

From ancient times to the present, dancers have expressed ideas, stories, rhythm, and sound with their bodies. They use a variety of dance forms that allow free movement and self-expression, including classical ballet, modern dance, and culturally specific dance styles. Many dancers combine performance work with teaching or choreography.

Many dancers work with choreographers, who create original dances and develop new interpretations of existing dances. Because few dance routines are written down, choreographers instruct performers at

rehearsals to achieve the desired effect. In addition, choreographers often are involved in auditioning performers.

It takes hard work and staying power to survive and build a career in dance. Do not assume that when you graduate, your training is finished and all you need to do is maintain your physical fitness. Ongoing training is essential. Classes and workshops can provide a regular opportunity for you to develop your craft—to practice, refine, and add to your skills as a dancer.

Skills

The study of dance equips a student with a broad range of communication and organizational skills applicable to many careers, including those in the performing arts. The dance major's presentation skills, ability to perform in public, and control of the body provide a solid basis for working effectively with others. Dance also develops the ability to concentrate intensely, listen introspectively, observe keenly, solve problems creatively, think critically, collaboratively develop a project, work independently, work under pressure, meet deadlines, and maintain composure when faced with the unexpected.

Because of the rigorous practice schedules of most dancers, self-discipline, patience, perseverance, and a devotion to dance are essential for success in the field.

Dancers must possess good problem-solving skills and an ability to work with people. Good health and physical stamina also are necessary attributes. Above all, dancers must have flexibility, agility, coordination, grace, a sense of rhythm, a feeling for music, and a creative ability to express themselves through movement.

Dancers seldom perform unaccompanied, so they must be able to function as part of a team. They should be highly motivated and prepared to face the anxiety of intermittent employment and rejections when auditioning for work. For dancers, advancement takes the form of a growing reputation, more frequent work, bigger and better roles, and higher pay. A sampling of representative skills and abilities follows:

Problem Solving	Communication	Artistic/Technical	Organization
Attending to details	Explaining concepts	Creating and performing dances	Utilizing available resources
Analyzing and interpreting the emotions and motives of others	Control of body	Sensitivity to and appreciation of diverse musical and dance styles	Interacting with colleagues in a team setting
Critical thinking	Awareness of body language	Moving efficiently and effectively	Time management
Taking multiple approaches to problems	Making keen observations	Program planning	Creativity
Adapting techniques	Listening critically	Doing detailed and accurate work	Spatial memory
Integrating diverse elements from others' ideas	Ability to give and receive criticism	Working independently	Self-discipline
Forming perceptions, seeing connections	Relating to people of varying backgrounds	Collaboratively developing a project	Working under pressure and meeting deadlines

Career Opportunities

A career as a performer or choreographer is not the only option available to you. Opportunities also exist in education, community and participatory dance work, and associated areas such as dance management, administration, and production. Do not underestimate the skills, knowledge, and experience you have gained as a dancer or company member. Determination, openness, and practical experience are crucial ingredients in gaining employment. Be aware that you will need additional support and training to work in some contexts. Examples of a few of the professions that some dance majors undertake are listed below.

Professional Dancer

Dancers perform in a variety of settings, such as musical productions, and may present folk, ethnic, tap, jazz, and other popular kinds of dance. They also perform in opera, musical theater, television, movies, music videos, and commercials, in which they may sing and act. Dancers most often perform as part of a group, although a few top artists perform solo.

Dance Therapist

Dance/movement therapists work with individuals of all ages, groups and families in a wide variety of settings. They focus on helping their clients improve self-esteem and body image, develop effective communication skills and relationships, expand their movement vocabulary, gain insight into patterns of behavior, as well as create new options for coping with problems. Movement is the primary medium dance/movement therapists use for observation, assessment, research, therapeutic interaction, and interventions. Dance/movement therapists work in settings that include psychiatric and rehabilitation facilities, schools, nursing homes, drug treatment centers, counseling centers, medical facilities, crisis centers, and wellness and alternative health care centers. Dance/movement therapy can be a powerful tool for stress management and the prevention of physical and mental health problems.

Arts Management

Arts organizations, like most for-profit

companies and non-profit organizations, have a number of administrative, business, or management functions. These roles require people with creativity and an understanding and passion for the arts, as well as skills in a range of areas from finance and marketing to education. As the dance industry grows, there is a need for people to organize and manage all the activities associated with dance. This could include working for dance companies, in theatres, regional arts/dance agencies, and the many dance organizations around the country, which set up and manage seasonal festivals and community dance projects. Many of these arts administrators have studied dance themselves, or they may have trained in completely different subjects at college or university. If you are employed in this sector, you will need to be very well organized, have good computer skills, and for many of the jobs available, have some understanding of financial management.

Arts management and arts administration are interchangeable terms. Some people draw a distinction between them, using administration to mean the more bureaucratic, operational side, and management to mean the more creative, strategic side of the field. However, that distinction is not widely made. In fact, some of the oldest and most respected programs train arts administrators. The specific positions available at an arts organization will depend on what the organization does and how large its budget and staff is. For example, a museum is likely to have staff members in education that work with school groups to introduce children to the exhibits. An opera company, concert hall, or theater needs box-office and front of the house workers to manage ticket sales, write press releases, market the productions in the community, and create visibility. A symphony needs general managers to schedule tours, monitor musician's union agreements, and run the business side of music performances. Over the last decade, arts management has become a growing field with increasing specialization and training. A number of new graduate training and certification programs have emerged. These programs may be useful, depending on your interests and goals. Some arts managers, for example, suggest eventually pursuing a

Arts Management (con't.)

business degree with a specialization in non-profit management. Almost without exception, however, arts managers advise getting work-related experience first and considering graduate study later on. If you decide to investigate graduate study, begin by asking professionals what programs they think are valuable and respected in the field; do not just ask one or two people and assume their opinions are representative.

Dance Teacher

A career as a dance teacher offers an increasing range of opportunities within private dance schools, the community, or in independent and state schools and colleges. Dance teachers can work with people of all ages and teach many different dance styles; tap, modern, ballroom, folk, African, Asian, ballet, or contemporary. They also need to be able to choreograph dances for their pupils and in some jobs such as in schools, know about the history of dance, and such aspects as anatomy and physiology, and dance notation. Dance teachers should have good communication skills, be interested in their pupils, and enjoy helping people to learn about dance.

Most teachers working in private dance schools have qualifications to teach in specific dance styles such as ballet or modern dance. For a number of years, dance has been recognized as an important part of children's education. In primary schools, dance is a compulsory activity, but it is mostly taught by classroom teachers. However, in secondary schools there are many opportunities to teach dance as an individual subject or combined with other subjects such as physical education, drama, or performing arts. Currently, UT does not have a teacher certification program in dance.

Choreographer

Many dancers are also choreographers who create dances. You do not have to be a dancer to choreograph professionally, but it is often the main route into getting your first choreography job. Making up dances is a satisfying occupation, as you have the opportunity to be creative and make something completely new. Choreographers work within all the major dance styles, however, it is very competitive and few choreographers earn their living just from

making up dances in theatre, video, or television. Most dance degree programs offer choreography as part of their training, but it is also essential to develop your skills through experience. Many professional choreographers started when they were at school or college by making up dances for their friends at end-of-term shows.

Community Dance Worker

Working in the community dance sector generally involves working in a particular geographical area. Community dance workers often work as part of regional arts and community agencies teaching, choreographing, and organizing dance programs and projects. Community dance workers generally work with a range of groups, which may include people with disabilities, young people, the elderly, and schools. Sometimes these individuals are freelance and employed for specific projects or periods of time. Some of the larger dance companies employ dance teachers/community workers to undertake projects that link with the performance program of the company. Most community dance workers have had full-time dance training or recognized dance teaching certification.

Dance Notator

Dance notation is the method of recording movement using symbols in order to analyze and understand dance and preserve dances for the future. There are two main systems in common use: Benesh and Laban Notation. Major dance companies employ dance notators to record their repertoire and to re-construct and rehearse previously choreographed dances or ballets. Many dance degree programs include the basics of one of these systems, but in order to have a career in notating, you need to attend a school/program specializing in notation.

Job Titles

These job titles are examples of some of the ways in which dance majors have applied their skills and abilities. In general, an advanced degree is required for those occupations marked with a • on the following list.

Education	Arts Administration	Performance/Production
Artist-in-residence	•General Manager, Administrator	Company Dancer
•Dance therapist	Public Relations Manager	Choreographer
Private Teacher	Press Agent	Dance Designer: costume, lights
Leisure and Recreation Instructor	•Business Manager	Technician
Dance Company Rehearsal Director	Personal Manager	Consultant
•College Professor	Personnel Mgr: Dance Company	Sound Person
Pilates/Body Conditioning Instructor	Booking Agent	Ballet Mistress/Master
•Public School Teacher	•Grants specialist	
•Benesh, Laban Notator	•Arts council director	

Some Employers of Dance Majors

University theatre/dance groups	Advertising agencies	Theatres
Touring companies	TV/Film studios	Magazines
Amusement and theme parks	Newspapers	Arts Councils
Industrial shows	Performing arts centers	Government
Colleges and universities	Cruise Lines	
Television networks	Schools	

First Jobs Held by Recent UT BA/BFA Graduates

Dancer
Journalist
Choreographer
Non-profit Manager
Dance Teacher
Computer Trainer

Production Assistant
Non-profit administrator
Marketing Segment Specialist
Web design coordinator
Company Member

A Few Words About Agents

Although having an agent is not necessary for a dancer/choreographer to find work, it may be important for you to understand how agents work. Agents find jobs for performers. In return, they receive a commission for each job they

find, usually paid out of the performer's salary, which the agent has negotiated on behalf of the performer. It is the agent's business to seek out talented artists and help them develop their careers.

Earnings

Median annual earnings of dancers were \$22,470 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$14,260 and \$34,600. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$12,520, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$55,220. Median annual earnings were \$29,980 in the producers, orchestras, and entertainers industries and \$16,290 in eating and drinking places.

Median annual earnings of choreographers were \$27,010 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$17,970 and \$42,080. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$13,370, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$55,800. Median annual earnings were \$25,860 in dance studios, schools, and halls.

Dancers on tour received an additional allowance for room and board, and extra compensation for overtime. Earnings from dancing are usually low because employment is

part year and irregular. Dancers often supplement their income by working as guest artists with other dance companies, teaching dance, or taking jobs unrelated to the field.

Earnings of many professional dancers are governed by union contracts. Dancers in the major opera ballet, classical ballet, and modern dance corps belong to the American Guild of Musical Artists, Inc., AFL-CIO; those who appear on live or videotaped television programs belong to the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists; those who perform in films and on television belong to the Screen Actors Guild; and those in musical theater are members of Actors' Equity Association. The unions and producers sign basic agreements specifying minimum salary rates, hours of work, benefits, and other conditions of employment. However, the contract each dancer signs with the producer of the show may be more favorable than the basic agreement.

Common Graduate School Options

The two most common graduate degrees offered for dance: the Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) and the Master of Arts (M.A.):

Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.): The M.F.A. is studio based and is focused on the "making and doing" of the art itself. It is an appropriate terminal degree. The most common areas of study include: choreography, performance, and arts management. Completion of the M.F.A. degree typically requires a thesis or performance project. The M.F.A. usually takes two to three years to complete. If you have the drive, the time and the resources to invest and want to do it, then you are ready to go. As you

build toward your future success, you can make your graduate school experience truly a good one.

Master of Arts (M.A.): The MA in dance is focused on scholarly and research-based activities which may be related to issues concerning dance aesthetics, theory, history, or cultural studies. It may be a final degree or a step toward the Ph.D. Completion of the M.A. degree typically requires a thesis. A master's degree usually takes two to three years of study. Some of the areas of concentration include: choreography, dance history, and criticism.

FACS Resources for Dance Majors

- ArtSEARCH: Monthly bulletin listing performing arts opportunities around the nation.
- Current Jobs in Performing Arts
- National Directory of Arts Internships
- Back Stage Handbook for Performing Artists
- Dancer's Resource
- Dancing for a Living-Two
- Opportunities in Entertainment Careers
- Opportunities in Performing Arts Careers
- Poor Dancer's Almanac
- Real People Working in Entertainment
- Stern's Directory, Dance Magazine 2003
- Theatre and Dance Résumés and Curriculum Vitae
- Wow! Résumés: Creative Careers
- Résumés for Performing Arts Careers
- Your Dance Résumé

Online Resources for Dance Majors

Career Information & Job Listings

AccessUT

<https://utdirect.utexas.edu/>
UT's online job and internship database which posts professional opportunities for all majors.

College Central Network

<http://www.collegecentral.com/utfacs/>
Fine Arts Career Services database of art-related opportunities. Fine Arts students can post a resume and create an online portfolio.

Actor's Fund

<http://www.actorsfund.org/>
This amazing resource offers a wealth of information for actors, dancers, musicians, producers, directors, carpenters, stage hands, singers and others in the spotlight and behind the scenes. They also have a terrific resource center for health insurance as well as human services for people with HIV+/AIDS and the elderly. Highly recommended.

Alliance of Artist Communities

<http://www.artistcommunities.org/>
A consortium of artists' communities that offer residencies in all disciplines.

American Dance Guild Job Listings

<http://www.americandanceguild.org/jobs.html>

Answers 4 Dancers

<http://www.answers4dancers.com/>
Auditions, agency preferences, industry action, casting insights, headshots, resumes, specialized workshops, and guidance from knowledgeable dance professionals to help you get on the inside track to dance employment. Some sections are open to all, but you must become a member to gain access to the rest of the site.

Art Job

<http://www.artjob.org/>
ArtJob is the place to find comprehensive, up-to-date national listings of jobs, internships, fellowships and other employment opportunities in the arts. Fine Arts Career Services subscribes. Contact us for the username and password.

Artslynx

<http://www.artslynx.org/>
With a neat and well-organized series of connecting icons, Artslynx has master folders dealing with "Dance," "Visual Arts," "Writing," "Film," "Arts Administration," "Music," "Arts of Social Responsibility," "Education," and "Arts Advocacy." All are rich in resources.

Auditions and Employment with Dance Companies

<http://www.baydance.com/Auditions.htm>
A ballet and modern dance information resource mostly for the San Francisco Bay area but there are many nation-wide opportunities listed as well.

Current Jobs in Performing Arts

<http://www.graduatejobs.com/login.html>
A national employment bulletin for jobs in the performing arts. Fine Arts Career Services subscribes. Contact us for the username and password.

Dance Art

<http://www.danceart.com/>
Nice site for links, jobs, articles, and other resources for dancers.

Dance Collective

<http://www.dancecollective.com/>
Great resource with tools to help dancers with their career development: Audition notices, dance school directory, bookstore, summer programs, and more.

Dance Europe's Job List

<http://www.danceeurope.net/docs/JOB/JOB.SHTML>

Dance Links

<http://www.dancer.com/dance-links/>
A compendium of dance-related sites. They have everything from links to grant funding resources, to newsgroups to calendars of upcoming events at arts facilities around the globe. Dance Link's funding resources section will aid even non-dancers.

Newdance.com/Dance Pages Directory

<http://www.newdance.com/newdance.htm>
This website encompasses information from jobs, discussion forums, writings & reviews, to a directory of contemporary dance companies.

Professional Associations**The American Dance Guild**

<http://www.americandanceguild.org/>
The American Dance Guild is a non-profit membership organization concerned with promoting the art of dance. Since 1956 the ADG has been serving the needs of performers, choreographers, teachers and students through all stages of their development and careers.

American Dance Therapy Association

<http://www.adta.org>
With excellent lists of FAQs, this site provides answers to many questions raised

by students considering art and music therapy as a career.

Dance Educators of America

<http://www.deadance.com/>
DEA is a prestigious dance professionals' organization established in 1932. DEA is dedicated to improve the quality and teaching abilities of its member teachers and to enhance their education of students, as well as further the professional and ethical standards in the performing and stage arts and of dance in all its forms.

Dance USA

www.danceusa.org
Dance/USA, the national service organization for professional dance, seeks to advance the art form of dance by addressing the needs, concerns, and interests of professional dance. To fulfill this mission, Dance/USA offers a variety of programs for its membership and the dance field, as well as works with organizations within

Government Agencies**The Texas Commission on the Arts**

<http://www.arts.state.tx.us/>
With links to all kinds of visual and performing arts sites on the Internet, this page is fast becoming one of our favorite places. You can reach their employment links by going to their "Recommended Hot Spots."

*The information in this guide was compiled from resources available online and in DFA 1.103.
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