

BRITISH THEATRE DANCE ASSOCIATION



COMPETITION HANDBOOK JANUARY 2026

**BRITISH THEATRE DANCE ASSOCIATION
GARDEN STREET
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Competition Handbook

BTDA Competitions are open to BTDA members and their schools, Non BTDA schools may enter at the discretion of the organiser. No independent entries will be accepted.

Teachers must send the Competition entry and entry fees en bloc to the organiser of the event by the closing date. All entry forms require the signature of the Parent or Teacher, to abide by the BTDA rules listed in this booklet.

SECTIONS

Solo Sections	Classical	Ballet, Character, Greek, National
	Cabaret	Acrobatic, Lyrical, Modern, Song & Dance, Tap. Contemporary and Solo Song (for Open and Novice competitions only, not applicable for Championships)
Duets and Trios	Classical	Ballet, Character, Greek, National
	Cabaret	Without song – Acrobatic, Contemporary, Lyrical, Modern, Tap With song - Song & Dance
Small Troupes	5 to 9 Performers (Cabaret sections)	
Groups & Troupes	10 or more performers (Cabaret sections) Minimum of 6 performers (Classical Sections) Sections as above plus Production	

Group and Troupe sections will be separated into the subjects only if there are enough entries, therefore teachers should mark the entry forms with the subject.

AGE RATIOS – Competitors age is taken on the first day of the competition

Solos (Excluding Solo Song & Contemporary)

Baby	5 and under
A	6 and 7 years
B	8 and 9 years
C	10 and 11 years
D	12 and 13 years
E	14 and 15 years
F	16 and over

Solo Song & Contemporary

Junior	7 - 10 years
Inter	11 -14 years
Senior	15 years and over

Duets/Trios/Group & Troupes

Baby	up to and including 6 years
Junior	7 - 10 years
Inter	11 - 14 years
Senior	15 - 21 years
Adult	22 years and over (Groups and Troupes only)

Championships

Competitors should enter the appropriate age group according to their age at the National Championship finals and enter with a view to compete in the National Finals.

Competitors must be in full time education at the Championship Finals to enter a heat.

Junior	8 - 11 years -Students must be 8 years old to enter a heat.
Inter	12 -14 years
Senior	15 - 19 years

Advanced Notice that from January 2027, the age for Senior championships section will be 15 – 18 years (age is as at first day of the Championship Finals).

TIME LIMITS

Solos	Baby A & B	1 ½ minutes
	C D E & F	2 minutes
Solo Song	Junior & Inter	2 ½ minutes
	Senior	3 minutes
Duets		2 ½ minutes
Trios		3 minutes
Groups & Troupes		6 minutes
Championship solos		2 minutes

**An extra ½ minute is allowed for Acrobatic, Character and Song and Dance subjects.
Time limits must be strictly adhered to.**

BURSARY

A bursary payment of £100.00 will be awarded at the end of an open competition (where finances allow). The adjudicator will select a competitor who demonstrates an **outstanding solo performance** at the event.

CERTIFICATES

These are awarded to all competitors.

Those placed 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th will receive a placed certificate.

MEDALS

These are awarded to 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th places in solos, duets and trios.

Group and Troupe medals are given for 1st and 2nd places only.

TROPHIES

At the end of the competition there will be a presentation of the awards and trophies, as follows:

Classical Aggregate

Baby, A, B, C, D, E and F

3 Dances

Ballet, Character, Greek, National

Cabaret Aggregate

Baby, A, B, C, D, E and F

3 Dances

Acro, Lyrical, Modern, Song & Dance, Tap

Highest Mark

(Discipline)

Ballet	Character
Greek	National
Acro	Contemporary
Lyrical	Modern
Song & Dance	Tap
Solo Song	

Highest Mark Solo

(Solo)

Most Promising Performer

Baby, Junior, Inter, Senior

(Solo)

Duets & Trios

Baby, Junior, Inter, Senior

Highest mark Classical

Ballet, Character, Greek, National

Duets & Trios

Baby, Junior, Inter, Senior

Highest mark Cabaret

Acro, Contemporary, Lyrical, Modern
Song & Dance, Tap

Groups & Troupes

All group / troupe sections must have a 1st & 2nd place trophy –

These trophies may be awarded at the end of the section at the organiser's discretion

GENERAL RULES FOR ALL COMPETITIONS

Entry conditions

1. BTDA Competitions are open to BTDA members and their Schools, no independent entries will be accepted. Non BTDA schools may enter at the discretion of the organiser.
2. Fees must accompany entry forms with the names of the competitors en bloc from the teacher before the closing date. All entry forms require the signature of the Parent/Teacher, to abide by BTDA rules
3. No fees are returnable (except where Rule 14 applies).
4. Organisers have the right to refuse late entries.
5. A competitors age will be taken on the first day of the competition. In duets, trios, groups and troupes the eldest performer determines the age group of the routine.
6. Birth certificates may be asked for if the need arises.
7. Only competitors and Teachers with a current DBS are allowed on the side and back of the stage.
8. The Association can offer no guarantee as to the day or time at which a section will be presented, once the final programme has been drawn up this must be adhered to.
9. The organiser reserves the right to change, alter or combine parts of the programme as necessary.
10. The running order will not be changed, should candidates fail to appear at their specified time the entry could be forfeited.
11. Competitors are required to be at the competition at least one hour before their section is due to perform. Organisers have the right to continue the running of the competition up to one hour early.
12. The Adjudicators decision is final, the organisers will not be drawn into any discussions regarding this.
13. The adjudicator will be marking the whole performance from entrance to exit.
14. A competitor cannot be entered into a section where the dance has been set by the person adjudicating the section. In cases where the adjudicator is not known at time of entry, it is the Teachers responsibility to withdraw that person if the aforementioned situation arises. A full refund will be given on these occasions.
15. Titles of the National, Greek and Character dances are to be clearly written on the entry forms.
16. When entering groups and troupes please write descriptive titles on the entry forms as these sections can also be split according to subjects at the organiser's discretion.

17. If a Solo/Duet/Trio are the only entry in a particular section, they can be combined with another section, but they will be adjudicated separately and given a mark and a medal.
18. Certificates may only be collected by the teacher or an assistant during the lunch and tea breaks or at the end of the day.
19. Any trophy collected by a competitor or teacher may be kept until the competition the following year and must be returned when requested.
20. Teachers are responsible for the return of trophies to the competition in which they were gained. Failure to do so will result in a charge per trophy payable to BTDA.
21. Teachers must ensure that any student who is likely to receive a trophy or award, is present at the presentations.
22. Teachers are responsible for their student's behaviour at all times. The teacher is responsible for checking the dressing rooms, to ensure everything is in order before leaving the premises.
23. BTDA accepts no liability for any item of equipment or clothing etc. which may be damaged or stolen at any time during the competition.
24. No recording or photography will be permitted under any circumstances
25. Eating and drinking in the changing rooms is not allowed.
26. No visible coaching is allowed.
27. In the event of over subscribing, in sections with over 30 entries, BTDA reserves the right to split the sections.
28. At the organisers discretion a competitor may dance out of section for a mark only. The performance cannot be held over to be included in the adjudication of the section.
29. Only the sections listed at the beginning of this book will be held at BTDA competitions.

Music Rules and Guidance

1. Time limits for each section must be strictly adhered to. The music will be turned down at the end of the specified time, then the competitor must take a bow and leave the stage immediately, otherwise they will be disqualified.
2. Music should be on an electronic device and the teacher must ensure that the correct adaptor for their device is available.
3. A Music representative for each school is required. This may be the teacher, a parent or senior student. If not in attendance, the teacher must inform the organiser of the music representative.
4. Teachers are advised to have a backup copy of the music available.
5. If a teacher wishes to use CD's they must check with the Organiser that this facility is available. Teachers, if they wish, may bring their own music system.
6. Teachers are responsible for their own PPL and PRS licenses at any BTDA competition
7. Music choices should be appropriate for the age of the competitors, Love songs must not be used for Baby and Junior competitors in all categories unless its Instrumental.
8. Performances using music from shows in current production are subject to copyright law.

Music for each discipline

1. Ballet - classical music should be used, either piano or instrumental, no vocals are allowed.
2. Character - appropriate music for the character being portrayed, spoken word is allowed.
3. Greek - classical music should be used, either piano or instrumental, no vocals are allowed.
4. National - Singing and spoken word is allowed according to the authenticity of the country.
5. Acro – a freedom of choice of music.
6. Contemporary - a freedom of choice of music.
7. Lyrical – a freedom of choice of music.
8. Modern – a freedom of choice of music.
9. Song and Dance - Vocals are not allowed.
10. Tap - Music with vocals may be used, providing the tone and sound quality of the performance is not compromised.

Dance Performance and Costume Rules and Guidance

1. Competitors may only enter once in any one solo section.
2. In duet and trio sections competitors may enter more than once with the same partner providing there is a change of subject.
3. Competitors wearing personal jewellery will be penalized.
4. Competitors with body art must ensure that it is concealed.

Dance and costume for each discipline

1. Ballet - Pointe work is not permitted in Novice competitions, A and B section in open competition and Junior Championships. Senior Championship sections, female competitors should wear a tutu or romantic style dress and pointe work is compulsory. Candidates who are not proficient at pointe work should **NOT** enter.
2. Character – The title should be clearly written on the entry form. A **short** synopsis can be read out. Character dances must be based on classical technique. Acrobatic tricks are not permitted. Costumes should reflect the character choice being portrayed.
3. Greek – The title should be clearly written on the entry form. A **short** synopsis can be read out. Costumes should be relevant and enhance the portrayal of the chosen theme. Sequins are not permitted on Greek Tunics/Costumes.
4. National - The title should be clearly written on the entry form. The Dance and Costume should be authentic for the country being portrayed. Jewellery may be worn if it complements the authenticity of the costume.
5. Acro – Dance linkage and acrobatic tricks should be included. Freedom of choice of costume.
6. Contemporary – Costumes have a freedom of choice but will be dictated by the style of the piece. They should not restrict the competitor in anyway, the line of the body and shape of the movement should be seen.
7. Lyrical – A full and circular skirt or full circular culottes to calf length must be worn by female competitors, a split is allowed but must not be above the knee. Acrobatic work is not permitted, and the use of floor work should be discouraged.
8. Modern – The use of Acrobatic work in Modern sections should be limited.
9. Song and Dance – Freedom of choice, this should be appropriate for the age and ability of the student.
10. Tap – Freedom of choice of costume.

Any entries that do not comply with the above will not be placed by the adjudicator.

ADDITIONAL RULES FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

- 1 Championships are only open to the schools where BTDA Registered teachers are entering candidates for Examinations and Awards.
- 2 A competitor cannot enter a Championship Heat without first taking part in a BTDA open competition. That competition must be in the same Championship year, which is defined as 01 January – 31 December.
- 3 The competitor can only enter a discipline in the Championship Heats that they have previously entered in a BTDA **open** competition in solo form.
- 4 First and Second place in the heats will go through to the National Championship Finals. In the event that either first or second cannot make the Final then the place will go to the next in line, (3rd or 4th). The teacher will be informed by Head Office.
- 5 Each finalist will have to pay a £6.00 transfer fee for their first entry to the finals. A fee of £3.00 will be payable for each additional entry. This will be collected by their teacher on completion of the final programme.
- 6 If a competitor gains entry to the National Championship Finals and then leaves his/her dancing school before the final their place will be forfeited.
- 7 If a competitor who has previously entered Championships with a school leaves that school, they will not be able to enter another heat with another teacher for 1 calendar year from the date they leave that school.
- 8 No less than 4 entries will be accepted for any section.
- 9 If an area cannot produce the number of entries required for each section, then the heat in that discipline will not take place.
- 10 The Championship Heats are to be treated independently of any other competition and should be held on a separate day.
- 11 Championship Heat and National Championship Finals competitors will receive special certificates. Championship Heat competitors will gain a mark and a report sheet.
- 12 The results and presentation of awards for Championship Heat and for the National Championship Finals will be given at the end of the event.
- 13 Competitors entering Championship Heats must be present for the awards on the last evening. Special consideration will be looked at in the event any student cannot attend, but a request must be sent to the area organiser prior to the event.
- 14 National Championship Finals competitors must be present for the awards, failure to do so will result in forfeiting any award achieved.
- 15 Teachers must inform Head Office immediately if a student is unable to perform at the National Championship Finals for any reason.

- 16 A competitor may, with their teacher's approval, change their dance between the Championship Heat and the National Championship Finals.
- 17 National Championship Finals - an official video recording will be made for the BTDA archives.
- 18 Competitor in Championship Heats and National Championship Finals are not permitted to dance out of turn except in exceptional circumstances. If the music fails to start or stops during the dance due to a technical problem, then the competitor can leave the stage and re-dance later in the section. They will not be penalised for this, but the teacher must sort this out as quickly as possible.

ADDITIONAL RULES FOR NOVICE COMPETITIONS

- 1 A Novice is a dancer who has never gained a 1st place in any competition reaching 83 marks. Therefore, a competitor gaining a 1st place with under 83 marks in a particular discipline is still eligible to enter the novice section in that particular discipline.
- 2 A novice who gains a 1st place in one section will not be restricted from entering other sections in a novice competition.
- 3 If a competitor enters a championship section in a particular discipline they lose their novice status in that subject only.
- 4 The novice status applies to all competitions.
- 5 In novice duets and trios all competitors must be novice as per solo entry.
- 6 In novice groups and troupes 75% of the competitors must be Novice as per their solo entry.
- 7 A baby retains their Novice status regardless of places gained in either Novice or Open competitions. When they proceed to A Section, they retain their Novice status until such a time as they gain a 1st place with 83 marks (see rule 1)