What Skills Does a Degree in Theatre Provide?

Theatre majors will develop a variety of skills that are attractive to employers across all fields. Some of the top skills a Theatre major will develop include:

- Effective writing and oral communication skills
- Ability to read, reflect, and critique
- Working collaboratively in an interdisciplinary environment
- Meeting deadlines and managing time
- Understanding components of complex problems and finding solutions
- Perceiving patterns/structures
- Comparing/contrasting
- Synthesizing information
- Managing a project from conception to completion
- Perceiving the world from multiple viewpoints
- Imagination and creativity
- Researching and interpreting data
- Conceptualizing original material
- Evaluating results
- Analyzing texts and character interpretation
- Writing creatively
- Presentation and public speaking
- Developing listening skills
- Learning to follow complex direction
- Understanding the body/mind connection
- Adaptability and artistic vision
- Intellectual curiosity and emotional intelligence
- Developing a context for transformation
- Self discipline and attention to detail

In the National Association of Colleges & Employers’ (NACE) 2011 Job Outlook, the skills and abilities such employers are seeking were listed in order of importance. The top ten skills were:

- Communication (verbal)
- Strong work ethic
- Teamwork
- Analytical skills
- Initiative
- Problem-solving skills
- Communication (written)
- Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)
- Computer skills
- Flexibility/adaptability

Organizations consistently seek candidates who possess a collection of “transferrable skills” - skills acquired through your classes, extracurricular involvement, experience, and hobbies that are applicable to virtually any position. The skills listed above all fit into this category and students in the Arts & Humanities, as noted by professionals and academics alike, participate in a rich curriculum that develops their skills in many, if not all, of these areas and beyond, making them extremely marketable and valuable to potential employers. In the current Recruiting Trends report put out by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute, nearly 40% of employers indicate that they will seek candidates across “all majors,” focusing more on the skills and abilities needed in the organization than on a specific academic discipline.

Why Theatre?

The Theatre major offers a balanced, liberal arts education that integrates production, design, and scholarship. The B.A. in Theatre seeks to introduce students to the history, theory, and literature of theatre; to offer them insights into the cultural diversity that has shaped the creation of theatrical forms around the world; to allow them to develop their own aesthetic sensibilities and their own perspectives as artists and audience members; and to offer them practical training in the areas of theatre craft, from design to directing to performance.

By the end of their undergraduate work, students should be able to demonstrate fundamental knowledge of theatre performance, design, history, craft and literature analysis. They will also be able to demonstrate critical and creative thinking skills and the ability to communicate with written and spoken word and artistic vision. Students will also develop the ability to interpret and analyze dramatic texts with critical understanding of content and methodology. They will expand their awareness of the basic methods and principles for creating a dialogue between theory and practice. Finally, students will develop the ability to work effectively within a collaborative environment.
What Can I Do With a Theatre Degree?

A Theatre degree can be shaped to fit a variety of disciplines and the broad skill set you acquire allows you to apply your knowledge in many exciting areas. From the University Career Center’s most recent graduate survey, upon graduation ARHU students entered into a range of dynamic industries including: Arts, Government, Academia/Education, Non-Profit, Communications/Media, Advertising, Technology, Food & Hospitality Services, Entertainment, Social Services and more!

Sample job titles include:
- Critic
- Actor/Actress
- Publications Editor
- Research Assistant
- Booking Manager
- Professor
- Director
- Teacher
- Public Relations Officer
- Special Effects Coordinator
- Sound Designer
- Casting Director
- Entertainment Agent
- Special Events Coordinator
- Theatre Arts Instructor
- Playwright
- Producer
- Costume Designer
- Media Director
- Set Designer
- Stage Manager
- Lighting Designer
- Sound Designer
- Choreographer
- Costume Technician/Draper
- Master Carpenter
- Construction Crew
- Run/Fly Crew
- Dramaturg
- Audio Engineer
- House Manager
- Production Coordinator
- Artistic Director
- Musical Director
- Light Board Operator
- Marketing Director
- Theatre Manager
- Sound Board Operator
- Puppeteer
- Voice Coach
- Movement Specialist
- Performance Coach

Gaining Experience With Your Degree

It’s never too early to start your search for experience. Ideally, you should begin at least one semester in advance. Make an appointment to talk with the University Career Center & The President’s Promise and/or your department internship coordinator and faculty advisor. Research shows that having an internship (or multiple internships) drastically increases your ability to obtain a fulltime position upon graduation, especially since most employers use their intern pool as a direct talent pipeline. The most recent NACE Internship & Co-op Survey reported that 44.6% of employers’ hires came from their internship programs. The College of Arts & Humanities ensures that students can have an internship experience prior to graduating, offering numerous credit-granting courses for experiential education at the college and departmental level.

Internships enable students to gain a sense of what it would be like to work in a particular field as they develop marketable skills and establish contacts that may lead to a job offer upon graduation. To get started, visit the University Career Center & The President’s Promise website (www.Careers.umd.edu) and sign up for a Careers4Terps account, a free web-based job posting service, to search for internships and employment.

Have questions? Need an appointment? Contact Kate Juhl, Program Director University Career Center & The President’s Promise kjuhl@umd.edu www.Careers.umd.edu