



VET and Dance

Sector Summary

Dancers and choreographers have a small national workforce of approximately 1000 that has remained the same over several years¹. When broader roles are included, the workforce size doubles to about 2000 (still a small workforce²). There are limited opportunities for a full-time place in a dance company in Australia. Working as an independent artist is usually a progression that happens with experience. Job roles may include ensemble dancer, dancer or choreographer.

Perception of Training

- Dancers require a high level of performance skill to be employed and, while formal qualifications may be useful, they are not essential. Qualifications enable students to work toward a professional dance standard. Since a high level of skill is required for the industry, a selection process for any VET course is vital. This should ensure that the student has the skills, knowledge, and experience to undertake the qualification. Even after completion of VET qualifications, further refining is often required (over several years), before paid work is secured. All employment in the sector needs to be supported with a portfolio of experience. Following completion of the Diploma level qualification, the initial roles in industry are potentially on smaller productions as an ensemble member, an instructor to young performers, a production support role (behind the scenes), performing on cruise ships, or entertainment events.

Attributes for New Entrants

- Existing dance skills - these are often developed while completing Cert III, IV and Diploma of Dance qualifications.
- Time management - the industry requires employees to self-manage their workload and conflicting commitments (family/work etc).
- Self-awareness - those new to the industry will need to acknowledge areas that need development and seek assistance or further support early in their journey.
- Motivation - the continued drive to gain industry skills and knowledge from industry professionals every day is vital. Those without prior industry experience may be unaware of the competitive nature of the industry. Motivation to grow and develop will provide

¹ [Dancers and Choreographers | JobOutlook](#)

² [Other Actors, Dancers and Entertainers | JobOutlook](#)

them with the foundation skills and exposure to continue the professional development required by industry.

- Resilience - the physical capabilities to dance and perform up to five days a week can be very demanding.
- Royal Academy of Dance examinations are recognised broadly in the sector. These are recognised by TASC as Recognised Formal Learning for Year 11 and 12 students in Tasmania and have associated TCE credit points.
- Performance and/or teaching experience is extremely valued and may need to be completed by volunteering in the beginning.

Preferred Training and Pathways

- There are no mandatory qualifications in the industry; however, qualifications support the development of skills needed for entry to further training and employment.
- Certificate III in Dance completed at school/college is supported by the industry. Post-school, a Cert IV and Diploma in Dance are supported.
- There are no tertiary dance options available in Tasmania - the training is undertaken in other states. The application for these programs is through audition. Options include tertiary providers such as WAPPA, NIDA, VCA for Creative Arts or entry into other higher education such as Bachelor of Education (Dance Teacher), Bachelor of Applied Science (Physiotherapy).
- Dance teachers will have a tertiary qualification, usually coupled with commercial experience.

Published: Version 1 | November 2021



State of Tasmania
(Department of Education)