

NASD Competencies Summary

Degree: BFA in Dance Education, a professional undergraduate degree

Essential Note: Items below are excerpts from the *NASD Handbook*. Items 1 through 6 indicate the content and natures of the competencies expected of those graduating with the above degree. Item 7 indicates recommendations for competency development.

Only the *Handbook* in its entirety contains all standards and guidelines applicable to and used by all phases of NASD membership reviews. In the text below “H.” indicates the location of the excerpted text in the *Handbook*; the term “(All)” indicates standards applicable to all professional undergraduate dance degrees including dance education; “(Dance Education)” indicates specific standards for that major.

Item 1. (All)

Common Body of Knowledge and Skills (H.VIII.B.)

1. Performance

- a. Studio experiences are of prime importance in the preparation of students for professional careers in dance. Skill in at least one major area of performance must be progressively developed to the highest level appropriate to the particular area of concentration. Students should achieve the highest possible level of technical skill in the medium and the highest possible level of conceptual understanding of the medium and its expressive possibilities. Technical proficiency standards must be established for each area of technique appropriate to each dance genre and for each level (e.g., freshman, sophomore, etc.), and the achievement of a specified level of proficiency in technique is required for graduation.
- b. Studies in technique and performance must begin at the freshman level and extend with progressive intensity throughout the degree program, with opportunities for independent study at the advanced level with appropriate evaluation. Students must experience a minimum of one daily technique class with the opportunity for additional work if appropriate. Such classes must be a minimum of 90 minutes in length.
- c. Opportunities should be available for all students to become familiar with every major aspect, technique, and direction in their major field.
- d. Students must be afforded the chance to perform and have their performance critiqued and discussed. The level of excellence is the best determinant of the effectiveness of studies in performance offered by an institution.

- 2. Choreography.** Students must develop basic knowledge and skills in choreography and have opportunities to develop their choreographic potential in studies that include traditional and/or experimental approaches. A minimum of two years of coursework in choreography is required.

3. Theoretical and Historical Studies

- a. Through comprehensive courses in dance studies, students must:
 - (1) Develop an understanding of the common elements and vocabulary of dance and of the interaction of these elements, and be able to employ this knowledge in analysis.
 - (2) Learn to analyze dance perceptively and to evaluate critically.
 - (3) Be able to place dance in historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts.
 - (4) Be able to form and defend individual critiques.
 - (5) Have fundamental knowledge of the body and of kinesiology as applicable to work in dance.
- b. These competencies are achieved by coursework and studies in fields such as repertory, dance notation, history of dance, dance technologies, philosophy of dance, music, anatomy and kinesiology, dance ethnology, production design, multi-disciplinary forms, and so forth.

- c. In certain areas of specialization such as dance ethnology, it is advisable to require that students study the historical development of works within the specialization.
4. **Teaching.** Students must develop basic knowledge and skills in dance pedagogy. The program should include the equivalent of at least one course in pedagogy and teaching experience particularly as related to the major area of study.

Item 2. (All)

Results (H.VIII.C.)

Upon completion of any specific professional undergraduate degree program:

1. Students must demonstrate achievement of professional, entry-level competence in the major area, including significant technical mastery, capability to produce work and solve professional problems independently, and a coherent set of artistic/intellectual goals that are evident in their work.
2. Students must demonstrate their competence by developing a body of work for evaluation in the major area of study. A senior project or presentation in the major area is strongly recommended.
3. Students must have the ability to form and defend analyses and critiques of dance and to communicate dance ideas, concepts, and requirements to professionals and laypersons related to the practice of the major field.

Item 3. (Dance Education)

Studio (H-X.C.1.)

(in addition to those stated for all degree programs in VIII.B. and C.):

The prospective dance teacher must have concentrated experience leading to proficiency in technique, improvisation, composition, repertory, and performance.

- a. Technique study must be continuous and sequential, and result in the attainment of an intermediate or advanced level (comparable to proficiency required for the institution's non-certification degree) in at least two forms of technique.
- b. Proficiency standards must be established for each level of technique.
- c. Candidates must develop a physical and conceptual understanding of movement and its expressive possibilities, including issues associated with student health and safety.
- d. Candidates must have opportunities to experience and develop an appreciation and understanding of dance forms and styles from diverse cultures.
- e. Graduation requirements must include two years of work in improvisation/composition; and choreography, performance, and production of original work.

Item 4. (Dance Education)

Theoretical and Historical Studies (H-X.C.2.)

(in addition to those stated for all degree programs in VIII.B. and C.):

The prospective dance teacher must have studies leading to knowledge of dance history, repertory, and ethnology; movement analysis; dance and movement sciences; and music and production. Prospective teachers must:

- a. Learn to analyze dance perceptively and evaluate it critically.
- b. Develop working vocabularies (physical, verbal, written) based on an understanding and interpretation of the common elements of dance and be able to employ this knowledge in analysis.
- c. Be able to place dances in historical, cultural, and stylistic contexts, and perceive dance as an evolving arts discipline.

- d. Be able to form, articulate, and defend individual critiques, critical analyses, and evaluations about dance.
- e. Have fundamental knowledge of the body, and understand the fundamentals of developmental kinesiology sufficiently to correlate student learning and development.

Item 5. (Dance Education)

Teaching Competencies (H-X.C.3.)

(in addition to those stated for all degree programs in VIII.B. and C.):

- a. Ability to teach dance at various levels to different age groups and in a variety of classroom, studio, and ensemble settings in ways that develop knowledge of how dance works syntactically as a communication medium and developmentally as an agent of civilization. This set of abilities includes effective classroom, studio, and rehearsal management.
- b. An understanding of child growth and development and an understanding of principles of learning as they relate to dance.
- c. The ability to assess aptitudes, experiential backgrounds, orientations of individuals and groups of students, and the nature of subject matter, and to plan educational programs to meet assessed needs.
- d. Knowledge of current methods, materials, and repertoires available in various fields and levels of dance education appropriate to the teaching specialization.
- e. The ability to accept, amend, or reject methods and materials based on personal assessment of specific teaching situations.
- f. Basic understanding of the principles and methods of developing curricula and the short- and long-term units that comprise them.
- g. An understanding of evaluative techniques and ability to apply them in assessing both the progress of dance students and the objectives and procedures of the curriculum.

Item 6. (All)

General Studies Competencies (H.VIII.A.7.a.)

Specific competency expectations are determined by the institution. Normally, students holding a professional undergraduate degree in dance are expected to have:

- (1) The ability to think, speak, and write clearly and effectively, and to communicate with precision, cogency, and rhetorical force.
- (2) An informed acquaintance with fields of study beyond dance such as those in the arts and humanities, the natural and physical sciences, and the social sciences.
- (3) A functional awareness of the differences and commonalities regarding work in artistic, scientific, and humanistic domains.
- (4) Awareness that multiple disciplinary perspectives and techniques are available to consider all issues and responsibilities including, but not limited to, history, culture, moral and ethical issues, and decision-making.
- (5) The ability to identify possibilities and locate information in other fields that have bearing on dance-related questions and endeavors.

Item 7. (All)

Recommendations for Professional Studies (H.VIII.D.)

Other goals for the professional undergraduate degree are strongly recommended:

1. Student orientation to the nature of professional work in their major field. Examples are organizational structures and working patterns; business applications and practices; artistic,

- intellectual, educational, economic, technological, and political contexts; development potential; and career development.
2. Acquisition of skills necessary to assist in the development and advancement of student career, normally including the development of competencies in communication, presentation, business, and leadership skills necessary to engage in professional practice in their major field.
 3. Student experience with broadly based examples of excellence in various dance professions.
 4. Opportunities for students to explore areas of individual interest related to dance in general or to the major. A few examples are dance bibliography, notations, aesthetics, performance practices, pedagogy, and specialized topics in history and analysis.
 5. Opportunities for students to explore multi-disciplinary issues that include dance.
 6. Opportunities for students to practice synthesis of a broad range of dance knowledge and skills, particularly through independent study that involves a minimum of faculty guidance, where the emphasis is on evaluation at completion (see Section III.G.).
 7. Opportunities for students to develop leadership skills.

Please Note:

For specific information regarding curricular structure, see H-X.A.1. Normally, approximately 55-60% of a 120 semester hour program is in dance studies, and 15-20% in professional education, to ensure that time is available to develop the requisite competencies.

For a table of contents for all standards, see [NASD Handbook](#).