

# DANCE

## What can I do with this major?

### AREAS

#### PERFORMANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY

Ballet  
Modern  
Jazz  
Tap  
Theater Dance  
Culturally-Specific Dance

### EMPLOYERS

Performing arts companies:  
Dance  
Theatre  
Opera  
Touring  
Broadway  
Off Broadway  
Television and motion picture industries and studios:  
Television shows  
Commercials  
Movies  
Music videos  
Amusement and recreation venues:  
Theme parks  
Cruise ships  
Resorts  
Casinos  
Restaurants  
Sporting events  
Self-employed/freelance work

### STRATEGIES

Begin formal training in classical dance and later move towards a particular style.  
Join campus and community organizations dedicated to dance.  
Prepare for professional auditions by participating in dance competitions and enrolling in summer training programs and workshops.  
Rehearse on a regular basis to stay in top form.  
Maintain good health and physical stamina.  
Obtain formal training in vocal performance and drama.  
Develop a broad understanding of music, literature, history, and other arts to help interpret ideas and feelings in dance.  
Although completing a college degree is not essential for a career as a professional dancer, it is necessary for many other dance related occupations.  
Opportunities are limited for full time work. Many dancers hold other jobs.  
Understand that dancers may work long and late hours since many rehearsals and productions are in the evenings.  
Prepare to relocate to areas with higher concentrations of art and dance related employers such as New York City, Boston, Atlanta, Chicago, and Los Angeles.  
For choreography positions, consider the following:  
Seek formal training and experience in dancing first.  
Serve as choreographer for local dance schools and camps and for student performances on campus.  
Accumulate years of dance experience to build a professional reputation.  
Develop expertise in music, costuming, and staging.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### EDUCATION

Formalized Instruction  
Recreational Instruction

K-12 schools, public and private  
Colleges and universities  
Private dance studios and schools  
Conservatories  
Performing arts camps  
Community agencies  
Adult education and continuing education programs  
Physical fitness centers

Acquire a teaching certificate for public school teaching. Learn about requirements by state.  
Earn a graduate degree to teach in higher education and many conservatories. Specialize in an area such as ballet, modern, jazz, etc.  
Develop strong communication skills and teaching ability through coursework and campus activities.  
Gain experience working with children through volunteer or part-time work.  
Become proficient in many styles and forms of dance.

### ADMINISTRATION

Arts Management  
Company Management  
Artistic Direction  
Promotion  
Tour Management  
Facilities Management  
Event Planning  
Booking  
Public Relations

Cultural organizations and arts councils  
Theaters and arts venues  
Dance companies  
Dance studios and academies  
Musical theater production companies  
Dance festivals  
National Endowment for the Arts

Pursue education in arts management, business, or non-profit management.  
Join organizations that plan and host campus cultural attractions and entertainment events.  
Develop administrative, leadership, and organizational skills.  
Participate in internships and/or volunteer activities to gain related experience.  
Learn how to write grants and to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.

### DANCE/MOVEMENT THERAPY

*Dance therapists work with individuals, couples, families or groups using both verbal counseling techniques and movement interventions.*

Schools and special education settings  
Nursing homes  
Rehabilitation facilities  
Psychiatric and medical hospitals  
Community mental health agencies  
Wellness centers  
Alternative health centers  
Private practice

Take courses in psychology, social work, education, or child and family studies along with developing a broad education in dance.  
A master's degree in dance/movement therapy, counseling, or psychology and a clinical internship in dance therapy are required. After completion, you hold the Dance Therapist Registered (DTR) designation.  
Learn to work well with many types of people and develop excellent communication skills.  
Volunteer in a rehabilitation setting.  
Join the American Dance Therapy Association.

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### MEDIA

Dance Writing  
Dance Criticism  
Dance History

Newspapers  
Magazines  
Websites  
Book publishers

Develop excellent grammar and writing skills along with knowledge of the history and culture of dance.

Write for campus or local newspapers. Create a portfolio of writing samples, especially those that have been published.

Seek opportunities for recognition and networking through writing contests and freelance writing submissions.

Learn HTML and other computer programs to prepare for online work. This area of journalism is growing while print is declining.

Become comfortable working in a deadline-oriented atmosphere.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

- Because of keen competition in the field, dancers and choreographers often go through periods of unemployment. Develop other skills that qualify you for alternative work when between dance jobs.
- Dance is a physically demanding profession; many dancers stop performing in their late thirties and transition to other related fields.
- Perseverance, self-discipline, and patience are important traits to cultivate along with physical stamina and creative abilities.
- Learn how to deal with rejection and criticism as these can be common when auditioning for jobs.
- Join a relevant union or guild to be eligible for work assignments.
- Some students may pursue the Master of Fine Arts in Dance to further their careers in performance or choreography. Others will earn a Master of Arts to pursue careers in dance history, dance critique, or arts management. The bachelor's degree can also serve as preparation for a variety of other graduate programs including law and business.
- Students pursuing a degree in dance may choose to work outside the field of performing arts. Many career areas, such as sales and management, are open to people from nearly any discipline if they have developed transferable skills and sought relevant experience.
- Some niche areas exist within the dance industry such as dance notation and reconstruction which is typically done by freelancers or dance professors.