

THEATER

What can I do with this degree?

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

ACTING

Community theaters
Regional theaters
Commercial theaters
Summer stock theaters
Dinner theaters
Children's theaters
University theater groups
Touring companies
Industrial shows
Show groups
Amusement and theme parks
Advertising agencies
Film studios
Television networks

Participate in acting workshops, courses, and seminars to get advice and experience and to make contacts with others in the field.
Join unions or actors' guilds to stay abreast of opportunities and developments in the field.
Get as much acting experience as possible. Perform in school productions, community theater, etc. to hone acting skills.
Prepare a professional resume that lists your acting experience. It's helpful to have your resume attached to or printed on the reverse side of an 8" x 10" photograph of yourself.
Be prepared to make the rounds: Distribute your resumes to numerous agencies and offices.
Follow up your resume with several personal visits.
Be aware that more opportunities exist in large cities such as New York and Los Angeles.
Learn about the entertainment industry as a whole:
Take courses on entertainment law, business, management, etc.
An extensive network of contacts is essential. Get to know people working in your field and related areas.

PRODUCING/DIRECTING

Support Staff

Theaters
Television/film studios

Participate in the Director's Guild Training Program. Supplement your program with business courses. Experience with fund-raising is important: Volunteer to do this with local theaters and arts councils.
Learn what types of permits and insurance are needed to film or perform in certain areas.
Volunteer with directors in local theaters to become familiar with the environment: Serving as someone's assistant is a great way to get started in this area.
Gain directing experience by participating in college productions.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

BEHIND THE SCENES

Set Design/Construction
Lighting Design
Sound Design
Costume Design
Camera Operation
Hair/Make-up
Special Effects

Theaters
Television/film studios
Performing arts centers

Become involved in the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE). This organization can give you information about becoming an apprentice as well as help you make valuable contacts.
Get experience: Offer your services to school and local theaters.
Read industry magazines and books to learn about your area.
For sound design: Become familiar with computer technology as digital sound effects and electronic music replace traditional means of sound design.
For costume design: Supplement your program with courses in art history and fashion design.
Learn about different eras in history so that they can be recreated on stage. A basic knowledge of history and architecture is helpful.

WRITING

Scriptwriting
Journalism/Broadcasting
Publicity
Research

Theaters
Television/film studios
Radio/television stations
Magazines
Newspapers

Review plays, movies, and TV shows for your school or local newspaper.
Join your school's radio or television station.
Theatrical press agents publicize and promote theatrical productions. They write press releases, arrange press conferences, and other media events. Take courses in related areas such as public relations, advertising, and business.
Reporters spend time on the set absorbing everything. They interview actors as well as craftspeople.
Get as much writing experience as possible: Write for the college newspaper, enter playwrighting contests, etc.
See many different productions and shows and read a variety of scripts to see how scripts are developed.
Researchers gather information for movie writers. They may also track down photographs or historical documents to make the film more authentic.

AREAS

EMPLOYERS

STRATEGIES

BUSINESS

Management (Agents)
Marketing
Fund-raising and Development
Coordination of Volunteers
Administration of Arts Programs
Accounting
Box Office

Theaters
Arts councils
Corporations
Government
Television/film studios

Many corporations sponsor arts programs and have "giving" departments for this purpose.
Secretarial/clerical positions in theaters and studios are often stepping-stones to higher ambitions and a good way to make contacts.
Take business courses to supplement your program.
Obtain a working knowledge of computers.

EDUCATION

Teaching
Community Liaison

Public and private schools
Colleges and universities
Performing arts centers

Obtain certification for the state in which you wish to teach.
Obtain a graduate degree to teach on the college level.
Many performing arts centers have outreach programs to get students involved in the arts. For example, students may be offered ticket discounts to a theater production.

GENERAL STRATEGIES

- Do an internship or an apprenticeship with a local theater.
- Network: Talk with people working in the field to find out about jobs and opportunities.
- Read newspapers and periodicals related to the theater to keep up with new developments.
- Read the "trades"--magazines and newspapers that report events in the entertainment industry.
- Read the "Theater" section of daily newspapers to find out about upcoming productions.
- Get your foot in the door: Get involved with productions in any way you can, and be prepared to do various tasks assigned by stage managers or producers.
- Join professional groups as an opportunity to make contacts.
- Get as much exposure as you can: Participate in local productions, volunteer with fund-raising efforts for the arts, etc.
- Be aware of scams: Check out the legitimacy of agencies and companies before paying any sort of fees.
- Have a back-up plan: Develop other skills that qualify you for other jobs while you wait for opportunities in acting. Be aware that the unemployment rate for actors hovers around 85%.
- Be prepared to move to a metropolitan area where more opportunities exist.