



AMERICAN HARP SOCIETY IN DALLAS
HARP ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL 2026
Texas Christian University in Fort Worth
March 14, 2026 9:00am - 5:00pm
RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Rules and Regulations of the AHS Harp Ensemble Festival are binding on all participants, ensemble directors, adjudicators, and festival administration. Copies of these rules and regulations will be provided to every participant and all adjudicators.

A. FESTIVAL DIVISIONS AND CATEGORIES

1. The Festival is divided into six (6) Divisions:

Division 1: Primary Division

Up to age 12 as of March 14, 2026

15 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

Division 2: Middle School/Junior High Division

Ages 12-15 as of March 14, 2026

15 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

Division 3: High School Division

Ages 14-19 as of March 14, 2026

15 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

Division 4: Mixed Pre-College Division

Up to age 19 as of March 14, 2026

15 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

Division 5: Collegiate Division

All members must be enrolled in a collegiate program as of Spring 2026

20 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

Division 6: Open Division

Any age

20 minutes maximum performance time limit, including transitions between pieces

2. Ensembles in each Division may participate in one or more of the following five (5) Categories:

- Harp Duet (two harps all playing individual parts)
- Harp Trio (three harps all playing individual parts)
- Harp Quartet (four harps all playing individual parts)
- Medium Ensemble (maximum of 12 harpists, players may double and/or divide parts)
- Large Ensemble (more than 12 harpists, players may double and/or divide parts)

B. ELIGIBILITY

All participants and ensemble directors must hold current national membership in the American Harp Society in Dallas. Studio teachers, ensemble directors, and adult participants must also hold current national membership in the American Harp Society. All students (21 and under) are strongly encouraged to join as a national member. Discounted Studio and Group national AHS memberships are now available: <https://www.harpsociety.org/groups>

C. REPERTOIRE

1. All programs are free choice. Each program must include at least one work originally composed for harp ensemble. A transcription will not count as a work that is 'originally composed' for harp ensemble.
2. Each Ensemble must present one (1) original score and one (1) set of original parts for the ensemble, as well as provide scores for all three (3) adjudicators with all measures numbered. Exceptions for allowable photocopies may be granted for music that is out of print, original downloads where multiple printings are granted, or new compositions with written permission of the composer.

D. DIVISION PERFORMANCES

1. Ensembles will perform once before a panel of adjudicators and live audience in the division and category in which they are entered.

2. Every ensemble will be entitled to complete its performance of the program within the prescribed time limits and will not be interrupted by the adjudicators unless the time limit is exceeded.
3. The public are invited to attend the live division performances.
4. Applause will be held between pieces, but will be allowed at the end of the performance.

E. ADJUDICATORS

1. A panel of three (3) adjudicators consisting of at least two (2) harpists and optionally one (1) non-harpist musician will be assigned to each Category within a Division.
2. Ensembles will receive written comments and ratings on their performance from each adjudicator.
3. Adjudicators will refrain from making any public statement whatsoever concerning the activities of the Ensemble Festival.
4. The decisions and ratings awarded by the adjudicators are final.

F. RATINGS & COMMENTS

1. Ensembles will receive written comments on their performance as well as ratings from the panel of adjudicators. Spoken comments will also be given by one of the adjudicators after the performance.
2. Ratings shall be awarded as follows:
I (Superior), II (Excellent), & III (Good)
3. Ratings will be based on precision of ensemble playing, blend of sound, quality of articulation and tone, ensemble intonation, and musical interpretation of the score.
4. The performance of the ensemble shall be the only factor considered when determining ratings. Rankings such as first, second, third place, etc. will not be awarded within a division or category.
5. Multiple ensembles may earn the same rating within the same division and category.
6. The Outstanding Ensemble Performance Award represents the attainment of superior musicianship by an ensemble as demonstrated in their performance at the AHS Ensemble Festival. Within each division and category, Outstanding Ensemble Performance Awards may be conferred at the discretion of the adjudicators. Only ensembles

receiving all I (Superior) ratings from each of the adjudicators will be eligible for Outstanding Ensemble Performance Award consideration.

7. Any ensemble may elect to receive written comments only with no rating. In doing so, that ensemble will not be eligible for Outstanding Ensemble Performance Award consideration.

G. FESTIVAL CHAIRPERSON(S)

The Chairperson(s) shall be responsible for the management of the Harp Ensemble Festival. The Chairperson represents the American Harp Society in Dallas to the adjudicators, the participants, and all outside parties in all matters.

1. The Chairperson is entrusted with the investigation of any infringement of the rules that may occur.
2. The Chairperson, in consultation with the elected representatives of the AHSD, may take steps required to rectify infringements to the rules of the Festival, including but not limited to censure, and/or disenfranchisement.
3. The Chairperson or designated surrogate will publish the results.

H. AWARDS

1. Ensembles will be awarded Certificates of Participation.
2. Awards based on ratings shall be announced following the conclusion of each division performance.
3. Outstanding Ensemble Performance Awards will be announced at the conclusion of the Festival.
4. Participants must be present to receive their awards. Awards will not be mailed.

I. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

1. Applications open October 1, 2025.
2. Application forms and any requested supporting documentation must be received no later than 11:59 p.m. February 1, 2026 Central Daylight Time.
3. All ensemble entry fees are due by February 1, 2026 and are non-refundable.
 - Small Ensembles (Duet, Trio, Quartet) = \$20 per ensemble

- Medium Ensemble = \$30 per ensemble
- Large Ensemble = \$40 per ensemble

J. LOGISTICS

1. Festival expenses including ensemble entry fees, AHS membership dues, travel, harp transportation, and meals are the responsibility of the participants.
2. The American Harp Society is not responsible for loss or damage to any harp in transit or during the Festival.
3. Participating ensembles must provide their own harps, benches, and related equipment.

K. RESTRICTIONS & PENALTIES

1. If behaviors or circumstances warrant, the Chairperson may impose the following penalties:
 - a. Reprimand
 - b. Censure
 - c. Exclusion from the proceedings and/or future events
2. Performance timings must be provided and performance time limits must be strictly adhered to. Ensemble performances exceeding the prescribed time limits may be stopped once the time limit is reached, will not receive ratings, and will not be eligible for an Outstanding Ensemble Performance Award.