DANCE - MASTER OF FINE ARTS (MFA)

The MFA program at CU is designed to accommodate a variety of students, ranging from the practicing professional to the recent BA/BFA graduate. The MFA will develop students’ creative, performance, pedagogical and scholarly work. With an emphasis on embodied research, this degree positions participants for teaching careers in higher education and a wide variety of careers in the field of dance, movement and entrepreneurial administration. Great transformations in learning are an expected part of the graduate school experience. The decision to pursue an MFA in Dance indicates a hunger to embark upon the challenges, rewards and maturation this experience will bring.

Curriculum

The primary core MFA curriculum focuses on the development of the individual artistic voice in performance, choreography, teaching, research and writing. The presentation of new creative work is bolstered, augmented and enriched by the study of theory, history and many diverse artists of all dance genres and movement disciplines.

MFA candidates are required to choose at least one secondary area of study to give variety and dimension to the student’s training. The university setting is particularly well suited to broad educational goals, given the wide assortment of subjects available at the CU Boulder campus. Possible secondary areas of emphasis study include (but are not limited to):

- Aerial Dance
- Anthropology
- Conflict and Peace Studies
- Cultural Studies
- Dance and Technology
- Dance Criticism
- Differently Abled/Disability Studies
- Entrepreneurship
- Ethnic Studies
- Film/Video/Music
- Hip-hop/Urban Dance
- History
- Intermedia Art
- Kinesiology
- Multi-media Forms
- Non-concert Forms
- Outreach/Community Engagement
- Performance Art
- Site Specific work
- Somatics - includes Alexander Technique, Body Mind Centering, GYROTONICS/GYROKINESIS®, Pilates
- Space Applications & Technologies
- Therapeutic Modalities
- Women & Gender Studies
- Writing/Poetry/Literature

Performance and Choreography

All MFA students are expected to present choreographic work each semester, either as part of course-related events or in other departmentally-produced events. Students are coached to seek refinement of their established artistic practices, but also assiduously to stretch their artistic selves into less familiar movement, choreographic, aesthetic and expressive modes. Evaluation of artistic growth will be based on articulateness, sophistication, theatrical and conceptual completeness and on the extent to which a student has deeply sought discovery, reconsideration and analysis of their art-making methods.

Students are cheered to seek a variety of performance opportunities with fellow students, faculty and guest artists. Produced performances are presented multiple times each year, and informal showings occur regularly. Given the rigorous schedule of our MFA program, extensive work with off-campus groups can be extremely difficult to schedule and tends to overwhelm students with multi-tasking and juggling of priorities.

Students are encouraged to think outside of the box in terms of course choices, creative pursuits and scholarly activities. A considerable number of the required credits consists of student-selected courses and electives, allowing for a great deal of freedom and individualized study. It is critical that a student work closely with their advisor in selecting courses in the dance curriculum, courses outside of the department, and creating independent studies that will support the student’s goals and secondary area of emphasis.

Modified MFA Program for Professionals

Those students entering our program with extensive professional backgrounds including teaching, choreography and/or performance may be able to request a modified degree plan. For such students, an interview with the Director of Dance and the Dance Graduate Director during the application/audition process is necessary. The interview will help determine if there is a good match between the student’s goals and the CU Boulder MFA program.

The goal of the modified program for professionals is to provide flexibility in the pursuit of individual goals and the fortification of specific educational gaps. In close consultation with the faculty and graduate advisor, the student will be able to propose and develop new areas of research and creative work. All modifications to the MFA program must receive the approval of program directors and the CU Boulder Graduate School. The number of required credits (minimum 30) and semesters will be determined based on the individual's exceptional professional experiences.

Core Course Waivers

An MFA student who wishes to have a core course waived must present a written proposal to the faculty that includes:

1. The title of the course to be waived, credit hours and instructor (if known)
2. What course(s) the student would take in its place, the credit hours, and the instructor (if known)
3. A brief narrative as to why the student does not feel it is appropriate for them to take the core course. If the student has taken elsewhere what they believe to be a comparable course, documentation in the form of syllabus or course materials must be submitted. If the student has a medical condition that precludes taking a technique
course, a physician’s documentation or other specific description of
the condition must be submitted.

This proposal should be developed under the guidance of the student’s
advisor, and then submitted to the faculty at large. The proposal will
be discussed at the next opportune faculty meeting, and approval
or disapproval will be granted or revision suggested. Waiving of
requirements does not necessarily mean a reduction of the total credit
hours required.

For detailed information, visit the department’s MFA in Dance (http://
www.colorado.edu/theatredance/admissions/degrees/mfa-dance)
webpage to download the MFA Handbook.

Requirements

Application Process
Applicants are expected to show a high level of proficiency in dance
performance and choreography. The deadline for all applications is
December 1. Applicants who want to apply for program support in the
form of graduate part-time instructor (GPTI) positions must apply by
December 1. Applicants for the MFA program in dance must audition
in person; international students may audition in digital format. Auditions
are held in the end of January for admission the following fall. Applicants
are notified by December 20 if they will be invited to audition. The specific
audition dates can be found on the department’s Auditions (https://
www.colorado.edu/theatredance/dance/auditions) webpage. The dance
program does not accept applications for spring admission.

Assessment Survey: Anatomy/History/Music/Production
Applicants will be sent a survey about their dance history, anatomy, music
and production training, both academic and experiential. Applicants are
asked to provide written answers and send the survey to the graduate
assistant prior to arriving on campus for the audition. After the answers
have been reviewed, secondary deficiencies in these curricular areas
may be determined. Deficiencies are identified prior to admission so
remedial courses or independent studies can be added to the degree plan
if necessary. It is possible that an entire course will not be recommended
but rather an individual will be asked to work with a faculty member in
a specific area. Courses taken to make up deficiencies may not be counted
towards the degree. The survey is also used to determine if strengths in
certain areas warrant waiving specific core courses.

Program Requirements

Required Courses and Credits
The three-year program requires a minimum of 60 credit hours, at least
45 of which must be taken in dance at the 5000 level or above. The
program focuses on performance/choreography and secondary areas
of specialization. Grades lower than a B- cannot be applied towards
graduation; a 3.0 GPA is needed to graduate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 5001</td>
<td>Graduate Technique (to be taken four times) 1</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNCE XXXX</td>
<td>Additional Technique Classes 1</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>DNCE 5012</td>
<td>Concert Production</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 5064</td>
<td>Music and Dance Seminar: Collaboration</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 5017</td>
<td>Dancing Histories: Sex, Gender and Race in U.S. Concert Dance</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1 Minimum dance technique: 14 credit hours.
2 Students must complete Advanced Composition, both Choreography
courses, and Concert Production prior to concert semester.

Secondary Emphasis
MFA candidates are required to choose at least one secondary area of
study designed to give variety and dimension to the student’s training.
Through collaboration with the student’s academic advisor, the student’s
secondary emphasis should be selected no later than the third semester
of study. The program is designed to be responsive to individual areas of
interest and to ensure effective preparation for careers in academics and
the professional arena. The university setting is particularly well-suited
to these broad educational goals, given the wide variety of subjects
available for involvement. See MFA in Dance (http://www.colorado.edu/
theatredance/admissions/degrees/mfa-dance) for possible secondary
areas of study.

Students may choose an emphasis that can be fulfilled by courses
taken within the department and/or in other campus departments. We
encourage students to search far and wide through the course catalog to
discover courses and areas of study that are particularly suited to their
individual interests and career goals.

Students may also choose to complete a graduate certificate offered by
another department as their secondary emphasis. The most common
certificates earned by MFA students are:

- Women & Gender Studies Certificate (catalog.colorado.edu/
graduate/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/programs-study/women-
gender-studies/women-gender-studies-graduate-certificate) –
Women & Gender Studies Program
- Ethnic Studies Certificate (catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-
schools/arts-sciences/programs-study/ethnic-studies/comparative-
ethnic-studies-graduate-certificate) – Department of Ethnic Studies
- Technology Arts & Media Certificate (catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/media-communication-information-
programs-study/critical-media-practices/emergent-technologies-
media-arts-practices-graduate-certificate) – Alliance for Technology,
Learning & Society (ATLAS)
- Critical Theory Certificate (catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-
schools/arts-sciences/programs-study/germanic-slavic-languages-
literatures/critical-theory-graduate-certificate) – Department of
Germanic & Slavic Languages & Literatures
Digital Humanities (https://www.colorado.edu/crdds/dhgc) - Center for Research Data & Digital Scholarship

Off-campus Emphases
Students also have two options for secondary emphases that involve off campus private lessons taken at special training schools/centers and subject to their requirements. The somatic and aerial emphases are sponsored by the department, but require students to take some of the private lessons and training that occur at local specialty centers. Because of this extra-curricular study, the number of CU Boulder credit hours required for the MFA is reduced from 60 to 50 credit hours.

Aerial Dance Emphasis
Courses in the aerial dance emphasis are offered for those students who have a serious interest in aerial dance and its application to dance training, performance and/or teacher training. Students can work towards the completion of the Professional Training Program at Frequent Flyers (http://www.frequentflyers.org)® while simultaneously pursuing their MFA degree. The Professional Training Program must be successfully completed before the MFA degree will be awarded. Before a student is eligible to begin work in the aerial dance emphasis, they must be officially accepted by Frequent Flyers® Professional Training Program (located off campus in Boulder) and have been approved by faculty member Nada Diachenko to follow the aerial dance emphasis.

Somatic Emphasis
The somatic emphasis is offered by the dance program for those students who have a serious interest in somatic studies and their application to dance training, performance, choreography and dance medicine/injury prevention. Students can focus in the Alexander Technique Intensive Study program (ATIS) and/or Body Mind Centering (BMC), work toward certification in GYROTONIC®, GYROKINESIS®, or work toward certification at the Pilates Center (http://www.thepilatescenter.com) in Boulder while simultaneously pursuing their MFA degree. Students may also combine Alexander and BMC for their intensive study. The ATIS and BMC intensive studies do not involve a certification, but they do provide an in-depth theoretical and practical study. They also provide a solid foundation for the possibility of entering an Alexander Teacher Training program (a three-year program) or a Body Mind Centering training (a four-year training program) elsewhere.

Before a student is eligible to pursue certification in GYROTONIC®, GYROKINESIS®, Pilates, ATIC or BMC, they must be approved and accepted by the training course Directors of those programs, as well as the director of the somatic/aerial emphasis, Nada Diachenko. The certification program or intensive studies must be successfully completed before the MFA degree will be awarded.

MFA Project
The culmination of graduate study is the MFA Project. The Graduate Project is based on creative work: a choreographic/creative project usually presented in a concert, followed by a paper and an oral defense of the project and paper. Creative work can take any number of forms from prosenium performance, to site specific or interdisciplinary work etc.

Graduate Comprehensive Portfolio
Prior to graduation, MFA candidates submit a collection of scholarly, pedagogical and creative work. The portfolio is intended to document and synthesize the graduate’s reasoned personal philosophies, choreography and academic investigations. It includes creative and pedagogical statements, scholarly essays, a CV and digital documentation of teaching, performance and choreography.

Plan(s) of Study

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<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<td>DNCE 5017</td>
<td>Dancing Histories: Sex, Gender and Race in U.S. Concert Dance</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>DNCE 5053</td>
<td>Advanced Dance Composition</td>
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<td>DNCE 5601</td>
<td>Alexander Technique for Graduate Students</td>
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<td>THDN 6009</td>
<td>Research and Teaching in Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies</td>
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<td><strong>Spring Semester</strong></td>
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<td>DNCE 5056</td>
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<td>DNCE 5012</td>
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<td>Electives and/or Independent Study</td>
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<td>Music and Dance Seminar: Collaboration (if not taken 2nd semester)</td>
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<td>DNCE 6047 or DNCE 6017</td>
<td>Dance Studies (6017 &amp; 6047 are offered in alternate years) or Cultural Collisions and Ethics in Dance and Movement Performance</td>
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<td>Total Credit Hours</td>
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Notes:
- DNCE 6017 & 6047 are offered in alternate years.
- DNCE 5017 & 6047 are offered in alternate years.
- Spring Semester of year 2 is optional.
- Elective hours are used for coursework from other departments, internships, independent studies, off-campus study, or performance and/or pedagogical studies.
Learning Outcomes

• To encourage the clarification and individuation of each student’s artistic voice
• To prepare and empower students to fulfill their chosen career paths, both in their graduate studies and in the professional world
• To investigate traditional and innovative approaches to movement invention, choreography and performance
• To deepen somatic awareness and increase fluency in dance technique, including ballet, improvisation, jazz, modern, Hip-hop and African Diasporic forms
• To actively engage in dance research, with particular attention to discovering relationships between scholarship and creative work
• To examine pedagogical goals and strategies from aesthetic, cultural and anatomical perspectives
• To present choreography/creative work on a regular basis and perform in the creative work of faculty, student peers and guest artists working in a variety of aesthetic and technical styles