

COLLEGE COUNSELING ARTS GUIDE



Every year, Menlo students consider pursuing arts-based majors in college. To help students start thinking about whether they want to pursue the arts, and at what level, here is a list of questions to consider, broken down by discipline.



DANCE

- ✓ Are you taking dance classes regularly? In ballet? In modern dance? What style is your strength?
- ✓ Are you on any competitive dance teams or performance groups? Do you go to conventions?
- ✓ Have you taken dance classes at Menlo School? Are you involved with the School's dance program?
- ✓ Do you enjoy taking dance classes?
- ✓ What feedback have you received from your teachers?
- ✓ How many public performances have you done?
- ✓ How did you feel during the rehearsal stage? During the performance? Afterward?
- ✓ Have you auditioned for competitive summer programs? For regional productions? What was the outcome?



THEATER

- ✓ Have you participated in theater productions at your school? How did you feel during the rehearsal stage? During the production? Afterward?
- ✓ Have you taken drama courses at school?
- ✓ Do you participate in theater programs outside of school?
- ✓ Where do you study theater outside of school?
- ✓ What summer programs have you participated in?
- ✓ What is the feedback that you have received like?
- ✓ What kind of acting are you interested in? Film? TV? Musical Theater? Theater?



MUSIC

- ✓ Do you enjoy using your musical skills to connect and create with others?
- ✓ Do you spend a significant amount of time studying, creating, and/or performing music?
- ✓ Are you active in the musical culture at your school?
- ✓ Are you self-motivated in honing your musical craft?
- ✓ Has music significantly impacted your personal and creative identity?



VISUAL ART

- ✓ Have you taken art classes at school, outside of school, or both? How long have you taken art classes?
- ✓ What type of art do you enjoy doing?
- ✓ What styles do you enjoy exploring?
- ✓ What type of feedback have you received on your art pieces?
- ✓ Have you taken part in any summer programs?

TYPES OF DEGREES

Bachelor degrees for visual and performing arts range from:

- Bachelor of Arts (BA)
- Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA)
- Bachelor of Science (BS)
- Bachelor of Education (B.Ed)

Although many foundational courses may overlap for these different degrees, the main differences are evident in the types of courses each degree emphasizes. A BA will have you taking more liberal arts courses (general students such as literature, history, etc.), while a BFA or performance degree, will focus more on the craft and performance of your discipline. Art forms can be studied from multiple angles, such as science, technology, and business, but not all schools offer all the different varieties of majors so be sure to check each school's programs. Getting a sense, early on, about the type of degree you are interested in pursuing could help guide the college list development.

TIMELINE

This simplified timeline will help students and parents plan the application process.

FRESHMEN AND/OR SOPHOMORE YEAR:

- ☐ Have conversations with instructors, coaches, and teachers for an honest assessment of skills.
- ☐ Begin collecting/recording work in preparation for admission requirements.
- ☐ With the help of the college counselor, research both audition/portfolio review and non-audition/non-portfolio schools.
- ☐ Investigate summer programs to see if students really want to commit to their craft; a trial run!
- ☐ Hone skill/develop voice/develop portfolio

JUNIOR YEAR AND SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR:

- ☐ Research portfolio requirements; it will vary from school to school.
- ☐ Continue collecting/recording work in preparation for admission requirements.
- ☐ Begin to compile a base arts portfolio that you can build on for each school's specific requirements
- ☐ Make sure portfolios are in the correct format
- ☐ Reach out to programs and/or participate in National Portfolio Day; admission officers are eager to help!
- ☐ With parents, discuss and plan the appropriate number of fall audition and visits. These can be costly.
- ☐ Develop artistic voice

FALL OF SENIOR YEAR:

- ☐ Students should start scheduling auditions early; some schools schedule on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- ☐ Be mindful of admission application deadlines and requirements; they vary from school to school!
- ☐ Be realistic; admissions to some performance/audition programs is extremely selective.

TIPS/ADVICE ON AUDITIONS AND PORTFOLIOS



DANCE

- ✓ Ask if you should bring recorded music or if there will be an accompanist
- ✓ If you perform an original piece be prepared to talk about it
- ✓ Are you auditioning with a class, solo, or both?
- ✓ Make sure you wear appropriate attire for the audition; i.e., musical theater, ballet, etc.



THEATER

- ✓ Be familiar with the entire play of the piece you choose and be ready to talk about the character
- ✓ Rehearse in the clothes you will wear to the audition
- ✓ You are auditioning from the minute you walk in so be yourself



MUSIC

- ✓ Acquire a letter of recommendation from your primary instrument instructor
- ✓ You may be asked to sight read or sing, so be prepared
- ✓ Prepare a solo that demonstrates your level of musicianship
- ✓ Singers should bring original sheet music in the correct key



VISUAL ART

- ✓ Be an expert on your work and be able to talk about why you created the piece
- ✓ In an art portfolio, the more variety, the better—consider including work in several studio areas
- ✓ Be sure you present your work the way the school asks
- ✓ Be comfortable creating artistic statements

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES STRONG IN THE ARTS

Here are a sampling of strong arts programs, grouped by discipline (note; the lists are not exhaustive; please see your college counselor with questions about particular programs):

DANCE

Arizona State University
University of Arizona
University of the Arts
The Boston Conservatory
California Institute of the Arts
California State University - Long Beach
Chapman University
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado, Boulder
Connecticut College
Alonzo King LINES BFA at
Dominican University of California
University of Florida
Florida State University
Fordham University
University of Hawaii at Manoa
The Hartt School
Harvard University
University of Idaho
University of Illinois at
Urbana - Champaign
Indiana University at Bloomington
The University of Iowa
The Juilliard School
Loyola Marymount University
Marymount Manhattan University
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
Montclair State University
New York University
Pace University
Point Park University
Princeton
Rutgers University
San Diego State University
University of Southern California
Southern Methodist University
Stanford
SUNY Purchase
Tulane University
Texas Christian University
University of Utah

MUSIC

Arizona State University
Belmont University
Berklee College of Music
The Boston Conservatory

Boston University
Bucknell University
Butler University
University of California, Irvine
California Institute of the Arts
California State University - Long Beach
California State University- Los Angeles
California State University - Northridge
California State University - Sacramento
Carnegie Mellon University
Chapman University
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado, Boulder
University of Connecticut
University of Denver
DePaul University
University of Georgia
University of Hawaii at Manoa
University of Houston
University of Idaho
University of Illinois at
Urbana - Champaign
Indiana University at Bloomington
The Juilliard School
Lawrence University
University of Maryland - College Park
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
New England Conservatory of Music
New York University
Northern Arizona University
Oberlin College
University of Oregon
University of the Pacific
Peabody Conservatory at Johns Hopkins
University of Puget Sound
University of Redlands
Rice University
University of Rochester
Rutgers University
San Diego State University
San Francisco State University
University of Southern California
Syracuse University
Texas Christian University
University of Utah
Vanderbilt University
University of Washington
University of Wisconsin - Madison
The College of Wooster

THEATER

The Boston Conservatory
Boston University
California Institute of the Arts
Chapman University
University of Cincinnati
University of Colorado, Boulder
University of Connecticut
DePaul University
Emerson College
University of Florida
Fordham University
The Juilliard School
University of Illinois at Urbana-
Champaign
Ithaca College
University of Miami
University of Michigan
University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
New York University
Pace University
University of Southern California
Southern Methodist University
Syracuse University
Rutgers University
University of Texas, Austin
Tulane University
University of Utah

VISUAL ARTS*

Cal Arts
*California College of the Arts
*Cooper Union
Chapman
*Chicago Arts Institute
Loyola Marymount Institute
*Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA)
NYU
*Parsons School of Design
*Pratt Institute
*Ringling College of Art and Design
*Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)
*Savannah College of Art & Design
(SCAD)
University of California, Los Angeles
University of Southern California

**These schools require a portfolio for entrance into their program. Most colleges and universities have a visual arts major, such as studio art, that does not require a portfolio.*