



DANCE
UMBRELLA
MOVING LONDON

QUEST CURATOR 2027

Job Application Pack

About Dance Umbrella

Dance Umbrella is London's annual international dance festival – 48 years in the making and always moving with the times. Every year, the festival ignites the city with bold, boundary-pushing work from artists who reflect the diversity of our global city and bring world-class work to London for the first time. Reaching audiences across the four corners of London, the Dance Umbrella festival is committed to making world-class dance accessible to the whole city.

Dance Umbrella is a commissioner of new work, co-producing with partners in the UK and abroad to invest in the next wave of international choreographic talent. Alongside the annual festival, the organisation offers audiences the chance to experience work online through a curated programme of dance films and artist encounters.

About Diversifying Curatorial Stewardship (DCS)

Diversifying Curatorial Stewardship (DCS) is Dance Umbrella's major multi-year initiative (2026–2028) designed to transform curatorial leadership within the UK and international dance ecology. With a steering group of national and international partners — Dance East, Lowry, FABRIC International and Aerowaves - together, we are invested in building a more diverse and equitable curatorial landscape in dance across the UK and internationally.

DCS responds to a clearly evidenced sector gap: the absence of visible, supported career pathways for curators — particularly Black/Brown Global Majority, predominantly female-identifying and non-binary practitioners — and the resulting lack of diversity within those who shape artistic programmes, narratives and decision making.

DCS aims to create structural, long-term change by widening who curates, how curation is practiced, and who has access to networks, resources and influence. The programme builds on Dance Umbrella's sector-facing research (2023/24), which identified five recurring barriers to diverse curatorial leadership: lack of pathways, undervaluing of lived experience, unequal access to networks, freelance precarity, and limited spaces for honest dialogue about power and representation.

Between 2026 and 2028 the following opportunities are available for practitioners (artists, producers, curators) to develop their curatorial practice in dance:

- Guest Curator roles — one in 2027, two in 2028 — each with hands-on curatorial experience at either NottDance (Nottingham), Lowry (Salford) or Dance East (Ipswich) and Dance Umbrella (London).
- Two Curatorial Fellows — one in 2027, one in 2028 — embedded in the Dance Umbrella festival cycle, will develop their practice and expand their professional networks.

DCS is supported by Arts Council England, British Council, Backstage Trust and The Performing Arts Fund NL.

At a glance

Job title: Guest Curator 2027

Reports to: Artistic Director/Co-CEO. Works strategically with Senior Producer

Duration: 14 months (September 2026 to October 2027)

Commitment: 48 days across the cycle, part-time and flexible

Contract type: Freelance

Location: Remote / flexible, with attendance at events and the festival

Fee: £12,000 (approx. £250 per day)

Production budget: Separate budget confirmed on appointment

Travel stipend: Available for work viewing and international platforms

Deadline to apply: Monday 13 July 2026, 10.00 BST

Start date: September 2026

About the Guest Curator role

Dance Umbrella is inviting applications from cultural practitioners with an interest in dance and performance who are ready to hone their curatorial voice and want to access a professional development support package.

As Guest Curator, you will:

- Develop and deliver one main event as part of Dance Umbrella Festival 2027. This might take the form of an existing presentation format within the festival, such as a double bill or venue takeover, or a new format that you propose.
- Work with Dance Umbrella and steering group partners to ensure all or a portion of the programme can be toured to a DCS steering group festival or venue, extending the reach of your work.
- Access sustained mentoring and professional development throughout the cycle.
- Connect with Dance Umbrella's national and international networks, with dedicated travel opportunities to attend significant international platforms and to experience contemporary dance beyond the western context, supported by the British Council.
- Participate in national and international professional development programmes including a four-day professional development residential at Dance East (Ipswich) January 2027 and the Aerowaves Start Up programme for emerging dance presenters, which takes place during the Spring Forward festival (14- 17th April 2027 in Limerick, Ireland)

The Guest Curator role is one strand of the broader DCS programme, which is building a professional development pipeline for curators from underrepresented backgrounds at different stages of their careers.

The commitment

This is a freelance role running from September 2026 to October 2027, approximately 14 months, with a total commitment of 48 days across the cycle. Those days cover the full scope of the role: programming, research, production and delivery.

The work is structured in three phases:

September to December 2026 — Intensive phase

The cycle begins with induction, venue introductions and budget planning, before moving into research, work viewing and the development of your curatorial thinking. You will attend Dance Umbrella Festival 2026 as part of your introduction to the organisation and its networks. You will meet with DCS steering group partners. This is the most intensive phase, at roughly 3 to 4 days per month.

January to May 2027 — Development and planning

A quieter period during which your curatorial concept takes shape, artists are approached and confirmed, and production planning begins alongside the Dance Umbrella team. You will also attend international platforms as part of your ongoing research and professional development. Roughly 2 to 3 days per month.

June to October 2027 — Delivery and evaluation

The cycle builds toward and includes the festival itself. Final decisions are made, preparation intensifies, and your programme is delivered, including presentations at Dance Umbrella and a steering group partner venue. Roughly 3 to 4 days per month, concentrated around the festival.

The role is part-time and flexible by design, to sit comfortably alongside other freelance commitments.

Key dates

September 2026	Induction, venue introductions, mentoring and budget planning
October 2026	Attend Dance Umbrella Festival 2026
January 2027	Residential at DanceEast, Ipswich
April 2027	Aerowaves Start Up and Spring Forward, Limerick
June - August 2027	Finalising programme, production and delivery preparation
October 2027	Dance Umbrella Festival 2027 — delivery of your programme

Fees and support

The Guest Curator fee is £12,000 (approximately £250 per day across 48 days). This is a freelance contract. You will be responsible for your own tax and National Insurance contributions and will invoice Dance Umbrella for your work.

In addition to the fee, you will have access to:

- A production, project and touring budget, confirmed on appointment
- A dedicated travel stipend to support work viewing and attendance at international platforms
- A separate stipend to cover the January 2027 residential at Dance East
- Access to sustained mentoring and professional development throughout the cycle

What we are looking for

We are looking for someone who:

- Is passionate about dance and performance
- Wants to hone their curatorial voice
- Has clear sense of the work they want to champion and why
- Has a keen interest in selecting artists and shaping audiences' experiences
- Can demonstrate experience of bringing a performance-related programme, event or project together. This might come from curating, producing, making work, community organising, or another route entirely
- Is interested in developing a programme that could have a life beyond Dance Umbrella through presentation and touring opportunities
- Can work independently and manage their own time across a flexible, part-time commitment
- Can demonstrate strong relationship-building skills with colleagues, artists, partners and freelancers

Role specification

Main Purpose

- To develop and deliver a curated programme strand as part of Dance Umbrella Festival 2027 which can tour to a DCS steering group festival/venue
- To add to the multiplicity of curatorial voices shaping dance programming in the UK
- To broaden the range of artists and work featured in the festival, bringing new perspectives to audiences and the sector

Key responsibilities

- Research and curate a programme for Dance Umbrella Festival 2027 that could tour to another festival/venue outside London, reaching out to and building relationships with artists fit for the strand and host venues
- Lead on creative direction of the final event or events in collaboration with the Dance Umbrella Artistic Director and Senior Producer
- Plan and deliver the event or events alongside the Dance Umbrella creative team to ensure smooth delivery of content
- Be responsible for devising and delivering the programme within an agreed production budget set and managed by Dance Umbrella
- Collaborate with Dance Umbrella to create a production schedule for the event or events
- Manage creative working relationships with any collaborators
- Collaborate with Dance Umbrella on marketing materials and communications strategy for the programme strand, including working with the marketing team and coordinating project management tasks
- Contribute to festival evaluation activity as part of the project (date TBC)

Personal specification

- Based in the UK with the right to work here for the duration of the contract
- Some professional experience in the cultural sector, whether as an artist, programmer, producer or in another creative capacity
- A track record of creating and delivering artistic projects
- A genuine passion for dance and performance, and a honing curatorial point of view
- Ability to manage a budget and work to deadlines independently
- A track record of partnership working, strong communication and relationship-building skills
- Availability for key programme dates including Dance Umbrella Festival 2026 and 2027, the residential at Dance East (Ipswich w/c 18th January 2027), and Aerowaves' Startup Forum and Spring Forward Festival (Limerick, April 2027)
- Ability to travel internationally as part of the professional development strand
- Comfortable working on a freelance basis and responsible for own tax and National Insurance contributions

Access information

Access information and further detail about the role are outlined below. This is to provide further clarity on what the role will entail and some factors that may impact the person applying. Dance Umbrella (DU) is committed to making reasonable adjustments and not to disadvantage anyone based on disability or access needs.

Travel

The festival takes place across different venues in London. The Guest Curator will be required to travel to and work across these different sites using public transport. National and international travel will also be required during the year.

High levels of social engagement

During the festival delivery period a large part of your working day will be spent working with and around other people. One of the main responsibilities involves being the first point of contact for the DU festival artists. The Guest Curator will also be collaborating with the staff team, other partner venue teams, volunteers and festival attendees.

Noise and light levels

Working across the different festival venues, the Guest Curator will be exposed to changes in noise and lighting levels, with frequent changes in environment. Some venues have a designated breakout / chillout space.

Working hours and work patterns

Evening and weekend work will be required during the festival period. Early starts and late evenings do take place but working hours are adjusted for suitable breaks in between. The Guest Curator will attend company meals, which take place after performances to celebrate the festival artists.

The Guest Curator will mainly work in the office alongside the Senior Producer, Artistic Director and the Festival Technical Director. However, remote working can take place either from home or at festival venues.

Physical access - Somerset House

The Dance Umbrella office is located in the mid basement of Somerset House. Either a spiral staircase or a lift can be used to reach the mid basement. Please note that the ground outside Somerset House is made of cobblestone. Parking is not available on site.

Gender neutral and accessible facilities

The mid basement has two gendered bathrooms and one accessible facility. The public parts of the Somerset House building have some all gender facilities and some gendered facilities. There are further accessible facilities available throughout the building.

Information session

An information session took place on **29 June 2026**. This was an opportunity to hear from Dance Umbrella's Artistic Director, Freddie Opoku-Addaie, along with colleagues, about DCS and for applicants to ask questions about the advertised Open Call.

If you missed the session and would like to view it, please email KatieT@danceumbrella.co.uk to access the recording.

How to apply

To apply, please submit the following:

- A **CV** (no longer than two sides of A4, with font no smaller than size 11)
- A **supporting statement** (no more than two sides of A4, font size no smaller than 11), outlining your skills and experience, why you are interested in the role, the curatorial ideas or questions you are currently thinking about, and what you would bring to the DU festival programme
- **Two referee contacts**. Please let us know if referees may be contacted in advance of interview.
- The **Equal Opportunities form**, which you complete [here](#).

If you would prefer to submit your supporting statement as an audio or video recording of no more than five minutes, you are welcome to do so. Please send the file as a link.

Email applications to:

KatieT@danceumbrella.co.uk

Subject: APPLICATION - GUEST CURATOR 2027 (DCS)

Deadline for applications: **Monday 13 July 2026, 10.00 BST**

If you have any access requirements or would like to discuss the role before applying, please contact KatieT@danceumbrella.co.uk. We are happy to make reasonable adjustments throughout the process.

Interviews

Interviews will be held in-person at Somerset House (central London) on **Wednesday 29 July 2026**.

Ahead of the interview, Dance Umbrella will share:

- Photos of the interview space
- Photos of the interview panel members
- Interview questions and any task you may need to prepare

We encourage applications from those who identify as Black, Brown or Global Majority, and who are female-identifying or non-binary. This opportunity is part of the Diversifying Curatorial Stewardship programme aimed at addressing underrepresentation in curatorial leadership in dance.