

A GUIDE TO **CAREERS IN DANCE**



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INTRODUCTION

So, you've decided that you want a career in dance. Great news, it's a rewarding career! Who wouldn't want to do a job they love?! This guide aims to help you understand what a dance career might mean – and it's not necessarily what you think.

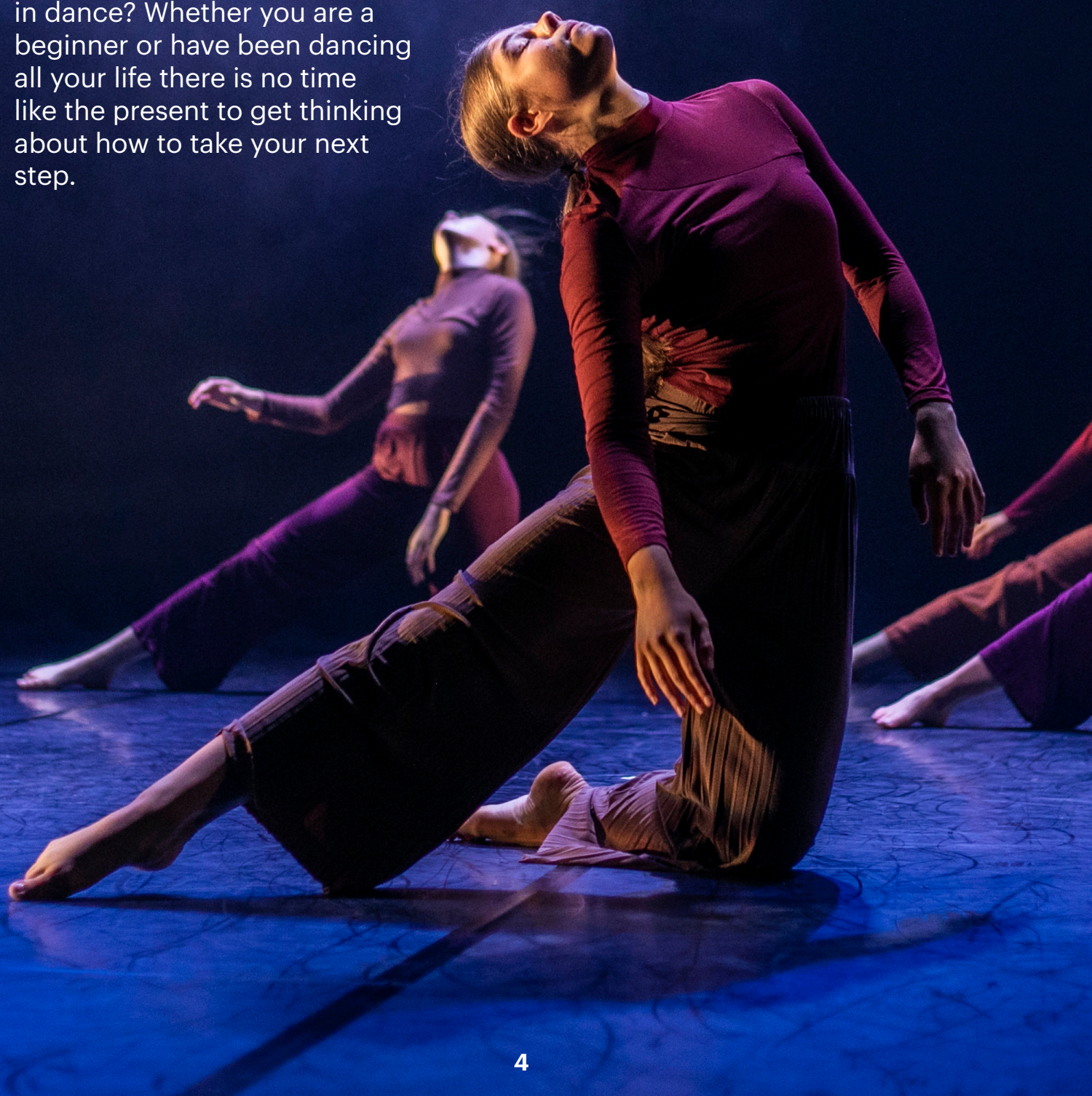
The dance profession isn't just something that takes place on a stage or in a rehearsal room. Careers in dance can take place in all kinds of settings – hospitals and arts centres, backstage, in schools and community centres and even in offices.

Only a small percentage of young people who train as dancers succeed as performers or choreographers. However, the huge variety of skills and techniques they have gained through their training will equip them for a multitude of other roles that can be just as fulfilling as, or perhaps more than, a performing career. Once you have developed key skills such as discipline, motivation, creativity and teamwork, your dance craft can be applied creatively in many ways. It can spill into words on a page, be snapped in a stunning photograph or passed onto others through the sharing and teaching of skills. There are numerous opportunities for people who want a career in the dance sector and many of these will require different skills, picked up in a variety of situations and contexts. Whether you choose to become a teacher, costume designer, dance therapist or a company manager, these roles require an understanding of dance in its many forms and all of them have an essential contribution to make to the dance world.

You may wish to use your training to develop your abilities in producing, project management, technical production or initiating a portfolio career. A portfolio career in dance can take you between different projects and dance roles. An individual with a number of skills, perhaps in performing, teaching and managing, can combine these strengths and become a highly employable and flexible dance artist. Use your skills wisely and you can enjoy a life-long career in dance!

STARTING OUT IN DANCE

So, you would like a career in dance? Whether you are a beginner or have been dancing all your life there is no time like the present to get thinking about how to take your next step.



Private dance studios

You can choose to study syllabi such as RAD, ISTD and others that follow set criteria and exam routes in different dance styles from ballet and contemporary to Khatak and more. See a list of validating [awarding organisations here](#). You can also attend dance classes that don't require exams in different dance styles. Dance classes with and without syllabi can happen in a range of places, from dance studios and gyms to community halls and more. It's best that you do your research to find out what qualifications and experience the teacher has. You should also check that the organisation has clear safeguarding policies and procedures in place. More information can be found [here](#).

Developing your talent through government funded schemes

The opportunities below are examples of accessible and high-quality dance training for children and young people that can be supported financially through funding or subsidised fees. This is to ensure that all children and young people who show potential in dance can thrive. Please note that these opportunities are available through an application and audition process only.

NATIONAL YOUTH DANCE COMPANY OF SCOTLAND (NYDCS)

The National Youth Dance Company of Scotland is the flagship contemporary dance company for Scotland's exceptional young dancers aged 16 – 21. The company works with YDance Artistic Director Anna Kenrick, in a series of creation intensive weekends once a month, to explore, create and rehearse a new work to be toured nationally and internationally. Dancers also get the opportunity to take part in exchanges with international youth dance groups and companies. The work of the National Youth Dance Company of Scotland aims to change the perceptions of what youth dance is and can be. The pieces showcase the movement language, individuality and minds of the dancers in the company that year. Find out more about NYDCS [here](#).

NATIONAL YOUTH DANCE COMPANY (NYDC)

National Youth Dance Company creates and performs innovative and influential dance, bringing together the brightest talent from across England to work intensively with Sadler's Wells' renowned Associate Artists and visiting companies. The company has established a reputation for challenging, high quality work and produces dancers that are open-minded, curious and brave. The NYDC company age range is 16-19, or d/Deaf or disabled dancers aged 16-24.

NYDC is run by Sadler's Wells and jointly funded by the Arts Council England and the Department for Education. NYDC is committed to being accessible through ensuring that financial costs are not a barrier to membership. Workshops are free of charge and means tested scholarships and travel bursaries are available for company members. Find out more [here](#).



NATIONAL YOUTH DANCE WALES (NYDW)

National Youth Dance Wales (NYDW) provides some of Wales' most-talented young dancers, aged between 16 and 22, with first-class training and performance opportunities. It draws on the energy and excitement of young peoples' enthusiasm for dance and dancing, and channels it into a creative, contemporary force that celebrates the very best youth dance in Wales today.

NYDW Bursary Fund could help to cover some or all of the membership fees, so that no-one is deterred from applying. If you have a household income of less than £50k, you could be eligible for financial support. Visit [NYAW Bursary Fund](#) for full information including how to claim help towards audition costs and membership fees. Find out more about NYDW [here](#).

CENTRE FOR ADVANCED TRAINING (CAT)

Funded by the Department for Education Music and Dance Scheme, CATs exist to help identify, and assist, children in England with exceptional potential, regardless of their personal circumstances, to benefit from world-class specialist training as part of a broad and balanced education. This will enable them, if they choose, to proceed towards self-sustaining careers in music and dance. They train dancers in contemporary, ballet, street dance, south Asian styles and circus skills with schemes hosted across England. Find your local CAT programme [here](#).

Families' financial circumstances are reviewed annually and support is available to families whose income falls below £74,883.12 per annum (2025/26). Students who are eligible and who make sufficient progress will be entitled to receive financial assistance until they graduate or exit from the programme.

You can apply for funding through the government's [Music and Dance grant](#) which provides financial help for specialist education or training for young musicians and dancers. The Music and Dance Scheme provides grants and help with fees at 8 independent schools and 23 centres for advanced training. A child must be aged 11 to 19 for the dance schools. To qualify for a Music and Dance national grant the applicant must have been resident in the British Islands for three years prior, be a member of the European Economic Area or Switzerland or be a refugee or the child of a refugee (conditions apply).

CAREERS





Teaching

Many people decide to become dance teachers because they get a huge amount of fulfilment from guiding students and helping them realise their full potential in and through dance. A dance teacher is someone trained to a high level in one or more dance styles and is able to share their knowledge and expertise with others: this could be children and young people or adults. A teacher may work in one setting, such as a school, or across a number of settings in part-time or freelance roles. Some people teach as part of a portfolio career that may also involve performing, choreography or management. Others focus entirely on teaching throughout their careers.

Dance can be taught in a variety of settings: state schools, private dance schools and an array of settings in the community that might include arts/dance venues or youth and sport centres.

You can find more detailed information on teaching dance:

[DANCE TEACHING PATHWAYS DOCUMENT](#)

[DANCE TEACHING PATHWAYS FLOWCHART](#)

[DANCE TEACHER CASE STUDIES](#)

PRIVATE DANCE SCHOOLS

Private dance teachers - i.e. those teaching in private dance schools - typically hold teaching qualifications from one or more Validated Awarding Organisations, such as bbodance, International Dance Teachers Association (IDTA), Imperial Society for Teachers of Dancing (ISTD) and Royal Academy of Dance (RAD). Validated Awarding Organisations offer a range of examinations for children and young people as well as teacher training programmes which lead to teaching qualifications. Validated Awarding Organisations accredited by Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre can be viewed [here](#). You will be able to access ongoing support from being a member of such an organisation that offers courses, publications and events. You will need to acquire business skills, know how to market yourself and your work and how to keep financial records.

Teachers working in the private sector are usually self-employed, based in places like leisure centres, halls or in private studios. They can offer classes that lead students towards taking graded examinations in a number of dance genres such as ballet, ballroom, jazz, stage dance, street dance and tap.



STATE SCHOOLS

Teaching in a state school involves you not just teaching dance in the curriculum but also being a part of the overall education of the students and the running of the school. This may include being a form tutor, taking on pastoral care of a group of students, assessing and recording student progress and developing course materials, as well as running out of school activities such as clubs and performance groups. As a dance teacher you may also contribute to the teaching of other subjects such as physical education, drama, music, creative and media studies, etc. If you wish to teach in schools, you are usually required to hold Qualified Teacher Status (QTS). You could complete a full-time teacher training programme such as a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE), Masters in Education or School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT). If you want to keep working, you could complete a Level 6 Diploma or part-time PGCert.

For further information and details of courses see [Get into Teaching or Universities and Colleges Admissions Service \(UCAS\)](#).

In Scotland you are also required to hold appropriate qualifications, [click here](#) for more information.

In Wales all teachers must register with the Education Workforce Council [click here](#) for more information.

Further information on teaching in Northern Ireland can be found [here](#). For more information on Initial Teacher Training courses in Northern Ireland [click here](#).

You will find teaching vacancies advertised in the local and national press, and in specialist publications such as the Times Educational Supplement. Reading these publications can also keep you up to date with the latest developments in education.

DANCE IN THE COMMUNITY

If you are interested in teaching in a less formal environment, such as with youth dance groups, those with special educational needs, older adults, or young offenders, you might like your dance training to incorporate the study of dance in the community. There is no prescribed route to a career in dance in the community. Any artists currently working in community settings may not necessarily have had access to specialised education at undergraduate level but have found their own pathway. There are different titles for this role, ranging from freelance dance artist to teacher, but generally it is a self-employed role (meaning they are not employed by a company but are their own business).

Most undergraduate dance courses will involve the study of dance in the community in some form or another and a great deal of what you study will provide a useful contextual and skills base for working in the sector.

For more information about studying community dance at university visit [People Dancing](#).



DANCE AND FITNESS

The dance fitness industry is booming and many dance artists teach dance fitness in gyms, studios and community halls as a way to subsidise their career or help engage everyone in physical activity. The Governing Body for group exercise is [Exercise, Move & Dance](#). Here you can find information on what qualifications you can gain to qualify you to teach within the exercise industry. You may also want to visit [Sport England](#) and [UK Active](#) for further advice.



Performing

To be a professional dancer you need to be highly trained, creative and at the peak of physical fitness. This will almost certainly mean a lengthy training process, probably from a very young age, but many dancers start in their teens, and some don't start their training until after 16 or when they are at university. If you decide to follow the performing route you need to be aware that competition for work is fierce and success depends on talent, experience, contacts and determination.

As a dancer you may need to have a number of different skills, for example in teaching or administration, to make a living in dance. You could work full-time for a dance company, although you are usually more likely to work as a freelancer on short, fixed-term contracts. You will often find work through networking and making contacts in the industry. Also, some choreographers choose to form their own dance company.

Your wellbeing, health and performance

Everyone in dance needs a healthy body and mind. No matter what your role, your body and brain are what pay the bills – so you need to look after them! This will include the basics like getting enough rest, warming up and cooling down for physical training, staying hydrated and fuelling yourself with healthy food. It will also include enhancing your performance, building a healthy mindset and sense of confidence in your abilities, and managing injury.

As a partner in the National Institute of Dance Medicine and Science (NIDMS), One Dance UK helps provide education, healthcare, and research to support healthy training and careers in dance.

Learning the basics is sometimes about listening to your body and making healthy choices. How does having a healthy meal and drinking water when you feel thirsty improve your energy and concentration? How can you stay motivated and build your performance skills through a love of dance? You can learn about these topics and many more with [One Dance UK's resources](#). Professional development, education and training in dance medicine and science for dancers, teachers, scientists and healthcare practitioners can be accessed through [NIDMS](#) and through [Safe in Dance International](#).

[Screening](#) is a physical assessment and functional movement evaluation. Screening can be added on to any One Dance UK membership and is available at 2 different levels. It is a valuable tool for dancers to improve their training and performance, understand their strengths and areas for development, prevent injuries and support overall well-being.

One Dance UK members can benefit from exclusive and discounted access to [Health Cash Plans](#) with BHSF. These plans include eye-tests, dental check-ups and more. You can also claim money back on a range of medical expenses including physiotherapy, osteopathy.

If you have an injury, you want the best treatment to help you heal and get back to dancing at your best. [NIDMS NHS dance injury clinics](#) in Bath, Birmingham or London provide free dance specialist injury care. [NIDMS emergency dance injury clinic](#) in London provides support for serious injuries that have happened in the last three days and can be accessed through A&E at Mile End Hospital. You can also search [One Dance UK's Healthcare Practitioners Directory](#) for dance specialist physios, counsellors, dieticians, Pilates, yoga and many other health practitioners near you.

In order to help improve dance training and careers, NIDMS healthcare and education is based on [research into health, wellbeing and performance](#). We explore the needs of all those in dance to train and work at their best including psychology, biomechanics, physiology, and injury care and management.



Images: This page - Screening by One Dance UK, Dani Bower.
Page 13 - Young Creatives by One Dance UK, Dani Bower.



Creating

CHOREOGRAPHER

A choreographer is someone who creates and curates movement and movement patterns to form a dance work or piece of choreography. They will usually work with dancers to make the work but can also choreograph movement with/for non-dancers or even moving objects!

A good grounding in dance training is essential to any choreographer. If you are interested in choreographing as well as performing, you should look for a course that includes creating and making dance as part of the curriculum as well as learning dance techniques. Choreographers will ideally have a good understanding of how the body works and moves, as well as dance techniques, to be able to safely and creatively work with the particular dancers they have in front of them.

A choreographer will be creative and have an aesthetic vision or drive to communicate something through their work. A choreographer is an author, and creative artist with the same creative status as a writer, film or theatre director. They will be confident leading a group of people and guiding and listening to others. Many choreographers start out as performers in professional companies and gain experience touring and in rehearsal with the company and its artistic director.

Always see as much work as possible to increase your knowledge and awareness of styles, creative ideas and current dance practice.

Many students set up companies of their own with their peers when they leave university or college as an introduction to the industry. Find platforms or curated

evenings of short works where there is support for those starting out. At the beginning of a choreographic career, it's useful to find a mentor or someone that you admire – e.g. a teacher or dance practitioner - to help you with your creation or to navigate the dance world. Ask them to watch your dance work while you're making it and make the most of their advice.

If you're creating and performing in a dance, get an 'outside eye' by filming it, or using a body double to dance as you watch it. Film your final dance work in performance and start to create your show reel. Experienced freelance choreographers can list themselves for work on [One Dance UK's Choreographers Directory](#).

If you're between the ages of 16 and 20, and are interested in choreography, then you may be interested in applying for One Dance UK's Young Creatives programme. As part of Young Creatives you will be offered the chance to explore, develop, and share your creative talent. You will have the chance to work with and learn from industry professionals who are experienced in their fields. Whatever your preferred style of dance is, we will be able to accommodate your needs. Previous experience is not essential, we just want you to bring your passion and enthusiasm for dance and choreography! [See more here](#).



DANCE PHOTOGRAPHER

A dance photographer will usually work on a freelance basis, and you will find many will work as general photographers also to top up their income. Photographs are very valuable to dance companies as a source of documentation and for marketing and PR.

Many dance photographers have a degree in photography or art and will have spent years taking photographs and practicing their trade. As a dance photographer you will need to be creative but also work to a brief set out by your client. Working as a dance photographer can involve a lot of travelling, long hours and late nights, so you will need to be patient and practical, with good organisational and communication skills. You should practice your photography skills as much as possible and try to build up your portfolio. Social media can be an excellent way to showcase some of your best work to potential clients.

DANCE FILM MAKER

A dance film maker creates movement-based work that is to exist and be viewed on screen, rather than live. Dance film is very popular and often fuses dance with new, innovative developments in film and technology.

If you are interested in pursuing dance film as a career, you will need to consider how you will develop your practice and should see as much interesting work as possible to inspire you. You will need to consider where you can exhibit your films and research appropriate organisations to approach.

Dance film makers must have a love of dance and film in equal parts, maintain a strong knowledge of artists and companies' work, build up a portfolio and develop practical skills and techniques – perhaps by attending short courses or summer schools led at arts cinemas or agencies.

DANCE PRODUCER

A dance producer is someone who works with dance organisations or venues to ensure that productions or projects happen on time and within budget. A producer's role can be highly varied depending on where they are working, and the level of creative involvement they are given – so flexibility is key.

A dance producer will normally hold a degree in dance, drama, or arts administration and have had plenty of relevant work experience – maybe as a performer or administrator. Dance producers often have a very varied schedule that requires them to be good all-rounders. Successful dance producers will have a good knowledge of performing arts, keep abreast of changes in the sector and be aware of new work being made.

As well as having creative flair, producers need a good business mind – they need to be extremely organised, a good planner, go-getters and have strong communication skills. Getting new productions off the ground requires lots of hard work and a strong sense of entrepreneurship.





Supporting

There are a host of other important and exciting roles within the dance sector. Performances must be commissioned, produced and booked. Projects have to be set up and documented, dancers need specialists to help them to take care of their health and bodies, funding must be found and performances have to be lit, scored and dressed.

There are many support areas in the industry that are relied upon to keep the wheels in motion. Some people, who are not bound for a life teaching or performing, go into these areas after college or university and others may take on some of these roles to support a performing or teaching career.

Everyone, however, is passionate about dance - whether it's helping others to take part, ensuring a production runs smoothly or generating new and exciting work for audiences. From supporting dancers' health and wellbeing to creating engaging dance projects for people to take part in, it all happens with a workforce behind the scenes.

BACKSTAGE

Backstage theatre careers can include costume designers, lighting designers, stage managers and set designers.

To succeed, you will need a lot of experience, good contacts and an excellent portfolio of work – so do contact your local theatres to see if they have opportunities to learn. It's important you find practical work experience and build a good portfolio of your work.

Try and get as much relevant experience as you can by getting involved in:

- student theatre or film
- local amateur or community theatre
- experimental or 'fringe' theatre

You may also be able to get into this job through a creative and digital media apprenticeship. Read more about design work in theatres on [The Society of British Theatre Designers website](#).

See the [UCAS website](#) to find art and design foundation courses all over the UK. See the [Bectu website](#) for other training opportunities.



Images: This page (L-R) - U.Dance National Festival by One Dance UK, Dani Bower and U.Dance National Festival by One Dance UK. Page 16 - Dance Ambassadors by One Dance UK, Dani Bower.



COSTUME AND SET DESIGNER

A set or costume designer's work begins at the start of the production planning phase. You'll create the design ideas and work with a team to bring them to life.

Costume and set designers are in charge of designing, making and often maintaining (sometimes restoring) costumes and sets for performances. You'll need to be creative with an excellent eye for detail and good artistic and technical skills, such as carpentry or sewing, depending on your area of work.

You may be able to become a costume designer or a set designer without a degree, by working your way up through craft or assistant jobs in costume and set departments into more senior roles.

You may also be able to get into this job through a creative and digital media apprenticeship. Read more about design work in theatres on [The Society of British Theatre Designers website](#). You can find training opportunities in costume design at [Get Into Theatre](#).

DANCE COMPANY EDUCATION AND LEARNING PARTICIPATION SPECIALIST

Dance companies and organisations need people who know about dance as well as education, community participation and cultural policy in order to provide an educational aspect to their work. This involves running workshops, performance projects, talks etc. on the working practices and repertoire of the company or organisation. These roles have a variety of titles including Learning and Participation, Engagement and Education.

Education and participation work led by a company alongside a performance often 'adds value' to an experience and enables companies to build relationships with venues and communities. Professional dancers can develop additional skills in teaching and project co-ordination to take on an education role in the company. The role will require administration and project management skills. Companies also recruit dance teachers and community dance practitioners to deliver this role or sometimes this work can be delivered by dancers in a company themselves.

Find your [regional dance agency](#) or [national dance organisation](#) or dance company and ask what work experience opportunities they have. Look at [dance Higher Education courses](#) that have modules that include education and community.

LIGHTING DESIGNER/ TECHNICAL PRODUCTION

To become a lighting designer you will need to start out as a lightning trainee. Find out more about being a lighting designer [here](#).

DANCE JOURNALIST AND CRITIC

Journalism is mostly learnt and "fine-tuned" on the job, although there are specific skills to learn, such as shorthand for speech reporting, which can be taught on industry approved journalism courses. You may want to look at [Higher Education courses in dance](#) where you can combine degrees in dance with media or English. Ask your local newspaper if you can write reviews for local dance shows or consider starting your own blog.

Visit the [National Council for The Training of Journalism's website](#) for more information.



DANCE LECTURER OR ACADEMIC RESEARCHER

If you are interested in dance history, aesthetics, research and the more academic side of dance, you may want to consider Higher Education lecturing and further academic research. If you are interested in the study of dance enrolling on a university degree course is essential. Most of these positions may require a Masters and PhD (or for you to be working towards a PhD).

DANCE PROJECT COORDINATOR OR ADMINISTRATOR

A dance project coordinator or administrator manages activities and projects provided by a dance organisations.

Every dance company, organisation, venue or funding body needs someone to run it and there is a growing demand for administrators who are knowledgeable in dance, administration or management to assist in the day to day running of these organisations, or sometimes with specific events being undertaken.

Administrators in this field need to be organised as well as being flexible and responsive as they will often manage a variety of tasks that can range from project and budget management to organising travel, copywriting, briefing suppliers and event management.

Usually, people holding these roles will hold a degree in a relevant subject such as dance, drama or performing arts. They may also have hands on experience working or volunteering in the sector. Dance artists sometimes work in administration to boost their income. This is a competitive field and it's often necessary to get some good work experience under your belt before applying for jobs!





Wellbeing, health and performance enhancement

Careers in dancers' health, wellbeing and performance enhancement focus on two important areas; firstly, improving physical, psychological, and social health and dance performance for dance students and dance professionals in their training and work, and secondly, supporting health and wellbeing for the general population who participates in dance. This may include those with dementia or Parkinson's, older people, children and young people, or people with access needs, health conditions or impairments.

DANCE SCIENTIST

A dance scientist is someone who studies dance training, performance and practice and their relationship to fitness, health, and wellbeing. Dance scientists use scientific disciplines including anatomy, physiology, psychology, neuroscience, motor control and learning, somatic practices, and biomechanics as well as quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Some dance scientists will focus primarily on research and work in an academic setting, and others work practically to apply evidence. Dance scientists work with dance teachers, other scientists, dance artists/performers, dance healthcare practitioners, and dance managers.

A dance scientist will need to have a curiosity and interest in movement and dance and their relationship to performance, fitness, health and wellbeing. You will need extensive practical and theoretical knowledge of dance, scientific disciplines, and research methodologies. Creativity, initiative, and collaborative skills will help you to design research questions, organise resources and people, and plan projects. You will also need written and verbal communication skills to explain research proposals and findings. A dance scientist will be good at taking a methodical approach and have good attention to detail. They will also enjoy researching, finding out new things and putting new-found knowledge into practice.

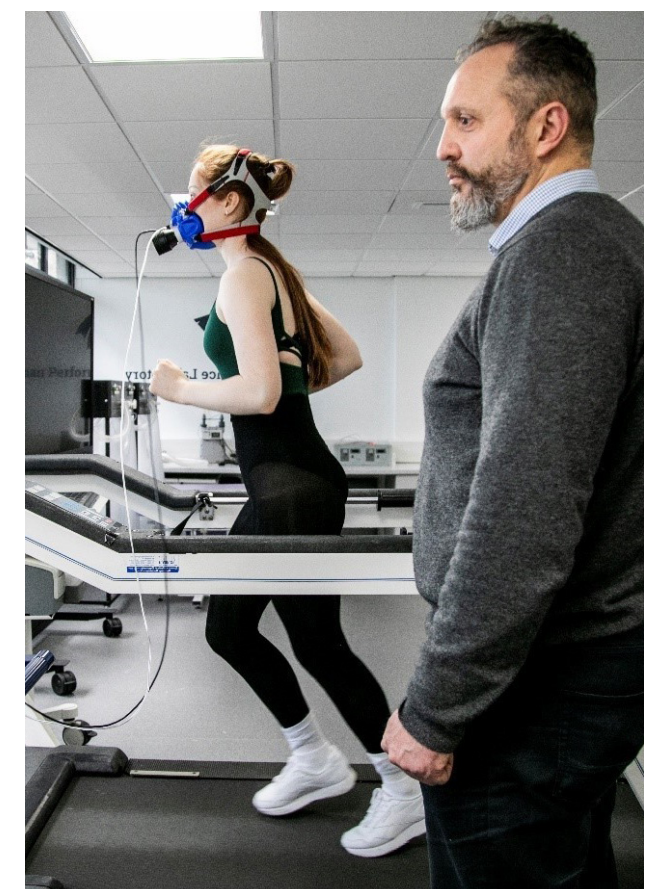
You can work as a dance scientist in a university or research organisation, or in a dance organisation such as a company, school, or community setting.

As a dance scientist working in an academic setting, such as a university or research organisation, you will need to have an MSc, as well as established research experience and publications.

Dance scientists in dance settings such as dance schools, companies, or community will need to develop an ability to work collaboratively with both dance participants themselves, as well as the staff, management, leadership, funders, and wider stakeholders and community around participants. This collaboration will allow applied dance scientists to ask relevant research questions for these groups, to engage people in the research process, to communicate what they learn from research, and implement results into practice.

You should ensure your knowledge of dance practice and research being conducted are kept up to date through reading research publications, attending conferences, and networking with other researchers.

Make the most of all opportunities to develop your experiences and skills in dance, scientific disciplines, and research. This might be at school or vocational college, through reading research, doing work placements, or attending research sharing events.



There are several dance science courses at BSc, MSc and PhD level that can provide academic preparation for a career in research, and/or supervision to complete research projects and publish academic papers. Along with A Level, BTEC or equivalent dance qualifications, science-based A Levels, including biology, physics, psychology, sociology, PE, or sport science are recommended preparation for BSc study in dance science.

If you complete a BA in dance or a vocational dance degree, increasingly, these will include a basic introduction to applied dance science, including improving performance through fitness training, nutrition, performance psychology, and injury management. You may also have an opportunity to select a dissertation topic related to dance science, which should be supervised by an established dance scientist at MSc or PhD level.

Dance scientists in applied dance settings will work with diverse groups and research projects, so to gain skills you should assist or gain work experience with existing research projects.

DANCE HEALTHCARE PRACTITIONER

A dance healthcare practitioner is someone who works with dance artists/performers to treat or prevent injury and ill-health, both physical and psychological. They are key to ensuring dance artists/performers are fit and healthy enough to perform and that they recover from any injuries or illnesses as quickly as possible. There are a wide range of healthcare practitioners that a dance artist/performer might use, some of the most common ones include: physiotherapists, osteopaths, doctors, nutritionists, psychologists, massage therapists and sports/dance therapists.

Dance healthcare practitioners will be interested in human biology, physiology, biomechanics and/or psychology. Whichever form of healthcare you are interested in there will be a requirement to study to at least degree level and this will not initially be dance or sports specific. To find out more about the qualifications required for different healthcare professions [click here](#). To be a dance healthcare practitioner requires study in your chosen healthcare specialism but also good knowledge of dance and the demands of the profession, and it will be an advantage to have danced and watched a lot of dance yourself. Often dance healthcare practitioners will have their own private practice and therefore need to be set up as their own business. They may work with more than one dance organisation or see individual dancers at their practice. Sometimes they will be able to work in the NHS as part of a Sport and Exercise Medicine (SEM) service.

Make the most of all opportunities to develop your knowledge and skills in science, clinical services and dance. This will likely start at school with science-based A-levels and be continued through higher education, clinical qualifications or medical school, and dance or sport specialism.

To find out more about what different healthcare and conditioning specialists do in their work, it may help to arrange to speak with someone working in the field you are interested in or arrange a work placement.

It is essential that you continue to learn and stay up to date with clinical practice and research being conducted through reading research publications, attending conferences, and through continuing professional education.



DANCE MOVEMENT THERAPIST

A dance movement therapist (DMT) works in a variety of settings including hospitals, psychiatric and rehabilitation units and schools. They use dance and movement to help people with a wide range of emotional, social, psychological and physical difficulties.

Therapists need to have a strong sense of empathy, be creative, physically fit, and interested in psychology and movement. They use dance and movement to help people with a wide range of emotional, social, psychological and physical difficulties. Part-time or session work is common and many DMTs are self-employed or freelance. Maturity and the ability to communicate through movement is essential and the minimum age for entering DMT training is 23 years.

Contact the Association for Dance Movement Psychotherapy UK ([ADMPUK](#)) for further information.

Dance Movement Therapists must have a postgraduate qualification recognised by ADMPUK, and a minimum of two years' experience of at least one dance or movement form.

Goldsmiths, University of London, the University of Derby and the University of Roehampton offer qualifications in this field. Subjects studied include anatomy, psychology, psychotherapy and movement observation.

Dance therapists work in a variety of settings including hospitals, psychiatric and rehabilitation units and schools. Therapists work with individuals and groups to help improve their self-esteem, develop communication skills and develop strategies to manage their lives.

VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND HIGHER EDUCATION



One thing all dancers need is a high quality, accredited training, whether they are to go on to perform or teach. So, how do you get there?

For vocational training a really good place to start your research is the Council for Dance, Drama and Musical Theatre (CDMT). It seeks to establish and maintain high standards of education and training at a national level and within an international context. The courses offered by CDMT's accredited schools vary widely in style, content and aims. They cover the disciplines of classical ballet, musical theatre and contemporary dance. It's wise to obtain prospectuses for more than one course and to ensure that the course aims and graduate destinations match your requirements. Most courses are three years in length. Find out more on [CDMT's website](#).

There are many Higher Education institutions offering dance courses or courses with dance elements. You can also study dance at conservatoires where the focus is on practical vocational training at the very highest level. Conservatoires have international reputations in their fields and have trained some of the world's leading figures in the performing arts.

Don't forget when planning your future, that open days, auditions and interviews will be held at institutions, and it is important to have contacted the course administrators well in advance, usually in the Autumn, in order to ensure that you are given an audition or interview date.



Training continues throughout a dance career, with even the most experienced practitioners attending daily classes and courses to update skills or to re-train for another area of the dance profession. In order to increase your employability, you may wish to gain further training and qualifications, particularly in other types of dance. Some dancers decide to gain dance-related skills by taking further training in dance performance, or by obtaining a qualification in an area related to performance, such as community theatre work, choreography, scenography, notation, arts administration or marketing.

Some dancers also do further training to work in complementary therapies or to teach fitness classes such as yoga, Pilates and the Alexander Technique. These open up opportunities for self-employment. It can also be useful to gain IT and project management skills, not only for temporary work but also for work in dance administration and development.

CREATIVE APPRENTICESHIPS

The dance sector is a popular and competitive sector. Walking into your dream job is not easy! Apprenticeships can be a great way to develop your skills, to build your networks within the industry and to get a foot in the door. There may also be opportunities to gain qualifications whilst you work.

[Creative Lives in Progress](#) has a list of current schemes available. Other opportunities will be listed on organisations' own websites.

HIGHER EDUCATION DANCE COURSES

There are many Higher Education institutions offering dance degrees. These courses cover an exciting breadth of areas of study and disciplines, ranging from dance science to screen dance, choreography to dance theatre. You will often have optional or elective modules within a dance course, meaning you can tailor your studies to your key interests and passions. Studying dance at a Higher Education institution will prepare you for the varied nature of a career in dance, as many professionals find themselves having a 'portfolio career', working in several different roles under the umbrella of dance. For further information on the institutions and course content, please visit www.dancehe.org. There are numerous other courses within Higher Education both at undergraduate and postgraduate level. Contact [UCAS](#) for a listing of all dance courses in the UK.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR DANCERS WITH DIFFERENT ACCESS NEEDS

If you have additional access needs and feel you may need some support going into dance, there are organisations and universities that are making their offer more inclusive and accessible.

<https://anjali.co.uk/about2/>
<https://artshape.co.uk/pages/gdance>
<https://candoco.co.uk/whats-on/>
<https://www.coralio.org.uk/>
<https://thegarage.org.uk/>
<https://www.magpietdance.org.uk/>
<https://northernballet.com/join-in/inclusive-dance/shift-dance>
<https://parabledance.co.uk/>
<https://www.communities1st.org.uk/paradance>
<https://www.plymouthonlinedirectory.com/article/2141/Wheelfever-Inclusive-Dance>
<http://www.stopgapdance.com/creative-learning>
<https://www.tinarts.co.uk/>
<https://yorkshiredance.com/project/leaps-and-bounds/>

FUNDING

Once you've found the right course, it's important to start thinking about how you will finance your studies as you'll need to cover the costs of both course fees and living expenses.

Finding the funds to study on dance courses can be a long and difficult process with a great deal of competition. We have highlighted some of the main funding sources for you.

Learning to manage your money is an essential skill you will discover whilst studying. Remember that the cost of higher education extends far beyond tuition fees and accommodation! You will need to pay for travel, insurance and course requirements (e.g. books) as well as bills and leisure activities.



STUDENT LOAN

For 2025/26, publicly funded universities can charge up to £9535 per year for full-time UK based students.

Fees are dependent on your country of residency and where you are planning to study.

If you are a full-time student, to cover the cost of tuition fees you can apply for a Tuition Fee Loan. To cover living costs, you can apply for a Maintenance Loan.

You will have to pay back your loans. This is dependent on your income after you graduate.

[Click here for more details on repaying your loan.](#)

[Click here for more details on Tuition Fees and Maintenance Loans.](#)

[Students in England](#)

[Students in Scotland](#)

[Students in Wales](#)

[Students in Northern Ireland](#)

COURSE FEES ACROSS THE UK

Country of residence	Studying in England	Studying in Wales	Studying in Scotland	Studying in Northern Ireland
England	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535
Wales	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535
Scotland	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	No fee	Up to £9,535
Northern Ireland	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535	Up to £9,535
EU and other international	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable



BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS

A bursary is non-repayable financial support from a university or college that is granted to students paying full tuition fees and receiving a full maintenance grant (although some pay bursaries to those on partial grants).

Scholarships are grants given to students by institutions or another sponsoring body such as a workplace. Scholarships tend to be given to students based on academic achievement or exceptional talent. Each vocational school determines the recipients of scholarships through its own audition process, and this will vary from school to school.

For more information on student bursaries, scholarships and financial support [click here](#).

MUSIC AND DANCE SCHEME AND DANCE AND DRAMA AWARD

Once you’ve found the right course, it’s important to start thinking about how you will finance your studies as you’ll need to cover the costs of both course fees and living expenses.

Finding the funds to study on dance courses can be a long and difficult process with a great deal of competition. Some courses will have their own bursaries that you can apply for. There are also two schemes you can apply to for specific conservatories:

[Music and Dance Scheme](#)

[Dance and Drama Awards](#)



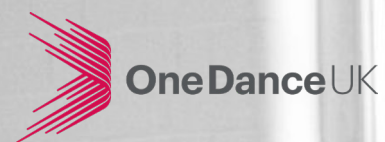
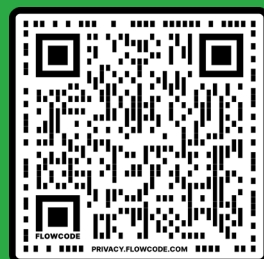
DANCE AMBASSADORS

Calling all young people who believe in the power of dance and are passionate about the development of dance across the UK and access for all!

One Dance UK's Dance Ambassadors is a unique programme for young people aged 18-25 years who are interested in gaining experience, and a deepened knowledge about the dance sector, whilst developing skills to support their employability in the arts and dance.



**SCAN HERE TO
FIND OUT MORE:**



YOUNG CREATIVES

Are you an aspiring young choreographer?

If you are 16–20 and love making movement, then our fully-funded programme Young Creatives could be the next step for you!

The Young Creatives programme offers young dance makers the opportunity to develop their choreographic skills in any dance style by learning from industry leading artists and, through mentoring, create an original dance work which is premiered in front of a live audience.

FIND OUT MORE:
www.onedanceuk.org/programmes/young-creatives



Photo credit: One Dance UK, Dani Bower



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www.onedanceuk.org