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 are often 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. Classes and workshops can provide a regular opportunity for you to develop your craft by refining and adding to your skills as a dancer, as well as through building your professional relationships.

The study of dance equips a student with a broad range of communication and organizational skills applicable to many careers. 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 and 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. Good health and physical stamina are also 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. This collaborative relationship requires an ability to give and receive constructive criticism. Dancers should also 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 sample of representative skills and abilities follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Problem Solving</strong></th>
<th><strong>Communication</strong></th>
<th><strong>Artistic/Technical</strong></th>
<th><strong>Organization</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attention to detail</td>
<td>Explaining concepts</td>
<td>Creating and performing dances</td>
<td>Self-discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>Control of body</td>
<td>Working independently</td>
<td>Time management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapting techniques</td>
<td>Listening critically</td>
<td>Program planning</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing and interpreting the emotion</td>
<td>Awareness of body language</td>
<td>Sensitivity to and appreciation of diverse</td>
<td>Interacting with colleagues in a team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and motives of others</td>
<td></td>
<td>music and dance styles</td>
<td>setting</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking multiple approaches to problems</td>
<td>Making keen observations</td>
<td>Doing detailed and accurate work</td>
<td>Utilizing available resources</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrating diverse elements from others</td>
<td>Ability to give and receive criticism</td>
<td>Moving efficiently and effectively</td>
<td>Spatial memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forming perceptions and seeing connections</td>
<td>Relating to people of varying backgrounds</td>
<td>Collaboratively developing a project</td>
<td>Working under pressure and meeting deadlines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 some professions that dance majors may undertake are listed below.

Professional Dance
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 also sing and act. Dancers most often perform as part of a group, although a few top artists perform solo.

Dance Therapy
Dance therapists, sometimes referred to as 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 and gain insight into patterns of behavior, as well as create new options for coping with problems. Physical mobility is the primary medium dance therapists use for observation, assessment, research, therapeutic interaction and interventions. Dance 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 therapy can be a powerful tool for stress management and the prevention of physical and mental health problems.

Dance Education
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. In some jobs, such as in schools, dancers must also know about anatomy, physiology, dance history and notation. Dance teachers should have good communication skills, be interested in their pupils and enjoy helping people 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. 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. Teaching in a private school would not require certification and may provide a smoother introduction into education for candidates without extensive student-teaching experience.

Choreography
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. Choreographing 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 creating dances for 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 choreographing dances for their friends at end-of-term shows.

**Arts Administration**
Arts organizations, like most for profit companies, 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. The specific positions available at an arts organization will depend on what the organization does and the size of its budget and staff. Since arts managers are needed in virtually every arts organization, from theatre companies to museums, many opportunities exist in this field. 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 theatre 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. Some theatre companies need general managers to schedule tours, monitor union agreements, and run the business side of 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 business degree with a specialization in nonprofit 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.

**Community Dance**
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 or 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 Notation**
Dance notation is the method of recording movement by using symbols in order to analyze and understand dance as well as preserve dances for the future. There are two main systems of notation in common use: Benesh and Laban. 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 or 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 an asterisk (*) on the following list:
Artist-In-Residence    *General Manager Company Dancer    *Dance Therapist
Public Relations Manager    Choreographer    Private Teacher
Press Agent    Personnel Manager    Dancer
Designer: Costumes Or Lighting    *Business Manager    Technician
Leisure and Recreation Instructor    Dance Company Rehearsal Director    Consultant
*College Professor    Dance Company Sound Person    Booking Agent
Pilates/Body Conditioning Instructor    Ballet Mistress/Master    *Grants Specialist
*Public School Teacher    Education Coordinator    *Arts Council Director
*Benesh/Laban Notator

**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

**A Word 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.

**Graduate School Options**
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. The M.F.A usually takes two to three years to complete, typically culminating in a thesis or performance project. If you have the drive, the time and the resources to invest in it, then you are ready to go. Master of Arts (M.A.): The M.A. in Dance is focused on scholarly and research-based activities related to issues concerning dance aesthetics, theory, history or cultural studies. A master’s degree usually takes one to two years of study and typically requires a thesis. Some areas of concentration include choreography, dance history and criticism. Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.): Less than five institutions in the United States offer the Doctor of Philosophy in Dance. Some institutions may offer a Doctor of Education degree with Dance as the cognate or minor field. As the terminal research oriented degree, Ph.D. programs emphasize scholarship and its applications to various aspects, issues, and problems in dance. Major fields include dance history, performance studies, pedagogy and dance education, cultural studies, and interdisciplinary programs.

**Resources for Dancers and Artists**
Alliance of Artist Communities
http://www.artistcommunities.org/
The Alliance of Artists Communities is the service organization for the field of artists’ communities and residencies. They maintain artist residency listings, advocate for artist residency programs and communities, and offer professional development for artists. Their website includes job postings.
Americans for the Arts
http://jobbank.artsusa.org
This advocacy organization supports the arts in many ways. Their job bank is the premier electronic recruitment resource for the industry and includes national job listings for all of the fine arts. It includes postings in academia, arts administration and management. Check out the rest of their site for other helpful arts resources.

Art Job
https://www.artjob.org/
Comprehensive, up-to-date national listings of jobs, internships, fellowships and other employment opportunities in the arts. Contact Fine Arts Career Services for the username and password.

ArtSearch
http://www.tcg.org/artsearch/
The publication from the Theatre Communication Group for full-time, part-time, seasonal, year-round and internship opportunities in the performing arts. Contact FACS for the username and password.

Current Jobs in Performing Arts
http://www.graduatejobs.com/index.html
A national employment bulletin for jobs in the performing arts professions. Available by individual paid subscription.

New York Foundation for the Arts
http://www.nyfa.org/
This website provides a number of services for artists including job and internship postings, funding opportunities, arts advocacy and services for artists. They also maintain an online newsletter covering current issues affecting artists.

Professional Organizations
Actor’s Fund
http://www.actorsfund.org/
This amazing resource offers a wealth of information for actors, dancers, musicians, producers, directors, carpenters, stagehands, 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.
The American Dance Guild
http://americandanceguild.org/
The American Dance Guild is a non-profit membership organization concerned with promoting the art of dance by serving the needs of performers, choreographers, teachers and students through all stages of their development and careers. Includes job listings.

American Dance Therapy Association
http://www.adta.org
This site provides answers to many questions students may have about dance therapy as a career.
Association of Performing Arts Presenters
http://www.apap365.org
Excellent site for those interested in arts administration positions in the performing arts. Includes a job bank.

Dance Educators of America
http://www.deadance.com/
DEA is dedicated to improving the quality and teaching abilities of its member teachers and to enhance their education of students. DEA also works to further the professional and ethical standards in dance in all its forms.

Dance USA
http://www.danceusa.org/
Dance/USA, the national service organization for professional dance, offers a variety of programs for its membership and the dance field. By providing services and leadership, Dance/USA enhances the infrastructure for dance creation, education and dissemination.

League of Resident Theatres
http://www.lort.org/
The largest professional theatre association of its kind in the United States. This site has links to 74 member theatres in every major market, as well as collective bargaining agreements for actors, directors, choreographers and designers.

Other
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 require site membership.

Dance Art
http://danceart.com/
Nice site for links, jobs, articles and other resources for dancers.

Gaynor Minden Online Dance Resources
http://www.dancer.com/onlineResources.php
A compendium of dance-related sites, from links to grant funding resources, to newsgroups to calendars of upcoming events at arts facilities around the globe.