



Welcome to the UCWDC community! We're excited to have you join us in growing and sharing the joy of country western dance.

Whether you are preparing individual students or couples, UCWDC has developed a great system for Newcomers to enter their competitive journey.

To help you get started, we've gathered a few key resources to support your success as a UCWDC teacher.

Official Rules and Guidelines:

You can find the current UCWDC rules, competition guidelines, and event information on our website here:

Link to: [Pro-Am Rules](#)

Link to: [Couples Rules](#)

These documents cover everything from division structures and scoring criteria to dress codes and age classifications. We recommend reviewing them thoroughly as you begin working with your students.

Understanding the Newcomer Division

While there are many levels that your students could start in based on their prior experience and proficiency, it is especially important to fully understand the criteria for the **Newcomer Division** as it is the most restricted. Newcomer dancers are expected to follow specific timing, patterns and costuming for their level. This structure helps build solid fundamentals and ensures a fair comparison for those students entering our community.

Newcomer Division Structure

The UCWDC Newcomer divisions are designed to provide a clear and progressive path for newer dancers. Here's how they break down:

- **Newcomer IV** is the starting level (for dancers with the least experience), with the most basic figures.
- Dancers progress upward through **Newcomer III** and **Newcomer II**.
- **Newcomer I** is the highest level within the newcomer division. This level provides a bridge between syllabus-based learning and more open choreography while maintaining consistency in timing. Newcomer I allows for more creative freedom in choreography. However, all routines must still follow the correct basic timing(s) for each dance with a timing exception allowed for the purposes of doing a foot change. There are also patterns from the Newcomer III or II syllabus that incorporate alternative timing(s) that may be used, but only as described in the UCWDC syllabus.

Starting Position

All Couples and Pro-Am competitors must start with their bodies touching each other. Additionally, all Newcomer divisions must begin in a closed hold dance position. There are 7 different closed positions allowed to help create the best variation for each individual dance.

Link to: [Additional Movement Limitations for Newcomers](#)

Syllabus Videos- Newcomer Levels IV, III, and II

We offer **syllabus videos** for Newcomer Levels IV, III, and II to help guide your teaching. These videos demonstrate the exact patterns permitted in each level. Competitors must strictly follow the figures as they are danced in the videos-no substitutions, variations, or additional patterns are allowed at these levels. In creating choreography, you may use any figure from a lower skill level at your discretion.

Link to: [Syllabus Step List](#)

Link to: [Syllabus Videos \(Youtube\)](#)

Link to: [UCWDC Syllabus Webpage](#)

Newcomer Costuming

It is especially important to understand the costuming requirements for your newcomer students. While the costumes allowed are more restricted, particularly for **Newcomer IV, III and II**, this is intended to help students get started in their competitive journey for less of an investment in costuming. Below is a link to rules specifically pertaining to **Newcomer Costuming**.

Newcomer specific costuming rules can be found at:

Section I.1.b.i

Section I.3

Section I.5

Link to: [Costuming Rules](#)

Finding Your Appropriate Level and Crossover Rules

It can occasionally be challenging to find the best starting point for your students if they have had prior training in other forms of dance. The UCDWC has rules and guidelines to help you find an appropriate starting place.

Divisions and Crossover Rules:

Link to: [Pro-Am Divisions](#)

Link to: [Pro-Am Crossover Rules](#)

Link to: [Couples Divisions](#)

Link to: [Couples Crossover Rules](#)

What Judges are Looking For

The UCWDC has a rigorous process for the certification of its judges. To learn more about what the judges are looking for within the UCWDC we recommend reviewing the following documents from the Judge Certification:

Link to: Part 1: [Couples Curriculum: The Dances-Basic Concepts](#)

Link to: Part 2: [Couples Curriculum: Newcomer/Novice](#)

Link to: Part 3: [Couples Curriculum: Intermediate/Advanced](#)

Link to: [Standards for Partner Dance](#)

Link to: [Comment Codes](#)

Link to: [Medal Descriptions](#)

We're Here to Help

The UCWDC is a welcoming and collaborative community. If you have any questions, need clarification, or just want to connect, please don't hesitate to reach out at:

Lee Harpe, Education Committee Chair, education@ucwdc.org

Beth Emerson, VP of Rules, rules@ucwdc.org

Clive Stevens, VP Judge Certification, judgecertification@ucwdc.org

Kathy St. Jean, UCWDC President, president@ucwdc.org

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Keith Armbruster, Bylaws and Policies Chair, info@keitharmbruster.com

Tony Lee, World's Director, director@ucwdcworlds.com

We're thrilled to welcome you to the floor and can't wait to see the inspiration and commitment you and your students will bring to the organization.

Warmest Regards,

UCWDC Education Department