



Post-High School Choices for Dancers

For some dancers, exiting stage right after senior year of high school and leaving a studio, team, or company can seem like the best thing ever. For some it's a deep loss. For most each, depending on the week, day, and hour.

There is a lot of pressure to get into the "right" college or land a job in the "best" company. Questions need to be considered. *Is college the right place for me? Should I find a trade school? Should I go to a community college the best place to get my "gen eds"?* The good news is that your life will be no matter where you decide to start.

Here are a couple of ways to look at post high-school next steps without judgement or going to consider your finances, mental well-being, academic momentum, and professional goals. **What's best and what's best for you**, you are going to seek out opinions from parents, teachers, and decide for yourself.

Options Post-High School Include:

Take a gap year

- Work for pay
- Internship for experience
- Volunteer/ community service
- Travel
- Take dance classes in your city/community

Attend a community college or trade school

- Full-time
- Part-time
- Combine with working, interning, volunteering, attending a training program, or taking classes in your city/community

Attend a four-year college (see SaraBibikDance.com/Dance in College Seminar)

- Major in dance
 - Degrees such as BA will essentially have an equal amount of credits in dance and core curriculum/ general education. Dancers who seek degrees such as a BFA take their majority of credits in the dance department.
- Double major in dance and another passion/interest you have
 - When researching your school, check to see if double majors are allowed and feasible.



Programs like the BFA and the BFA in Ballet are structured so that dance classes at the professional school mentioned. Some universities connect with professional companies with the directors or dancers of that company. Contemporary Dance Company as well as the SaraBibikDance Reflection: This can be a really great way to get top-tier education along with dance training directly from a professional school/company. This can be extremely beneficial and creates natural connections. The downside could be that some schools/companies for networking.

Finances now and future

- Are there merit scholarships for academics?
- Is there financial aid?
- What is the cost (in time and dollars)?
 - What is the cost to my support?
- Housing:
 - Do I want to and/or can I live at home?
 - What are the requirements for living on-campus?
 - If I can/want to live off-campus, what are the requirements?
 - Do I want to/ can I be an RA?
- Do I want to graduate in three years? If not, how long will it take and/or take classes during breaks.
- Do I want to bring a vehicle? What is the cost?
- Does the college/university offer help with transportation?
- Does this school have a history of professional connections?
 - A good way to see this is to go on the alumni section of the school's website. Conversely, go to the website of places where you are interested in working (a specific company, a specific program, a specific school, etc.) and see if they have any alumni listed.



Paths Within the Professional Dance World

Do I want to dance professionally?

- Broadway. Musical Theater Touring. Regional Theater. Las Vegas shows. Cruise Ships
 - All will more possible if you can also sing, act, do gymnastics, and/or do aerial work
 - These jobs will usually be full time. Contracts may last 10 weeks to 52 weeks.
- Back-up dancer for a singer. Movies. Television.
 - You will get an agent to get this commercial work
 - These jobs will range from a 2-night gig to a 1-year tour.
- Competition circuit.
 - Demonstrator, usually with additional tasks.
 - Varies from working one weekend a year to almost all weekends a year
- Company
 - Full time: please note, very few companies in the USA offer full time positions
 - Part time: virtually all companies/groups/choreographers will hire part time or project based
 - range from 3 to 40 weeks per year
 - What genre/style do I see myself dancing most of the time?
 - aerial, ballet, pointe, contemporary, ethnic, jazz, modern, or tap

Do I want to teach?

- Studio
- Recreational Department
- K-12 in a public or private school system
- College/University
- Competition Circuit
- Each of these goals will have different requirements. For example: if you want to teach in the Public School System you'll need a teaching degree as well as a dance degree. If you want to own your own studio, a business and/or law degree would be very useful. If you want to teach at the University level you'll need at least your Masters Degree.

Do I want to choreograph?

- Students or Professionals
- Concert dance, musicals, or for the screen

Do I want to work in a dance related field? (Please see SaraBibikDance Jobs in the Professional World)

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