Dance Studies
Move your thinking
Bachelor of Dance Studies
BDanceSt
3 years – full-time

Bachelor of Dance Studies (Honours)
BDanceSt(Hons)
1 year full-time / 1–2 years part-time

In these programmes students integrate mind, body and spirit by learning in, through and about dance. Dance Studies at The University of Auckland aims to prepare students to enter the international arena, equipped with the skills, networks and attitudes necessary for a sustainable career in dance.
Postgraduate Diploma in Creative and Performing Arts

PGDipCPA – Dance Studies
1 year full-time / 2–4 years part-time

Master of Creative and Performing Arts

MCPA – Dance Studies
1 year full-time / 2 years part-time

Doctor of Philosophy

PhD – Dance Studies
3 years full-time / up to 6 years part-time

Postgraduate degrees in Dance Studies are designed to create an environment where students question, analyse, frame and develop research within a supportive and active community. A postgraduate research graduate will demonstrate mastery of knowledge and theory in dance studies along with intellectual and life skills that will lay the foundations for a lifetime of continuous learning and development.
Geordan Wilcox
PGDipCPA, MCPA (Dance Studies)
Head of Dance, Pakuranga College

“As a somewhat meandering fifteen-year-old I was fortunate to come across the Southern Ballet Studios in the Christchurch Art Centre. This is where I was introduced to dance.”

Geordan was a professional dancer with the Royal New Zealand Ballet for 13 years.

In 2008 Geordan began postgraduate studies in dance at The University of Auckland and then went on to add a Diploma of Secondary Teaching to his qualifications. He is currently the Head of Dance at Pakuranga College. He also freelances as choreographer and tutor for the East Auckland Performing Arts School, Hawkes Bay Ballet and Dance and the Auckland Youth Dance Company. Geordan is a member of the Tempo Dance Festival Board. His masters degree at The University of Auckland opened his eyes to the need for male dancers to mentor youth, especially boys. His study helped him transition from dancer to educator and mentor.

Erin Wright
BDanceSt
Company Manager, Queensland Ballet (Brisbane, Australia)

Erin did not take a conventional path into Dance Studies. She began studying for a business degree and took two elective papers in dance. She then changed from a business degree to a Bachelor of Performing Arts in Dance. She didn’t want to be a dancer, but was able to realise the possibilities of a dance degree and maintain her interest in business.

“The dance courses opened my eyes to the possibility of combining my love of dance with my ambitions in business. Dance Studies respects your chosen career path and there are plenty of options to suit everyone. In our graduating year, we all had very different plans for the future.”

Erin has recently been promoted from Arts Administrator to the position of Company Manager for the Queensland Ballet Company in Brisbane. She is responsible for coordinating the artistic side of the company. Erin believes that the communication skills she gained from her degree equipped her well for her present position.
Carrie-Rae Cunningham
MCPA (Dance Studies)
Assistant Director, Tempo Dance Festival

Originally from the United States, Carrie-Rae worked extensively as a dance teacher, educator, administrator, producer and choreographer before coming to New Zealand to undertake a Master of Creative and Performing Arts (Dance Studies) degree at The University of Auckland.

“My adventurous spirit was drawn to New Zealand and The University of Auckland offered a different perspective of the world to further my learning and experience of dance – and of life as well.”

Carrie-Rae has been working with the Tempo Dance Festival since 2008. She is the main contributor to DanceStuff, a blog dedicated to writing about dance and critical commentary on dance in the local and national community. She has worked as an independent producer and as a consultant for dance companies and artists such as Atamira Dance Company, Michael Parmenter, Mary Jane O’Reilly, Auckland Fringe festivals and The New Zealand Dance Company.

Cat Ruka
BPerfArts, MCPA (Dance Studies)
Independent Dance Artist
Principal Dance Lecturer, Manukau Institute of Technology

Since graduating with a Master of Creative and Performing Arts from The University of Auckland’s Dance Studies Programme in 2009, Cat has enjoyed a diverse range of experiences to establish her career in dance. Primarily Cat is a choreographer and performance artist dedicated to making bold and challenging contemporary work. She also has strong research interests in dance writing, education and whanau.

“I chose to study at NICAI because this programme offered a multi-faceted approach to dance. Not only could I receive training to become a dance artist, but also a dance educator, writer and scholar. I appreciate the career sustainability this kind of training can provide.”

Cat has received numerous international awards for her choreography and was selected by the Geothe Institute to study the art of dance writing. Cat is also the Principal Dance Lecturer at the Manukau Institute of Technology in Otara, South Auckland.
Justine Terrill  
BPerfArts (Dance Studies)  
Dance Teacher, Aorere College

Justine came to The University of Auckland Dance Studies Programme with a studio background in tap and jazz dance with a focus on technical training. The courses offered in Dance Studies expanded her knowledge and understanding of dance. Through her experience in dance education and community dance, Justine set off on a career path in teaching. Justine is a dance teacher at Aorere College where the majority of students have a Pacific Island cultural background. The dominant dance-form at Aorere College is hip-hop, which is seen in the streets, the school yard and the classrooms.

“Aorere students have shared with me their talent and passion of Hip Hop dancing”.

Justine takes the students’ natural love of dance into new areas, extending their knowledge and experience in the same way as she herself had extended her knowledge and experience through the study of dance at The University of Auckland.

Juanita Jellyman  
BPerfArts, PGDipCPA, MCPA (Dance Studies)  
Independent Dance Artist | Choreographer

Juanita Jellyman is a freelance dance artist who demonstrates skills in a range of areas within the dance community. In 2012 she stage managed a Tusk Tusk Youth Festival production and co-produced *En Route* a three part dance journey. Juanita has recently worked as a dancer for Choreolab in Wellington and the Remnant Dance Company in Sydney. She has performed and choreographed extensively, both in New Zealand and overseas.

“Studying dance at The University of Auckland has opened some incredible doors, and I am only just out the door from uni, so to speak. The programme has equipped me with invaluable skills and has helped me to develop a choreographic practice that is emergent but full of potential”.

Photo: Williams Photography & Makeup
Rina Chae
BPerfArts (Dance Studies)
Independent Dance Artist

Rina is a New Zealand born Korean who chose to study dance because, “…every aspect of dancing is fun, the people, the job, the physicality and the expressive dramatic elements that go with it.” From the beginning of her studies, Rina dreamed of working in Hollywood and she is now realising that dream working as a full-time dancer in Los Angeles. Rina works regularly as a dancer in music videos, award shows and touring performances with artists such as Ne-yo, Pitbull, Justin Beiber, Kat Graham and Eric Benet.

“As I train hard and dance amongst some of the most internationally acclaimed dancers, I realise that there isn’t a limit on knowledge and education. I am grateful to have a job as a dancer and happy to have my ground so solidly set at The University of Auckland.”

Dr Rosemary Martin
PGDipCPA, MCPA, PhD (Dance Studies)
Lecturer, Dance Studies, The University of Auckland

Rose was a former Principal Dancer for the Royal New Zealand Ballet before an injury forced an early retirement. She then changed direction to pursue an academic career in dance. Rose began with a Postgraduate Diploma leading to a Master of Creative and Performing Arts (Dance Studies) and has recently completed her PhD.

“I chose to pursue Dance Studies at The University of Auckland as the atmosphere was full of possibilities – I found a place where I could think, write, read and talk about dance all day long.”

Rose is now a Lecturer in Dance Studies at the University and the NICAI Doctoral Studies Coordinator. She has taught extensively within New Zealand and the southern Mediterranean region. Her PhD critically reflects on experiences of international education in dance. “I got ‘hooked’ on research after receiving a NICAI Summer Scholarship. Knowing that postgraduate studies allowed me to continue this research path was a big factor in continuing all the way to a PhD.”
Dance Studies offers a stimulating opportunity to develop your full creative and professional potential. Our degrees will prepare you for a wide range of exciting careers.

At The University of Auckland students learn in, through and about dance. The degree courses are designed to move students’ thinking and to offer experiences that examine a wide range of theory and practice, providing opportunities to discover and study particular areas of interest.

The Dance Studies Programme is part of an international community of dance industry professionals. Dance students have opportunities to learn from visiting experts, and we have been invited to perform and teach locally and in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Taiwan.

Dance degrees assist in creating pathways into specialised work including:

- dance education
- community dance
- dance journalism
- choreography
- performance
- dance administration
- academic research
- dance criticism
- dance therapy
- youth work

You can enter a career in dance by studying at an undergraduate level (BDanceSt) or at a postgraduate level depending on your previous qualifications and experience.

Keen to find out more?

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