

Zurich Dance Academy (Tanz Akademie Zürich)

Zurich, Switzerland



Daily classical training inside a full university of the arts, feeding dancers toward Prix de Lausanne and stages worldwide.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	63/100
Academic outcomes	55/100
University placement	45/100
Prestige & heritage	58/100
Alumni network	58/100
Facilities	61/100
Transparency	62/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

The Zurich Dance Academy sits at #12 on our Global Elite 50 Dance Schools 2026, with B+ confidence, because it is one of the most focused professional-conversion pipelines in Central Europe and — through its formal partnership with Ballett Zürich and its integration within the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) — offers a rare combination of Swiss academic accreditation, English-medium instruction and daily contact with an operating elite company. Founded in 2009, it enrolls approximately 60 pupils in its Professional Dance Program (secondary-age) plus a small Bachelor stream.

Its specialism is classical ballet with a strong contemporary integration reflecting the Ballett Zürich house

repertoire (previously Christian Spuck's, now Cathy Marston's). Pupils follow an accredited Swiss Matura or International Baccalaureate track alongside daily professional-standard technique, pointe, pas de deux, contemporary, character and repertoire classes. Faculty is drawn directly from Ballett Zürich and ex-principals of major European companies. The academy shares studios and stage-time access with Ballett Zürich in the historic Opernhaus Zürich.

Progression evidence is strong. Between 2016 and 2026, roughly 70% of graduating dancers have converted directly into main-company or elite junior-company employment. Recent leavers have entered Ballett Zürich, Bavarian State Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet, Vienna State Ballet, Ballet Basel, Ballet du Rhin, English National Ballet, Norwegian National Ballet and multiple elite second/junior companies.

International openness is a defining feature. Approximately 35-40% of dancers in a typical year are non-Swiss, with strong feeder pipelines from Germany, Italy, France, the UK, the Americas and East Asia. English is the primary language of tuition alongside German. Boarding is standard, Swiss Student visas are handled by the academy, and admissions is by international audition tour and video pre-screen. Tuition and boarding fees sit around CHF 32,000-38,000 per year all-in, which — given Swiss cost-of-living — represents genuinely competitive value for a school with this professional-conversion rate.

STRENGTHS

- Operates in partnership with Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), giving students access to university-level dance faculty and studio facilities.
- Structured to let students combine intensive daily dance training with the academic Swiss Matura, keeping a university pathway open alongside a performing career.
- Located in central Zurich, offering easy access to the city's wider cultural and performing-arts scene, including opera and ballet companies.
- Small, talent-focused cohort model allows individualised attention to technical dance progression alongside academic coursework.
- Day-school format keeps students embedded in local family life rather than requiring boarding, easing logistics for Zurich-based expat families.

TRADE-OFFS

- Entry is audition-based and highly selective for the dance component, making it unsuitable as a fallback or general international school choice.
- Curriculum is narrow by design, built around a single vocational specialism (dance) rather than broad academic or extracurricular breadth.
- Teaching and administration are conducted in German, which can be a barrier for newly arrived non-German-speaking families.
- As a niche, vocational-track institution it carries no independent international ranking or inspection rating, making outcomes harder to benchmark against mainstream schools.

ADMISSIONS

Admission requires a formal dance audition assessing technical level, physicality and potential, in addition to standard Swiss academic entry requirements for the Matura track. Places are limited and competition for spots is significant given the school's specialist remit within ZHdK. Prospective students typically apply through the ZHdK admissions office, with auditions held on set dates; German-language proficiency is expected for the academic stream. Families should contact the school directly for current audition dates, age cut-offs and required supporting materials.

WTS RATING 

This profile summarises editorial research by World's Top Schools. Verify all admissions dates directly with the school before submitting. Sources are cited in the full online profile at WorldsTopSchools.com/schools/sch_9736a2817f.