

This is a solo competition, open to dancers 18 years of age or older (as of January 1, 2026).

Dancers may choose soft shoe or hard shoe, and must perform a 90-second routine, in a manner suitable for a general audience, on a stage no larger than 28' x 28'.

The core style of the routine must be Irish dance. Participants are challenged to explore the blending of traditional Irish dancing with progressive upper body and head movements, to create a unique interpretation of Irish dancing in a manner which broadens our art form. Articulation and execution of footwork, timing, and rhythm are of the utmost importance, and the performance should portray a character/theme through dance and mime.

Routines performed live at the World Championships (for those who are selected) must replicate the routine submitted in the video, unless changes have been recommended and/or approved by the Lord of the Dance team.

The music chosen should reflect the character/theme of the performance, and be specifically Irish i.e., Reels, Light Jigs, Slip Jigs, Single Jigs, Double Jigs, Hornpipes, Irish marches, Irish slow airs, or set dance music. A cappella segments are also acceptable. A tune outside of this range which enhances or depicts the character/theme may be incorporated for a maximum of 16 bars for the live performance at the World Championships, with prior approval from the Lord of the Dance team.

All music must comply with the ownership, source, licensing and submission requirements as outlined on page 10 of this syllabus.

Costuming must be suitable for a general audience, with modesty in mind. The costume used for the live performance at the World Championships may be enhanced from what is worn in the video submission, with prior approval from the Lord of the Dance team. Changes to costuming must not be substantially dissimilar to that used in the video.

Small/basic props may be utilized, provided they enhance the performance. Props must be portable and of a kind that can be placed and removed easily and quickly. The use of "smoke", "straw", "confetti", "liquid" etc. will not be permitted. This rule will be strictly enforced.

Entrants are required to submit a written account of their dance, which should not exceed 250 words, to the CNIDC Chairperson, with a copy of their music, no later than January 15, 2026.

Given the size of Canadian Nationals, there will be one competition, combining male and female competitors.

The competitions will be adjudicated by one of the 2026 Canadian National Irish Dance Championship panels.