

# EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY BALLROOM DANCING SOCIETY

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## Team Guide

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# Welcome to the Edinburgh University Dance-sport Team!

Competitions are one of the most exciting and rewarding aspects of Ballroom and Latin American dancing, and they're a great way to put all that practice to good use!

This guide will tell you everything you need to know about competitive dancesport. If you have any other questions, don't hesitate to contact the Team Captain, who will be happy to help!

## How Competitions Work

The majority of the competitions we attend are part of the University Circuit. There are 2 types of competitions on the University Circuit, Friendlies and Varsities. These are run the same, with one exception; there are no ex-student categories at Friendly competitions allowing them to join in whichever category matches their level.

University Varsity competitions are organised into 6 different categories based on ability.

These are:

- Beginner
- Novice
- Intermediate
- Advanced
- Ex-Student Novice
- Ex-Student

## **Beginners, Novice, and Ex-Student Novice**

### Beginners

To compete at Beginner, you must have started Ballroom classes after the Inter Varsity Dance Competition (Blackpool Competition) of the previous academic year, usually held in late February/early March. Beginners compete in Waltz, Quickstep, Cha Cha and Jive. These are 4 separate competitions meaning you have 4 chances of progressing through the rounds.

### Novice and Ex-Student Novice

After an academic year of learning to dance, competitors move into the Novice category. Once in Novice, competitors are then free to move up through the sections as they wish. Novices compete in Standard 2 dance (Waltz, Quickstep) and Latin 2 dance (Cha Cha, Jive). So unlike beginners, your Standard and Latin are judged as one category each rather than individual dances.

### Restricted Steps

Both the Beginner and Novice events are restricted step events. This means that competitors in these events can only dance certain steps as specified by the BDC syllabus. For this reason it is better to stick to the routines and figures taught by Chris in the beginners and novice classes as these will all be from the syllabus. For further information on step restrictions ask the team captain.

## **Intermediate, Advanced, and Ex-Student**

The number of dances in the following categories may change depending on the competition, but in general will be as follows.

### Intermediate

Intermediate dancers compete in Standard 3 dance and Latin 3 dance events. You will always be asked to dance Waltz, Quickstep, Cha Cha and Jive, but the final dance will vary from year to year. For this year's NUDC and IVDC

the additional intermediate dances are Tango and Rumba.

#### Advanced

Advanced dancers compete in Standard 4 dance and Latin 4 dance events. Once again, you will always be asked to dance, Waltz, Quickstep, Cha Cha and Jive, but the final 2 dances will vary from year to year. For this year's NUDC and IVDC the dances are Tango, Viennese Waltz, Rumba and Paso.

#### Ex-Student

Competitors in the Ex-Student Category compete in Standard 5 dance and Latin 5 dance competitions, meaning they will be dancing all the dances.

There are no dress or step restrictions in these categories.

### **Progression Through Rounds**

In all the categories, how you progress through the rounds is the same. Each Judge will note down the numbers of the couples they wish to progress through in each dance. These numbers are then counted and the top couples progress to the next round where this process is repeated until they get to the final (usually 6 couples). For the final, each judge will rank the finalists first to sixth in each dance and the winner will be the couple with the best average placing.

### **Other Events**

Other events that are held at University competitions are Same Sex, Team Match, Open, Sequence, Offbeat, Rock and Roll (acro and non-acro) and Salsa.

#### Same Sex

This category can vary competition to competition, though one thing remains the same across them all, as the name suggests entrants must be made

up of a partnership that identify as the same gender.

#### Team Match

The team match is danced across Waltz, Cha, Quickstep and Jive (usually in that order) with each couple dancing one of the four dances (W, C, Q or J). The team is considered as a whole and the competition is marked as though it were a 4-dance with team being recalled as a whole. The first round of the competition acts as a qualifying round and splits the teams into two divisions. These two divisions are then run as separate competitions.

#### Open

At many competitions there are categories listed as Open. These can range from 1 dance competitions to 5 dance competitions. In this instance, Open means anyone can enter, students and ex-students of all levels.

#### Sequence

Sequence dances are a set of steps that are danced by everyone in the same order. Progression through the rounds works the same as other categories with the same dance being danced in each round.

#### Offbeat

This is a group dance that is danced at NUDC and IVDC, these dances can be made up of any form of dance except ballroom and latin dancing. This is not danced as call back to rounds and only danced once with judges ranking each group.

#### Rock and Roll/Salsa

There are two forms of rock and roll dancing, acrobatic rock and roll and non-acrobatic. Both of these and Salsa are danced in rounds like other categories with the same ballroom judges marking the categories.

## Open Competitions

In addition to University competitions, EUBDS also attend some open circuit competitions. These are danced in rounds like the university competitions with similar categories, Beginner, Novice, Intermediate, PreAm and Amateur. PreAm and Amateur are equivalent to Advanced and Ex Student at university competitions. Dances and dress code do vary across Open Circuit competitions, but the one thing they do have in common is Beginner and Novice are restricted step categories.

## Attire

Every competition organiser has their own set of dress restrictions, so if you are heading to a competition, one of the first things you should do is double check these with your Head of Attire or Team Captain!

## Restricted Dress

In most cases, beginner and novice categories (and sometime intermediate too) are restricted dress categories. This means there are rules about what you can and cannot wear to dance. Each competition will have its own set of specific rules, but a good guide is:

- No tailsuits or dinner jackets
- No glitter, sequins or stoning
- No fringe or floats
- No frills or ruffles
- Nothing tailormade

We would recommend:

### Gents

1. Plain black trousers

2. A dress shirt in black or white for either ballroom or latin – this should not be a specially-made ballroom shirt
3. A plain single-colour turtle neck or t-shirt for latin
4. You may choose to wear a waistcoat, tie, bow tie, belt, braces or cummerbund for ballroom

### Ladies

1. A plain skirt without crinoline/wiring or satin binding. For ballroom, this should typically be below knee-length, and for latin typically above knee-length.
2. A single colour practice wear top or leotard without floats, fringe or bat-wings.

Where the partnership is a same-sex or reverse-role partnership, you may choose at your discretion whether you wish to follow the male or female dress restrictions.

In most cases, shoes, accessories and jewellery are allowed to have sparkle, but please double check with Head of Attire or Team Captain before a comp to check this is the case

## **Open Dress**

Where there are no dress restrictions in place (this is typically the case for most competitions at intermediate level and above), then the above restrictions do not apply. You can wear all the sparkle, fringe and frills you like!

## **Shoes**

Ballroom and Latin shoes differ from normal shoes as they have suede soles. These help as they reduce friction and help you glide across the floor. If you are looking to compete it is worth investing in dance shoes.

# Hair and Makeup

## Gents

Hair should normally be slicked back neatly with gel and set with hairspray. Make-up is normally not applicable for gentlemen, however you may wish to wear light makeup such as concealer and powder.

## Ladies

Long hair should always be tied up, preferably in a bun, however low pony-tails for latin are also acceptable (as long as it doesn't whack your partner in the face!). You may also use quiffs, plaits, or other ways to add volume and texture - as long as everything is pinned and sprayed in place! Sparkly hair-pieces and stones can also be used for decoration. Your hair should be able to stay in place for the whole day, withstanding all your twists and turns, so lots of pins and hairspray will be required!

Ballroom makeup will be similar to stage makeup, as you will need to be able to be noticed from a distance - big eyes, bright lips, and and some contouring/highlighting are recommended! You can experiment with different looks and colours, and some glitter will also never be a bad thing.

As well as some fancy hair and makeup, it is also common practice to tan, as this will stop you looking washed out under the bright lights of the dance floor.

If you do not want to wear lots of makeup or fake tan, this is perfectly alright also - the most important thing is that you are comfortable!

## What Will It Be Like?

A typical university competition will see the team travel down to the competition by bus. We would leave on the Friday night, for a Saturday competition, and stay overnight. The team would be allocated rooms and share with other dancers of the same gender.



The morning of the competition, you should make sure you have a good breakfast to set yourself up for the rest of the day. We would then get on the bus and go to the competition venue. Ballroom is normally in the morning of the competition, with Latin in the afternoon, and Team Match in the evening. After the competition is finished, we will travel back to Edinburgh during the night.

Throughout the competition, shouting and cheering on your teammates is highly encouraged. You can choose to shout out their number or their names. It can be a real boost to a couple hearing they are being supported from the sidelines.

After a competition, results and marks are posted online. These can be posted on a couple of websites but the Team Captain will post the link to the competition facebook page once they have been published.

## What I Wish I knew

Some quotes from experienced members saying what they wish they knew about competitions as a beginner.

- “Care about the dancing, not about the results.”
- “It’s a very opinionated sport - your results can vary quite a lot from comp to comp. Some judges will love you, but unfortunately some just won’t!”
- “How much waiting around there would be on a comp day, and to be prepared for it.”
- “How addictive competing can be!”
- “Keep choreography simple - get the body positions right, and ideally spend a few months practicing rather than a few weeks.”
- “If you think you’re smiling enough, you’re not. Smile more!”
- “How I should have done hair and makeup for the day. Also all about floorcraft - how to walk on and off the floor, and what to do if you

bump into another couple on the floor.”

- “The bus always breaks. . .”
- “None of that really matters - you’ll enjoy yourself even if you mess up, so relax!