



The following list has been written as a way to help ballet companies and institutions think differently about their organisations to create true inclusion.

A concise guide to equality in your dance company or institution:

1. **Colourism:** are you aware of what this is? It is a very real, often unspoken problem where dancers with the darkest skin tone, particularly women, are consciously or unconsciously not chosen for jobs or roles. Are you projecting your own conscious or unconscious bias onto the dancer in front of you, and limiting their opportunities?
2. **Auditions:** do you make it explicitly clear that you want black, brown and Asian dancers in your company? (Not just the equal opportunities disclaimer) Tell vocational schools that you are making a concerted effort to seek out, nurture and hire more diverse dancers.
3. **Typcasting:** be honest. Do you do it? *The Nutcracker's* Arabian and Chinese dances are not the only place for black, brown and Asian dancers to shine. Modern work is also not the only place to shine.
4. **Is your board diverse?** Diversity at board level will help ensure your company is questioning its practises and hiring policies at all other levels. What about your management team? Changes there can have a ripple effect on your organisation.
5. **Repertoire:** what's in your rep? Any ballet that requires dancers to black, brown or Asian up has to go. It is racist. What about tradition, you ask? Screw tradition. Dearly held, outdated traditions across ballet is why we have a problem in ballet.
6. **Marketing:** is your marketing a true reflection of what your audience is going to see? Keep it real. We see you.
7. Think **one black or brown swan** in the corps de ballet might "distract" or "look wrong"? Nope. No. Not at all (And hire more than one black or brown artist, anyway)
8. **Costumes, shoes, wigs:** are bronze or brown shoes and tights available so your dancers have a **choice**? Talk openly to your dancers about what they are most comfortable wearing. Are your costume designers and makers aware that "nude" means to match the shade of the individual in front of you? Is your wig department aware of and sensitive to different

hair types and styles, and that it's not one way for all?

9. **Audiences:** if you knew your auditorium was going to be filled with black, brown and Asian people, would you be comfortable programming the kind of work described in **point 5**? And understand you are unlikely to see diversity in your audience without putting it on your stage.

10. Have **you already got black and brown dancers**? Great! But you are not done, and diversity in your company is not solved. The work needs to continue. Also: it is not the job of those dancers to be the face of and voice of diversity for your organisation. Some dancers will want to be part of it, some won't. Talk about it with them. Don't hide behind them.

11. Do you have a truly confidential and truly sympathetic system for your black, brown and Asian dancers to **discuss or report racism** or discrimination without fear of backlash or punishment? We in the ballet world are trained to be obedient and grateful and quiet. **We CANNOT BE QUIET ABOUT RACISM.**

12. Do you know what **your ballet staff** are saying to your artists? Does it reflect the open, honest and diverse atmosphere you wish to foster? Ballet is full of old-school ideals, and out-of-date language which can be very hard to adjust. Have you got the energy and determination to call it out and put a stop to it? It's up to your organisation, NOT your black, brown and Asian dancers.

13. **Outreach:** as with marketing, check that you don't plaster social media with the faces of diverse participants, only to have a majority-white professional company. Consider how you can turn your outreach into opportunities for your young participants to have a pathway to vocational training, rather than a short-term event. Vocational schools produce dancers for companies. Help shape what you want to see in your auditions.

This is a starter guide, listed in no particular order, and is not a definitive list.

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