

An introduction to competing on the open circuit

EADA, IVDA & the open circuit :

Outside the university circuit there is vast and vibrant community of dancers of all ages, and competitions are held almost every weekend of the year across the country. EADA is the voice of Amateur Competitive dancesport in England and is an organisation which aims to promote dancesport and provide training and support for Amateur dancers. The IVDA is keen that student dancers do not restrict themselves to solely university competitions and do not give up dancing once they graduate and are working with EADA to facilitate the transition between university and open circuit, by providing more information and working with competition organisers to provide "student-friendly" events. This fact-file is designed to give you the information you need to start competing on the open circuit if you have never done so before — it is not as intimidating as it might seem! This document explains how open competitions work, how to become a member of EADA, where to find information on open circuit competitions and other useful details.

Good luck & Happy dancing!

An introduction to the open circuit & EADA :

EADA consists of 4,000 members who compete in Latin American, ballroom, ten-dance, sequence, disco and freestyle. The British National Rock n Roll Federation have also recently affiliated to EADA

Age groups:

Amateur competitions will commonly consist of events in various age grades, as follows: Juveniles (<12yrs); Junior (12-16yrs); Youth (16-19yrs); Sometimes there are Under 21yrs competitions; Adult; and Senior I (Over 35yrs), Senior II (Over 45yrs) and Senior III (Over 50yrs). Some comps may have an under 21 all girl event.

Most students will typically be in the adult category when they graduate, which is further divided up into

1) Beginners 2) Novice 3) Intermediate 4) Pre-Championship/Pre-Amateur 5) Amateur/Championship

Regional clubs:

EADA is also divided up into regional clubs which organise their own practices, socials and competitions and affiliate to EADA each year. These may charge a small annual membership fee:

Avon www.avondanceclub.org.uk
Channel Counties
Guernsey www.danceguernsey.co.uk

Midland Amateur Dancers Club www.madclub.org.uk
Norwest www.norwestada.org
Bedfordshire

Wales and Scotland also run their own amateur associations, but these are much smaller than EADA. Members based in Wales and Scotland are permitted to join EADA.

EADA membership :

In order to compete on the open circuit at any level above beginner, the British Dance Council requires that you become a member of an Amateur Association, which in England is EADA. EADA offer a discounted membership to all those in full time education. Student membership runs on the academic year (i.e. October to September) and costs £15. The usual price is £26 for full membership.

Benefits of membership:

Becoming a member will also mean you receive *InMotion*, EADA's biannual newsletter and *E-Motion*, the quarterly e-newsletter. You will also be entitled to the discounts available for EADA members from major dance retailers (including 10% off DSI, Supadance, Crystal-Clover and Spot Turn Ballroom). You will also need to be a member of EADA if you wish to participate in the annual EADA student training days, which provide students and recent graduates with high quality training at low prices; and if you want to join the Amateur Coaching Scheme which allows you to protect your Amateur status whilst helping your coach to teach. EADA also provides merchandise and personal accident insurance for members—further information about the insurance can be found on EADA's website.

The EADA membership form can be downloaded from:

http://dance104.valuehost.co.uk/Mambo/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=223&Itemid=105

and should be returned with a cheque payable to EADA and a copy of your University card to:

EADA Student Membership, 162 Penwill Way, Paignton, Devon, TQ4 5JW

www.eada.org.uk:

The EADA website is full of information about rules for the open circuit and chart rated events, online calendar, useful links, and there is a specifically designed "Information for IVDA members" section of their site. They also have a forum which is an ideal place to ask questions about open circuit competitions and to search for partners and second hand costumes.



Format of open circuit competitions :

Open competitions take place most weekends across the country — see page 3 for where to find out details of these competitions. The open circuit is for all standards of dancer – events range from beginner, through novice, intermediate and pre-champ to Amateur. These levels are probably slightly higher in standard than University levels — ask your coach for advice if you are not sure. However on the open circuit you can dance in more than one level at most competitions. If you win two comps at beginner level or four comps at novice/intermediate you are required to then move up to the next level. More information on grade progression is given on the EADA website. Some competitions will also have “open” events (typically for all adults competing below Championship level), some may also have all girl events and/or solo events.

Many Sunday competitions will act as qualifiers for either Champions of Tomorrow; Stars of the Future or Britain’s Best (see below) and will offer “all grades” or a “full supporting programme” — these are ideal as a first competition. Unlike university competitions beginners events are typically quite small numbers. Junior and juvenile events typically occur during the morning and adult events during the afternoon, usually ballroom then Latin — promoters usually announce an approximate first round time in advance, but make sure you arrive with sufficient time to register, get changed and warm up.

Keep an eye out for student-friendly events where IVDA are working in conjunction with competition promoters to include a student event or a team match. Details will be posted on www.universitydancesport.com

How to enter:

You need to become a member of a national dancesport Association such as the English Amateur Dancesport Association (See page 1 for details on how to do this). Then just turn up to the competition you want to go to and register at the desk, saying what levels you’d like to compete in. Some events, including Stars and Champions and Amateur National Selection Competitions, will require you to write to the organiser beforehand and register your entry. These may require payment in advance (check with the promoter). Typically though you’ll need to pay an entry fee on the day (usually £10) and show your EADA membership card. Do remember, that if you go on your own you won’t have a team captain with you so you’ll need to organise yourselves. However, the open circuit is not as intimidating as people may think and although there is no team match, there is still a lot of support and shouting from the sidelines.

Rules:

Generally beginner and novice categories have restricted steps (basic syllabus only) and beginners competitions are restricted to lounge wear (not formally defined but typically means plain practice wear or high street clothes with no decoration). However rules can vary between comps (especially at Stars and Champions) so it is worth checking with the competition organiser beforehand if you are unsure. A list of restricted steps can be found on the EADA website. Note that beginners are not defined at all. Some competitions have strict rules against videoing events — check with the organisers.

National Ranking Events (National Selection Competitions):

Higher level dancers may wish to compete in National Ranking Events (NREs), which are used to compile charts which monitor the rankings of the Amateur couples in Ballroom, Latin and Ten-dance. The highest ranked couples are chosen to represent England at the IDSF European and World Championships. NREs are held around the country throughout the year and a calendar of NREs is given on EADA’s website. Points are awarded to couples according to their final position in the events in which they have danced. In ballroom and Latin 4 out of 5 of the NREs are required each year for a ranking and the best 5 results are used; in ten-dance, 2 out of 3 NREs are required per year and the best 3 results count. The top 12 couples in the country are then invited to squad training. If you have questions about the charts contact: charts@eada.org.uk

Stars of the Future, Champions of Tomorrow & Britain’s Best:

These are prestigious events with qualifying rounds during the year

Stars of the Future :	in June at the International Centre, Brentwood, Essex www.brentwood-centre.co.uk organised by Nigel Horrocks www.danceworld-uk.co.uk
Champions of Tomorrow :	in January at the Empress Ballroom, Winter Gardens , Blackpool www.wintergardensblackpool.co.uk organised by Nigel Horrocks www.danceworld-uk.co.uk
Britain’s Best :	in September at the Bournemouth Pavilion www.bic.co.uk organised by Richard Rose & Richard Hopkins www.the2ichards.com

These competitions have the same format as described above, with beginner through to Amateur events. However at these competitions you can only enter one level in each discipline, you can enter different levels in ballroom and Latin. To qualify you must attend a qualifying competition during the year and make the necessary place in the final — you will be given entry forms on the day and you must register in advance. Deadlines for entries are typically about 6 weeks in advance of the competition. Qualification is now possible at some University competitions — see the IVDA website.

Where to find information about open competitions:

IVDA's online events calendar can be found here:

http://dance104.valuehost.co.uk/Mambo/index.php?option=com_events&Itemid=67

EADA list dates of all national ranking events (see page 2) on the charts section of their website as well as on their online calendar: www.eada.org.uk. Competitions may also be announced in the IVDA and EADA forums.

The most comprehensive guide is Dance News, a weekly dance newspaper, www.dance-news.co.uk which gives complete details of comps in the upcoming months. Dance news offer a reduced price 9 month subscription for IVDA members.

Dance Today, a monthly dance magazine, also gives a list of competitions in the next month: www.dance-today.co.uk

Comp promoters:

The following people are organisers of open circuit competitions. Check their own websites for details of their events. Also see the websites of EADA regional clubs (see page 1).

Lynette Boyce: 01202 302905 www.danceniceeasy.com	Tom & Pat Lait: 01473 743079 www.laitdanceclub.co.uk
David Bullen: 01704 566922	John Lamb: 01942 602866 john@lamb89.fsnet.co.uk
Georgina Cairncross: 0208 8506069	Colin Mansbridge: 01489 574367
Martin Cutler: 0121 705 9168 www.nationaldanceevents.co.uk	Michael Pharaoh & Julie Williams: 01554 771543 www.dancekingdom.co.uk/dancesport
John Donaldson: 01375 407423	Margaret Redmond: 01695 574526 margaret.redmond2@btinternet.com
Alan & Maureen Ford: 01782 616036 alanandmaureenford@fsmail.net	Mary Richardson: 0118 926 2869
Brenda Gascoigne: 0121 550 8946	Derek Squires: 01708 740707
Diane Haywood: 0115 9681409	Michael Stylianos & Lorna Lee: 01342 892833 www.thebestcomps.net
Richard Hopkins & Richard Rose: 0121 453 4142 www.the2richards.com	Paul Taylor: 01695 455969
Nigel Horrocks: 0161 728 4939 www.danceworld-uk.co.uk	David Trueman: 01922 496039
Tony Hunnisett: www.dancextras.co.uk	Audrey Willsher: 0151 3394362
John Knight: 01922 635085	Jeanette Winter: 01403 268674
	Philip Wylie: 01895 632143 www.holidayanddance.co.uk

Where comps are held :

Many common venues for competitions are listed here:

Bournemouth International Centre, BH2 5BH	Albany Banqueting Suite, Birmingham B5 4EW
Brentwood International Centre, CM15 9NN	Atherstone Memorial Hall, CV9 1AX
The Colosseum, Watford, WD17 3JN	Bloxwich Leisure Centre, WS3 2DA
Drill Hall, Horsham, RH12 1JF	Bootle Town Hall, L20 7AE
Effingham Park Hotel, RH10 3EU	Brierley Hill Civic Hall, DY5 3DH
Egham Leisure Centre, TW20 8NL	Chepstow Leisure Centre, NP16 5LY
Harold Hill Community Centre, Essex, RM3	Coventry Colliery Sports & Social Club, CV7 8HY
Lakeside, Frimley Green, GU16 6PT	Ellesmore Port Civic Centre, CH65 0BE
Loddon Valley Leisure Centre, RG6 5HZ	Empress Ballroom, Blackpool FY1 1HL
Thistle London Heathrow UB7 0EQ	Floral Hall, Southport PR9 0DZ
Thurrock Civic Centre, Grays, RM17 6SL	Kings Hall, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 1FT
Tylney Ballroom, Leatherhead, KT22 9BL	Kirby Suite, Liverpool L32 8XY
Winter Gardens, Weston-super-mare, BS23 1AJ	St Johns Sports Centre, Worcester WR2 4EL
	Stockport Town Hall, SK1 3XE
	Tower Ballroom, Birmingham B16 9EE
	Winsford Civic Hall, CW7 1AX

Other information you might need :

Where to find a coach?

Dance News provides a very comprehensive list of professionals in the UK and abroad and their contact details. You can also find dance schools listed here:

<http://strictly-ballroom-latin.co.uk/ballroom-teachers/dancing-schools.php>

www.bbc.co.uk/strictlycomedancing/learning/dance.shtml

www.dancesport-uk.com/studios/index.htm

www.dtol.ndirect.co.uk/dtoluk.htm

www.idta.co.uk/schools/index

www.danceschools-uk.co.uk

Dance clubs across the country are also listed in Dance Today.
www.dance-today.co.uk

Where to practise?

Dance schools and EADA regional clubs may run their own weekly practice sessions. These will typically cover all 5 dances and will be restricted to one discipline. Costs for practice sessions vary depending on the venue, the average cost will be £6-£10 per couple. Times may vary in the approach to major competitions so do check.



Amateur Status:

The BDC has strict rules on Amateur status. EADA have a guide on what you are/aren't permitted to do on their website. Please note that if you are demoing as an Amateur you must inform EADA on each occasion and you can only teach as an Amateur (regardless of whether or not you are paid) if you are part of the EADA Coaching Scheme – further details are on EADA's website.

A list of practice sessions around the country can be found here:

<http://strictly-ballroom-latin.co.uk/ballroom-practices/dancing-practices.php>

and internationally on:
www.danceplaza.com

The more well known practice sessions:

LONDON & SOUTH-EAST:

Dance Options, Cheam, SM3 8BU
www.danceoptions.com

Semley Dance Studio, No 1 Semley Rd, Norbury SW16

Wimbledon Dance Academy SW19 7AF
www.danceacademy.org.uk

Starlight Dance Centre: 103-5 High Rd, Streatham SW16 1HJ

Moonglow, 38A Estcourt Rd., Watford WD17 2PS

South Kensington Dance Studios, SW7 2PN
www.kensingtondancestudio.com

ESSEX:

Aveley Public Hall RM15 4DJ
Delmar, Hornchurch RM11 2LG
Chelmsford CM2 7HY
www.chelmsforddance.com

BOURNEMOUTH:

www.danceniceeasy.com

SHEFFIELD: www.city-limits.co.uk

LEICESTER: 118 Dance Studio, LE1 1LB

Where to purchase costumes ?

Everyone competing in pre-champ and above will be in costume. There are numerous websites selling new and second hand costumes. www.universitydancesport.com has a links section which might help.

The major retailers sell new and second hand costumes — some retailers offer IVDA members a discount, check the offers section of the website. Typically new dresses will be over £1000 for a ballroom dress and £500 for latin dress and £400+ for a tailsuit.

There are often second dresses on sale at competitions and many dresses are advertised through the EADA forum and the IVDA website. You can also find costumes on e-bay and there is a group for selling dresses on facebook. You could buy practice wear and then stone it yourself as a cheaper alternative. See the IVDA website for offers available from retailers.

Looking for a partner?

If you can't find a partner within your University club you can place an advert and search for partners on:

the EADA forum, www.eada.org.uk
www.dancesport.uk.com
www.dancesportinfo.net
www.ballroomdancers.com

www.dancesportinfo.net

This website lists most major competition results. Register yourself and your partner. It allows you to search for other couples and competitions.

Helpful contact information :

www.eada.org.uk

www.universitydancesport.com

To request a copy of British Dance Council Rules:

www.british-dance-council.org/web%20pages/Publications.html

Contact opencomps@universitydancesport.com for clarification or feedback on any part of this document, for details of student-friendly open circuit events, or if you want to post details of open comps you know about on IVDA's website.

Rachelle Stretch is EADA's University Liaison Officer and will be happy to answer any questions about EADA and the open circuit:
Universities@eada.org.uk

EADA and IVDA are listed as groups on www.facebook.com so please sign up to meet your fellow dancers.