



UCWDC® JUDGE CERTIFICATION CODE OF CONDUCT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The United Country Western Dance Council® is an international organization which promotes country western dance by producing festivals and competitions across the world. We host the annual Country Dance World Championships® for partner dancers and line dancers and we advocate country dancing as a social activity for people of all ages and abilities.

1.1 Purpose

This document outlines the Code of Conduct for all UCWDC Certified Judges, Judge-Apprentices and Judge-Candidates.

The United Country Western Dance Council (UCWDC) has a duty to provide guidance to its judges, judges in apprentice status, and approved judge applicants (so designated as candidates) on standards of behavior and ethical conduct.

Certified Judges, Judge-Apprentices and Judge-Candidates of the UCWDC are required to conduct themselves at all times in accordance with the current Bylaws, Polices, Procedures, and Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct represents the UCWDC's commitment to high standards. It should be regarded as minimum expectations for performance and behavior by all Certified Judges, Judge-Apprentices and Judge-Candidates.

2. STANDARDS

It is an honor and a privilege to be a UCWDC Certified Judge, Judge-Apprentice or Judge-Candidate. This designated status reflects the experience and expertise that comes from high-level training, teaching, and/or dancing, as well as an aptitude for learning and adapting to constantly developed methods of adjudication. The position of judge demands application of all published judge certification documents (to include Curriculum, Structure & Standards, Methodology, Code of Conduct, Rules, and Scoring Format). Behavior consistent with the status of judge, showing respect for judging criteria, the judging arena, competitors, contest staff, event directors, events, and the UCWDC as an organization, is required, as is a dedication to UCWDC contest priorities in a concerted effort to provide the best results possible. Judges who have a social media footprint must use it responsibly with the above in mind.

Please remember as a Certified Judge, Judge-Apprentice or Judge-Candidate you are always publicly considered to be an Ambassador of the UCWDC, whether judging or not judging at an event. Even outside of events, the public views you in this regard. It is essential to realize that the quality of a judge's behavior affects the image of an event, and the UCWDC as an organization. You are as such bound by this Code of Conduct for your duration as a judge, and automatically agree to these tenets without exception each time that you work as an employee of an event:

- Professional conduct must always be maintained, utilizing proper decorum in dealing with competitors, contest staff, event directors, and other members of the dance community;
- Proper dress as specifically requested by the event director is expected during all judging assignments;
- Be on time for all assignments (at least 15 minutes prior to the start of the contest unless otherwise stipulated), and refrain from viewing any of the warmups or music preview provided to the competitors;
- No texting or phone calls are allowed during your judging assignments, and as such, cell phones should either be turned off or not be taken into the contest arena;



- No alcoholic beverages should be imbibed prior to your judging assignment for that day, and such drinking will not be tolerated;
- Refrain from eating meals while you are actively judging, except for a small snack taken during breaks (or quickly between heats) if you are scheduled for a long contest;
- Refrain from talking to your fellow judges during heats of competition, as idle chatter is distracting and disrespectful to the competitors while they are dancing (questions of rules and procedures need to be directed to the contest coordinator, not a fellow judge);
- During shift on a contest panel, judges must focus their entire attention on the contestants, must have a positive demeanor and facial appearance toward the contestants, and make every attempt to complete the marking of their ballots for the current heat before the next contest heat enters the floor;
- Should there be a problem during the competition, any judge may contact the contest coordinator, and is advised to do so immediately to resolve any issue before the next contest heat commences;
- No judge, contest official, or contest coordinator may approach a competitor concerning his/her performance, dress, floor-craft, choreography, technique, execution, or any rules violation until after the contest shift has concluded its very last heat;
- In the event a judge feels the need to approach a competitor after the contest shift has concluded, it is recommended that the judge have a witness (a fellow judge, contest official, or contest coordinator) during any discussion with the competitor (and coach, if possible);
- A judge is not allowed to individually critique or make written comments about a competitor while they are actively assigned to judge that competitor's specific session of competition;
- A judge must recuse himself/herself from judging a specific division of competition if a personal partner, dancing partner, teaching partner, training partner, business partner, or relative is being judged (where the responsibility for recusing himself/herself rests with the judge, who must notify the proper contest official or contest coordinator before the session begins);
- No fraternization between a judge and a specific competitor being judged by him/her may occur prior to or during a contest session until the session has concluded all competition heats;
- When not on shift, judges are encouraged to socialize equitably with event patrons, however, they may not isolate themselves in the company of any contestant(s) they are judging during the event (that is, share lodging with, privately converse with, perceivably coach with, or publicly fraternize with);
- Any private lessons given by a judge to competitors they are judging may not be given until after the competitors are finished competing said competition session that was judged (and only if he/she is not judging them again for that event);
- A judge may never coerce, intimidate, or in any way perceivably threaten contestants into taking private lessons or coaching from him/her;



- Private lessons at an event should be preferably perceived as being initiated and asked for by competitors rather than offered by judges, although judges may dispense free critique if asked by competitors as to how the judge might see improvement in the competitors' performance;
- Judges may not discuss their own contest observations or reasons for their markings with any competitor(s) until after the competitor(s) are finished competing;
- Judges may never discuss other judges contest observations or markings that they may inadvertently witness, and all discussions or proceedings that are privileged to the event and the competition may not be revealed beyond the event's contest staff, and the contest staff should only be notified on a need-to-know basis (when in doubt about the information or the issue, please refer individuals to either the contest coordinator, or the event director);

3. RULES

Judges will further acknowledge and adhere to the following rules to maintain their position as a Certified Judge, Judge-Apprentice or Judge-Candidate:

1. You agree to use in its detail and entirety the Curriculum, Structure & Standards, Methodology, Rules, Scoring Format, as well as this Code of Conduct, as developed for and articulated to certified judges.
2. Your scoring marks may be evaluated, and contest videos reviewed where the marks were made, to insure the use and application of Methodology, Curriculum, and Structure & Standards. If there is enough evidence, either of clerical or visual import that shows a critical instance or a chronic pattern of not using these applications fairly and correctly, a review may be initiated. Such review could yield a warning with probation, or a suspension with probation. If additional education or examination is mandated by the review, such must be successfully completed before said suspension is lifted.
3. You agree your name will be directly associated with your scores at event(s) and your scores (with your name attached) may be released or published publicly.
4. You must be current in your annual dues for UCWDC Associate Membership before you can actively participate in Judging or Judge Certification work for that year. If you are not current, you will be put in 'pending' status where Judging or Judge Certification work may not be done until you are once again in good standing with UCWDC Associate Membership department.
5. You will complete all annual Continuing Education and Fundamental B requirements, open book tests, scheduled reviews, or any other assignments deemed necessary on time. Failure to do so will put you into 'pending' status taking you out of 'active' status until such required work is successfully completed (some form of monetary fine, or other penalty, might also be issued).
6. Your full understanding of the current UCWDC Rules and Appendices, complete with a working knowledge of the Scoring Format, is expected always.
7. You will always speak positively about other UCWDC judges, UCWDC events and event directors, and the organization of the UCWDC. You will also speak positively to our UCWDC competitors and customers. Failure to conduct yourself accordingly could result in a warning, a suspension, or a revocation of judge certification, depending on the severity of the issue or offense.



8. You will contact the Office of Judge Certification as soon as possible if any of your contact information should change (mailing address, email address, phone numbers, etc.).
9. You will forward all issues pertaining to judge certification to the Office of Judge Certification.
10. You do so acknowledge that certification does not guarantee employment as a judge at any UCWDC event. Undue pressure from a judge to gain employment as a judge prior to an event will not be tolerated and could be subject to the penalties listed in this section.
11. You agree to adhere to the policies and procedures set forth by the UCWDC Judge Certification program and understand that by accepting and performing work at a UCWDC event, that said agreement is binding. If you fail to follow this agreement, you acknowledge that by the tenets of this agreement, the UCWDC has the right to suspend or revoke your judge certification.

4. NOTIFICATION OF VIOLATION

Judges who engage in unacceptable behavior or whose performance is unsatisfactory, as determined at the discretion of the UCWDC management, are subject to disciplinary action and/or revocation of their certification.

ALL Certified Judges, Judge-Apprentices and Judge-Candidates involved in group complaints or violation activities will be reviewed on an individual basis and not as a group.

4.1 Preliminary Investigation of the Complaint

1. A complaint regarding the alleged offense of individual(s) must be sent to the Office of Judge Certification with any corresponding evidence including, but not limited to any record of judging marks, any video of the performances that correspond to these marks, and any testimony given.
2. The Vice President of Judge Certification, or an appropriate appointed designee of the Vice President, will review the issue cited in the complaint and conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if it is in violation of this Code of Conduct. The Vice president or appointed designee will contact individuals as required by the investigation to acquire all the necessary information, including witness statements to make an informed decision in a timely manner.
3. If an appointed designee is used, that person will then make known in a timely manner his/her finding to the Vice President of Judge Certification.

4.2 Investigation and Discovery

1. If the Vice President of Judge Certification finds in the Preliminary Investigation that the complaint has possible factual validity about the alleged violation, they will contact the individual(s) in question (in writing) identifying that a complaint regarding their actions in violation with this Code of Conduct was filed against them and that a Preliminary Investigation was conducted and request their defense. The individual(s) in question are to provide a written statement within ten (10) calendar days regarding their alleged involvement in the suspected offense and their admission, with any mitigating circumstances, or denial of involvement.



2. After receiving the individual(s) written defense statement the Vice President of Judge Certification shall gather all information relative to the complaint and put forward to a jury of the full membership of the Judge Certification Committee.
 - a. By practice and precedence, the Judge Certification Committee is made up of all active Educators, Examiners, and Contest Coordinators (all of which must be Master Level Judges in good standing), plus the Line Dance Chair, the UCWDC President, and the UCWDC Secretary.
3. If the Preliminary Investigation does not yield enough validity about the alleged violation listed in the Complaint, then the plaintiff or person registering the complaint will be notified by the Vice President of Judge Certification of either this lack of evidence or that the Complaint does not fall within the discretion of the Judge Certification Code of Conduct.
4. When the Preliminary Investigation has been completed, the Office of Judge Certification will appropriately respond to all parties as to the disposition of the case.

4.3 Verdict 'For or Against' the Complaint

1. Once a Complaint has been sent to the full membership of the Judge Certification Committee, then the jury of these members shall consider all evidence, deliberate through mutual discussion, and when designated by the Vice President of Judge Certification, render a vote by direction of the Office of Judge Certification to determine whether the person accused, the defendant, is innocent or guilty of the violation detailed in the Complaint. If the verdict is against the Complaint, then the defendant will be innocent of the charge(s) and so notified by the Office of Judge Certification.
2. Direct communication from the individual(s) in question with the jury for the purpose of influencing the outcome of the case is prohibited and may result in a subsequent second complaint.
3. Maintaining the appearance of propriety and ensuring impartiality is crucial to all members of the Judge Certification Committee. All communication must flow through the Office of Judge Certification and not be held directly with the individual(s) in question.
4. If the Judge Certification jury of members find in favor of the Complaint, then said jury will determine along with the guilty verdict, the penalty that will be assigned to the defendant. The jury will consider a penalty that is commensurate with the severity of the violation(s) listed in the Complaint. Depending on the determined severity of the case, such penalties could fall into three areas of action.
 - a. A penalty for a 'lesser' violation will be enacted by giving the guilty party a warning, with an assigned length of probation to ensure that the violation does not occur again.
 - b. A penalty for a 'greater' violation will be enacted by giving the guilty party an assigned length of suspension, with an additional assigned length of probation to ensure that the violation does not occur again.
 - c. A penalty for an 'extreme' violation will be complete revocation of certification for the guilty party.
 - d. Also, depending on the circumstances, the guilty party may be assigned work product in the form of education and/or examination that must be completed successfully before reinstatement to a level of active judging.



5. When the Verdict on the Complaint has been rendered, and the Verdict is found in favor of the Complaint, the Office of Judge Certification will appropriately respond, identifying the violation, the penalty and any additional training requirements to:
 - a. all parties in a timely manner as to the disposition of the case;
 - b. all Event Directors in a timely manner as to the disposition of the case.

5. NOTIFICATION OF APPEAL

In the event of a Verdict for a Complaint, where a penalty has been determined, and notification of the upheld violation has been issued to the guilty party, the judge who had been penalized has the right of appeal.

1. The appeal must be registered with the Office of Judge Certification in writing within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of being notified of the UCWDC's decision.
2. All appeals must have merit and either;
 - a. shed new light on information previously presented;
 - b. provide new evidence not originally seen by the Judge Certification jury members;
 - c. disclose a failure to follow procedures or standards set forth in this policy.
3. All appeals will be reviewed and rendered with an Appeal decision made by a special ad hoc Review Panel consisting of five (5) randomly chosen members of which three (3) will be Judge Certification committee members and two (2) will be members of the UCWDC Ethics Committee. The Panel's spokesperson (chair) will be selected internally by the Panel itself.
4. All information, specifically that which is declared for detailing the reason for the Appeals merit, will be presented and re-evaluated and in a majority vote the Review Panel may pass one of the following decisions:
 - a. uphold the original decision of the jury of Judge Certification, or;
 - b. lessen the original decision of the Verdict and assigned penalty by one standing, and;
 - c. in any regard, no matter the decisions of the original Judge Certification jury or the Review Panel for the Appeals process, the guilty party may not by contract with this Code of Conduct have any recourse to declare, demand, seek through outside processes, or hold accountable the UCWDC, its events, or its directors for any lost contracts or lost wages or lost professional considerations during the time of the investigations, or rulings, and the subsequent notifications listed herein.
5. When the decision of the Review Panel has been rendered, the Office of Judge Certification will appropriately respond to all parties in a timely manner as to the disposition of the Appeals case.

END OF POLICY