:15 pm Wednesday 18 June
Program 6 - 8:15 pm Wednesday 18 June
Program 7 - 6:15 pm Thursday 19 June
Program 8 - 8:15 pm Thursday 19 June

Program 9 - 6:15 pm Friday 20 June
Program 10 - 8:15 pm Friday 20 June
Program 11 - 6:15 pm Monday 23 June
Program 12 - 8:15 pm Monday 23 June
Program 13 - 6:15 pm Tuesday 24 June
Program 14 - 8:15 pm Tuesday 24 June
Program 15 - 6:15 pm Wednesday 25 June
Program 16 - 8:15 pm Wednesday 25 June

Please note: The aim of ITSDF is to showcase schools across the region, so as a result if your school is successful with more than one item please be aware that they may not be programmed on the same night.

Daily Schedule

Technical rehearsals will take place during the day of your allocated performance.

Event	Time	Venue
Technical rehearsal 1	9:00 am to 10:30 am	Seymour Centre, Everest Theatre
Technical rehearsal 2	10:30 am to 12:00 noon	
Technical rehearsal 3	1:00 pm to 2:30 pm	
Technical rehearsal 4	2:30 pm to 4:00 pm	
Performance	6:15 pm	
Performance	8:15pm	

Additional opportunities

ITSDF25 Committee

Expressions of interest for In the Spotlight Dance Festival Committee will be available for teachers seeking further professional learning in dance. The committee will comprise of both primary and secondary teachers with dance and event experience. The role of the dance committee will be to advise, coordinate and implement ITSDF25 auditions, programming, support to schools and production team. In addition to being a production team member this commitment includes participation in team conference calls during terms 1 and 2. Schools will be allocated with casual funding for any days of absence in Term 3.

Please complete the [ITSDF25 Committee EOI](#) by Week 7 Friday 14 March 2025 4:30pm

ITSDF25 Compere

Compere nomination forms for highly accomplished, confident and enthusiastic public speaking students from Years 5 to 12 will be released early Term 1 2025. Please complete the [ITSDF25 Compere Nomination Form](#) by Monday 7 April 2025 4:30pm

VET Entertainment Industry Studies students:

Applications for Vocational Education and Training – Entertainment Industry students wanting to complete a 44 hour work placement as a member of the festival.

Applications will be open via our website early of term 1 2025 for the following:

- VET entertainment

Please complete the [ITSDF25 VET Nomination Form](#) by Monday 7 April 2025 4:30pm

All of these forms will be accessible on the [In the Spotlight Dance Festival](#) website.

Criteria for selection

ITSDF25 presents a high standard of dance performance and choreography which inline with NSW DoE Dance syllabus outcomes; this is a requirement to be accepted into the festival.

All items must be auditioned and adhere to the following assessment criteria in order to be a part of the festival.

- Technical skills
- Choreographic concept and intent
- Choreographic structure
- Choreographic variation
- Performance quality
- Stage space
- Music
- Costumes
- Props (if integrated)
- Length

Syllabus Outcomes

Choreography must reflect an understanding of the basic compositional structures and choreographic processes taught in the curriculum:

- Items should be based on a concept/intent or theme.
- Choreography should use the Elements of Dance (space, time, & dynamics) as the basis for generating movement to communicate the concept/intent or theme. Thought should be given to variation of these elements.
- Shapes and movement motifs that reflect the concept/intent or theme should be used to communicate the meaning of the work.
- Choreographers should try to use relevant movement as opposed to known phrases of generic choreography and consider form/structure to reinforce their concept/intent or theme.

Concept / Intent

When creating your work, it is important to identify the intended concept / intent or theme. Spend time reflecting on **what** you are trying to communicate to the audience and **how** you are going to communicate it – through movement, music, costuming, props, staging and lighting.

This must be appropriate for young audience members to view:

- Audition videos with disturbing or violent content will not be considered for inclusion in the festival.
- Performances that have added disturbing, violent or culturally inappropriate content or costuming and make-up past the audition process may possibly be removed from the festival.

Choreographers

- Items can be produced by NSW Department of Education teachers, students currently enrolled at the school or non-DoE choreographers. The item must be original work created and developed as a part of an ongoing program within the school.
- It is the responsibility of the coordinating teacher to ensure that non-DoE choreographers integrate the NSW Dance syllabus outcomes within their choreography.
- Choreographers who submit multiple items may not have all their items accepted for the festival. The school must rank their nominations in priority order.

Integrity

The overall choices made by the choreographer should be age appropriate and suitable for the skill level of the dancers. This is essential when selecting the theme/intent, music, costume, lighting, staging and movement choices.

Content

- Choreography must be devised with the guidelines of the dance festival in mind. Do not assume that items choreographed for other educational or school based events will meet the guidelines of this festival.
- Sensitivity should be displayed in the treatment of themes such as romantic relationships, depression, suicide, racism, sexism, drug and alcohol abuse etc. If these themes are explored by senior students, they should be treated in an abstract context rather than representational. These themes are not suitable for primary or junior secondary students.

Questions to explore throughout the choreographic process:

- What is the dance about?
- What is the concept/intent, theme or narrative being developed?
- How do you intend to develop your idea?
- Does the movement support the concept/intent, theme or narrative?
- How do you intend to develop the relationship between dancers/characters?
- How will you explore the elements of dance? e.g. shapes, space and formations?
- How will you create variations or dynamic contrasts? e.g. variations in time - frantic rush to a moment of stillness
- Does the movement help to convey the intent of the piece?
- Does music choice and costuming enhance the concept/intent, theme or narrative?
- What atmosphere and 'feeling' do you want to create?
- Is the concept/intent, theme or narrative clear to the audience from beginning to end?

Length of item

- **Primary** - Should not exceed **4 minutes**, the recommended timing is up to 3 and a half minutes.
- **Secondary** - Should not exceed **6 minutes**, the recommended timing is up to 5 minutes.

The item should last as long as it takes to communicate the choreographer's intent. The time limit is not a parameter to be aimed for; choreography and technique must be of high quality to fill this much time. Items that take on a 'mega mix' approach can become laboured and disjointed.

Safe Dance Practice

ITSD25 committee endorses safe dance practices. Care should be taken so that potentially harmful activities are excluded. Unsafe dance practices will not be accepted. Choreographers need to cater for the skill level of their students and be aware of these potential dangerous activities:

- full neck roll
- splits
- sustained forward flexion or back arches
- quick and repetitive plies
- falling/landing on knees rather than lowering down to the floor
- unstable or under-rehearsed lifts or weight bearing movements
- heavy/unsafe landing techniques.

Movement

- Movement should reflect the concept/intent or theme to communicate the meaning of the work.
- Movement content of the item should be appropriate to the age, skill and level of development of the students.
- Movement should explore the elements of dance using shapes, space, levels, formations and varying the dynamics. Large amounts of repetitive movement should be avoided; blocks of unison choreography in lines.
- Movements of a mature and sexual nature such as chest and pelvic thrusts, running hands down the body and straddling chairs will not be accepted.
- Where a student choreographer is involved, the supervising teacher is responsible for checking the appropriateness of the movement content.
- Avoid using 'tricks' that do not have any relevance to the theme or intent of the work.

Costume, hair and make-up

- Costume, hair and make-up should support the concept or theme of the work.
- Costumes must be suitable to the age, gender and movement of the dancer.
- Sensitivity should be shown to the body shape of the dancers. Undergarments should not be seen when dancers are performing in costume.
- Midriff, cut-away tops, plunging necklines and high-cut leotards are not acceptable.
- Changing costume on stage is not permitted.
- The committee reserves the right to withdraw any item if costumes, hair and make-up are unacceptable or culturally inappropriate.
- No tap shoes allowed to be worn on the tarket stage floor.

Number of students

- Items should be a class or ensemble group performance with students currently enrolled at your school.
- The minimum number of students is 6, the maximum number of students is 30.
- Items should not contain choreography featuring a 'star' performer.

Number of Items

- Prior to nominating items for the dance festival, schools are asked to discuss with staff and their school principal on the item/s that should be nominated.
- Schools should ensure that they are nominating high quality performance items that meet the dance festival criteria to represent the school at a representative level.
- Primary schools are permitted to nominate a maximum of 3 items for audition plus 1 item for special consideration. Secondary schools are permitted to nominate a maximum of 5 items for audition, plus 3 items for special consideration.
- Special Consideration Application schools may choose to nominate an additional item/s from their school for inclusion in the festival. To apply for Special Consideration, the principal of the school must complete the Special Consideration Form for additional high quality works that meet the criteria and provide a statement as to why the school should be able to have these additional item/s included in the dance festival. Schools nominating for special consideration must complete the Special Consideration Application Form, Application for Inclusion Form and provide performance submission as per the festival guidelines. Additional items should be ranked in order of priority. Schools with large numbers of high quality items, above the school quota guideline, are able to submit additional items for special consideration on a case by case basis.
- ITSDF25 aims to program the performances equitably and may need to limit the acceptance of items from each school.
- Applications must be received by the due date for consideration. Late applications will not be considered.
- Completing the ITSDF25 Participation Application form does not guarantee inclusion in the festival.

Audition submission

The committee understands that items will generally not be completed by the application due date. The committee expects to see the potential for high quality. Please polish as much of your item as possible.

The committee recommends:

- Primary: one to one and a half minutes completed.
- Secondary: one and a half to two minutes completed.
- The performance must be a current 2025 dance item. Students appearing in the audition submission must be current students enrolled at the school for 2025 who will be performing at the festival in the item.
- Teachers must be able to describe the intent, inclusion and manipulation of the dance elements, link to the dance syllabus and costuming details on the application form.
- A google doc link will be required with an image of your costume. Due to the programming process changes to costumes will not be permitted.
- It is recommended that you do not purchase costumes before receiving an acceptance notification.
- Schools submitting more than one item for inclusion should note that the committee cannot guarantee that all items will be successful.
- Each school is required to rank their items in preference order.
- Multiple items from the one school will not be scheduled to perform on the same day.

General audition panel feedback to all schools

- The festival promotes dance education in primary and secondary schools; items must reflect the outcomes of the NSW DoE Dance syllabus relevant for the learning stage of the students.
- The application must adhere to the ITSDF25 criteria for selection.
- The festival audition panel expects all schools to submit works that are based on a clear theme or concept.
- Musical accompaniment should enhance the choreographic concept and be suitable for performing in the festival.
- Do not solely rely on the music to tell the theme, but create original movement and structure the work in a way that communicates an idea.
- In 2024 the audition panel viewed dances that consisted largely of unison movement that did not relate to a clear concept. We encourage schools to take greater consideration into structuring the work, small groupings, partner work, cannon, pathways, formations and layering.
- Primary schools are linking the dance syllabus with their choreography and producing items that have a clear intent with relevant music and costuming. The panel is concerned about acrobatic tricks that do not relate to or enhance their intent.
- Secondary schools need to manipulate space/time and dynamics, making more use of playing with the motif to ensure the intent of the work is really clear to an audience.
- Movements of a mature and sexual nature such as chest and pelvic thrusts,

- running hands down the body and straddling chairs are not acceptable.
- Care should be taken so that potentially harmful movements are excluded. Choreographers need to cater for the skill level of their students and ensure safe dance practice.

Support for schools

If a school is identified as requiring support the committee will recommend a complimentary professional learning in-service for the school. An In The Spotlight Dance Festival tutor, also a trained DoE dance teacher, will provide a 2 hour workshop with the coordinating / dance teacher and dance ensemble.

During this rehearsal the audition panel recommendations will be integrated and the tutor will assist in completing the choreography. Further mentoring and professional dialogue will be established and continue towards the performance



Refugee Dance Ensemble

Music guidelines

Music suitability

- Music and lyrics help communicate the intent of an item, your music choice should be appropriate and support the intent / theme of your work.
- Music must be legally purchased on behalf of the school with your principal's acknowledgment of the purchase.
- Music should be selected and screened carefully with the school principal endorsing both song choice and song lyrics.
- Songs with inappropriate lyrics or intent will not be accepted.
- Avoid using Top 40 hits or current 'popular songs' unless they are relevant to the intent of the item. Keep in mind that it is highly likely another school will use the same music.

Copyright

- ITSD25 committee adheres to all copyright laws. When a school requires additional copyright permission, copies of permission need to be attached to the application for inclusion. To support the committee, please abide by the following *general* copyright guidelines.
- Schools should choose commercially available sound recordings. Once the sound recording has been purchased, the school is not automatically covered for copyright under the educational copyright agreement. Some sound recordings may fall under the category of 'Grand Right Works' or 'Dramatic Context' and additional licence/s may need to be obtained. To seek clarification, please refer to the APRA AMCOS website <http://apraamcos.com.au/>
- Choreography must be original work created in accordance with choreography and copyright laws.

For detailed copyright information, please contact:

- Smartcopying – The official guide to Copyright Issues for Australian Schools and TAFE <https://www.smartcopying.edu.au/>
- ARIA <http://www.aria.com.au/>
- Australian Copyright Council '[Choreography and Copyright](#)'

Staging & props

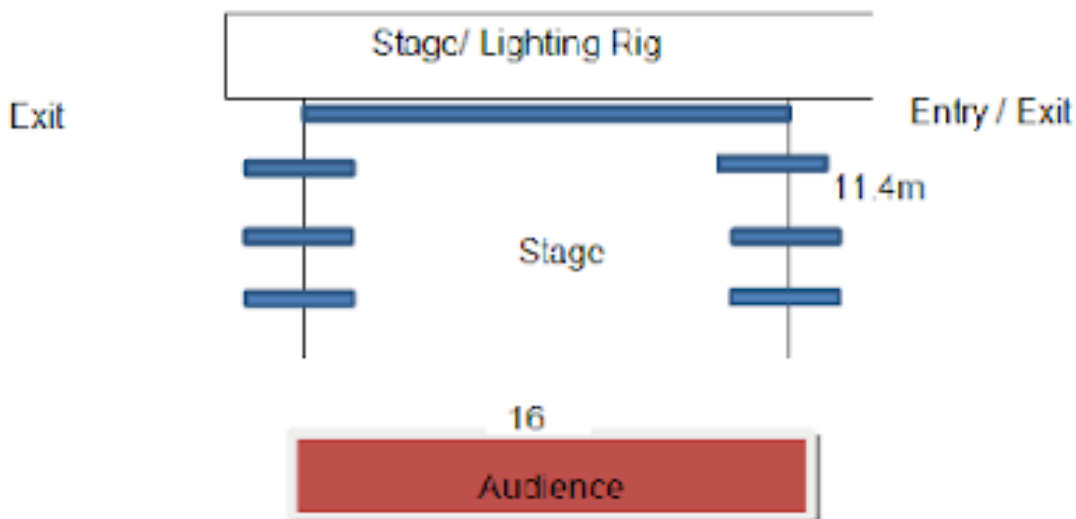
Staging - Everest Theatre, Seymour Centre

The stage space is approximately 16m x 11.4m and subject to change upon stage and lighting set up. The stage is a traditional proscenium – style set up.

Entrance to the stage is from prompt side only. Dancers entering from opposite prompt must cross the stage in blackout. Any crossovers during the performance must be made by moving outside the immediate stage area and along the corridor backstage. Performers must be given sufficient time in the choreography to do this.

Movement that travels backwards can be potentially dangerous for young and inexperienced dancers. It is the coordinating teacher and choreographer's responsibility to ensure that dancers are aware of stage dimensions and how to orientate themselves in the space.

Wings are narrow and are obstructed with lighting trees. Lights are hot and made of glass and metal. Teachers should choreograph entrances and exits sparingly and/or when in support of the choreography. You should not choreograph entrances and exits with large numbers of dancers in one wing. *There are usually three wings on either side of the **stage**.*



Props

Please note:

- Due to venue regulations and access, sets and props must be able to fit through a standard door.
- There is a Work Safe limit of 25kgs on all props; it must be an appropriate weight for 2 students to carry.
- Free standing sets or props must be secure and weighted at the bottom if necessary.
- Props on wheels must have safety locks
- Prop dimensions will be required in the application form.
- Props should appear as an integral part of the item, complementing, not dominating it or appearing as a gimmick.
- Coordinating teachers and choreographers will be directed by the stage management team on the safest most logical way that props are set and removed from the stage.
- Keep in mind there is limited time to set up props and often limited light.
- Please note; the lighting rig design prohibits the use of backdrops.
- Props or weapons that imply violence will not be permitted on stage.



Shining Stars

Participation cost

Costs

All successful dance item/s will be required to pay a participation fee of \$220.00 including GST per item.

This fee will partially contribute to paying for:

- venue hire
- venue on costs such as venue staff, venue set up, security, first aid officer, fire warden, electricity and cleaning
- lighting and audio production elements and audio-lighting engineers for the duration of the festival
- videographer and a digital copy of your item/s.

It is recommended that you divide this cost amongst the participating students of each item: $\$220 \div 20 \text{ students} = \11.00 per student.

The following considerations will become the responsibility of your school:

- participation fees for multiple items
- teacher relief during the week of the festival
- travelling expenses
- costume and make-up
- supply and transport of props
- fees for additional cleaning/damage to holding rooms and or venue property.

Online application form

Link: [ITSDF25 Participation Application Form](#)

This online application should take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete.

This online form is not exclusive to NSW DoE users; meaning a Non-DoE choreographer can complete this form.

The online application combines our multiple forms into one in an effort to minimise paperwork and save time. By completing this application form properly, you are reducing the time spent providing additional information at a later date.

PLEASE NOTE: Once you have started your application, you will not be able to save your progress and exit it. It will not time out, however, if you close the window, it will exit.

For time efficiency there is an **Application Checklist** found below. To ensure you are able to complete your application properly and all in one go, please make sure you have the information contained in the checklist available before completing your application.



Randwick Public School

Application checklist

SECTION	INFORMATION REQUIRED
Contact details	Name of school
	School code
	School category
	Combined ensemble list of schools
	Operational directorate
	Principal network
	Principal name and email address
	School address and phone number
Choreographer's details	Coordinating teacher's name, contact phone number and email
	Choreographer's name, DoE or non-DoE employee / student
Equity and access information	Stage/s and year group/s of students
	Number of boys
	Number of girls
	Total number of students
	Students with disabilities and amount
	Students who identify as Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islanders and amount
	Students who speak English as an Additional Language or Dialect and amount
	Do you require assistance
Indicate additional needs of students	
School availability	Indicate days your school is available
Technical rehearsals	Preference 1-4: 9:00 am to 10:30 am / 10:30 am to 12:00 pm / 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm / 2:30 pm to 4:00 pm
Audience attendance	For programming purposes, please indicate if majority of parents for students in this item will be attending as audience members.
Item Details	Item name
	Type of ensemble
	Genre
	Duration of item
	Description of intent: two sentence limit
	Elements of Dance apparent or manipulated
	Link to NSW DoE Dance syllabus
	Multiple application preference rank
Costumes, Props & Lighting	Costume description
	Costume google image link
	Sets and props; description and dimensions
	Lighting request
Video File	To be directly uploaded; no video link required.
	Additional information
Musical Accompaniment	Certification
	Track title
	Artist
	Lyrics google doc link
Declarations	Additional tracks
	Coordinating teacher / Principal endorsement
	*authorise the \$220.00 participation fee (per item), payable on acceptance notification. *additional costs at the expense of the school

Important contacts

To assist schools effectively, please direct your enquiries to **itsdf@det.nsw.edu.au**

- If you have any questions or concerns regarding the information required before commencing your application please contact the festival producers Sarah Banks or Emma Bathgate-Petersen.

ITSDF website

<https://itsdf.schools.nsw.gov.au/>

Performance venue address

Seymour Centre

Corner of City Road and Cleveland Street

CHIPPENDALE NSW, 2008