

# STEP UP '25 OPEN CALL



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DANCE COMPANY

# Step Up Dance Project 2025

## Open Call for Early-Career Dance Professionals

### What is Step Up

Step Up Dance Project is a programme of professional development for recent dance graduates or equivalent early-career dance professionals that is celebrating its **15th anniversary in 2025**. We are looking for **dancers born or resident in Ireland who graduated in 2022 or since then** and who are interested in being part of a paid professional development programme. You're also eligible if your professional dancing career has started since 2022 but you have come through other training routes that didn't involve graduation. This is an opportunity for dancers in the early stages of their professional career. If you are only starting your career or graduating in 2025 you are not eligible. Previous Step Up participants who match the criteria above are eligible to apply again. We're recruiting up to five dancers for this **8-week performance programme**. We welcome dancers from a diversity of backgrounds, lived experience and dance styles who are interested in developing their skill in this contemporary dance frame.

Step Up wants to connect recent graduates to the range of practices and practitioners that make up Ireland's dance ecology and to the international networks of dance in which we operate. **Curated by Fearghus Ó Conchúir and Mary Wycherley and delivered under the guidance of Rehearsal Director, Lucia Kickham**, the programme is focused on developing artists as performers while recognising the creativity necessary in the performer's work.

Dance artists rely on a range of skills including technical competence, improvisational facility, the ability to process input from a variety of creative stimuli, alongside a capacity to perform and engage with audiences and publics in different circumstances. We're hoping you'll come with some of those skills and with an appetite to develop them further.



We are delighted to offer an extended programme this year as part of the 15th edition of the Step Up Project. Dancers will have the chance to train with some of the most renowned names in the contemporary Irish dance scene for a full eight weeks. These will be divided into two sections: a performance in context project lasting six weeks and a laboratory in partnership with Ireland's National Dance Company, Luail, for two weeks.

## Creation and performance of new choreography

Dancers will get the chance to participate in a Performance in Context project with choreographer Philip Connaughton to develop a new work in Limerick.

**Philip Connaughton** is a Dublin-based choreographer whose practice is distinguished by a deep commitment to collaboration and artistic experimentation. His work navigates the intersections of dance, theatre and visual art, often challenging conventional boundaries of form and presentation. Since founding Company Philip Connaughton in 2014, his body of work has explored a rich diversity of forms, from large-scale ensemble pieces to intimate collaborations. These works often blend dance with theatre, opera and visual art, while exploring deeply personal and societal themes.

Philip is looking forward to having the opportunity to collaborate and engage with the artists involved in this year's Step Up Project, which he sees as a vital contributor to the expansion of Ireland's creative landscape.

## Repertoire masterclasses and guest teachers

Masterclasses with Finola Cronin and Mufutau Yussuf will give insights into the repertoire of celebrated European dance works. Regular guest teachers will provide the dancers with a range physical practices as well as a chance to hear from dance artists working in Ireland about how they sustain their practice.



**Finola Cronin** is a dance artist & lecturer in Theatre Studies at UCD. Finola danced in Germany with Vivienne Newport in TAT Frankfurt, and with Pina Bausch in Wuppertal, and with many other choreographers including Raimund Hoghe in Düsseldorf and the Liz Roche Company in Dublin.

**Mufutau (Junior) Yusuf** is a Nigerian/Irish performer based between Dublin and Brussels. Trained mainly in dance and physical theatre, Mufutau regularly works with Brussels company Ultima Vez and is known to Irish artists and audiences through his work with Irish choreographer John Scott's Irish Modern Dance Theatre and through his own choreography.

## Further professional development

Independent dance artists often have to make their own opportunities, manage their careers and build networks. The Personal Development aspect of the Step Up programme aims to give participants opportunities and a road map for taking the next steps in their career path. In 2025, we are pleased to offer valuable opportunities including both networking and performance engagements. These will feature a Studio Sharing of the Step Up Production at Dance House, Dance Ireland, providing a platform for artists to showcase their performance skills. In addition, a networking event will be held to foster connections and collaboration opportunities for Step Up dancers.

**Career skills**-workshops designed to support early-career dancers in the practicalities of making a career in dance. Topics will include Safe to Create Bystander Training, self-employment, contracts, application writing, CV development.

**Coaching** – each participant will receive sessions with a personal coach.

## Luail International Dance and Composition Intensive

As part of the 15th edition of the Step Up Project, Step Up dancers will have a two-week placement on **Luail's Moving in Collaboration International Intensive at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance**. For the two weeks that the Step Up dancers will be at the University of Limerick, they will have the chance to delve deeper into the company's approaches to composition and choreography. This opportunity is possible thanks to a new partnership with Luail, Ireland's National Dance Company.



## Key dates

Monday 25 November 2024 **Application deadline**

W/c 25 November 2024 **Applicants notified**

Thursday 12 December 2024 **Audition at Dance Limerick**

Monday 9 June - Saturday 9 August 2025 **Training / performance period**

## Terms & conditions

Rehearsals will take place in Limerick 10 am – 6 pm Monday to Friday for the duration of the training period (Monday 9 June to Saturday 9 August, both included). Some weekend dates may be required and will be scheduled in advance.

Five selected dancers will receive a **weekly fee of €650 over 8 weeks**, along with accommodation for the period of Sunday 8 June to Saturday 3 August. Participants will be responsible for their own travel costs to and from Limerick, and for incidental travel while in Limerick. **Participants must be available on an exclusive basis to take advantage of the full programme.**

## Applications

Please send your CV and a personal statement outlining your motivation to be involved in Step Up along with a weblink to a 1-minute improvisation to [stepupdanceproject@gmail.com](mailto:stepupdanceproject@gmail.com) with 'Step Up Application' in the subject line. Your personal statement can be written (100 words max.) or in video form (1 minute max. submitted as a weblink).

Applications should be submitted in one pdf, as an email attachment, to include cv, personal statement and weblink. Please note individual video files and documents linked to google drive cannot be accepted.

**The closing date for receipt of applications is Monday 25 November at 12 pm IST.**





## Accessibility

The programme is committed to equality of opportunity, supports and encourages under-represented groups and values diversity. We guarantee an interview to any dancer with a disability whose application meets the minimum criteria for the opportunity. To be eligible for the guaranteed interview, you must have a disability or long-term health condition which puts you at a significant disadvantage in either obtaining or keeping jobs. The disability could be physical, sensory or mental and expected to last for at least 12 months. You do not have to be registered as a disabled person to apply under this scheme.

If you have additional access needs, please get in touch with us at [stepupdanceproject@gmail.com](mailto:stepupdanceproject@gmail.com)

*Step Up Dance Project is a partnership project between the Arts Council, Dance Limerick, the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick and Dance Ireland. Step Up's participation in the International Dance and Music Composition Laboratory is possible thanks a partnership with Luail, Ireland's National Dance Company.*

