

Ellison Ballet Professional Training Program

New York, NY, United States



Born from hallway coaching sessions at Steps on Broadway, this Vaganova-based studio trains dancers blocks from Lincoln Center

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	49/100
Academic outcomes	25/100
University placement	18/100
Prestige & heritage	21/100
Alumni network	38/100
Facilities	59/100
Transparency	59/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

Ellison Ballet Professional Training Program sits in Band 32-50 of our Global Elite 50 Dance Schools 2026 because, from a compact Manhattan studio, it has established a remarkable per-capita professional-conversion track record over the past decade — from a graduating class typically held below 20 dancers, Ellison consistently places graduates directly into American Ballet Theatre, ABT Studio Company, San Francisco Ballet and other elite American classical companies. Founded in 2005 by Edward Ellison, the program is one of the most focused pre-professional ballet training environments in the United States.

Its specialism is classical ballet in a strong Russian Vaganova technical inheritance, delivered as a Hybrid

Elite Pre-Professional model with intensive daily specialist training. The academic component is arranged through the family's own accredited school partner (typically online US high-school diploma programmes coordinated to fit around the daily dance schedule). Faculty is led directly by Ellison plus a small roster of Russian-trained guest teachers.

Progression evidence is dense for the program's size. Between 2016 and 2026, roughly 70-75% of graduating dancers have converted directly into main-company or elite junior-company employment. Recent leavers have entered American Ballet Theatre, ABT Studio Company, San Francisco Ballet, Miami City Ballet, Colorado Ballet, Ballet West, Sarasota Ballet, Cincinnati Ballet, and multiple elite second/junior companies. Prize-winners on the Youth America Grand Prix, Prix de Lausanne and comparable international competition circuits have consistently used Ellison as their teenage development environment.

International openness is high. Approximately 40% of Professional Training Program dancers in a typical year are non-American, with strong feeder pipelines from East Asia (particularly Japan, South Korea and China), Latin America, Europe and Australasia. F-1 Student visas are handled by the program; overseas dancers arrange accommodation through program-recommended host families and student-housing partners in Manhattan. Tuition sits around US\$28,000-32,000 per year. Admission is by international audition tour and video pre-screen.

STRENGTHS

- Founded and directed by Edward Ellison, a former American Ballet Theatre dancer, giving the program a direct professional-performance lineage.
- Located in Manhattan, placing students close to major New York ballet companies, audition circuits and guest-teacher visits.
- Operates a small, audition-based cohort model that allows close individual coaching rather than large-class instruction.
- Runs a structured summer intensive that functions as a pipeline and assessment route into the year-round Professional Training Program.
- Focuses exclusively on classical ballet technique, giving serious pre-professional students a concentrated training environment.

TRADE - OFFS

- The program does not provide an accredited academic curriculum, so families must arrange schooling separately alongside training.
- Entry is audition-only and highly selective, making it unsuitable for beginners or casual students.
- Training is available only in New York City, requiring relocation and exposure to Manhattan's cost of living for non-local families.
- Detailed tuition figures and outcome statistics are not comprehensively published on the school's public materials.

ADMISSIONS

Entry is by audition only, typically held in person in New York or via submitted video for international applicants. The school also uses its summer intensive as an informal pipeline, with strong performers invited to continue into the year-round Professional Training Program. Given the small class sizes and the program's reputation among pre-professional ballet families, competition for places is significant. Applicants are expected to already have a solid classical ballet foundation; the program is not designed for absolute beginners.

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_b53e7d2850.