

# An introduction to the university dance circuit

## An introduction to the IVDA :

The Inter Varsity Dance Association is the student-led organisation which promotes dancing amongst UK University students. Its aims are (i) to promote Ballroom and Latin American dancing within universities, (ii) to organise an annual Inter Varsity Dance Competition, (iii) to extend participation of university dancers in competitive dancing both on the University Circuit and the Open Circuit, and (iv) to seek to raise the standard of dancing amongst students.

The IVDA was set up in 1962 and consists of all members of University ballroom and Latin clubs which affiliate each year. It consists of 9,000 members of dancesport clubs from around 30 different Universities across the country. The IVDA is run by an Executive Committee who are elected as the hosts of the Inter Varsity Dance Competition (IVDC) for that academic year. Various dance retailers offer discounts to IVDA members—these are listed on the website. Many thanks to our sponsors for their continued support.

## An introduction to the University dancing circuit :

The University circuit consists of various inter university events throughout the academic year, typically October-May. Most Universities will hold trials for their team and put partners together in September/October. Each University will have different practices/classes for their teams so for any University-specific enquiry please contact the team captain directly.

Several Universities traditionally hold a competition every year which most Universities attend (eg Warwick, Nottingham and Sheffield) and some host smaller fun events (eg Manchester, Keele-Leeds, Bath). The SUDC (Southern Universities Dance Competition) and NUDC (Northern Universities Dance Competition) are the regional competitions and the IVDC is the national competition. These are more serious, have higher numbers of attendees and a different University bids and is elected to host these competitions each year.

Team captains will determine which competitions a team will go to, but couples should feel welcome to attend the events if they wish. To compete at the SUDC, NUDC or IVDC, the University clubs must have paid the requested affiliation fee to the relevant body (SUDA, NUDA, IVDA). Teams are entered in advance and couples should let their captains know which open events they wish to enter.

The rules and events for each competition will vary. More information about competitions can be found on the host University's website and also on the IVDA website: [www.universitydancesport.com](http://www.universitydancesport.com) Full details are given in the online calendar and you can ask questions via the forum.

The typical calendar for the season is as follows:

- *Leicester Friendly* - first week November at Leicester University. Fun events, ideal for beginners.
- Warwick Varsity Ball* - mid November at Kings Hall, Stoke. Most major Unis attend. Typically includes: opens at advanced, intermediate and beginner levels, ex-student events and mixed team match and Warwick 4 dance - basic WQCJ.
- *Nottingham Inter Varsity Competition* - last weekend November at Portland Leisure Centre, Nottingham. Most major Unis attend. Typically includes: opens at advanced, intermediate and beginners level, basic, ex-student events and salsa events. split team match with unlimited D team.
- *Bath Friendly* - first weekend of December at Bath University. Friendly, by invitation only.
- *Manchester winter event* - second weekend December at Manchester University. Fun events and a team match, ex-students welcome.
- *Keele-Leeds* - start of February, alternating between Leeds and Keele uni as hosts. Fun events.
- Southern Friendly* - first weekend February. Only open to Southern unis excl Imperial, Oxford and Cambridge.
- *Sheffield Social* - mid February at the Octagon, Sheffield. Most major unis attend. Typically includes: basic comps, opens at advanced, intermediate and beginner levels, ex-student events. Mixed team match and team knockout competition. All events except beginner in costume.
- *SUDC/NUDC* - hosted by SUDA/NUDA last weekend in February at a venue decided by host (bids made previous year). Regional competition - most unis attend. Includes: opens at a beginners, novice, intermediate and advanced level and mixed team match. Offbeat and Rock n Roll. Rules dictated by SUDA/NUDA constitution.
- *IVDC* - hosted by IVDA - mid March at a venue decided by host (bids made in previous year). national competition - all unis attend. Typically opens at a beginners, novice, intermediate and advanced level and mixed team match. offbeat and Rock n Roll. Rules dictated by IVDA constitution.
- *Manchester Spring event* - end of April at Manchester uni. fun events. Team match, ex-students welcome
- *Varsity Match Oxford vs Cambridge* - varsity competition between Oxford and Cambridge and opens for everyone. Hosted by Cambridge in odd years, Oxford in even years. Also Rock n Roll and Salsa. Rules dictated by Varsity Constitution.



### Format of university circuit competitions :

University competitions typically have a series of open events during the day and the team match in the evening. Different types of team match are discussed below. Opens results don't count towards the team score and you can have different partners for different events (rules regarding non students may vary - most competitions have separate ex-student events). Different hosts can put on different events with different criteria/rules although IVDC, SUDC, NUDC governed by rules laid out in constitution so have a strict format. The IVDA and the standing committee only govern the IVDC, each host's organising committee will deter the rules for their competition. The opens are usually all ballroom events then all Latin events, although this can vary. Opens can include basic events (restricted to BDC basic syllabus steps), beginners events (for beginners only "beginners" are strictly defined for each competition), and then events which can be single or multiple dance events at different levels from novice through to advanced (see below for a suggestion about levels). There might also be salsa and Rock n Roll events depending on the competition. Offbeat is a team event and requires teams to perform a piece to the music of their choice for 3mins. Many competitions also have a demonstration couple. University competitions can be long days and involve large numbers of people - so be prepared and bring plenty to eat and drink. Team captains will typically coordinate entries into the opens as well as the team match so you will need to let your captain know in advance what you want to enter. Entry to competition can vary between £5 and £10 per person.

**Novice/Intermediate/Advanced:** There are no strict definitions of Novice, Intermediate and Advanced. If you are uncertain which level you are at then your coach can probably offer some advice. You can be at different levels in ballroom and Latin. However as guidelines Novices are typically the year following beginners; these events are typically restricted to basic steps. Intermediate dancers have had a couple of years experience and might be B/C team level. Advanced are the most experienced dancers on the circuit and are typically A team level or very high B team for the large University teams.

**Beginners:** These are strictly defined. most competitions use the IVDA definition: *"A present student who has neither received professional tuition (individually or in groups) in Latin American and/or Ballroom, nor competed in any university or open circuit competitions in dancesport, prior to the IVDC of the previous academic year. Professional tuition is defined as teaching that has been paid for and provided by a professional. A professional is defined as a person who makes their living from ballroom or latin american dancing or teaching ballroom or latin american dancing, and/or is a fellow of the UKA, IDTA or ISTD."*

**Step restrictions:** Basic competitions are restricted to BDC basic syllabus steps. all beginners comps and novice at SUDC & IVDC are also basic steps only a list of these can be found on the English Amateur Dancesport Association's website: <http://eada.org.uk/new/duffer/restrictedstep1.html>

**Costume restrictions:** Many competitions will restrict some of their open events to "lounge-wear" or Non Competitive Dress (NCD). All beginners events are NCD whereas all the team matches are in competitive dress. The IVDA has a long definition for what can/can't be worn and the IVDA standing committee will confirm if an item you want to wear for the IVDC is suitable. Typically NCD involves practice-wear and high street clothes which do not have any stoning. i.e. they are not designed for competition. Latin trousers are permitted but tailcoats, white bow ties and shorties are not. Unlimited accessories are allowed. The full definition is given on page 4.

### Team matches :

An integral part and the highlight of a university competition is the team match. Universities can typically enter 4 teams of 4 couples (although some comps may have unlimited D team or an extra beginners only team). A couple will dance one of WQC or J. Many Universities will trial their teams a week beforehand to see who is going to dance what.

Team matches can take several formats:

**"Old-style" Mixed team match:** everyone is dancing together i.e. d team members might be against A team members. each dance is recalled separately such that there will be 4 finals. The marks added up for each team couple (points are given for recalls and positions within the final) and teams will be ranked so that there will be a best A tea, best B team etc and a winner overall.

**Split team match:** A team couples only dance again A team members. each dance at each level goes through recalls to a final i.e. there will be 16 finals. The marks added up for each team couple and teams will be ranked for their performance across 4 dances so that there will be a best A team, best B team etc and a winner overall.

**IVDA team match** - This was changed in 2004. A qualifying round is used to determine which teams will dance in which division. Events are then held for each of the 2 divisions. Couples are not recalled as individual couples but as a team i.e. the whole of your A team will be recalled to the next round or none of them will. Semi-finalists who don't make their final are entered into a play off final so you will have places from 1 to 12.

**Knockout team event:** unique to Sheffield. two universities and three dances are picked out of a hat. the team must put three different couples on the floor, one for each dance, to compete against the opposition. i.e. it is a direct showdown. The rule is that each team may only use a couple once (unless they have gone through their whole team). this leads to exciting and unexpected results!

Scoring: Dancesport is marked using the Skating system. This is a complex system of 11 rules which explain recalls to a final and positions within a final. Basically judges scores are median averaged and the position of a couple in 4 dances are added together.



## The Inter Varsity Dance Competition :

This is the National student dancesport competition and commonly takes place in March. It can attract about 1,000 competitors. The rules for the event are laid out in the IVDA constitution:

<http://dance104.valuehost.co.uk/archive/Constitution.pdf>

Any amendments to the constitution are agreed at IVDA general meetings which happen in the Autumn and Spring. Team captains typically represent Universities at these meetings and vote on the team's/club's behalf. Any IVDA member is welcome to make a suggestion for any constitutional amendments.

The IVDC has a beginners W Q C J one dance events (basic steps in Non competitive dress), Novice WQ CJ two dance (basic steps), intermediate three dance and advanced four dance events. The Intermediate and Advanced dances rotate each year Advanced: CJRP (2004), CJSR (2005), CJPS (2006), CJRP (2007) and WQTV (2004), WQFT (2005), WQVF (2006), WQTV (2007) and Intermediate: CJS (2002), CJP (2003), CJR (2004), CJS (2005), CJP (2006), CJR (2007) and WQF (2002), WQV (2003), WQT (2004), WQF (2005), WQV (2006), WQT (2007). There are also Ex-student, Rock 'n' Roll and Offbeat events. There is also a team match as the highlight of the day as outlined on page 2. There are returnable trophies for the winners of the open events and returnable team trophies for the team match.



Team captains are given more information about the competition in a pre-competition pack, this will include information about the venue and its facilities and its events. The Exec will also develop a section of the IVDA website with further details of the competition. Queries can be directed to [president@universitydancesport.com](mailto:president@universitydancesport.com)



## Am I eligible to compete :

To compete in a student competition you must be a university student. IVDA defines this, and this is generally accepted by most uni comp organisers.

*"3.13.1 A Present Student is someone undertaking a full-time degree or diploma at a British University or University College recognised by the central government department currently responsible for higher education and able to prove their status with a valid University Library or Registration Card showing their name, photograph and duration of period of registration.*

*3.13.2 PhD students shall be considered Present Students only until the end of the academic year in which they submit their thesis."*

If you are a part time student you will qualify as a student if you study at least 8 hours per week. All part time students must send the relevant paperwork to the standing committee before competing at the SUDC/IVDC.:

*"3.13.3 Part-Time students may compete as Present Students provided that: i) They are studying for a recognised degree or higher at a recognised university or university college. ii) They are studying for a minimum of eight hours a week. iii) Proof of conditions (i) and (ii) be provided in the form of a letter or other official documentation from the academic institute.*

*3.13.4 Persons holding sabbatical posts are classified as Present Students if their post is during their course of study or course of study or in the first year after graduation. In all other circumstances they are considered Ex- Students."*

If you are uncertain about your eligibility your team captain must contact the IVDA standing committee (SC) to verify your eligibility. The SC typically asks all team captains to send in a copy of the university card of each of their team members to verify their status.

If your university does not have a team you can compete for another university, this is generally allowed but you must contact the SC as each team (A, B, C, D etc) at the IVDC must consist of at least 4 people from the named institution, or if you wish to dance for another University other than your own which has a team, both captains must agree and you must contact the SC.

The SC consists of 5 IVDA members at least 2 of which are from NUDA, 2 from SUDA. Their job is to interpret the constitution, police disciplinary matters and verify eligibility of those students competing. They elect a chairman from amongst themselves and vote upon each case. Each case is announced via the forum but with no names. Reports from previous years are kept online and act as precedent. Decisions can be appealed, the procedure for doing this is outlined in the constitution.

## Glossary of terms & helpful information :

**Affiliation fee:** Paid by a University Society to join IVDA, SUDA or NUDA

**EADA:** English Amateur Dancesport Association; those competing on the open circuit will need to be a member of an Amateur dance Association.

**Executive Committee:** The organisers of the IVDC, appointed by the Host Society.

**General Committee:** The Executive Committee plus Nominated Representatives of each Member Society. It meets at two General Meetings per year, Autumn and Spring.

**Host Society:** The Member Society chosen to stage the IVDC, as voted at the Spring Meeting.

**IVDA:** Inter-Varsity Dance Association.

**IVDC:** The Inter-Varsity Dance Competition; held annually.

**Majority vote in favour:** More Member Societies voting for a motion than against it, i.e. the number of abstentions is irrelevant. This is the system used for IVDA meetings.

**Member Society:** Any society or club promoting dancing for University students in Britain that pays the affiliation fee to join the IVDA. Each member Society has one vote at an IVDA meeting.

**Nominated Representative:** An ordinary member of IVDA nominated to represent a Member Society by the society's committee.

**Non-competitive dress:** shall not allow items specifically designed for competitive dancing. It shall allow practice-wear. The following items are allowed

Ballroom Men: Plain dark trousers, plain shirts, ties or bow ties, waistcoats

Ballroom Ladies: Plain skirts or trousers, tops without excessive adornment, dresses;

Latin Men: Plain dark trousers or latin trousers, plain or ruffled shirts or t-shirts, plain latin tops (no transparent material), ties or bow ties, waistcoats.

Latin Ladies: Plain skirts or trousers, tops without excessive adornment, dresses.

Plain is defined as meaning unpatterned or having a small single or repeating motif. Excessive adornment counts as altering the item defined as embellishing the outfit by adding additional rhinestones, sequins or feathers as that would be deemed more appropriate as a competitive costume.

**NUDA:** The Northern Universities' Dance Association; has its own constitution, for societies typically North of a W-E line drawn through Birmingham.

**Standing Committee:** Group of 5 representatives from Member Societies who ensure that the constitution is being upheld and to interpret the constitution where necessary. They will determine if dancers are eligible to compete as a present student.

**SUDA:** The Southern Universities' Dance Association; has its own constitution, typically for societies south of Bir-

## Where to purchase shoes & costumes ?

Typically most teams will have a team costume which you can borrow for University competitions. Many Universities like to have a team colour. However you will probably need to buy your own shoes. The main shoe retailers are linked from the IVDA website:

[www.dancesport-international.com](http://www.dancesport-international.com)  
[www.supadance.com](http://www.supadance.com)  
[www.freedoflondon.com](http://www.freedoflondon.com)  
[www.ray-rose.com](http://www.ray-rose.com)

If you want to buy your own costume (many of the advanced dancers do have their own costume) 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.



## Don't forget to bring:

Shoes (ballroom & Latin), Team costume, Opens costumes, Accessories/ jewellery, Student ID, Money, Safety pins, energy tablets, food, water, make-up (foundation, powder, concealer, bronzer, eye shadows, eye liner, mascara, lip liner, lipstick, blusher), mirror, hair accessories (lots of pins!), hair gel, comb & hair spray, sewing kit in case of problems, first aid kit in case of problems, and if you're brave you can bring some work to do when you're not dancing!

## Where to find more details :

[www.universitydancesport.com](http://www.universitydancesport.com)

[president@universitydancesport.com](mailto:president@universitydancesport.com)

The IVDA is listed as a group on [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) so please sign up to meet your fellow dancers.

The website provides links to dance retailers, a forum for discussion and to ask advice, second hand costume adverts and advertisements for partners. The website also has links to all University team websites.

## Once you graduate ...

We hope you will keep dancing when you graduate — there is an open circuit, with competitions around the country every Sunday. We are working with the EADA (English Amateur Dancesport Association) to promote these events and run student friendly events. An info sheet is available on EADA and the open circuit.

Written by Rachelle Stretch January 2008