

FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION

UK speaker application guidance

8–9 July 2027
Wellington College,UK

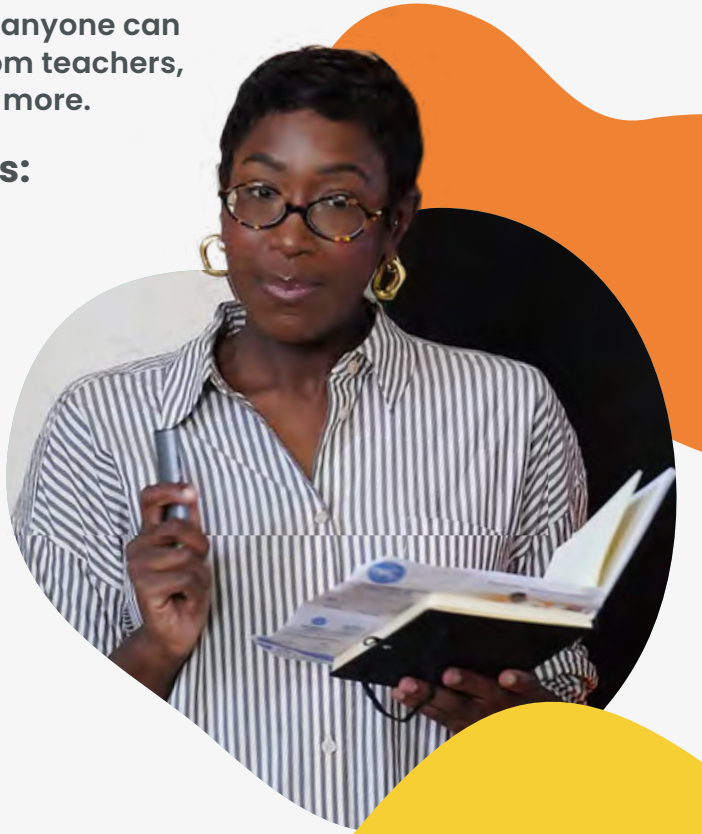
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Application routes

Our mission is to provide an inclusive platform for sharing innovative ideas, fostering meaningful discussions, and promoting professional growth in a vibrant, relaxed atmosphere. We have an open application process: anyone can apply to speak. We typically receive applications from teachers, leaders, researchers, policy experts, and a whole lot more.

For 2027 we have three application routes:



1

Educator applications:

This route is for full-length sessions with the submitting speaker being employed by a school, college, university, early years setting, or registered training provider. For sessions on governance the applicant may be a governor/ trustee of one of the above. (please note that the same requirement does not apply to co-speakers.)

2

Open applications:

This route is for anyone else (e.g. charities, consultants, commercial organisations, public sector) wishing to deliver a full-length session at Festival.



3

Short session applications:

This route is for short sessions (10-20 mins) with the submitting speaker being employed by a school, college, university, early years setting

Who will be in the audience?

Primarily, our audience is made up of people working in UK schools and colleges, plus a growing audience from early years and universities. We also attract attendees from international schools, the wider world of education, such as civil service, policy, research, and education suppliers.



Accessible application process

If you need to submit an application in an alternative format – e.g. video or audio, please contact us at **foe@educationscape.com**



Full-length applications

What is the recommended number of speakers per session?

Many sessions will be delivered by one speaker, but it may make sense to have multiple speakers to deliver the content effectively – for example, you may have a researcher explaining some research, paired with a classroom practitioner talking about how to put it into practice.

We allow a maximum of four speakers, which means that for a panel discussion, you would likely designate a chair plus three panellists. Please ensure that the role of each speaker is clear in your application – you can use the "Additional information" section if necessary.

What format should sessions take?

The sessions are 45 minutes long (with at least 15 minutes between sessions to move between venues).

You can deliver a traditional presentation, or a more interactive session. For example, you could ask the audience to participate in polls, turn and talk, do role plays, or even move around the room in a drama or dance session. You can leave time for a Q&A, and venue managers can support with roving microphones. You might even want to propose something that is majority audience-driven, such as a structured networking session.

It might help to think about the audience experience, such as their prior knowledge, potential for engagement, and learning objectives, as you might when preparing a session for students.

What will the venue be like?

Our venues are a mix of classrooms, tents, and large rooms at Wellington College, with seated capacity ranging from 24 to 200. Many will have a stage at the front. All have a screen and microphones. Most venues have the audience sitting in rows but there are some exceptions – if your session requires a particular set-up, please mention this in the "Additional information" section.

We aim to confirm allocation of venues at least two weeks in advance of the Festival.

When will my session(s) be?

We will contact you in advance of the Festival to let you know which day and time has been allocated for your session. If a speaker is only available on a specific day, please let us know in your application.









Full-length applications

What makes a good session title?

Titles should be clear and concise; we recommend a length of 3-12 words. Remember that Festival-goers will be browsing over 250 sessions; you will want your title to be enticing, and easy to understand at a glance.



Here are some examples of clear titles:

- Modelling emotionally intelligent leadership
- 10 ways to improve writing in your classroom
- Retrieval practice…but better!
- How to lead change teachers won't roll their eyes at
- What works for working-class kids?
- Belonging. Meeting the needs of the many and the needs of the one.
- Leading AI in schools and colleges - what have we learnt?

When designing your session, please aim to make it relevant and accessible to the broadest possible audience, given your area of expertise. For example:

Narrow scope	Target audience	Broader scope	Target audience
Best practice cases of dyslexia support in schools	School teachers and SENCOs	Supporting students with dyslexia – best practice examples	School and college teachers and SENCO
How to design a secondary history curriculum across a trust	Heads of history or secondary curriculum leads working in trusts	Curriculum design principles, using history as an example	Curriculum leads or heads of any subject in any setting

Full-length applications

How to describe your session

You don't need to list everything you will cover, but do give attendees enough of a sense of what the session will be about and who it is relevant to (e.g. role, phase, or setting), to help them decide whether it is likely to be a good fit. Knowing roughly what the takeaways will be, and any interactive elements, are also popular with attendees.



We have a 700-character limit, but don't feel you have to use it all up. Here are two examples of session descriptions of different lengths:

What does research tell us about what makes high-quality questioning, and how can teachers apply key messages in their lessons to become 'questioning experts'? This session will explore both these topics and offer opportunities to practice what you've learned. Expect to leave with practical strategies to implement in classrooms at all phases.
[345 characters]

We've all experienced that moment - another new initiative arrives, and it looks surprisingly like something we tried years ago under a different name. This session will explore why educational change often feels like Groundhog Day. You'll hear real examples of settings that broke free from repetitive cycles to create meaningful change. With time for peer discussion, we will explore how to distinguish between superficial rebranding and genuine progress, showing how to work with your setting's institutional memory rather than against it. Perfect for leaders seeking to build on what already works while embracing real improvement.
[636 characters]



Full-length applications

Choosing your session topic

Below is the list of content categories we use in the Festival programme:

- Accountability & Governance
- AI & Ed Tech
- Attendance & Belonging
- Arts & Humanities
- Business & Operations
- Careers
- Curriculum & Assessment
- Disadvantage & Social mobility
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Early years & Primary
- FE, Apprenticeships & Skills
- Flourishing
- Leadership
- Literacy, Oracy & English
- Recruitment & Staff Wellbeing
- Safeguarding & PSHE
- SEND, Specialist & AP
- STEM
- Teacher Training & Development
- Teaching & Learning

Topic of session	Suggested 'main session topic'(s)
Weaving sustainability throughout the curriculum	Curriculum & Assessment
Teaching the NEW Natural History GCSE	STEM
How to make your school more environmentally sustainable	Business & Operations
Staff mental health	Recruitment & Staff Wellbeing
Student mental health	Attendance & Belonging Safeguarding & PSHE
Whole-school wellbeing culture	Flourishing

Please do not worry too much about choosing the correct topic! We have the ability to change it on our end if we feel there is a better fit.

Short session applications

Who can apply to speak?

This route is aimed principally at those currently working in schools, colleges, universities, and early years settings. It is also open to governors or trustees of the above.

We invite applications from one or two speakers; you are welcome to pair up with a colleague, a young person, or with someone who does not work in an education setting.



What will the venue be like?

The venue for short-form sessions in 2027 is still to be confirmed, but we will aim to create a relaxed vibe.

Last year the venue was the *Pavilion Pop-Up*. Inspired by Speakers' Corner, speakers stood on the steps of the cricket pavilion with a single microphone, and the audience sat in deckchairs on the grass.

When will my session(s) be?

We will contact you in advance of the Festival to let you know which day and time has been allocated for your session. If a speaker is only available on a specific day, please let us know in your application.



Pavilion Pop-Up venue in July 2026

Short-session applications

Theme and format

What format should my presentation take?

Each Festival session is 45 minutes long. For short-form content, we will schedule between two and four speakers per session. This means you will be allocated somewhere between 10 and 20 minutes (we will confirm this with you well in advance of the Festival).

Please note that you will not have a screen so will not be able to share a presentation.

You can invite audience participation, but this needs to be within your allotted time. In previous years, speakers have found it easy to engage the audience in discussion in the short-form venue, due to the informal set-up.

What themes can I speak on?

This venue is different to the other Festival venues. Rather than delivering a presentation, it offers the opportunity to share something about your experience with colleagues in a more informal environment. It might help to think about questions such as:

- When have you tried something new and it worked (or failed!)?
- What is something you wish you'd known when you were starting out as a teacher?
- What is a time you feel like you have made a difference?

Young people might want to think about:

- What is one thing you think all teachers should know more about?
- What would have made your time easier at school?
- Is there a time a teacher really made a difference for you?

We want all speakers to feel supported – especially those who are new to public speaking. Each session will have one of our Advisory Board members as the MC. You will be put in contact with the session MC in advance of Festival, and can set up a call with them if you like.



Describing your session

What should I write as my session title?

Titles should give an overview of your subject matter, and should be easy to understand at a glance. We recommend a length of 3-12 words. For example:

- Navigating staffroom politics
- The student that changed my career
- What I learned from my first year as Head of Department
- How our school changed our approach to inclusion

For young people:

- Here's the influencer all teachers should know about – and why
- Why phone bans in school are a good/bad idea
- Why teachers need to stop using AI
- 3 things the best teachers do

Session description

Unlike the full-length sessions, the description won't be used in full for attendees if your application is successful. The main purpose is to give the judges a sense of what you'd like to share with Festival-goers. It doesn't have to be long, for example:

> *As a new head of year, I went into the job bursting with ideas about what to do differently. By the end of the year I'd realised change management wasn't that easy! I want to share what I learned on my journey.*

> *As a student, I often struggled to fit in socially at school. I want to share what the SENDco at my college did differently that really helped.*

> *I'd like to share the story of how we changed our approach to attendance and it shifted the culture in our primary school.*

Why are you asking about my motivation to apply to Festival?

This section gives you the chance to tell the judges as much or as little as you like about yourself and why you want to share your story. It can be very straightforward, for example:

- I feel passionately about the way my college looks after students and I want to share it with others.
- I want others to learn from my experience as an early career teacher.
- I've never done public speaking and I want to build my confidence.



Young people's participation

We recognise the value of foregrounding young people's voices and welcome their participation in sessions. Please note that any applications on behalf of under 18s must be submitted by a responsible adult, with a commitment to provide an adult chaperone for the young person at all times on site.



Timeline at a glance

- **1 Sept 2026:** Applications open
- **8 Nov 2026:** Applications close
- **15 Jan 2027:** Applicants notified of outcome
- **1 Feb 2027:** List of sessions published
- **1 April 2027:** Festival schedule published

Any other tips?

If you are part of the wider education sector (e.g. a charity or consultant) you may want to consider co-presenting with someone currently working in an education setting, to ensure your session is as relatable as possible to the audience.

If you are proposing a panel discussion, please keep in mind that these tend to work best when they feature a broad range of opinions, knowledge, and lived experience of the topic under discussion.

We ask that each person speak in a maximum of two sessions over the two days of Festival. If you are approached to join a panel and you are already speaking in two sessions, please consider suggesting a colleague qualified in the subject matter who could take your place.

Some elements of this application are marked as "optional". You will not be penalised for leaving "optional" sections blank.



For anything that is still not clear, please contact our Deputy Festival Director, Cath Bansal, on catherine.bansal@educationscape.com

We look forward to receiving your application!





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