

What Is A Drum Corps?

Membership in a drum and bugle corps means many things. Sure, it means you get to travel and perform, learn music, and make new friends. But membership also means taking responsibility for yourself and others around you. It means self-discipline, teamwork, and sharing. It means hard work, mental and physical health, and learning about yourself -- about your character. Membership comes with a lifetime of memories.

Of course, not all drum corps have identical membership requirements. Generally, corps placing in the upper ranks of DCI demands more time, energy, and financial commitment of members than many other corps. But there are corps for everyone, from weekend-only performing corps to Division II and III corps participating in portions of or all of the SUMMER MUSIC GAMES tour. Talent requirements vary accordingly.

Membership in a highly competitive corps comes with heightened demands. From tryouts and auditions in the fall to weekend and weeknight winter rehearsals, through springtime intensive training camps to summer long performance tours, membership definitely means Commitment with a capital C.

It is possible to join some corps at anytime during the year, but new members will find that joining a DCI-member corps during the summer, when the corps is touring and competing, is difficult. The best time to approach a corps about membership is early fall, when the competition season has ended and the corps' brief hiatus (generally September to early October) is over. Many corps hold tryouts/auditions then, but it's still possible to join and receive training with many corps throughout the winter.

DCI corps practice a policy requiring members to receive releases from corps directors before attempting to gain membership in another DCI corps if the change in membership is attempted after March 1 of the competitive year. The upper age limit for membership in a DCI competitive corps is 22. Persons turning that age before June 1 are no longer eligible to march.

Each corps has unique membership requirements; there are no standard practices. To determine membership requirements and procedures, contact the corps of your choice directly by email, telephone, or mail.