

**Audition Guidelines**

**How to apply**

Apply using the online application form on the UYO website ([www.uyo.org.uk/howtojoin)](http://www.uyo.org.uk/howtojoin)

A non-refundable audition registration fee of £25 is required before an audition can be scheduled. Payments can be made online through the UYO website.

**CRITERIA**

**Age**

Applicants must be aged between 14 & 23 on 5th August 2026.

**Standard**

Applicants must be of a standard equivalent to at least ABRSM Grade 7.

**Nationality**

Applicants will be accepted from musicians who:

* Were born in Northern Ireland
* Live in Northern Ireland
* Are in full-time study in Northern Ireland (at least 12 hours per week)
* Have family ties to Northern Ireland but live elsewhere

**Preference will be given to musicians who fulfil the above criteria however consideration will be given to other applicants to ensure the necessary orchestral balance and preserve the excellence and continuing high standards of the Ulster Youth Orchestra.**

Qualifications gained or previous membership of UYO do not guarantee success at audition - all candidates must re-apply for a place in the Orchestra and are assessed on their performance on the day.

Places are allocated based on the numbers required for the 2026 repertoire.

**The audition**

Auditions will be live and in person only and on these dates:

* Friday 19th December 2025 (Strabane)
* Saturday 20th December 2025 (Belfast)
* Sunday 21st December 2025 (Belfast)

We will do our best to accommodate you on the day of your choice however due to the complexities of the audition schedule it may not always be possible.

**What to play**

Candidates will be required to play **two contrasting pieces** of their own choice and a selection of prepared orchestral excerpts.

Your excerpts will be available to download from the website **after** the closing date of Friday 7th November 2025.

Own choicepieces can be small sections taken from longer pieces and don’t have to be the start of movements – select an appropriate part of the piece that will show the panel your capabilities.

Remember that we are looking for orchestral players, so select music that highlights your musicianship as well as your technical ability. Don’t worry if the panel stop you before you finish your pieces. The pieces should be a combined **length of 6-8 minutes.**

You will be asked to prepare a selection of **orchestral extracts** in advance of your audition.

* Listen to the pieces that the extracts are taken from.
* Think about their orchestral context.
* Think about appropriate speeds, dynamics and phrasing.
* Be prepared to play them in different ways, as directed by the panel.

**Auditions are strictly unaccompanied.**

**Percussion**

Percussion candidates are asked to play two contrasting pieces – one on xylophone and one on either snare drums **or** timpani.

**The panel** (all candidates)

The UYO strives to ensure panels are balanced, where possible, by gender and community background and that there are no known conflicts of interest between panel and candidate e.g. family or student/teacher connections.

**Late Auditions**

Occasionally we have vacancies for certain instruments at other times of the year. These will be advertised via our website and social media.

**Results**

We aim to release your results within four weeks of your audition.

**Reserve list**

A reserve list of those candidates who met the required standard will be created if the number of applicants exceeds the number of places available.

**Feedback**

Feedback is not offered automatically due to the number of candidates who audition however can be requested by emailing manager@uyo.org.uk

If you are not chosen this time, we hope you will continue practising and enjoying your music and apply again next year. It will not be possible to repeat your audition for this year if you are unsuccessful – you will only have one chance to audition.

**The decision of the UYO audition panel members in the choice of players is final.**

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Fees**

Cost for 2026 membership is £995. This represents less than 50% of the true cost per member and the remainder is subsidised by the Ulster Youth Orchestra.

This year’s membership fees cover return group flights from Dublin to Berlin, 10 nights' accommodation in Berlin, free entry to all our activities and opportunities during the year and all meals, tutoring and transport to social and concert venues during the residential course and concert period.

**Help with fees**

Full bursaries are available for under 18s in receipt of free school meals thanks to the Leverhulme Trust.

There is also a limited bursary fund available for all other musicians who are in genuine financial need however we expect that you apply to your local council, school, college, local business or one of the many Trusts and Foundations that offer student bursaries before applying to the UYO Bursary Fund.

Email manager@uyo.org.uk for further details of both schemes.

**Commitment**

We expect participants to be available for **all course and concert dates** and commit to the orchestra and their fellow musicians however if you do have any problems with the dates, it is important that you **get in touch at your earliest convenience.**

Participants may **not** be excused for one of the following reasons:

* They have chosen to attend another course or activity knowing or could have reasonably expected to know that it will clash with a UYO course **with no mention to UYO.**
* Their family has booked a holiday
* They have booked a social activity or event that clashes with a UYO course

2026 Schedule:

5th August 2026 \*Fly Dublin to Berlin

6th August 2026 Course begins

12th August 2026 Concert Konzerthaus, Berlin

13th & 14th August Sightseeing/time off in Berlin

15th August 2026 \*Fly Berlin to Dublin

16th August 2026 Concert Ulster Hall, Belfast

\*Seats on both flights are already held for the orchestra and are non-refundable therefore if you choose not to fly with the group **you will be liable for any extra costs incurred by UYO.**

NB: Due to the disruption caused by absences, if you are not available for the full course **you will forfeit your role as section leader/leader of the orchestra** in favour of someone who is able to attend in full.

**POLICIES**

**GDPR**

We ensure all application and bursary forms received will be kept electronically and physically safe. Application forms from all candidates will be securely disposed of 12 months after the application deadline. Bursary forms will be securely disposed of 12 months after the completion of the funders’ reports.

**Disability Policy**

The Ulster Youth Orchestra welcomes applications from disabled young musicians who satisfy the usual criteria for application to audition. A musician who wins a place in the orchestra will not be omitted because of that disability. The orchestra will use its best endeavours to ensure that a disabled member of the orchestra can take as full a part as possible in all its activities: not just participation in performances, but in social activities also.

**Complaints Policy**

A copy of our complaints policy is available upon request.

**Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk**

A copy of our Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk Policy is available on our website.