



FESTIVAL OF EDUCATION

Festival of Education: Short-session application guidance

Last updated: August 2026

This guidance is aimed at anyone wanting to deliver a short session at the 2027 UK Festival of Education. Our new, short-session venue is designed as an informal, inclusive environment that feels supportive for all, including those with no previous experience of public speaking.

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. 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.

Who will be in the audience?

Festival attendees mainly work in schools and colleges, as well as early years settings, universities, the public sector, and education-related charities, businesses, and organisations.

What will the venue be like?



Pavilion Pop-Up venue in July 2026

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.



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.

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

How to describe your session

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 to share a story from my school experience that I think could help make teachers better.
- ✓ 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.

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.



Timeline at a glance

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

Young people's participation

We recognise the value of foregrounding young people's voices and welcome their participation in sessions. If you are an organisation supporting a young person to speak about their experience in an education setting, but are not yourself employed by an education setting, please email catherine.bansal@educationscape.com for advice on how to complete the application.

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

Note: 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!

If you are a commercial entity who would like to find out more about offering sessions at the Festival, please contact our Director of Partnerships, Adele Kilby, at adele.kilby@educationscape.com