

Dancers' Career Development (DCD): Retraining Grants

Application Information for Independent & Freelance Dancers

ACCESS

If you require this information in another format or need help with your application, please contact the Relationship Management Team at dancers@thedcd.org.uk. We will be happy to respond to your requests and support you with your application.

WHAT ARE RETRAINING GRANTS?

Retraining Grants are for professional freelance or independent dancers from any dance genre. Grants are awarded by DCD's independent Grants Committee, within **an annual Retraining Grant Budget** set by DCD's Board. **All funding decisions are at the discretion of the Grants Committee.**

Retraining Grants are available for the purpose of supporting professional dancers to make a successful transition into a post-performance career and/or expand their portfolio career to help prolong their dance career. Their intention is to support dancers to develop and broaden their skillset and qualifications, and sometimes purchase necessary items, which will enable them to work towards a fulfilling and financially secure career during and after their performance career.

ELIGIBILITY

1. To apply for a Retraining Grant you must have been a professional dancer for a minimum of 10 years, with at least 7 years of your career based in the UK. Our definition of a professional dancer is someone whose primary profession is performing, as opposed to a dance teacher or choreographer, for instance.
2. Freelance/independent dancers should be able to demonstrate that you have earned an income as a dancer for a minimum of 16 weeks (on average) each calendar year. These do not need to be consecutive years, for instance if you have had a career break, so long as the above criteria is met.
3. All applications must be made **within 6 years** of ending your professional performance career **or** after receiving your first grant from DCD, **whichever is the soonest.**

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria above, due to injury or illness, you may still be able to apply for funding. In this instance, please book a meeting with one of our Relationship Managers who will be able to advise you.

If you are not eligible for a DCD Retraining Grant due to having a predominantly international career you may be able to apply for support from the international network [IOTPD](#).

WHEN CAN I APPLY?

Prior to any application you will need to arrange a meeting with DCD to check your eligibility and discuss your plans. You will be assigned a Relationship Manager who will become your main point of contact and support you with your application, if needed. You can organise a Teams or phone meeting by emailing dancers@thedcd.org.uk.

You can apply for a grant at any time, but it will only be considered by DCD's Grant Committee when they meet. The Grants Committee currently twice a year. Grant application deadlines for these meetings are publicised via our [website](#), quarterly newsletter and social media channels. Should your application be received after a specified deadline, your application cannot be reviewed until the next Grants Committee meeting.

WHO MAKES THE FUNDING DECISIONS?

DCD's Board of Trustees are responsible for setting the annual Retraining Grants budget. All funds are raised by DCD and the maximum grants awarded can vary, depending on funds available.

DCD's Grants Committee are responsible for assessing and awarding grants, within the budget set by DCD's Board of Trustees. Members of the Committee include current and former-dancers, and other professionals with relevant skills, expertise and experience (DCD staff are not permitted to sit on this committee). Decisions are based on the strength of each application. Your application is anonymised prior to being assessed by the Grants Committee.

All funding decisions are at the discretion of the Grants Committee and funding is not guaranteed under any circumstances. Decisions made by the Grants Committee are final. Unsuccessful applicants can request feedback from their assigned DCD Relationship Manager. If after receiving feedback, a rejected applicant feels they have grounds to appeal, they should do this through the Retraining Grants formal appeal process (see below).

If there are not sufficient funds to award all eligible, strong applications, the committee can 'roll-over' applications to the following meeting to be reconsidered. This can only happen once, so if the applicant is unsuccessful at the subsequent meeting their application will be rejected.

Occasionally, an unsuccessful applicant may be invited to reapply; in this instance you will be given feedback and guidance from your assigned Relationship Manager to strengthen your application prior to resubmission.

Unsuccessful applicants may reapply, but with a different application.

Our appeal procedure is available on request via dancers@thedcd.org.uk.

HOW MUCH CAN I APPLY FOR?

DCD is currently awarding grants of up to £3,000 with a small number of bursaries up to £4,000. Your assigned Relationship Manager will advise you if you are eligible for a bursary during your initial conversation, bookable via dancers@thedcd.org.uk.

We are often unable to fully fund successful applications. The average grant awarded in 2024-2025 was £2,571. Your assigned Relationship Manager can signpost you to other sources of potential funding to make up any shortfall, or if your application is not successful, but we cannot offer any guarantees that these sources will be able to support you.

Independent and freelance dancers can apply for a DCD Retraining Grant up to a maximum of three times (including those that are unsuccessful).

WHAT COSTS CAN I APPLY FOR?

Training costs/course fees are prioritised over other costs.

1. Training Costs

- Courses/tuition costs, including registration and exam fees. Where possible, study should lead to a recognised qualification from an accredited (recognised/approved) provider.
- Your retraining should normally take place in the United Kingdom. However, you may apply for an overseas course if:
 - It is in your country of residence
 - There is no equivalent course in the UK
 - The qualification is recognised in the country in which you will seek work afterwards
 - You can demonstrate that it is more cost effective to study abroad
- Informal or self-directed learning/studying provided dancers demonstrate that the learning will lead to clear measurable outcomes and/or employment opportunities. And they provide evidence of the qualifications, track record and/or experience of the provider, trainer or mentor, with dates of planned 'study'. This can include internships or apprenticeships, shadowing, work experience, mentoring, life coaching and/or workshops (this list is not exhaustive).

DCD Retraining Grants, prioritise learning, training and requalifying. However, the Grants Committee will also **consider** applications for support for:

2. Study Aids e.g. books & materials – up to a maximum of £500

- Textbooks, books on a designated reading list detailed by your course provider or any other associated reading if it can be proven to be directly related to your study.
- Any other study aids/materials that may be required by your course or are directly of benefit.

3. Equipment Costs

Applications for equipment will be considered for applicants undertaking a career that requires basic equipment for them to be able to work as a practitioner in their chosen field. Examples of this are (the list is not exhaustive):

- Photographer (camera equipment, lights, memory cards etc)
- Independent ballet teacher (portable barres, sound system)
- Pilates instructor (mats, exercise ball, reformer, pulley tower)
- Plumber (tool kit)
- Make-up artist (make up kit)
- Personal trainer (weights, portable equipment)
- Computer equipment necessary to support your retraining and career ambition. You must provide clear rationale for technical specifications of equipment. Computers for general use will not be considered.

Please note we do not provide funding towards:

- Capital improvements to a premises/place of work.
- Furniture e.g. desk, office chair.
- Fixed equipment e.g. wall mounted mirrors, barres.
- Clothing, including uniform. Requests for essential protective clothing will be considered but are not a priority for the fund.

4. Maintenance Costs

- Maintenance support costs if you are in full or part time study (only). This can include support with housing costs and essential utilities and services. Please note you will need to provide evidence of costs.
- Accommodation whilst studying to a maximum of £100 per night.

5. Childcare Costs

- Childcare costs, to enable you to attend your retraining programme.

6. Travel Costs

- Second Class/standard travel costs to and from your place of study/training (only) via public transport or mileage – depending on circumstance.
- It is extremely rare for the committee to agree to cover air travel. Flights will only be considered where there is a strong and quantifiable reason.

Please note: all costs will be paid directly to course or service providers where possible. If this is not possible, costs will be reimbursed on receipt of invoice with evidence such as receipts or bills required. We cannot make payments retrospectively to reimburse applicants for courses already undertaken, or costs for any payments made for courses/training started prior to the outcome of your application.

CONDITIONS & RESTRICTIONS

The following list contains all notes and stipulations, as set by the Board of Trustees, to making an application to DCD. Any applications that do not follow this guide will not be considered.

1. A conversation with a DCD Relationship Manager to check your eligibility and discuss your plans, prior to submitting your application, is compulsory. You will be assigned a Relationship Manager who will be your main point of contact and support you with your application if needed.
 - Contact dancers@thedcd.org.uk to arrange an appointment with the DCD Relationship Management Team via Teams or phone.
 - **Initial appointments must take place at least 2-weeks before the grant deadline** so staff can support you to make a considered application. Applicants contacting DCD after this time may not be permitted to apply and will need to wait for the following grant round.
2. Before an application can be approved, complete details of all associated costs will need to be known and submitted on the Budget Template provided by DCD. The Grants Committee **cannot** consider extra costs presented at a later date.
3. Maintenance can only be applied for if undertaking a full or part time course of study.
4. We do not fund anything retrospectively.
5. Successful applicants will have a one-year period to start drawing on their award. If you cannot commence your retraining within 12-months of being granted an award, you may ask for an extension of up to one year. After two-years the funds will be rewritten. In this instance you may reapply for funding at a later stage.
6. Purposes of grants cannot be changed once agreed. If you wish to pursue an alternate retraining programme after an award has been made, you should contact your DCD Relationship Manager to discuss this immediately. You will be required to either complete a request to redirect some/all your grant or if the activity is too different from the original application a new application will need to be submitted for consideration at the next Committee Meeting.
7. Applicants must wait a minimum of 12-months between applications and all awards must be made within 6-years of ending their professional performance career. Returning dancers will need to include a personal progress report and an employer, client or tutor reference, to demonstrate their development since receiving their first award. If they are retraining in a different area, they will need to explain why this is the case.
8. If successful, you must sign and return a Funding Agreement before any monies are released.
9. It is a condition of the funding that all successful awardees submit progress reports to DCD at one, five and ten years. This is collated via a survey to capture the longitudinal impact of our support on your professional development and help us improve our services to dancers

APPLICATION PROCESS

You must make your application using our online system, which you can register for here:

<https://portal.thedcd.org.uk/user/register>

Please find below guidance and a checklist to help you with your application.

Ensure you include:

- 1. A completed [application form](#)** - answers to the questions can be supplied either in written form **or** via uploaded audio files (MP3).via uploaded audio files (MP3)

There are a series of questions to answer regarding your career development to date, your planned career progression and the training you plan to do. Make your answers as clear and as detailed as possible, within the word count outlined or recommended time limit if audio file, for **each question**.

2. Your CV including your dance and other relevant work experience:

- Your CV should demonstrate that you fulfil the eligibility criteria as outlined above.
- The CV should include a **full** performance history with most recent dates first. It should include dates for each job, showing months and years e.g. Jan 2010 – Mar 2010.
- You can also include alternative work experience (that is relevant to your application). Again, please include start/end dates against this information.
- Other non-dance experience need not be included.
- Please include your dance training, school/conservatoire/university attended, dates and qualifications.
- DCD operates spot-checks on contracts based on your CV in order to confirm eligibility, so please ensure your information is as accurate as possible. Inaccurate information may result in your application being withdrawn.

3. Budget (please review guidance and example provided on budget template)

- Use the budget template provided in the following link to produce a detailed budget.
- Once you have created your budget, upload it on the system when requested to do so.
- Remember to list all expected, necessary costs involved with undertaking your retraining.
- If you are applying for equipment costs, please list the equipment, supplier name, cost and remember to include shipping and VAT costs where relevant.
- The Grants Committee may require you to separately provide evidence that you have sought competitive quotes for equipment items in excess of £500.

- If your application involves payments outside the UK via foreign bank transfers or bankers' drafts, the cost of bank charges which DCD would incur to process these payments needs to be included in the amount for which you are applying for funding. Depending on which country the cost may be up to £24 for each international transaction. Please note that international payments take a minimum of three weeks to process.

4. Professional Reference

You will need to find a suitable referee for your application. Please read and complete 'the applicant' section of the reference form prior to sending your reference form to your nominated referee, these should be sent back to DCD via your referee as explained on the reference form. Only references received on the supplied reference form will be accepted.

Download the [reference form](#) here

The reference should be completed by someone in a position to comment on the applicant's suitability for their proposed area of study/retraining, and their existing capabilities and competencies. This may be the applicant's employer, former employer, colleague or tutor.

- You may not provide a reference if you are a friend or member of the applicant's family
- You may not provide a reference if you stand to benefit financially from the outcome of this application or have any other conflict of interest e.g. you are the course provider.

QUESTIONS AND SUPPORT

If you have any further queries or need help with your application, please contact the Relationship Management Team at dancers@thedcd.org.uk. We will be happy to respond to queries and support you with your application.