

CMU BDC Instructor Expectations

1. Understand and respect that we are a student club

- a. Instructors will be conscientious that we are all students first. Dance is a secondary hobby pursued for stress relief, socialization, and potential competitive engagement.
- b. Instructors will be supportive of supplemental learning opportunities. The club (and individual dancers) may utilize additional resources to expand their dance knowledge in addition to professional instruction. This includes, but is not limited to, student taught lessons and veteran mentorship.
- c. Instructors will recognize the leadership of the student board. The students ultimately dictate the structure and intentions of their club. Instructor influence is encouraged and highly valued, but not decisive.
- d. Instructors will utilize the student board to resolve conflicts. Potential or perceived problems will be discussed privately with one or more board members. It will not involve or interfere with other club members or activities (including lessons).
- e. Instructors will align with the club's prioritization of retention over perfection. Student organizations exist solely because of the members that they serve. It is more important for members to have fun and keep coming back, than it is for them to be perfect. Instructors must understand this unique dynamic of collegiate clubs.

2. Contribute to a welcoming and supportive dance environment

- a. Instructors will create a safe space for learning and growing. Dancing involves many layers of understanding and expression. Instructors should practice flexibility and forgiveness for dancers to comfortably and confidently explore and experiment in this space, even if it is not always technically correct. Be kind and encouraging, even in the presence of perceived mistakes.
- b. Instructors will practice patience and positivity. Dancers are expected to be respectful and take lessons seriously. Even so, some may still come without proper attire, and others may catch on slower even when they are trying their best. Instructors should provide adequate time and support as dancers learn both expectations and movements.
- c. Instructors will accept and appreciate all levels of engagement. Some dancers may devote all of their free time to practicing. Others may only show up for a few lessons. All are appreciated members of this club.
- d. Instructors will teach all levels with consistent enthusiasm. Dancers will not be singled out, positively or negatively, on the basis of natural talent or potential. Group lessons should provide equal benefit for all participants across all levels.
- e. Instructors will be physically respectful of a dancer's space and body. While physical touch is readily expected and accepted due to the nature of ballroom dancing, it must ALWAYS be consensual. Instructors should actively seek permission before touching a dancer in any way, i.e. leading another dancer or fixing their form.

- f. Instructors will be mindful of dancers' backgrounds. CMU, and the CMU BDC, welcome a diverse range of individuals. Instructors should be actively aware of this and minimize the expression and/or influence of personal views while giving instruction. Discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexuality, physical appearance, etc. will not be tolerated.

3. Provide structured, professional instruction to expand dancers' knowledge

- a. Instructors will come prepared with intentional lesson plans. Group lessons are intended for instruction/review of pre-determined topics. Although student questions are encouraged and should be addressed, instructors should prepare specific moves, routines, and or techniques that they intend to discuss. The student board may work with instructors to develop a guiding curriculum each semester.
- b. Instructors will be timely and dependable. An instructor should be on time to lessons and preferably a few minutes early so that lessons can begin promptly. When unable to make a lesson, they should give ample warning about the lack of availability so that the club can prepare alternate instruction.
- c. Instructors will provide constructive feedback to further students' goals. Care should be taken when providing individual feedback during group lessons so that it is actionable, productive, and concise. Instructors are expected to guide a dancers' learning through compassion rather than criticism.
- d. Instructors will be receptive and flexible to student needs. Different students require different styles of teaching. While some can handle and appreciate strict expectations, others get discouraged by it. Instructors should be able to recognize what a student needs and adjust their teaching in order to best help them learn.
- e. Instructors will cultivate a broad understanding and appreciation of dance. Collegiate clubs are many dancers' first experience with ballroom, and for most, with dancing in general. Thus, we are building a foundation. As much as possible, instructors should teach fundamentals that will serve students in many contexts. Help dancers recognize both common themes and distinctive traits of each dance.
- f. Instructors will elevate the club competitively. For dancers that want to be competitive, instructors will serve as a coach. They may have higher expectations and provide more rigorous feedback in order to prepare dancers for competition. If present at a competition, instructors should take care to engage with and support CMU BDC dancers.