



THE ACADEMY OF DANCE

Pointe Policy

updated July 2024

Pointe work is a vital part of ballet, particularly for girls. It is an advanced form of technique that should only be attempted with teacher approval and under teacher supervision. In order to ensure the safety of our dancers and to establish a uniform standard, we require all students to meet the following criteria before they are permitted to begin pointe work:

- be at least 10 years of age by the date they begin pointe work
- be taking ballet technique classes at least three days per week
- maintain regular attendance in all classes for which they are registered
- Pass the following checks for mobility, strength, body control, and technique:
 - the “pencil test” - be able to point the foot with a pencil laid flush along the top, demonstrating a straight line
 - 16 temps levés on one foot with the bottom foot fully extended, maintaining ideal alignment for at least 8 of the 16
 - 5 “airplanes” - plié on parallel supporting leg with upper body and working leg held horizontal
 - 20 élevés on one foot in parallel, maintaining ideal alignment and achieving a full demi-pointe
 - execute a controlled single pirouette en dehors to the left and to the right, landing in 5th position
 - maintain a high demi-pointe on one foot during a 30-second combination at the barre
 - 16 plié-relevés on one foot maintaining ideal alignment
 - 8 doming exercises with straight toes
 - demonstrate piqué to demi-pointe with proper initiation and straight piqué leg
 - maintain alignment of spine, pelvis, knees, and feet in class work
 - maintain turnout and engagement of core, leg, and foot muscles in class work

Students will be given periodic “progress reports” in which they will be graded from 1-4 in all areas of assessment. The scores translate as follows:

- 1 = underdeveloped; make this top priority
- 2 = in progress but not yet meeting expectations
- 3 = meets expectations (pass)
- 4 = exceeds expectations (pass)

Once the director approves students to begin pointe work, they must be professionally fitted for pointe shoes to ensure a good fit in a shoe that is suited to their unique foot shape. We often take a “field trip” to the dance store together as a class for the first fitting. In addition to pointe shoes, dancers will need to purchase ribbons, elastic, and director-approved padding (lamb’s wool pads). Additional items may be purchased but are not necessary (stitch kit, pointe shoe bag, toe tape, etc.).

After purchasing their shoes, we will schedule a time for the dancers to learn to sew their pointe shoes. A family member can help with this project; however, every dancer needs to be able to sew their own pointe shoes, both because it is a time-honored rite of passage for pointe students and because it is a practical necessity!

Once students begin pointe work, pointe work will be incorporated into all classes for short periods of time (beginning with about 15 minutes per day). Students should bring their pointe shoes to every class going forward.