

Since the launch of the [Everyone in Harmony Strategic Vision](#) in June 2017 and the welcoming of women into Society membership in June 2018, many have been asking when women's and mixed harmony quartets and choruses would be able to compete on the BHS International stage. We are happy to share with you a proposal for expanding the International contest to include women's and mixed harmony quartets and choruses, starting with the 2021 convention in Cleveland.

Please note: This is a proposal, not a finalized and enacted policy. The next step is to collect feedback from you! Review the video and written materials provided and share your feedback with us using this form. All comments will be reviewed and considered. We hope to hear a wide variety of viewpoints - past and future competitors, audience members, chapter and district leaders, and anyone interested in helping us shape this process.

BHS International Contest Expansion Draft Proposal

Project Vision: Simplicity in Implementation and Equality in Competition

Origins & Timeline

August 2018

Events Team tasked with developing the EiH Contest Expansion Proposal

August / September 2018

Consultation with Harmony Hall program area teams to develop first draft

September 2018

First Draft of the Proposal presented to the Harmony Hall Executive Team

October –December 2018

Collaboration with SCJC to develop specific language and rule changes required

Jan-March 2019

Events Team consulted with various stakeholders to get feedback and further refine the proposal. This group includes: Society Contest & Judging Committee, BHS Impact Alignment Team, BHS Women's Advisory Group, Harmony Hall program managers, Harmony Hall Executive Team, BHS Convention Team, BHS Production Team

April 2019

Version 7.1 of the proposal prepared from the stakeholder feedback and presented to the Harmony Hall Executive Team

May 2019

Version 8.2 of the proposal prepared for review by Society Board of Directors and Strategic Planning Committee; advance copy shared with district leadership

June 2019

Draft proposal shared with membership and general public

BHS International Convention Goals

THE must-attend event for people interested in barbershop

One giant event, education, contests, spectacular showcases

The highest level of BHS competition for:

- Men's Quartets and Choruses
- Women's Quartets and Choruses
- Mixed Harmony Quartets and Choruses

BHS Midwinter Convention Goals

Preserve a more relaxed convention experience

Focus on growing Seniors and NextGen Junior events for quartets & choruses

Continue adding women's and mixed harmony content to the showcases & education events

No additional contests added to Midwinter

District, Division, and local events

Increased participation at district and local events due to addition of women's and mixed harmony classifications

Simplicity and Equality: Women's and mixed harmony choruses and quartets will qualify for the International convention using the same method determined for men

Process to qualify for International

Step 1: Register your quartet or chorus with BHS

Step 2: Enter any available prelims contest

Step 3: Achieve a score of 78%+ for quartets or 81%+ for choruses * **

*Wildcards may also be available.

**These are the recommended qualification scores for Cleveland 2021. This number could be changed on an annual basis by the BHS Executive Director in an effort to achieve the desired number of competitors.

This process represents the vision of simplicity & equity. The qualification terms are the same regardless of the classification (men/ women/mixed harmony).

Projected Timeline

2019

Districts will welcome women's quartets/choruses and mixed harmony quartets/choruses to be participants at their events. All participants will be scored and evaluated. Note: *Some districts are already planning or holding official contests for these added classifications.*

2020

District and local events will include mixed harmony quartets, mixed harmony choruses, women's quartets, and women's choruses as official contests. For districts with divisions, the qualification criteria will be the same as previously determined for the men's contests.

During the fall district or local events, qualification for the 2021 International competition will take place for *choruses* (men/women/mixed harmony). Districts that qualify *quartets* in the fall (currently ILL, MAD, RMD) would include women's and mixed harmony quartets as well.

2021

District and local events will qualify quartets for the International Competition in 2021 in Cleveland, OH. The qualification criteria will be the same for all competitors men/women/mixed harmony).

At the International Convention held in Cleveland, OH, awards will be given in the following categories:

Men's quartet
Men's chorus
Women's quartet
Women's chorus
Mixed quartet
Mixed chorus

Preliminary Contest Details and Considerations

In an effort to achieve Everyone in Harmony, we will remove all geographic barriers in terms of qualification. The competitor will be allowed to enter any available preliminary contest to qualify for International regardless of district affiliation.

The competitor will be allowed a second try to achieve the qualifying score by competing in multiple local events (pending availability and cut-off dates). A 2nd attempt will erase the 1st attempt score in terms of possible wild card qualification.

The 2021 International quartet minimum qualification score will be set to 78%.

The 2021 International chorus minimum qualification score will be set at 81%.

The rule that guarantees a representative from each district will be eliminated to open up a new level playing field without borders. To achieve true simplicity and equality, we will qualify any competitor that achieves the desired score regardless of their district affiliation, geographic location, or gender classification.

International Contest Details and Considerations

The International quartet contest will remain a 3-round event for quartets. New rules will allow for dynamically increasing the semifinals round to more than 20 and the finals round to more than 10 quartets as needed.

Historically, advancing to the Quartet Semifinals requires a score of 81%+ and a score of 85%+ to advance to the Finals. Based upon the number of competitors scoring these levels at Prelims, the number of quartets in those rounds will be set to match that level.

For example: If 25 competitors exceeded 81%+ in Prelims, the Semifinals round would be set at 25 competitors before the International competition begins. The actual score to advance to the Semifinals could be higher or lower than 81%, but the 25 highest scoring quartets, regardless of numerical score or classification, would advance to the next Semifinals round. Similarly, a number would be set for the Finals based on the preliminary scores and that number of quartets would advance, regardless of numerical score or classification.

International chorus contest will remain a single round contest for men, women, and mixed harmony choruses.

Definition of eligibility for mixed harmony ensembles: "A quartet or chorus is considered mixed if more than one gender is represented."

Women's, mixed harmony, and men's contests will remain separate in terms of results and awards. The order of appearance will intersperse the three classifications during all contest sessions.

District Convention Assumptions and Considerations

ASSUMPTIONS

- District conventions will see increased competitor participation with the inclusion of these new classifications (men's/women's/mixed harmony).
- District conventions will see increased attendance with the inclusion of these new classifications (competitors/friends/family/entourage).
- With increased attendance, District conventions will have increased financial stability.
- With increased financial stability, District conventions will be able to secure desirable venues and high-quality production equipment, therefore creating a better experience for all attendees.
- With the removal of geographic barriers for qualification, District conventions will be able to attract competitors and participants from anywhere in the world.

CONSIDERATIONS

- All Districts will be offered the opportunity to hold International preliminary competitions during their District conventions (no change from the current model). However, if a District feels that it cannot adequately accommodate a prelims contest for any reason, Harmony Hall will provide assistance to determine a plan of action.

- Districts will not be forced to offer a convention experience that they may not have the infrastructure, means, or personnel to execute.
- BHS Events department will work with Districts to provide guidelines and best practices for contest schedule and formats that include men's, women's, and mixed contests. BHS Events Team is available to assist with District hotel contracts that might need to be amended to accommodate additional participants.

Recommendation Overview

In Q2 2019, BHS will announce that women's and mixed harmony choruses and quartets will be eligible to qualify for 2021 International competition in Cleveland during local or district qualifying events in 2020 and 2021.

By Jan 1, 2020, we will publish dates and approximate locations of all preliminary contest events for Cleveland 2021.

Rule Changes

The International chorus contest session adds a BHS International Women's Chorus Championship contest award and a BHS International Mixed Harmony Chorus Championship contest award.

The International quartet contest session adds a BHS International Women's Quartet Championship contest award and a BHS International Mixed Harmony Quartet Championship contest award.

Provide for a *minimum* number of 27 BHS choruses (across all 3 chorus classifications) to compete in the International chorus contest session.

Provide for a *minimum* number of 50 BHS quartets (across all 3 quartet classifications) to compete in the International Quartet Quarterfinals round. Allow for dynamically increasing the Semifinals round to more than 20 and the Finals round to more than 10 quartets, as needed.

Remove the policy that guarantees a quartet and a chorus representative from every district, in order to truly have an open contest without geographic boundaries.

Remove the policy that restricts an ensemble from entering multiple preliminary events. Quartets & choruses would be able to enter any prelims contest regardless of district affiliation. They would also be allowed a second opportunity to achieve the qualification score by entering in multiple prelims events (adhering to local entry deadlines and requirements).

By Jan 1, 2020, BHS will determine and announce the specific rule change language and qualification criteria for the 2020 contests.

By Jan 1, 2020, BHS will publish dates and approximate locations of all preliminary contest events for Cleveland 2021.

Conclusion and Implementation

The stakeholders are in agreement that this proposal will help fulfil the Everyone in Harmony vision through simplicity and equality.

In June 2019, BHS will release the details of this proposal to the BHS membership with Frequently Asked Questions and a feedback form to collect input. Feedback is collected online and by mail and shared with Society Board at the 2019 convention in Salt Lake City for incorporation into the final draft.

By January 1, 2020, the rules will be changed to reflect this proposal and adopted by SCJC.