

2025-26

Milwaukee Ballet II

Dancer Handbook

Milwaukee Ballet II (MBII) is a post-secondary vocational program. MBII is a second company of students that make up of the next generation of dancers. During this year-long program, MBII students train with a world-renowned faculty, perform alongside our main Company in their full-length productions and represent our organization in the community through impactful outreach programming.

This handbook is designed to supplement specific policies within the Milwaukee Ballet Employee Handbook, including but not limited to workplace accidents, complimentary tickets, and other general policies, and to help answer specific questions regarding policies for the Milwaukee Ballet II Program. Review both the Employee Handbook and this MBII Handbook thoroughly and direct questions to the MBII Director or to staff. The policies, rules, and regulations set forth will be strictly followed.

Staff and faculty will use their best judgment while enforcing all Milwaukee Ballet II policies. If you have questions or concerns, please first see your MBII Director. If you feel your needs have not been met, please then contact the School & Academy Director regarding instruction on artistic matters or administrative issues.

Milwaukee Ballet II Mission

The Milwaukee Ballet II program, established in 1978, nurtures and develops dancers' technical skills and artistry required for a professional career in dance. The Milwaukee Ballet II curriculum is based on the artistic vision of Milwaukee Ballet and gives dancers the training needed to bridge the gap between student and professional through performing opportunities with the Milwaukee Ballet Company, as well as performances created specifically for Milwaukee Ballet II. These dancers are a vital part of the Community Engagement's Department's mission to reach and educate the community. Their participation in outreach programs through teaching and performing fully enhances their education.

Admission and Retention

Dancers must have completed their secondary education (high school diploma, secondary certificate, or GED equivalent) and have auditioned for consideration into the Milwaukee Ballet II Program through stand-alone audition dates, video audition submissions, and/or invitation to audition through Summer Intensive or other recruitment opportunities. The Milwaukee Ballet II Program is up to a two-year program where students must successfully complete each individual year for completion and promotion, and later, towards graduation. Exceptions may be made due to individual dancers' needs in granting a third year. Dancers are in general aged 18 to 22; however, admittance into the program is subject to the discretion or recommendation of the MBII Director.

Retention criteria include but are not limited to dancer achievement in both class work and performance, attendance, comportment, and adherence to MBII policies and procedures. Dancers found to be deficient in any of these categories will be notified before or during their bi-annual evaluations and conferences so that they may either rectify their performance within the program, or, if no improvements are made, be withdrawn from the program. Dancers' performance in the first year will determine promotion/reengagement for a second year.

Dress Code and Shoes

Ladies wear pink tights and a leotard (your choice of style and color). Pointe shoes should be worn for daily technique classes for center combinations, except when a designated pointe class is scheduled.

Gentlemen wear tights and a fitted T-shirt (shorts are OK). Hair must be clean and cut short or pulled back into a ponytail, bun, or bandana.

Flat and pointe shoes are provided for most MBII dancers for performances. Please see Wardrobe Supervisor and Shoe Manager Christy Seibers for details on your shoe allotment and how to request/exchange shoes.

Attendance and Grading

Attendance is taken in all MBII classes, including Pilates, ballet technique, pointe, pas de deux, and contemporary. Dancers are expected to consistently attend every class scheduled, making every effort to schedule personal appointments outside of their daily class schedule. Dancers missing over 5% of any class section will be notified and may not earn credit hours or be awarded successful completion of the class. This policy pertains to both excused and unexcused absences. Special exceptions may be made at the MBII Director's discretion regarding injury, illness, or special student circumstances. For a detailed report of the number of allowed absences for any particular class section, please contact the School Programs Manager to receive further clarification.

Each instructor completes grading for their respective classes. Dancers will be graded each semester on a pass/fail scale. Components of the grading requirements consist of completion of learning objectives, attendance, participation, and showcase performances or other summative assessments.

MBII Gentlemen are required to attend additional pas de deux classes with School & Academy level students: Pre-Pro Program classes on Tuesdays 11:15am-12:15pm and Academy II classes on Thursday evenings 8:00-9:00pm. These classes are not optional and are included in the required coursework for MBII. Gentlemen will be excused from these additional School & Academy pas de deux classes only during production weeks, dependent on schedule.

Grievances and Appeals

Staff and faculty will use their best judgment while enforcing all Milwaukee Ballet II policies. If you have questions or concerns, please first see your MBII Director. If you feel your needs have not been met, please then contact the School & Academy Director regarding instruction on artistic matters or administrative issues.

Appeals Procedure

Within 15 days of the action/decision that prompted the appeal, the student appeals to the faculty or staff member responsible for making the initial decision. This appeal must be made in writing and should contain substantiating reasons for the appeal, a request for a specific remedy, and a rationale for the remedy sought. If the outcome is negative and the student requests written notification, the faculty member or body must provide the student with a written statement of the reason for the adverse decision.

If the above outcome is negative, the student may, within 10 days of receiving the decision, appeal to the School & Academy Director. The appeal must be made in writing and should contain the reason for the appeal, substantial evidence in support of the appeal, and the solution sought and be submitted to the School & Academy Director. The School & Academy Director has final decision making and may reverse any consequential decision making based on evidence found after a thorough investigation.

Phones Use in the Studio

As a courtesy to your fellow artists, staff, and our guests, we respectfully ask that you refrain from using your mobile phones during rehearsals. If you have an emergency and need to use your phone, please excuse yourself and leave the studio. Phone use is allowed during breaks, but at no other time are phones permitted in the studio.

Progress, Evaluations and Conferences

Dancers are provided with instruction and mentorship regarding job placement, audition materials preparation, and career development. Dancers are encouraged to meet informally with their instructors for additional guidance. Written Evaluations are composed by the MBII Director and fellow faculty. These Evaluations are prepared at the conclusion of the fall semester and spring semester. Students should use their Mid-Year Evaluations and Conferences to determine their focus for corrections to address in the second semester.

At the end of the fall semester and spring semester, conferences for each dancer will be held with the MBII Director. Performance review and career advisement will take place during such conference meetings. Dates and more details will be announced in advance.

Following completion of the program, graduates go on to secure jobs within the dance field throughout a variety of pathways including trainee and apprenticeships with international and national ballet companies, contracts with professional companies and other second companies, local theater companies, prestigious dance university programs, and various commercial dance opportunities. Dancers are supported in their endeavors to find job placements within the dance community and networks.

Dancers are notified of MBII reengagement in early March with responses expected from dancers by the end of March.

Credits and Transfers

MBII is unable to accept and recognize credits from other institutions. Credits earned from MBII may not be accepted and recognized by other institutions; however, MBII will make every effort to provide student transcripts and curricular information to dancers wishing to transfer their credits to another institution.

Injury or Illness

Dancers suffering from injury or illness should clearly communicate all injuries and/or illnesses to the MBII Director and/or instructor(s) at the start of each class. If a dancer is injured and unable to participate in classes, they are expected to attend and observe all scheduled classes.

Dancers who suffer any injuries or accidents at work must report this to the MBII Director and Company Manager immediately to secure any necessary medical attention or treatment. More details can be found in the MB Employee Handbook and through the Company Manager.

Dancers who have injuries sustaining beyond one week are required to seek medical care and have an established care and recovery plan. This plan, accompanied by a doctor's note, must be shared with the School Programs Manager who will also distribute details to your Director and instructors. Significant injuries sustained beyond a 6-week period will require a meeting with the MBII Director to identify any opportunities for accommodations, modifications, or potential withdrawal from the program. Efforts will be made to the best of the organization's ability to accommodate injured dancers' successful completion of the program.

Dancers may receive athletic training services and care Froedtert Sports Medicine Center and Medical College of Wisconsin team on site at the Baumgartner Center for Dance. To consent to such services, dancers must complete and submit the consent form provided. Occasionally, the Sports Medicine Team may require dancers to be seen offsite at their Wauwatosa clinic or at other clinic locations. Dancers are responsible for their own transportation to and from these offsite appointments.

Dancer Wellness

Dancers of the MBII program will be provided monthly workshops surrounding mental health topics for dancers provided by the Wisconsin School of Professional Psychology (WSPP at 9120 W Hampton Ave #90 Milwaukee, WI 53225, Lower Level). Dancers requesting individual sessions and additional support beyond these workshops can secure sessions for a flat \$5 cash rate per session by contacting Nick Walkowiak at Walkowiak.Nicholas@wspp.edu or call (414) 466-9777.

Physical therapy is available at the Baumgartner Center for Dance Physical Therapy room on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays during the season. A sign-up sheet will be provided for available treatment times. Additional care will be offered onsite on Tuesdays whenever available for dancers seeking further treatment.

All MBII dancers are required to attend a physical exam at the start of the program each year. These exams are complimentary and are provided by Froedtert and Medical College of Wisconsin Sports Medicine team. Additional details will be distributed prior to the start of the year.

Upon request, MBII dancers wishing to meet with a Sports Dietitian can seek advisement from MBII staff for nutrition referrals with preferred providers. Dancers' personal insurance will be used for such services.

Discounted membership at Wisconsin Athletic Club sites may be available for MBII Dancers. Additional information is forthcoming.

Performances, Outreaches and Showcases

When in Milwaukee Ballet rehearsals and performances, MBII dancers are expected to maintain the same level of respect and discipline as in MBII classes and rehearsals, including dress code guidelines. If an MBII dancer is asked to understudy a Company role, they are strongly advised to remain active during the rehearsal, learning their assigned role inside and out, if not studying additional roles in the production.

MOMENTUM is the annual MBII showcase. Tentative production information and performances dates will be shared soon.

Additional performance opportunities throughout the school year and season will be announced and assigned by both the MBII Director and Community Engagement Manager. MBSA may utilize MBII dancers for guest roles in school showcases.

The MBII Graduation Showcase is held in May at the Baumgartner Center for Dance. For this production, MBII dancers select a classical or contemporary pas de deux or solo to perform. All selections must be approved by the MBII Director. Details forthcoming.

MBII students learn and conduct a large portion of the Community Engagement programming throughout the school year. This allows students to learn valuable teaching, marketing, and development skills to take beyond into their professional careers. Outreach assignments are distributed by both the MBII Director and Community Manager.

Auditions and Travel

Dancers should make every effort to schedule auditions, especially those that require travel, to take place during their scheduled time off. If a dancer must be absent during work weeks, the absence must be approved by the MBII Director with as much advance notice as possible (two-week minimum notice). Dancers will not be given approval for absences that occur during Company and/or MBII production and performance weeks.

International students holding an M-1 visa must seek advanced approval and signature from the School & Academy Director prior to travel outside of the country. Without advanced approval and endorsement of their visa, students will be denied entry back into the U.S. at a port of entry.

Guesting Performances and Costume Rental

Students may perform as a guest for productions outside of Milwaukee Ballet, but advance approval is required. Please obtain, complete, and return a request form with as much advance notice as possible. Costumes may be available to rent via Milwaukee Ballet Wardrobe; please inquire directly for further details.

International students are ineligible for performances with outside organizations, paid or unpaid, unless directly approved by the MBII Director and School & Academy Director.

Students understand that any injuries obtained during the rehearsal process, performances, or auditions cannot be claimed underneath Milwaukee Ballet's Workers Compensation Policies. Although medical care can be provided, your individual insurance will be billed.

Parking

All MBII dancers with vehicles will be issued parking passes for the Marcus Performing Arts Center for use during company productions.

MBII Dancer parking in the Baumgartner Center for Dance lot is not guaranteed but may be requested. See the provided questionnaire link provided by School Programs Manager to request parking at BCD. Abundant, free street parking is available in the area, as well as monthly and flex parking passes in the Italian Community Center parking lot (located across the street from the studio) through [Interstate Parking](#). Use promocode MBC622 for a rate of \$3.55 per day with the Flex-Park 16 Pass.

Contacts & Reporting Absences

Save these contacts in your phone in advance to ensure you can communicate all absences in a timely manner. In the event of your absence from any scheduled Milwaukee Ballet class, rehearsal, production or other event, please contact the individuals below as applicable.

Davit Hovhannisyan MBII Director	for all absences dhovhannisyan@milwaukeeballet.org
-------------------------------------	--

Alyx Johnson School Programs Manager	for all absences Office 414-902-2149, ajohnson@milwaukeeballet.org
---	---

Mary Brennan Company Manager	when Davit and Alyx cannot be reached, and for any MB production absences Office 414-902-2109, mbrennan@milwaukeeballet.org
---------------------------------	--

Kristin Dimmer School Director	for student visa support and any grievances and not directed to MBII Director Office 414-902-2118, kdimmer@milwaukeeballet.org
-----------------------------------	--

THIS HANDBOOK MUST BE SIGNED BY ALL PARTICIPANTS OF THE MILWAUKEE BALLET II PROGRAM.

By signing below, I hereby release the Milwaukee Ballet II Program, its agents and employees, from all liability for personal injury, illness or property damage occurring on or off Milwaukee Ballet premises, whether or not caused by the negligence of the Milwaukee Ballet Company and School, its agents or employees. I have read the complete Milwaukee Ballet Employee handbook and this supplemental packet and understand the MBII policies as outlined. I certify that I am in good health and capable of participating in all activities, rehearsals, and classes. I hereby give permission to the Milwaukee Ballet to take photographs or videos of me to be used in Milwaukee Ballet and Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy promotional materials.

MBII Dancer Name Print

MBII Dancer Signature

Date

Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Dance.

Subject to change. Updated October 24, 2025

2025-26 Milwaukee Ballet II Schedule at a Glance

September 2 First Day of classes and rehearsals

October 13-19 *Giselle* production and performance week @ MPAC. Men: No Pas de deux w/ Academy II

November 24-26 In-studio rehearsals for *The Nutcracker*. Men: No Pas de deux w/ Pre-Pro

November 27 Thanksgiving Day – Closed. No MBII classes or rehearsals. Men: No Pas de deux w/ Academy II

November 28 Closed. No MBII classes or rehearsals

December 1-5 *The Nutcracker* production week

December 6-26 *The Nutcracker* performances @ MPAC. Men: Pas de deux schedule to be determined.

December 27-January 4 Closed. No MBII classes or rehearsals. Men: No Pas de deux w/ Pre-Pro and Academy II

January 5 MBII classes and rehearsals resume

January 13-16 Accreditation Site Visit (National Association of Schools of Dance)

January 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day – Closed. No MBII classes or rehearsals

January 26-February 1 *Encore* production and performance week @ BCD. Men: No Pas de deux w/ Academy II.

February 5-8 *Encore* performances. Men: No Pas de deux w/ Academy II.

February 20-March 1 *MOMENTUM* production week and performances

March 9-15 *Genesis* production and performance week @ Pabst Theater. Men: No Pas de deux w/ Academy II.

March 16-22 Week Off – No MBII classes or rehearsals. Men: No Pas de deux w/ Pre-Pro and Academy II.

April 28-29 Community Engagement ACE Concerts

April 27-May 10 *ALICE (in wonderland)* production and performance weeks @ MPAC. Men: No Pas de deux w/ Academy II (on April 30).

May 11-16 Ballet Ball production and performance week

May 21 MBII Graduation Showcase performance. Last Day of MBII Program for 2025-26 Season.

Milwaukee Ballet II Program

Curricular Table | National Association of Schools of Dance

as of September 2025

Class Name	Age	Hours/Week	Weeks/Year	Total Hours/Year	Total Hours in 15 weeks	Avg Hours per week/3 for determining credit equivalent	Semester Credit Hour Equivalent*
Classical Ballet Technique	18+	6	36	216	14.40	4.8	4.8
Pointe	18+	1	36	36	2.40	0.8	0.8
Women's Technique	18+	1	36	36	2.40	0.8	0.8
Men's Technique	18+	1	36	36	2.40	0.8	0.8
Partnering	18+	3	36	108	7.20	2.4	2.4
Pilates	18+	1	36	36	2.40	0.8	0.8
Contemporary	18+	1	36	36	2.40	0.8	0.8
PEP	18+	1	36	36	2.40	0.8	0.8
MBII Repertoire	18+	10	36	360	24.00	8.0	8
MBC Rehearsal	18+	15	36	540	36.00	12.0	12
School Performance	18+	varies	varies	15	1.00	0.3	0.3
Outreach	18+	varies	varies	44	2.93	1.0	1
Company Performance	18+	varies	varies	115.5	7.70	2.6	2.6
				Total Annual Clock Hours	1614.5	Total Credit Hour Equivalent	35.9

*Semester hours of credit represent at least 3 hours of work each week, on average, for a period of 15 weeks. Achievement shall be consistent with the understanding that credit is earned only when curricular, competency, and all other requirements are met, and the final assessment or equivalent is satisfactorily met.

**Successful completion of the Milwaukee Ballet II program consists of four semesters of 30+ clock hours each.

Milwaukee Ballet School & Academy is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Dance.