

Dorset County Dance Festival 2026

4. SYLLABUS



Please use the table below and their codes to enter your routines.

Ages are to be taken on 31st August 2025

Solos (Open) - £7.00 per routine

All categories below are AED categories where performers have the opportunity to qualify

6yrs & under						
Classical or Modern Ballet	Narrative / Character	Global Dance	Classical Greek	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Jazz / Modern
1A	2A	3A	3CA	4A	5A	6A
7 & 8yrs						
Classical or Modern Ballet	Narrative / Character	Global Dance & Greek	Classical Greek	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Jazz / Modern
1B	2B	3B	3CB	4B	5B	6B
9 & 10yrs						
Classical or Modern Ballet	Narrative / Character	Global Dance & Greek	Classical Greek	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Jazz / Modern
1C	2C	3C	3CC	4C	5C	6C
TIME LIMIT (MINS)						
1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	2	1.5	1.5

11 & 12yrs								
Classical or Modern Ballet	Narrative / Character		Global Dance	Classical Greek	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Jazz / Modern	Lyrical Modern
1D	2D		3D	3CD	4D	5D	6D	8D
13 & 14yrs								
Classical or Modern Ballet	Narrative / Character	Contemporary	Global Dance	Classical Greek	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Jazz / Modern	Lyrical Modern
1E	2E	7E	3E	3CE	4E	5E	6E	8E
15 yrs +								
Classical or Modern Ballet	Narrative / Character	Contemporary	Global Dance	Classical Greek	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Jazz / Modern	Lyrical Modern
1F	2F	7F	3F	3CF	4F	5F	6F	8F
TIME LIMIT (MINS)								
2	2	2	2	2	2.5	2	2	2

Solos (Novice) - £7.00 per routine

Not an AED category

10yrs & under		
Novice Ballet	Novice Tap	Novice Modern
1NA	5NA	6NA
14yrs & under		
Novice Ballet	Novice Tap	Novice Modern
1NB	5NB	6NB
TIME LIMIT (MINS)		
1.5	1.5	1.5

3&4yrs Solo Performance Section (any genre) - £9.00

Not an AED category

3 & 4yrs
Solo Performance
0A
TIME LIMIT (MINS)
1.5

Interpretive Solos (Improvisation) - £7.00 per routine

Not an AED category

10yrs & under
Interpretive Solo
9A
14yrs & under
Interpretive Solo
9B
21yrs & under
Interpretive Solo
9C

Choreography - £9.00 per routine

Not an AED category

14yrs & under
Choreography
10B
21yrs & under
Choreography
10C
TIME LIMIT (MINS)
3

Duets - £12.00 per routine

All categories below are AED categories where performers have the opportunity to qualify

10yrs & under			
Classical (Ballet, Narrative, Global Dance, Greek)	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Modern
11A	12A	13A	14A
14yrs & under			
Classical (Ballet, Narrative, Contemporary, Global Dance, Greek)	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Modern
11B	12B	13B	14B
21yrs & under			
Classical (Ballet, Narrative, Contemporary, Global Dance, Greek)	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Modern
11C	12C	13C	14C
TIME LIMIT (MINS)			
2.5	3	2.5	2.5

Trios / Quartets- £15.00 per routine

All categories below are AED categories where performers have the opportunity to qualify

10yrs & under			
Classical (Ballet, Narrative, Global Dance, Greek)	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Modern
11D	12D	13D	14D
14yrs & under			
Classical (Ballet, Narrative, Contemporary, Global Dance, Greek)	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Modern
11E	12E	13E	14E
21yrs & under			
Classical (Ballet, Narrative, Contemporary, Global Dance, Greek)	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Modern
11F	12F	13F	14F
TIME LIMIT (MINS)			
2.5	3	2.5	2.5

Groups (5–16 performers) - £25.00 per routine

All categories below are AED categories where performers have the opportunity to qualify.

10yrs & under			
Classical (Ballet, Narrative, Global Dance, Greek)	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Modern
15A	16A	17A	18A
14yrs & under			
Classical (Ballet, Narrative, Contemporary, Global Dance, Greek)	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Modern
15B	16B	17B	18B
21yrs & under			
Classical (Ballet, Narrative, Contemporary, Global Dance, Greek)	Musical Theatre (Song & Dance)	Tap	Modern
15C	16C	17C	18C
TIME LIMIT (MINS)			
3 (groups of 5-10 performers) 4 (groups with 11+ performers)	3.5 (groups of 5-10 performers) 4.5 (groups with 11+ performers)	3 (groups of 5-10 performers) 4 (groups with 11+ performers)	3 (groups of 5-10 performers) 4 (groups with 11+ performers)

Non-Competitive Duets / Trios / Quartets- £12.00 per routine

Not an AED category

Non-Competitive Duets, Trios & Quartets (2-4 performers)	
Classical	Cabaret
19A	20A
TIME LIMIT (MINS)	
2.5	2.5

Non-Competitive Groups- £25.00 per routine

Not an AED category

Non-Competitive Groups (5-16 performers)	
Classical	Cabaret
19B	20B
TIME LIMIT (MINS)	
4	4

GENRE DESCRIPTIONS

Please use the description below if you are unsure as to where your routines should be entered.

Classical or Contemporary Ballet

Classical Ballet should include elements of both adage and allegro. Stylised ballet is a communication of an idea through movement, danced with/without the use of hand props, and could reflect elements such as the Hornpipe, Spanish and Tarantella for example. Soft or pointe shoes must be worn (depending on age and technical proficiency). Contemporary Ballet is a fusion of both classical and modern ballet styles which may or may not be danced with a parallel line of the leg. Choreographers such as Crystal Pite or Wayne McGregor are examples of the type of work we would expect to see in this section, neo-classical work would also be acceptable.

Narrative

In this section you may portray a character, fictional or non-fictional, or you may choose to interpret an animal or an element from nature, a feeling, an emotion or something more abstract. The fundamental element of the performance should always be focused on the storytelling and development of the narrative. Demi-character could be presented within this section.

Contemporary

Breath should inform movement, with weight, swing, suspension, and release applied.

Choreography should explore themes and the use of contraction, extension, and relaxation should be explored along with the use of the spine. The performance should avoid being presentational and dancers should demonstrate they have a deep understanding of what initiates movements and why. The space should be explored in a multi layered way including, levels, planes, and facings.

At its core the work should demonstrate a clear underpinning of recognisable contemporary dance techniques (such as Graham, Cunningham, Horton, Release) which may be amalgamated. However, the choreography should not be a hybrid of modern theatrical dance, which is not contemporary dance in its purest form.

Global Dance

All traditional music, songs, and techniques appropriate to the country of choice are acceptable. Younger competitors are expected to demonstrate traditional performances. Seniors may introduce theatrical performances that are clearly based on a national tradition. The choice for this section is broad and encompasses both traditional folk dances and dances drawn from the rich body of cultural dance practices from around the world.

Classical Greek

Based upon the technique of Ruby Ginner, classical Greek is performed barefoot and is essentially showing the use of opposition and relaxation through the movement which was core to Ginner's work. Dances should reflect the title. Myths, studies from nature and modern-day themes are acceptable, together with the accompaniment of many different genres of music or the spoken word, provided the movements are given their appropriate interpretation and relate to one or more of the seven styles of this technique which are:

- Lyric
- Athletic
- Bacchic
- Pyrrhic
- Choric
- Ritual
- Tragic

The choreography should be based upon the natural movements of the body such as Standing, Walking, Running, Skipping, Leaping, Jumping and Spinning, whilst experiencing the cultural connections to other arts such as Sculpture, Ceramics, Painting, Poetry, and Music. Aspects of the performance should include expression, use of breath and musical understanding. Also demonstrated should be balance, strength & control, relaxation, elevation, and flexibility through the spine.

Musical Theatre

Musical theatre encompasses the 'triple threat' abilities of performers and adjudicators will consider the following aspects:

- Vocal ability and technique.
- Acting through song and connection to the words.
- Acting through dance and/or movement.

The choice of the material should be both suitable in terms of age and cultural identity. Characterisation and believability are integral to the performance, and it is important that the song choice is relevant to the performer. The lyrics are important, and clarity of diction should be thought about. Breath control and pitching are also a key element and need suitable training. The key of the accompaniment should be within the range of the performer and it is permissible to change this to suit the voice type. Dance should not be included for the sake of it and should flow naturally out of the lyrics and characterisation. Pedestrian movement and staging are considered appropriate, and each action should have a clear purpose and intention. Any genre of dance can be utilised, the focus should be that the genre enhances the role that is being played and is in keeping with the character and era of the chosen material. Ensure that the performer understands the context, period, and location of the song and/or musical.

For younger candidates in Pre Junior, A and B sections, it is acceptable for the performers to choose songs that are not necessarily drawn from musical theatre.

THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT FOR THE PERFORMANCE TO CONTAIN 50% SONG AND 50% DANCE.

Tap

Tap encompasses many different styles – often dictated by the choice of accompaniment. The use of the body and/or arm lines and overall performance should work in unity to form a cohesive presentation that is informed by the style of tap that has been utilised. Tap dances should be rhythmic, show clearly defined rhythmic patterns and precision in beating and footwork. There should be variance in the use of tonal quality which may, or may not, be influenced by the accompaniment.

Jazz/Modern

Jazz utilises the underpinning of a clear jazz technique in its presentation. There is plenty of scope for freedom in the style, choice of music and theme, if relevant. The term, theatrical jazz, refers to the fundamental jazz dance techniques which evolved from musical theatre into more contemporary hybrids such as modern dance and which may incorporate influences from contemporary dance. The term Theatre Jazz does not dictate that the source material must be derived from musical theatre and the two should not be confused (although it is clearly permissible to use this style in the genre). Choreography should reflect the rhythms and dynamics of the music, clear sustained technique in turns, kicks and elevated steps and should avoid being solely based on limbering movements. Tricks can be utilised, but should have purpose to the piece, ensure that focus and consideration is given on the linking steps in between to help with flow in the transitions.

Lyrical

Lyrical Jazz allows the dancer to interpret the music and lyrics through movement and encourages a sense of musicality and connection between the dancer and the accompaniment. The use of breath is important and strong technical application will allow for simplicity and space in the presentation. Highlights in the movement should match that of the orchestration/musical arrangement.

Lyrical jazz is a pure interpretation of the music and should therefore show fluidity, resistance, suspension, relaxation, purpose and create physical shapes that are aesthetically pleasing. Vocal or non-vocal music may be utilised, however if interpreting the lyrics, the performance should be consistent throughout. The choreography should have a continuous sense of flow showing breadth, expansion, and release. Whilst the use of floor work is permitted, it should be kept to a minimum. Ask yourself, does the music suggest going to the floor?

Music should be age appropriate and the size of orchestration and emotive content should relate to the age and ability of the dancer.

Acrobatic work is not permitted in lyrical.