

## **A GENERAL TIMELINE FOR ARTS STUDENTS**

Many high school arts students choose to continue their involvement in the arts in college. Just as no two students are exactly alike, each art student's college search will be an individual process. Here are some tips on what arts students can do along the way to help facilitate the college application process.

### **Freshmen and Sophomores**

- Explore the arts classes and extracurricular activities that your school has to offer. This is the best way for you to build your skills and get to know other students and teachers who share your interests. The opportunities are many and varied, and there is something for everyone.
- Practice your craft. Whether it's a musical instrument, dance, singing, photography, or other art form, training develops both discipline and skill.
- Begin to archive your artwork. photography, playbills, programs, newspaper clippings, etc. Keep track of any exhibitions or publications for which your work has been selected. These will help to refresh your memory when you're creating a resume and/or portfolio later on.
- If you are interested in theatre, begin to create a monologue library by saving audition monologues for all shows, even if you don't audition for all of them.
- Voice students should start creating a repertoire binder of art songs, arias, Broadway, and Pop songs used in class, in auditions, or with private teachers.
- Music students should consider taking piano lessons and/or music theory classes. Visual arts students should plan on taking a self-portrait or life drawing class. A self-portrait will be a portfolio requirement.
- If you like, continue your exploration outside of your school, through studios, theatres, private instructors. summer camps, etc.
- Have fun and enjoy what you're doing. You participate because you love the arts.

### **Juniors**

- Make time to communicate with your post high school (PHS) counselor, your arts teachers and your parents about your interest in continuing your involvement in the arts, your goals and your plans.
- Assess how you really feel about your artistic pursuits and career aspirations. Consider the following questions:
  - Which of your current classes do you like and why?
  - Do you think you're good at the craft you plan to study?
  - Do you seek out opportunities to attend performances or exhibits?
  - Are you self-disciplined?
  - Are you looking forward to years of study that may be required before you begin your career?
  - How do you feel about hours of daily practice that will be required as part of your studies?
  - What have your current teachers said about your skills, strengths, and weaknesses?
  - Do you have the physical and emotional resiliency to study and work in the competitive arts fields?
  - Is there anything else you could pursue that would make you happy?
  - Visit the web sites of colleges that interest you. Research types of degrees and programs available at specific schools. Ask questions, such as:
    - Does the visual art program you're applying to have a concentration in your desired media?
    - Can you participate in the program without majoring?
    - Is the program's acceptance based on auditions or academics, or both?

- In concert with your counselor, teachers and parents, create a list of targeted colleges/programs and/or professors and their addresses and e-mails. If you are applying to conservatories, try to also include at least one liberal arts college or university on your list.
- If you haven't done so already, collect all your old programs, playbills, monologues, newspaper clippings, videos and projects to refresh your memory for your resume.
- Begin work on your resume. Present your history, including all information related to your art. Be sure to record your teachers' and private instructors' names and e-mail addresses. Have your teachers look over your resume to get their suggestions on presentation and what should be included.
- Write generic e-mails of interest to the colleges on your list, asking for information. Attach your resume. Be ready to provide additional information upon request.
- If possible, visit the schools you are most interested in and talk with the teachers there. Try to schedule a lesson or a class before you go.
- Depending on what type of degree you are pursuing and which schools you will be applying to, you may need to have a DVD or CD made, create a portfolio, or obtain a head shot.
- If you will be producing a DVD or CD, have a parent or friend videotape or record the shows, concerts, contests and recitals you are in, including your original choreography, if applicable. Copyright regulations might restrict the recording of theatre and musical theatre productions. Please talk with the director for instructions.
- Consider taking or auditing a college class during the summer between junior and senior year.
- At the end of junior year, look ahead to the senior year school calendar to plan visits, auditions, portfolio presentations, etc.

### **Seniors**

- If you are asking your arts teachers to write recommendations, please make your requests early in the year.
- Investigate deadlines of school conservatories. Sometimes these deadlines are earlier than the regular application deadlines. Some colleges require applications or acceptance before auditions can be scheduled. Check the policy of any college on your list.
- Schedule auditions/portfolio reviews if they are required by your targeted schools' admissions offices. Most auditions take place from January to March of your senior year. If possible, schedule an in-person portfolio presentation for the colleges you want most.
- Visit the colleges that interest you most to check out their facilities as they pertain to your major interest.
- Keep communicating with your PHS counselor, your arts teachers and your parents about your plans, especially if they change.
- Keep an open dialogue with the colleges in which you continue to have an interest.
- Update your resume, DVD, CD or portfolio as needed.
- Many students pursuing an arts degree will be required to complete the Arts Supplement to the Common Application. This is where your DVD, CD or portfolio will come in handy. Other applicants may choose to submit the Arts Supplement in order to provide a more complete profile of the student. This may be optional for the admissions process at some schools.
- Be sure to apply to some schools in which you are a strong candidate, regardless of your visual and/or performing arts interests.
- Schedule extra time to work with teachers and/or private instructors as needed for audition and

portfolio preparations.

- Pick a college where you feel comfortable. A college that looks good on paper might not be a perfect fit for you. Ideally, you want a life in college outside your major.

## DANCE

### I. General Information

You have decided to study dance. Now how do you begin? First, continue to grow as a dancer. Take classes from several teachers and take a variety of dance styles, such as ballet, modern, jazz, or ethnic dance. The more versatile you are, the more prepared you will be for success in a college dance program. You will also be in better physical shape for the demands of the dance program.

### II. Research

- Most dance programs combine ballet and modern dance. They usually offer additional styles in jazz, African-American dance, etc. Some programs lean more heavily toward ballet so be sure to ask if there is an emphasis on a certain style.
- At some colleges, you must first be admitted to the institution before you may audition. Some schools require that you write an essay to indicate why you wish to pursue dance.
- Ask where the dancers go once they graduate. There are many career choices in the dance field besides being a professional dancer. See Related Careers.

### III. Auditions

Audition procedures vary, so it is important to check each school's requirements. Dance auditions are typically held as a two-day event, with the first day being an open house. This is your opportunity to view the students taking a variety of different dance classes, observe faculty members, tour the facilities, and attend a question and answer session.

The following day is the audition. You will most likely take a ballet class, modern class, and some other dance class, such as African, Jazz, etc. You will be auditioning with other students wishing to be in the program. You may have to send a full-length picture of yourself beforehand or have it available so that the judges can identify you. You will probably also wear a number on your leotard so that the judges, who are faculty members, can rate your technique, aptitude, and ability to learn quickly.

Some colleges require that you prepare a dance solo. If this is the case, you will receive information regarding the style of dance the solo should be and how long it should last. While choreographing your solo, it would be beneficial to get advice from a teacher or professional dancer.

Auditions are generally offered in October/November and February/March. Women should bring a leotard, tights, footless tights, ballet slippers, jazz shoes, and a non-bulky cover up. Men should wear jazz or ballet shoes, tights, jazz pants, shirts or shorts. No bulky or oversized clothing. Have your hair secured and off of your face. Wear minimal jewelry. Do not chew gum! If you absolutely cannot make an audition, you will need to send a videotape of your dance ability. Each college will have specific requirements for the video.

This is also your opportunity to judge the school's program, and whether it is a good fit for you or not. The audition pieces are usually in the areas that are most important to the school.

### IV. Visiting

Arrange to visit the dance department and take a campus tour. Ask the admissions office if you can

Speak with a member of the faculty and/or a dance major. (Ability to do this will depend on the institution and when you visit.)

Take a look at the dance studios and the performance spaces. Is there climate control? (This is especially important in the hotter parts of the country.) Are the facilities in good condition? Are they near the rest of campus? Are the kiosks or bulletin boards organized with current dance and theatre events?

Observe some dance classes. Take note of the rapport between the students. How do faculty members treat the students and each other? Talk to the students. Ask them where else they applied and why they chose this particular college. Ask if they are being challenged and supported by the dance department. Is the faculty accessible? Are many classes taught by teaching assistants? If so, are they inspiring and competent teachers? While watching performances, try to see student choreography as well as faculty choreography. Do the performances interest and challenge you?

Consider the caliber of the faculty. Note their credentials. Are/ were they in professional dance companies? Do they choreograph? How long have they been there? Is there a high turnover? Who are the guest artists they bring in to hold master classes and create new works?

#### V. Role of the Dance Teacher

Your dance teachers can be a valuable resource. The teacher has first-hand knowledge about auditioning for a dance program. The dance teacher can assist you during the school year by discussing your strengths and weaknesses with you and guiding you to the actions you should take to become a successful candidate for a college dance program. If you need to perform a solo for the audition, your teacher can also help you with your solo, or advise you on seeking other professional assistance. Your dance teachers may be able to suggest schools for you to consider, or know of past students at those on your list as well. Don't be afraid to ask for an appointment to get their advice or recommendations.

#### VI. Related Careers

Arts Administrator  
Cinematographer for dance  
Choreographer  
Dance Critic/ Journalist  
Dance Historian  
Dance Photographer  
Dance or Movement Therapy  
Director- dance school, studio, or dance company  
Notator in Labanotation  
Physical Therapist specializing in dance injuries  
Retail dancewear entrepreneur  
Stage Manager/Production Designer  
Technical Director  
Teacher

#### VII. Websites

[www.dance-teacher.com](http://www.dance-teacher.com)  
[www.dancemagazine.com/thecollegeguide/intro](http://www.dancemagazine.com/thecollegeguide/intro)



## DESIGN

### I. General Information

Design is an umbrella term for many different areas of study. Collegiate studies offer a Bachelor of Arts [BAL a Bachelor of Fine Arts [BFA), or and Associates Degree [AA).

Designers come from many different backgrounds. For example, many Graphic Artists graduate from 4-year Colleges with a BA and a focus area in Graphic Design, others graduate from 4-year Universities with a specific major in Graphic Design and a BFA. others will attend an art school and specifically study the graphic arts and receive a BFA, still others come from 2-year colleges and have associates degrees, AA. Some Institutions require 5 years of study for BFA degrees. Many designers also cross-over from other fields, or are self-taught and self-employed.

The title of the major and the program are can vary depending on the school. For example, Graphic Design majors may study their field in Graphic Arts, Website Design, Computer Art/Design, Commercial Arts, Product Design, Layout and Production, Advertising, and Media Arts, and Digital Art programs. Often these areas overlap and cover many of the same topics. Different schools have strengths in certain areas depending on their staff.

### II. Portfolio and Entrance

Some design programs have stringent requirements for entry such as portfolio submission. Others, however, help students build a portfolio throughout the course of their education. Design educators agree future employers are primarily concerned with the skills displayed in an applicant's portfolio and presentation. Each school has a different approach, but a portfolio at the end of the process is a must. Many universities that offer BFA and BA programs require students to apply to specific programs after 1-2 years of being in their art school and taking general art courses.

### III. Related Careers

Designer  
Publisher  
Creative Director  
Packaging Designer  
Product Designer  
Illustrator  
Environmental Designer  
Website Designer

### IV. Websites

[http://www .whatintheworld.aiga.org/](http://www.whatintheworld.aiga.org/)  
[http:/ /www.aiga.org/](http://www.aiga.org/)  
[http:/ /www.artschools.com](http://www.artschools.com)  
[http:/ /artschools.com/majors-programs/ design/](http://artschools.com/majors-programs/design/)  
[http:/ /nasad.arts-accredit .org/](http://nasad.arts-accredit.org/)  
[http:/ /www.npda.org/](http://www.npda.org/)

## FILM & MEDIA ARTS

### I. General Information

Colleges and conservatories with film programs offer instruction in cinematography, screenwriting, directing, editing (linear and non-linear), animation, visual, audio and technical production. Programs vary so students will need to find an institution that offers a program of study that they are interested in pursuing.

### II. Research

- Do you want to attend a conservatory or a non-conservatory program? Conservatories offer highly advanced, intense training and usually have an annual evaluation determining your ability to continue in the program. The curriculum is highly structured. In addition, the opportunity to take courses outside the area of study is limited.
- Do you want to pursue a Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS), or a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)? Each has its own specific requirements that offer the student different possibilities. For example, in a typical BA/BS program, the student has the time and energy to carry a minor or double major.
- Do you want to study in a program that focuses on one training philosophy or offers courses in a variety of techniques?
- Are you comfortable in a highly competitive environment?
- Will your film classes generally be large or small?
- Will professors or graduate students teach you in beginning courses?
- When are students allowed to participate hands-on on a film project?
- If you are considering a minor in film, what are your opportunities to participate in productions?

### III. Application

The application process varies from institution to institution. Some schools require a full portfolio and others ask only for a resume. Students need to contact the individual school for specifics. The following is a sample of what may be required.

### IV. Film Portfolio

Contact the school that interests you for their specific requirements, as they do vary. The typical requirements for portfolios are listed below:

- A one-page resume that highlights creative work accomplished.
- A non-returnable creative submission consisting of one of the following:
  - Film or video/live-action or animation (VHS cassette/NTSC format only, no more than 10 minutes).
  - Storyboards and/or a portfolio of drawings or paintings (e.g., figure drawings) on 8-1/2" x 11" paper (no more than 10 images, copies only).
- Photographs (8" x 10"; no more than 10 of fine arts photography or stills of paintings, drawings or sculpture. Slides are not acceptable).
- Not more than six pages of dramatic or creative writing (8-1/2" x 11" paper, typed) consisting of a short story, dramatic scene, or portrait of an individual or place.
- Dramatic Essay (no more than four 8 1/2" x 11" pages, typed). Dramatize an unforgettable actual event in your life. This event can be dramatic and/or comedic.



- Exact credits must be specified: the applicant must be the principal creative force of creative work submitted. The creative submission deadline is the same as the application deadline. Make sure your name and Social Security number are on all submitted materials.

#### V. Visiting

When visiting, it would be most helpful to attend a class. Check with your specific school to see if this is possible. Also, schedule an appointment with a professor or the department chair and ask prepared questions. Be sure to research the program beforehand, so you can ask questions that cannot be found on the school's website or in their printed materials. Each of these experiences will give you a more intimate understanding of what the program has to offer you. It also helps to talk with students currently enrolled. They will give you the inside scoop.

While visiting, ask to see the facilities and any other related place of interest. You will get a feel for the program's standards. If possible, try to view student created work.

#### VI. Role of the Teacher

Your instructors can assist in portfolio creation and evaluation.

#### VI. Related Careers

Animator  
 Audio Effects  
 Audio Engineer  
 Camera Operator  
 Character Modeler  
 Cinematographer  
 Creative Director  
 Editor  
 Level Designer  
 Modeler  
 Motion Graphic Artist  
 Particle Effects Specialist  
 Production Assistant  
 Rendering Specialist  
 Sound Operator  
 Special Effects Designer  
 Visual Special Effects

#### VII. Websites

[www.film-maker.com/reviews.html](http://www.film-maker.com/reviews.html)  
[www.rivalquest.com/schools/](http://www.rivalquest.com/schools/)  
<http://forums.cgsociety.org/showthread.php?s=&threadid=64951>  
<http://forums.cgsociety.org/showthread.php?s=&threadid=44802>  
<http://forums.cgsociety.org/showthread.php?s=&threadid=47061>  
<http://forums.cgsociety.org/showthread.php?s=&threadid=47061>  
 Choosing Computer Art as a Major in College: <http://www.siggraph.org/education/directory>

Jcamajor.htm/

The 'TOP 10' Things I Needed to Know (01-10) about getting a job in the computer graphics & animation industry: <http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/top7O.html>

The 'TOP 10' Things I Needed to Know (11-20) about getting a job in the computer graphics & animation industry: <http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/top7Opart2.html>

The 'TOP 10' Things I Needed to Know (20-25) about getting a job in the computer graphics & animation industry: <http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/top10part3.html>

Finding the Promised Land: For 3D Enthusiasts: Some recommendations for people just starting out. What software to use? What skills to learn? [http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/promised\\_land.html](http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/promised_land.html)

Preparing for a Career in Animation: An article from Computer Graphics World. [http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/preparing\\_for\\_a\\_career.html](http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/preparing_for_a_career.html)

So you want to be a computer animator? Part 1: Thoughts on getting a job in the industry. [http://www.3dark.com/archives/so\\_you\\_want\\_to\\_be\\_1.html](http://www.3dark.com/archives/so_you_want_to_be_1.html)

So you want to be a computer animator? Part 2 : A Letter of Advice from the Pros ... [http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/so\\_you\\_want\\_to\\_be\\_2.html](http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/so_you_want_to_be_2.html)

A Demo Reels Primer : <http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/primer.html>

Oren Jacob: Senior Technical Director. Pixar Animation Studios. Oren talks about tailoring your demo reel for your audience and other things. <http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/demoreelpro7.html>

Steph Greenberg: Supervising Animator, a well known entertainment company. Steph shares a word or two regarding character animation (and "the 3 stages"), demo reel output, and what to put and not put on a demo reel. <http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/demoreelpro2.html>

Rob Skiena: Computer Animation Guy, Dream Quest Images. Rob shares some of his thoughts on story and gives a primer on what to put on a reel. <http://Jwww.3dark.com/archives/demoreelpro3.html>

## MUSIC

### I. General Information

Conservatories and university schools of music offer many different programs that emphasize various ways you can be involved with music as a career. The major you choose will govern the number and types of music classes and non-musical classes in your curriculum. Another important facet of your exploration process is the learning climate of each school. The feel of the music department in a college may barely resemble that of a highly respected school of music or conservatory.

David Lane, Director of Admissions for the Peabody Conservatory, states, "There is no agreement among music schools about the level of musical development required for entrance into (or for graduation from) a Bachelor of Music program. Likewise, there are no definitions about what skills are required for completion of a first-year music theory (or any other musical academic) course." Thus, all Bachelor of Music degrees are not equal. The value of the degree as an indication of musical accomplishment is tied to the standards of the school that awards it.

As you begin to narrow your list, visiting schools will tell you far more about the atmosphere than the websites can. The environment of a highly selective conservatory may be exactly what you need if you have already devoted several years to practicing and performing, and need to be surrounded by others with the same high level of accomplishment and commitment. It is a good idea to try to schedule lessons with potential instructors when you visit the schools. This will allow you to get an idea of the teaching style of the professor you would be studying with and if you would want to study in that fashion for four years.

One of the most important experiences you can give yourself, in preparation for any music school, is piano lessons. Knowing your way around the keyboard will be instrumental to your success in college. It will help you improve your sight-reading skills and your understanding of music theory.

### II. Research

Questions to ask yourself:

- Do you want to be in a smaller program where you may get more attention and opportunities or in a larger program with a wider focus and more students to learn and possibly compete with?
- Do you want to focus on performing, or would you like to do something else involving music?
- Have you considered feedback you have received from your teachers and other professional musicians regarding your skill level, preparation and ability?
- Are you committed to a particular career path, or do you want to leave your options open?
- Are you choosing a school because of its musical offerings or its general academic reputation?
- Is it important to you that the school you attend is strong in academic areas outside of music?

Questions to ask while you are researching schools:

- Will your music classes generally be large or small?
- Are courses and private lessons taught by professors or graduate students? Will professors or graduate assistants teach you?
- If you are majoring in performance, securing a specific private teacher may be more important than which school you attend. If that teacher is also a performer, will the teacher's performance

schedule conflict with your lessons?

- Is the music program large enough to provide satisfactory band, orchestra, chorus, chamber music, production, or other ensemble experiences?
- Are students allowed to take private lessons during all four years? At some schools, musical theatre and/or music education majors are not allowed to take four years of private lessons, especially with professors.
- If you are thinking of a minor in music, does the school have a minor in music option? Are music minors allowed to participate in private lessons, performance ensembles, shows, etc?
- Does the school allow students to audition for shows or operas as freshmen and sophomores?
- Will the school's graduate program effect your access to performance opportunities?

### III. Auditions

Most music schools require an audition as part of the application. Auditions typically take place during January through March of your senior year. Some schools will not let you schedule auditions until your application is completed and/or you have been accepted to the college. Schedule your auditions as early in the fall of your senior year as you know where you want to apply; It is highly recommended that students audition in person when possible. It is important that you contact each school for their specific requirements several months ahead of your audition date to allow yourself enough time for thorough preparation. See each school's website for specific requirements. These requirements are often altered from year to year, so check periodically for the most up-to-date information. Some schools may ask for a taped audition prior to an in-person audition. Make sure the quality of your tape and recording equipment is excellent. Hire a professional accompanist for the recording.

Many colleges offer auditions both on campus and in a variety of cities throughout the United States. If you can't afford to attend an audition at the school, you may have a choice of attending an audition in a nearby city (a regional audition) or sending a recording of your audition. Keep in mind that you will not audition for the actual audition committee at a regional audition; in all likelihood, an admissions person will record your audition and return to the school with the recording. The advantage of a regional audition (vs. sending a recording) is that you will probably have an interview and a chance to have questions answered in person. The advantage of sending a recording is that you can start over if necessary.

Many colleges include an interview and a brief screening of music theory background via a timed test as part of the application process. Sample music theory tests are available on-line from those schools having this requirement. In preparation for your career in music, it is wise to enroll in any music history/literature/history classes that your high school offers. Piano lessons are another highly effective way of learning music theory.

### IV. Vocal Music

Most schools require 2-4 arts songs or arias, one in English, the other(s) in Italian, German, and/or French. Style and tempo should be varied. Every song must be memorized. It is unwise to try to impress judges by singing especially difficult arias. Auditors are more likely to conclude that you have wasted your time working on inappropriate literature.

Ask if an accompanist will be provided or if you are expected to bring an accompanist. Do not record your accompaniments and sing along with the recording. Provide original and clean copies of the music for the accompanist when you arrive at the audition. Erase any marks, except those that indicate whether you are repeating, taking first or second endings, making cuts, D.S.'s, etc. Make sure the accompaniment is in the correct key. Do not ask the accompanist to transpose the song to another key for you. If the original music is in a book that won't stay open or has awkward page turns, you may also bring a photocopy for the accompanist's convenience. However, always have the original music with you.

Lead your accompanist; it is his/her job to follow you. You may set a tempo by quietly tapping one measure's worth of beats when you give the accompanist the music at the beginning of the audition. Point out all repeats, cuts, etc. It is highly likely that the accompanist has played the song many times before. Follow very carefully the rules or guidelines each school sets. Do not assume that slight deviations from their list of guidelines will go unnoticed.

Dress professionally and conservatively. Suits are appropriate for men, and professional looking dresses or skirts of mid-length are best for women. Heels should not be high. Appropriate dress presents you in the most favorable light and shows respect for the judges and the audition process.

During the audition you should always be upbeat and pleasant. Never make excuses (nerves, illness, lack of preparation). Relax (as much as possible) and enjoy your audition. The people watching you want you to do your best, and they are usually friendly and receptive. Do not concern yourself with their behavior during the audition. They may or may not look at you, smile, eat, or speak to other evaluators while you are performing. Do not assume their behavior is a reaction to your performance. They do not want to be part of your performance so please focus slightly over their heads and concentrate on your work.

You may be asked to sight-read. Follow standard procedures: choose a reasonably slow tempo, use solfege syllables, numbers, or a neutral syllable, do not hum, do not stop or ask to start over.

#### V. Instrumental Music

Most of the information regarding vocal music auditions above applies for instrumental music as well, except the comments regarding specific literature to be performed. The requirements for audition pieces may vary from school to school; many schools publish lists of suggested pieces, as well as specific guidelines as to how the pieces are to be performed. A general rule is to prepare at least two contrasting pieces: one to demonstrate musicality and expression, the other to demonstrate technical skill and fluency. It is essential that you contact each school for their specific requirements several months ahead of your audition date to allow for thorough preparation. It is advisable to contact the applied teacher on your instrument to verify the suitability of your audition pieces.

Your audition may take place in front of one to eight members of the performance faculty. Although most out-of-state schools accept audiotape/videotape auditions, it is highly recommended to audition in person, on campus or at a regional audition, when at all possible. Some schools have an audition and/or scholarship audition committee. The applied teacher on your instrument may not be on the committee, but will most likely be present for your audition. Every school is different, so be sure to do thorough

research, so you know exactly what to expect.

At some schools the audition may be followed by a private lesson with the applied instrument teacher. The teacher may be looking for something not heard in your audition or may use the time as an informational interview and as a way to get to know you and how you learn. This is an opportunity for you to experience his/her teaching style. Remain positive and upbeat and enjoy working with a master performer/teacher.

#### VI. Visiting

It is important when visiting schools to explore not only the performance venues, but the practice facilities as well. Are there enough practice rooms for all students? Talk with faculty about opportunities for performance. Most schools require participation in an ensemble, but you may want to ask about the competitiveness of certain types of ensembles in which you have a particular interest. For students pursuing instrumental music, determine how seats are assigned and how often.

When visiting the school, try to schedule a private lesson with a teacher. This can be as important as an audition, for it allows the teacher to see you in an instructional setting. It also allows you to determine if the teacher's instructional style and your learning style are compatible. Ask in advance if there is a cost to the lesson, and have cash on hand.

Make an effort to meet with the placement office to get a feel for how many of the alumni are working in the field and what type of placement assistance they offer graduates. (Many schools continue to offer services after graduation.)

#### VII. Role of the Music Teacher

Your teachers can be of particular value in helping you choose literature for your audition. They will help you in determining the appropriateness of literature: level of difficulty, age-appropriateness, songs that are not overdone, and pieces that are likely to go smoothly with an accompanist who has not had an opportunity to rehearse with you. Your teachers can help decide which literature presents you in the best light.

#### VIII. Related Careers

Arranger/Orchestrator  
Church Organist  
Commercial Jingle Composer  
Conductor  
Development Director  
Film Score Composer  
Instrument Builder and Repair  
Music Administrator – public schools  
Music Administrator – professional organizations  
Music Business Manager  
Music Copyright/Licensing Administrator  
Music Copyist

Music Critic  
Music Dealer Salesperson  
Music Editor  
Music Librarian  
Music Manager  
Music Publisher  
Music Therapist  
Music Educator  
Piano Tuner  
Producer  
Radio Announcer  
Recording Engineer  
Repair Technician  
Sound Engineer  
Studio Performer

#### IX. Websites

[www.bridgetomusic.com](http://www.bridgetomusic.com)  
[www.menc.org](http://www.menc.org) (National Association for Music Education)  
[www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org) (Music Teacher's National Association)  
[www.nats.org](http://www.nats.org) (National Association of Teachers of Singing)  
[www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com) (American String Teachers Association)  
[www.symphony.org](http://www.symphony.org) (League of American Orchestras)  
[www.aes.org](http://www.aes.org) (Audio Engineering Society)

## THEATRE

### I. General Information

Colleges and conservatories with theatre programs offer instruction in theatre performance production, education, directing, writing, and drama therapy. Some schools offer programs in musical theatre and theatre administration. It will facilitate your search if you determine the disciplines in which you're most interested. There is no agreement among theatre educators regarding the standards for admissions or graduation from college or university theatre programs. Each school will have its own focus regarding texts, technique, and opportunities for students. So, it's vital that students think carefully about what they want from a theatre program, the best ways that they learn, and how much of each day they want to spend in theatre training.

### II. Research

- Do you want to attend a conservatory? These programs tend to be highly structured and require the vast majority of class time be spent in a theatre program. The opportunity to take courses outside the area of study is limited. Most conservatory programs result in a BFA.
- Do you want to study theatre in a liberal arts setting? A liberal arts approach offers students a chance for intense theatre study but also requires that some courses are required outside the major. Liberal arts degree programs (BA or BS) often provide opportunities for minors or double majors.
- Do you want to study in a program that focuses on one training philosophy or offers courses in a variety of techniques?
- Do you want to be in a smaller program where you may get more attention and opportunities or in a larger program with a wider focus and more students to learn and possibly compete with?
- Will your theatre classes generally be large or small?
- Will professors or graduate students teach your beginning courses?
- How many mainstage productions are produced each year?
- Are there performance/technical opportunities other than mainstage productions?
- How much support does the program give to students interested in creating their own projects? Are there student-run theatre groups on campus in which you can participate?
- Does the school allow students to audition/crew as freshmen and sophomores?
- If you are considering a minor in theatre arts, what are your opportunities to participate in productions?
- Is the teaching faculty large or small?
- Who directs and designs most productions?
- How are guest artists or visiting professors used to augment the program?

### III. Acting Auditions

Each school has its own specific requirements. Most schools require two contrasting monologues; typically one classical and one contemporary, and/or one comic and one dramatic. Contrasting pieces can also refer to monologues in which the characters have different objectives and different tactics.

Choose age-appropriate material that showcases your best work. This includes your physical/vocal range, emotional depth, comic skills, and overall theatrical sensibility. Some schools will expect you to choose a character who is in your playable age-range now; in other words, a role in which you could be



cast today.

Read monologue instructions carefully. Most schools will set a time limit of two minutes and some will want one minute. Do not go over the time limit set in the audition instructions.

Make sure you have read the play prior to using the monologue in an audition. You may be asked to discuss the character's journey and/or why you chose the monologue. This is part of your preparation.

Avoid pieces that depend on extreme language and/or violence to be dramatic.

Schools may specify appropriate dress. You show respect for the judges and the process by the clothing that you wear.

Make sure you can move easily and that you feel confident in the outfit. Professional audition etiquette demands that you: prepare thoroughly, and arrive early. The people watching you want you to do your best and they are usually friendly and receptive. Do not concern yourself with their behavior during the audition. They may or may not look at you, smile, eat, or speak to other evaluators while you are performing. Do not assume their behavior is a reaction to your performance. They do not want to be part of your performance so please focus slightly over their heads and concentrate on your work.

#### IV. Musical Theatre Auditions

Most schools require students auditioning for musical theatre to prepare one or two songs, a monologue and a dance audition. Be sure to act while you sing, but do not use props, choreography, or costumes in your performance.

The two songs should be contrasting, for example, one up-tempo and one ballad. Read the audition materials carefully. Many schools will expect students to prepare one chorus or one verse and one chorus of a song. Be prepared to sing more, but do not sing more unless specifically asked.

Schools may specify appropriate dress. Clothes should be comfortable and easy to move in. You show respect for the judges and the process by the clothing that you wear. A nice shirt and slacks for boys, and a dress and character shoes for girls is highly recommended.

Provide original and clean copies of the music for the accompanist when you arrive at the audition. Erase any marks, except those that indicate whether you are repeating, taking first or second endings, making cuts, D.S.'s, etc. Make sure the accompaniment is in the correct key. Do not ask the accompanist to transpose the song to another key for you. If the original music is in a book that won't stay open or has awkward page turns, you may also bring a photocopy for the accompanist's convenience. However, always have the original music with you.

Lead your accompanist, as it is his/her job is to follow you. You may set a tempo with the accompanist by quietly tapping one measure's worth of beats when you give him/her the music at the beginning of the audition. Point out all repeats, cuts, etc. It is highly likely that the accompanist has played the song many times before. Follow the rules or guidelines each school sets very carefully. Do not assume that slight deviations from their list of guidelines will go unnoticed.

## V. Theatre Design Portfolio

The digital portfolio is a vital part of your application process for theatre arts as a whole and in particular, for those students who are interested in pursuing design and technology at the college level. The advantage of the digital portfolio is that each university can easily have a copy. It also demonstrates an understanding of technology that is important in technical theatre. Visit the website of your school of interest to find out about their specific requirements. In general, however, a portfolio should include:

- A home page with name, address, contact information, etc. It is advisable that a directory of contents be part of the home page.
- A page with the student's personal statement about the role of theatre in both his/her life and in our society.
- A resume page.
- A page with production photographs that reflect the different productions the student has been involved with at their school.
- A page with photos of the student's sketch work.
- A page with pictures of the student's designs, models, etc. Performance students can include short videos of performances, photographs in costumes, etc.
- A page focused on the analytical skills of the student (i.e. a script analysis).

## VI. Visiting

When visiting, it would be most helpful to attend a class. Also, schedule an appointment with a theatre professor or the department chair and ask prepared questions. Be sure to research the program beforehand, so you can ask questions that cannot be found on the school's website or in their printed materials. Each of these experiences will give you a more intimate understanding of what the program has to offer you. It also helps to talk with students currently enrolled because they have a different perspective on the program than the teachers and the admission officers.

While visiting, ask to see the theatres, scene shop, and any other related place of interest. You will get a feel for the program's standards. And, if you have time, reserve tickets to a show. It will be helpful to see the results of what the program is teaching.

## VII. Role of the Theatre Teacher

For actors, your teachers can be valuable in helping you choose audition material that showcases your specific skills, while demonstrating an appropriate level of difficulty. They will expect that you have already done some preliminary research in this area. In addition, they can coach you in preparing for the audition and offer suggestions on how to relax and focus prior to the performance. For designers, your instructors can assist in portfolio creation and evaluation.

## VIII. Related Careers

Artistic Director  
Casting Agent  
Casting Director  
Costume Designer  
Director  
Drama Therapist  
Lighting Designer

Lighting Technician  
Producer  
Set Designer  
Sound Designer  
Scenic Artist  
Special Effects Artist  
Stage Manager  
Teacher

IX. Websites

[www.theatrdirectories.com/books3.html](http://www.theatrdirectories.com/books3.html)

[www.actlbooks.com](http://www.actlbooks.com)

[www.namt.net](http://www.namt.net) (National Alliance for Musical Theatre)

[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

[www.collegeactingprograms.com](http://www.collegeactingprograms.com)

## VISUAL ARTS

### I. General Information

The degree that a visual arts student will pursue is either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a specialization or major in a specific visual arts area. A Bachelor of Fine Arts degree requires more hours of studio courses and more hours of art history. A university with an art department will offer opportunities to study other academic disciplines, whereas the professional art school will be more focused on art training and offer a more concentrated studio experience. Many schools offer illustration and graphic design, as well as teacher certification to supplement an art degree. The reputation of any visual arts program is critical for acceptance into a strong graduate school placement later on.

Additional training outside of the high school art program is always helpful. A complete portfolio should include human figure drawings and/or paintings. This may require you to take a course at an institution or local arts center which offers specific classes in figure drawing and painting, typically from a human [i.e. nude] model. Other courses should be considered as well such as landscape painting, sculpture, mixed media, and watercolor.

Summer is an excellent time to take studio art classes. Classes given at accredited art programs will offer a glimpse into the world of art schools and art professors: these programs are filled with students who are serious about art. They provide the opportunity to decide if this level of intensity is comfortable and desirable.

### II. Research

Investigate the school's curriculum thoroughly. Schools have different strengths and philosophies. One school may favor more avant-garde curricula such as performance, installation and digital technologies, whereas another may give a solid grounding in traditional drawing, painting, and sculpture. You will find that programs differ greatly. Make sure you are in the type of program that suits your interest. Consider the type of program you prefer- one that is artistic skill-based or one that emphasizes conceptualizing and expansion of creative thought.

### III. Portfolio and Interview

It is critical to build the best portfolio possible by the first semester of senior year in high school through classes both in and outside of school. It is highly recommended that you attend one of the National Portfolio Days one year prior to submitting your portfolio for college admission. During these days professionals will critique your portfolio and offer suggestions for improvement. Specific dates and locations may be obtained at [www.npda.org](http://www.npda.org).

Art programs generally want 15 to 20 examples of artwork and most will accept a digital disc containing those images. Some schools ask for images to be uploaded to Slideroom, while other schools still require slides or original artwork. This is especially true of professional art schools. Some university art programs may only require that you begin taking studio classes and declare a major in the sophomore year.

Check with your school of interest to find out their specific requirements. Typically, schools expect students to demonstrate good drawing skills with emphasis on portrait, still life, figure or life drawing from the human model. They do not want drawings copied from photographs.

Good images are a critical part of the admission process. Photographs of your artwork are the core element on which you are judged. Make sure your work is photographed in optimal lighting, with a good quality SLR digital camera. If your school still requires slides, they can be made from a digital file. Photography methods are generally taught in the AP Studio Art class; it is not necessary to pay a photographer to take slides.

A complete portfolio should include human figure drawings and/or paintings. This may require you to take a course at an institution or local arts center which offers specific classes in figure drawing and painting, typically from a human (i.e. nude) model. Other courses should be considered as well, such as landscape painting, sculpture, mixed media, and watercolor.

In addition to the portfolio, many schools will recommend an interview as part of the admissions process. Appropriate dress for the interview is expected, but the art school environment is essentially a working environment and the spaces and rooms you visit will have paints and materials about. The interviewer will ask you about the work in your portfolio. Be prepared to talk about your art. Practice in advance what you would say about each piece. Be ready with questions of your own. Questions might include how students are selected for admission, job placement support, department philosophy, job and graduate school placements. Remember, interviewers' skills vary; be ready to carry the interview and direct it to your advantage.

#### IV. Visiting

If at all possible, visit your college{s} of interest in person to present your portfolio. When visiting, look at the artwork the faculty creates. This is the best indicator of what you will be learning in classes, since one teaches from one's style, strength and experiences. It is also a good indicator of the philosophy of the school. Do not assume that drawing and painting are taught in the traditional sense. Some schools pride themselves on being -cutting edge, which can mean experimenting with forms of art, sound, light, and digital technologies.

Determine what percentage of classes is taught by faculty and what percentage is taught by graduate students. Ask when you will actually have contact with faculty members. Ideally, this should begin immediately after the foundation classes. Generally, you should hope to find one or two faculty with whom you can form a mentoring relationship. This is critical in art and provides the deepest level of learning that will impact a lifetime of creativity. The support of one faculty member during your training can be critical to your development and future success as an artist.

Prospective students should visit schools, talk with faculty and students, and view the facilities. It is also important to check out the studio spaces for students. A student must have access to a personal or shared studio space as soon as possible in order complete outside assignments for studio courses. Some schools are limited in their space and may not grant a studio to students until their senior year, but it is generally true that by junior year students should be provided with space, either shared or private.

It is also important to see current undergraduate exhibitions on display in the school galleries. This will help you discern what is being taught at the school.

## V. Related Careers

Teacher  
Illustrator  
Artist  
Conservator  
Auto industry technician  
Backdrop painter  
Museum lecturer  
Curator  
Sculptor  
Mold maker  
Photographer  
Jewelry designer  
Gallery owner/assistant  
Portraitist  
Toy designer  
Muralist

## VI. Websites

[www.artschools.com](http://www.artschools.com)  
[www.filmmaker.com/reviews.html](http://www.filmmaker.com/reviews.html)  
[www.musicschoolsearch.com](http://www.musicschoolsearch.com)  
[www.aicad.org](http://www.aicad.org) (Association of Independent Colleges of Art & Design)  
[www.rivalquest.com/schools/](http://www.rivalquest.com/schools/) (film and media programs)  
[www.petersons.com/vpa/vpsector.html](http://www.petersons.com/vpa/vpsector.html) (Peterson's Guide to the Visual and Performing Arts)  
[www.theatredirectories.com/books3.html](http://www.theatredirectories.com/books3.html)  
[www.arcotestprep.com](http://www.arcotestprep.com) (ARCO The Performing Arts Major's College Guide)  
[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com) (Guide to Performing Arts Programs)  
[www.backstage.com](http://www.backstage.com) (College Guide for the Performing Arts printed each November)  
[www.penrose-press.com/IDD](http://www.penrose-press.com/IDD) (art design directory with links)  
[www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org) (National Association for College Admission Counseling NACAC-schedule of Performing and Visual Arts college fairs)  
[www.nasad.org](http://www.nasad.org) (National Association of Schools of Art & Design)  
[www.artsschoolnetwork.org](http://www.artsschoolnetwork.org) (International network of Performing and Visual Arts Schools)  
[www.xensei.com/users/adl](http://www.xensei.com/users/adl) (newsletter listing arts competitions, scholarships, jobs, internships, casting calls, auditions, etc.)  
[www.artlex.com](http://www.artlex.com) (Visual Arts Dictionary)  
[www.aicad.org](http://www.aicad.org) (Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design AICAD)  
[www.collegeart.org](http://www.collegeart.org) (College Art Association)  
[www.dance-teacher.com](http://www.dance-teacher.com) (magazine for dance teachers of all disciplines)  
[www.laade.org](http://www.laade.org) (London Association of Art and Design Education)  
[www.mtna.org](http://www.mtna.org) (Music Teachers National Association- MTNA)  
[www.mtishows.com](http://www.mtishows.com) (Musical Theatre International)  
[www.namt.net](http://www.namt.net) (National Alliance for Musical Theatre)

[www.nfaa.org](http://www.nfaa.org) (National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts- NFAA)  
[www.npda.org](http://www.npda.org) (National Portfolio Day Association- NPDA)  
[www.unifiedapps.org](http://www.unifiedapps.org) (Unified Applications for Conservatory Admission)  
[www.actlbooks.com](http://www.actlbooks.com) (theatre/college reference resources)  
[www.iaje.org](http://www.iaje.org) (International Association for Jazz Education)  
[www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com) (American String Teachers Association)  
[www.symphony.org](http://www.symphony.org) (American Symphony Orchestra League)

### **GENERAL ARTS WEBSITES**

[www.petersons.com/vpa/vpsector.html](http://www.petersons.com/vpa/vpsector.html) (Peterson's Guide to the visual and Performing Arts)  
[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com) (Guide to Performing Arts Programs)  
[www.backstage.com](http://www.backstage.com) (College Guide for the Performing Arts printed each November)  
[www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org) (National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) schedule of Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs)  
[www.artsschoolnetwork.org](http://www.artsschoolnetwork.org) (International network of Visual and Performing Arts Schools)  
[www.xensei.com/users/adl](http://www.xensei.com/users/adl) (Newsletter listing arts competitions, scholarships, jobs, internships, casting calls, auditions, etc.)  
[www.nfaa.org](http://www.nfaa.org) (National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts (NFAA))  
[www.npda.org](http://www.npda.org) (National Portfolio Day Association- (NPDA))  
[www.unifiedapps.org](http://www.unifiedapps.org) (Unified Applications for Conservatory Admission)