



MEL DANCE COMPETITION

OFFICIAL COMPETITION & PARTICIPATION GUIDE

U.S. EDITION

Version 1.0 | National Regional Framework

Competition • Education • Scholarships • Opportunity

Designed for studios, independent dancers, teachers and families

MELDanceCompetition.com

[@meldancecompetitionusa](https://twitter.com/meldancecompetitionusa)

Movement Excellence League

Welcome to MEL Dance Competition

More than a competition - a structured platform for performance, education, recognition, and long-term opportunity.

MEL Dance Competition is designed to provide dancers, studios, academies, choreographers, teachers, and families with a professional event experience built around artistic excellence, disciplined organization, education, meaningful recognition, and continued growth.

This U.S. Edition establishes the general competition and participation framework for official MEL Regional Events in the United States. It is intended to remain useful across seasons; city-specific dates, venues, registration deadlines, fees, workshop details, and activated qualification opportunities are published separately for each Regional Event or season.

MEL event architecture

A MEL Regional may combine Competition, an optional MEL Official Workshop, scholarships and educational opportunities, approved media experiences, and - when formally activated for the season - pathways toward future MEL Finals or special programs.

How to Use This Guide

This document is the general U.S. participation framework. It should be read together with the event-specific materials that apply to the Regional Event you attend.

Official Regional Call

City, date, venue, registration opening, activated event features, and market-specific information.

Official Fee Schedule

Current prices, registration stages, deposits, deadlines, and any event-specific fees.

Competition Rulebook

Detailed technical, scoring, stage, music, prop, and operational rules when issued separately.

Registration Terms & Releases

Participant/guardian consents, waivers, media permissions, payment terms, and venue-specific requirements.

Controlling documents

If event-specific materials differ from this general guide, the later and more specific official MEL document controls for that Regional Event, subject to applicable law.

Contents

1. General Information
2. Season & Regional Structure
3. Registration
4. Registration Windows, Capacity & Fees
5. Payments, Cancellations, Credits & Refunds
6. Age Divisions
7. Modalities
8. Disciplines
9. Competition Levels
10. Routine Time Limits
11. Music & Content
12. Costumes & Presentation
13. Props & Stage Safety
14. Check-In, Scheduling & Punctuality
15. MEL Official Workshop & Educational Opportunities
16. Judges & Evaluation
17. Awards & Recognition
18. Scholarships, Sponsorships & Special Opportunities
19. Regional Qualification & MEL Grand Final
20. Multi-City Participation & Tour Development

21. Photography, Video, Streaming & Media

Professional photography, video, livestreaming, broadcasting, and commercial event coverage are controlled through MEL's approved media process, applicable agreements, and venue rules. Only MEL Dance Competition or media providers expressly authorized by MEL may offer official or commercial photography/video services in connection with an official MEL event.

- As part of event registration, adult participants - and a parent or legal guardian for minors - may be required to accept an event-specific Media & Publicity Release authorizing MEL to photograph and record performances and to edit, reproduce, publish, display, distribute, promote, and commercially use or monetize authorized MEL event recordings through MEL websites, social media, YouTube, streaming/digital platforms, advertising, archives, and promotional materials, subject to the applicable release and law.
- Studios, choreographers, and registrants may be required to confirm that they have authority to submit the performance and to grant or facilitate the permissions described in the applicable event terms. MEL's rights in an event recording do not automatically transfer ownership of third-party music, choreography, or other protected material.
- Professional cameras, interchangeable-lens equipment, tripods, livestream systems, credentialed media activity, or commercial recording are prohibited unless expressly authorized by MEL. Personal mobile-phone photography or recording may be permitted for noncommercial use only when allowed by the Regional Event policy and venue rules.
- Official event photo/video products, when offered for sale or distribution, may be provided only by MEL or MEL-authorized media providers. Online publication or monetization may still be affected by third-party music/choreography rights, platform rules, Content ID, revenue sharing, blocks, or takedowns; participant consent alone does not clear those third-party rights. Exact permissions are controlled by the applicable Registration Terms & Releases and Regional Event materials.

27. Brand Protection & Intellectual Property

28. Acceptance & Final Authority

1. General Information

MEL Dance Competition is open to academies, dance studios, schools, companies, independent groups, community programs, choreographers, and independent dancers, subject to the requirements of the applicable Regional Event.

- Participants may enter one or multiple routines when permitted by the Regional Call and available capacity.
- MEL may operate Regional Events in multiple U.S. markets during the same season.
- Regional Events are designed to follow shared MEL brand, participant, judging, safety, and operational standards.
- Participation in one Regional does not automatically create exclusivity or guaranteed entry into another Regional.

One MEL standard, multiple markets

Each city may have different venue conditions, pricing, capacity, dates, and local logistics, while the MEL competition identity and core participation framework remain consistent.

2. Season & Regional Structure

MEL is building a repeatable Regional network rather than disconnected one-time events. Official Regional Events may be organized as part of a broader MEL U.S. season or tour calendar.

Regional Event

An official MEL competition serving a defined city or market under approved MEL standards.

Pilot Regional

A controlled first Regional used to validate local demand, event operations, registration behavior, and market fit without reducing MEL quality standards.

Recurring Market

A market that demonstrates sufficient demand, execution, participant experience, and sustainability to return in future seasons.

Tour Calendar

A broader schedule that may group multiple approved Regional Events under one national season identity.

A Regional Event is considered officially confirmed only after MEL publishes or authorizes the applicable event announcement. “Coming Soon,” interest collection, or preliminary market development does not by itself guarantee a final date or venue.

3. Registration

Registration is complete only when MEL has received the required participant/routine information and the applicable payment or deposit required by the official event materials.

- Participant full name and age/date information as required
- Official age division
- Discipline
- Modality
- Studio, academy, independent affiliation, or choreographer information
- City/state or other required origin information
- Music and routine information by the published deadline
- Required participant/guardian releases and event terms

MEL may reject, hold, correct, or request clarification for registrations that are incomplete, duplicate, inconsistent, unsafe, or outside the published event requirements.

4. Registration Windows, Capacity & Fees

MEL may use structured registration windows to encourage advance commitment and protect scheduling, venue capacity, staffing, judging, awards, workshop capacity, and production quality.

- Early Registration / Early Bird may be offered at a preferred rate.
- Standard Registration may apply after the early window.
- Late Registration may be offered only when capacity and operations permit.
- Registration may close before a stated deadline if the event reaches capacity.
- Routine or participant deposits may be used when published in the Official Fee Schedule.
- Official participant pricing is set by MEL and may vary by market, season, modality, registration stage, promotion, sponsor support, or operational conditions.

Where prices live

This guide intentionally does not contain fixed participant prices. Current fees, deposits, and deadlines are published in the Official Fee Schedule or Regional registration materials so MEL can update pricing without changing the permanent competition framework.

5. Payments, Cancellations, Credits & Refunds

Payment, cancellation, credit, transfer, and refund terms are governed by the event-specific registration terms, Official Fee Schedule, and applicable law.

- Fees may become non-refundable after processing, published deadlines, or other stated milestones.
- MEL may offer a transfer, account credit, reschedule option, refund, or other remedy when expressly stated in the applicable cancellation notice or event terms.
- Participant-initiated withdrawals, no-shows, schedule conflicts, travel issues, illness, and other circumstances are handled according to the published event terms.
- Chargebacks or payment disputes do not replace the official cancellation or dispute process.

Important

This general guide does not override rights or remedies that may be required by applicable law.

6. Age Divisions

MEL uses age-based competition divisions rather than skill-level divisions. The public age-division names used by MEL are:

Division	Age
BABIES	Ages 4-6
KIDS	Ages 7-9
JUNIORS	Ages 10-12
TEENS	Ages 13-15
SENIORS	Ages 16-18
FREE	Ages 19 & Up

For Duet, Trio, Group, and Mega Group entries, the competition division may be determined by the average age of the registered dancers according to the event-specific calculation rule. The Regional Call may define the age calculation date and any exceptions.

MEL may combine or adjust divisions when registration volume, safety, scheduling, or event operation requires it, while seeking to preserve fair and understandable competition groupings.

7. Modalities

MEL maintains a simple public modality structure that is consistent across Regional Events unless an event-specific Regional Call expressly provides otherwise.

Modality	Composition
SOLO	1 dancer
DUET	2 dancers
TRIO	3 dancers
GROUP	4-15 dancers
MEGA GROUP	16 or more dancers

Why MEL keeps the structure simple

The objective is to make registration easy to understand for studios and families while allowing MEL to manage ensemble size, scheduling, pricing, and recognition through event-specific materials.

8. Disciplines

Official MEL disciplines may include the following. A Regional Call may activate all or a subset of these disciplines based on market demand, scheduling, judging coverage, and event format:

Ballet Ballet-based choreography using classical or neoclassical technique; music and choreography do not need to come from established classical repertoire.	Ballet Repertoire / Classical Variation Recognized classical ballet repertoire or variation-based choreography that preserves the identity and stylistic vocabulary of the source work; event-specific repertoire requirements may apply.
Jazz Jazz-based technique, style, musicality, and performance.	Acro Jazz Jazz choreography incorporating approved acrobatic content within applicable safety rules.
Lyrical Lyrical movement, musical interpretation, and expressive storytelling.	Contemporary Contemporary movement vocabulary, composition, and artistic interpretation.
Belly Dance Belly dance / oriental movement styles when offered.	Hawaiian Hawaiian dance forms and movement vocabulary when offered.
Tahitian Tahitian dance forms, rhythm, and movement vocabulary when offered.	Hip Hop Hip hop and related street/commercial movement styles.
Reggaeton Reggaeton-based choreography, rhythm, and performance within applicable age-appropriate content rules.	K-Pop K-Pop performance and choreography styles.
Tap Tap technique, rhythm, musicality, and performance.	Latin Rhythms Salsa, Bachata, Merengue, Mambo, Cha-Cha, and related Latin dance/rhythm-based choreography when offered.
Folkloric Dance Traditional folkloric dance, including regional and cultural forms such as Mexican folklórico, when offered.	Open Fusion, showcase, experimental work, or styles not specifically listed in another activated discipline.

9. Competition Levels

MEL does NOT divide dancers by skill level

Participants compete within their applicable age division, discipline, and modality regardless of

whether they consider themselves beginner, intermediate, advanced, recreational, pre-professional, or professional.

This philosophy supports direct comparison within age and discipline while allowing MEL to focus recognition on the quality of the performance presented on stage.

10. Routine Time Limits

Unless the Regional Call or Rulebook states otherwise, the general maximum routine times are:

Modality	Maximum Time
Solo	3:00 minutes
Duet	3:00 minutes
Trio	3:00 minutes
Group	5:00 minutes
Mega Group	5:00 minutes

Timing begins with the first audible sound, movement, or intentional stage execution. Entries exceeding the published limit may be penalized, shortened, rescheduled, or otherwise handled according to the Rulebook and event operations.

11. Music & Content

- Music must be submitted by the official deadline in the format requested by MEL.
- Common accepted formats may include MP3 or WAV unless another format is specified.
- Studios should maintain a backup copy accessible at the event.
- Music and performance content must be age-appropriate and suitable for a family-oriented event environment.
- MEL may require edits or refuse content involving extreme offensive language, explicit sexual content, discriminatory material, excessive violence, or other inappropriate content.

MEL is not responsible for problems caused by damaged, corrupted, mislabeled, incompatible, or late files supplied by participants, except where the issue results from MEL-controlled systems or operations.

12. Costumes & Presentation

Costumes and presentation should be appropriate for the dancer's age, discipline, choreography, safety, and the family-oriented environment of the event.

- No partial or full nudity
- No explicit sexual presentation inappropriate for the age division
- No offensive or discriminatory symbols or messaging

- No costume elements that create an unreasonable physical or stage hazard

MEL may request modification, delay an entry, or restrict participation when a costume or presentation creates a material safety or appropriateness concern.

13. Props & Stage Safety

Props must be safe, stable, practical to transport, and capable of being placed and removed within the time allowed by event operations.

- Fire, explosives, hazardous chemicals, glass, uncontrolled liquids, smoke-producing materials, or other dangerous elements are prohibited unless specifically authorized through a documented professional process.
- Confetti, glitter, powder, loose material, or any item that creates a cleanup or slip hazard may be prohibited.
- Studios and participants are responsible for transporting, assembling, operating, and removing their approved props.
- MEL or the venue may reject any prop that creates a safety, timing, property, or operational concern.

14. Check-In, Scheduling & Punctuality

Participants are expected to follow official check-in, backstage, warm-up, call-time, and performance instructions.

- Performance order may change when necessary for safety, judging, technical, or operational reasons.
- Reasonable consideration may be provided for consecutive routines from the same studio, but schedule adjustments are not guaranteed.
- Participants who are not ready at their call time may be moved, delayed, or lose the performance opportunity depending on event operations.
- Studios are responsible for monitoring the official schedule and any authorized updates.

15. MEL Official Workshop & Educational Opportunities

The MEL Official Workshop is designed as an educational complement to the Regional Event and may include faculty classes, master classes, auditions, scholarship opportunities, educational recognition, or other approved experiences.

Current U.S. launch framework

For launch-stage U.S. Regional Events, MEL generally intends the Official Workshop to be **OPTIONAL** for competition participation unless the event-specific Regional Call, Rulebook, or registration materials expressly state otherwise.

- Certain workshop-based scholarships, auditions, faculty selections, or educational recognitions may require registration in the applicable Workshop.
- Workshop faculty, schedule, age groupings, capacity, price, and eligibility are published separately for each event.
- Workshop registration may close when room or faculty capacity is reached.
- MEL may offer workshop-only participation when the event format permits.

16. Judges & Evaluation

MEL uses an approved judging and evaluation framework intended to support consistent, professional, discipline-aware adjudication.

Evaluation may consider factors such as technique, execution, musicality, interpretation, stage presence, choreography, synchronization when applicable, projection, creativity, and overall performance quality. The exact scoring framework, criteria definitions, weights, or digital tools used for a specific event may be published separately.

- Judges are selected or approved by MEL based on event needs and professional fit.
- MEL may use approved digital judging, reporting, or operational tools as they become tested and ready for event use.
- Human adjudication remains the official basis of results unless a specific event rule expressly provides otherwise.
- Judging decisions are final, subject to MEL's authority to correct verified clerical, tabulation, eligibility, or system errors.
- Private deliberations and proprietary internal evaluation processes are not required to be disclosed unless MEL elects to publish them.

17. Awards & Recognition

Awards may vary by Regional Event based on registration volume, divisions, sponsors, program design, logistics, and season structure.

- Medals, trophies, certificates, titles, or placement recognition
- Best Choreography
- Best Technique
- Best Interpretation
- MEL Rising Talent
- Best Stage Energy
- Outstanding Academy
- Outstanding Dancer
- Faculty or sponsor recognitions
- Scholarships, invitations, support programs, or special benefits when activated

Cash awards may be offered for selected events when published in advance. Amounts, eligibility, minimum participation requirements, and payment conditions are controlled by the event-specific Regional Call or award terms.

18. Scholarships, Sponsorships & Special Opportunities

MEL may create or coordinate scholarships, sponsor-supported opportunities, invitations, faculty selections, educational support, or special benefits.

- Scholarships and special opportunities are not guaranteed at every event.
- Eligibility may depend on competition performance, Workshop participation, auditions, faculty selection, sponsor criteria, age, discipline, or other published requirements.
- Approved sponsors may select recipients under their own disclosed criteria when applicable.
- A sponsor selection does not necessarily change official competition results or placements.

19. Regional Qualification & MEL Grand Final

MEL may activate a Regional-to-Final pathway for a season when the national or cross-market calendar, operational readiness, venue plan, and qualification structure support it.

No automatic qualification created by this guide

Qualification exists only when the applicable Regional Call or official season materials expressly state the pathway, eligibility rules, benefits, and Final structure.

When activated, qualification may be based on placement, award, score, routine, dancer, academy, invitation, or another published method. MEL may also establish minimum Regional-event requirements before a Grand Final is held.

If a Final is postponed, modified, relocated, rescheduled, or not activated for a season, MEL will communicate the applicable participant options through official season materials and event terms.

20. Multi-City Participation & Tour Development

Participants and studios may attend more than one MEL Regional Event during a season when registration rules and capacity permit.

- MEL may offer returning-dancer, multi-city, Workshop, scholarship, or loyalty benefits when officially published.
- A dancer or routine may be subject to event-specific rules regarding repeat entries, awards, or qualification.
- As Regional markets mature, MEL may publish a broader U.S. Tour calendar under shared national standards.
- Future tour scale does not change MEL's responsibility to protect quality, safety, fairness, and participant experience at each Regional Event.

21. Photography, Video, Streaming & Media

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Media authorization is layered

MEL can control and commercially use its authorized event recordings when the applicable participant/guardian and event permissions are in place. Underlying music, choreography, venue, platform, and other third-party rights remain separate and must be respected.

22. Conduct, Safety & Participant Protection

MEL expects professional, respectful, and sportsmanlike behavior from dancers, studios, teachers, choreographers, families, vendors, staff, and attendees.

- Violence, threats, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, property damage, dangerous conduct, or material interference with the event may result in removal or other action.
- MEL may restrict backstage access, remove an attendee, disqualify an entry, or contact venue/security personnel when necessary to protect participants or operations.
- Event-specific codes of conduct, safeguarding rules, or venue policies may impose additional requirements.

23. Minors, Supervision & Venue Access

Minors must remain under appropriate supervision by a parent, legal guardian, studio representative, instructor, chaperone, or other responsible adult as required by the event and venue.

- MEL is not a substitute for parental, guardian, studio, or chaperone supervision.
- Backstage and restricted-area access may require credentials or studio authorization.
- Studios are responsible for ensuring their dancers and accompanying adults understand call times, access rules, emergency procedures, and conduct expectations.

24. Health, Assumption of Risk & Incident Response

Dance competition, workshops, travel, warm-up, stage movement, and event participation involve ordinary physical and operational risks. Participants should compete only when medically and physically able to do so.

- Required participant/guardian waivers and health acknowledgments are handled through event-specific registration documents.
- Participants should promptly report injuries, hazards, or incidents to designated event staff.

- Emergency medical decisions may involve venue personnel, emergency services, guardians, or responsible studio representatives.
- MEL's liability, participant assumptions of risk, and any indemnity obligations are governed by the applicable written terms and law, not solely by this general guide.

25. Accessibility & Reasonable Accommodation

MEL seeks to provide a professional and respectful event environment. Participants or studios requesting a reasonable accommodation should contact MEL as early as possible before the event so the organization can review the request together with venue, safety, scheduling, and operational requirements.

Not every request can be guaranteed, but advance communication gives MEL and the venue the best opportunity to evaluate practical options.

26. Changes, Force Majeure & Operational Authority

MEL may make reasonable changes when necessary to protect event quality, safety, fairness, venue compliance, or continued operation.

- Dates, venues, rooms, schedules, performance order, judges, faculty, event format, awards, capacity, or logistics may change when necessary.
- Weather, government action, public-health conditions, transportation disruption, venue failure, technical issues, emergencies, labor disruptions, security events, or other circumstances outside reasonable control may require modification, postponement, relocation, or cancellation.
- Participant remedies are governed by the applicable event-specific terms and applicable law.

27. Brand Protection & Intellectual Property

MEL Dance Competition, Movement Excellence League, official logos, visual identity, competition materials, evaluation resources, broadcasts, designs, graphics, documents, and other protected content may be used only as authorized.

- Unauthorized commercial reproduction, modification, sale, sublicensing, impersonation, or misleading use of MEL materials is prohibited.
- Studios and participants may share approved public promotional materials in a manner that accurately represents their participation.
- Use of third-party music, choreography, trademarks, or other intellectual property remains subject to the rights and permissions applicable to that content.

28. Acceptance & Final Authority

Registration and participation indicate agreement to comply with the official materials applicable to the event, including published rules, registration terms, waivers/releases, venue policies, Fee Schedules, and authorized operational decisions.

MEL retains final organizational authority over official competition administration, subject to applicable law and any written rights granted in the controlling event documents.

Version control

This Version 1.1 is the general MEL Official Competition & Participation Guide - U.S. Edition. It replaces the prior general 2026 English call/rules document for new U.S. use. Future versions may update this framework as MEL's legal, operational, judging, technology, tour, and market requirements evolve.

Final Message

MEL Dance Competition is building more than a stage schedule. We are building a Regional network designed to create meaningful performance experiences, educational opportunities, scholarships, professional relationships, and long-term pathways for dancers and studios.

Each Regional Event is an opportunity to compete, learn, connect, and become part of a growing MEL community in the United States and beyond.

Ready to compete?

Visit MELDanceCompetition.com for current Regional Events, official registration links, Fee Schedules, event-specific rules, and activated Workshop or qualification opportunities.

Build the future of dance - together.

MEL DANCE COMPETITION | MOVEMENT EXCELLENCE LEAGUE