

# DANCE

## What can I do with this major?

### AREAS

#### PERFORMANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY

Ballet  
Modern  
Jazz  
Tap  
Hip-hop  
Theater dance  
Culturally-specific dance

### EMPLOYERS

Performing arts companies:

Dance  
Theatre  
Opera  
Music concerts  
Touring

Broadway

Off Broadway

Television, 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.

Consider after gaining a foundation in classical dance move towards a particular style.

Join campus and community organizations dedicated to dance. Gain as much experience as possible through volunteering and seeking opportunities.

Prepare for professional auditions by participating in dance competitions and enrolling in training programs and workshops.

Rehearse regularly and maintain health and stamina. Obtain formal training in vocal performance and drama.

Develop a broad understanding of music, literature, history, and other arts to give context for ideas and feelings to be interpreted in dance.

Understand opportunities are limited for full-time work and may require other jobs.

Consider completing a college degree to provide opportunities for additional dance related careers and intensive training as a professional dancer.

Prepare for working long and late hours since many rehearsals and productions are in the evenings.

Consider relocating 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.  
Serve as choreographer for local dance schools, camps, and student performances on campus.  
Accumulate dance experience to build a professional reputation.

Develop expertise in music, costuming, and staging.

| AREAS   | EMPLOYERS   | STRATEGIES   |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b><u>EDUCATION</u></b><br/>Formalized instruction<br/>Recreational or self-enrichment instruction</p>   | <p>K-12 schools, public and private<br/>Colleges and universities<br/>Private dance studios and schools<br/>Conservatories<br/>Performing arts camps<br/>Community agencies<br/>Adult education and continuing education programs<br/>Physical fitness centers<br/>Recreation centers/clubs</p> | <p>Acquire a teaching certificate for public school teaching, teaching requirements vary by state.<br/>Earn a graduate degree to teach in higher education and many conservatories. Specialize in an area such as ballet, modern, jazz, etc.<br/>Develop strong communication skills and teaching ability through coursework and campus activities.<br/>Gain experience working with children through volunteer or part-time work.<br/>Become proficient in many styles and forms of dance.</p>  |
| <p><b><u>ADMINISTRATION</u></b><br/>Arts management<br/>Company management<br/>Artistic direction/Rehearsal direction<br/>Promotion<br/>Tour management<br/>Facilities management<br/>Event planning<br/>Booking<br/>Public relations<br/>Marketing<br/>Dance accreditation</p> | <p>Cultural organizations and arts councils<br/>Theaters and arts venues<br/>Dance companies<br/>Dance studios and academies<br/>Musical theater production companies<br/>Dance festivals<br/>National Endowment for the Arts</p>   | <p>Pursue education in arts management, business, or non-profit management.<br/>Join organizations that plan and host campus cultural attractions and entertainment events.<br/>Develop administrative, leadership, and organizational skills.<br/>Participate in internships and/or volunteer activities to gain related experience.<br/>Learn how to write grants and to communicate effectively both orally and in writing.</p>   |
| <p><b><u>HUMAN SERVICES</u></b><br/>Dance therapists</p>  | <p>Schools and special education settings<br/>Nursing homes<br/>Rehabilitation facilities<br/>Psychiatric and medical hospitals<br/>Community mental health agencies<br/>Wellness centers<br/>Alternative health centers<br/>Private practice</p>   | <p>Take courses in psychology, social work, education, or child and family studies along with developing a broad education in dance.<br/>Consider an undergraduate degree in recreation therapy for a wider range of job prospects.<br/>Learn to work well with many types of people and develop excellent communication skills.<br/>Volunteer in a rehabilitation setting.<br/>Complete a master's degree in dance/movement therapy, counseling, or psychology and a clinical internship in dance therapy are required.<br/>Join the American Dance Therapy Association.<br/>Work towards credentialing as a Registered Dance/Movement Therapist (R-DMT) and/or as a Board Certified Dance/Movement Therapist (BC-DMT).</p> |

## AREAS

## EMPLOYERS

## STRATEGIES

### **MEDIA**

Dance Writing  
Dance Criticism  
Dance History

Newspapers  
Magazines  
Websites  
Book publishers

Develop excellent writing and editing 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 website design programs and techniques to write online.

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.
- Internships with dance companies or theater groups can provide experience and networking opportunities. The National Dance Association offers internships and volunteer positions.
- 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. Learn how to discuss and demonstrate these skills to potential employers in interviews.
- Some niche areas exist within the dance industry such as dance notation and reconstruction which is typically done by freelancers or dance professors.