DANCE - MASTER OF FINE ARTS (MFA)

The MFA program is designed to accommodate a variety of students, ranging from the practicing professional to the recent BA/BFA graduate. The MFA develops 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 great variety of careers in the field of dance, movement, entrepreneurship and arts administration.

Whereas an undergraduate degree provides a broad introduction to a field of study, an MFA is an intense immersion into a student’s expertise and curiosities as an artist and scholar. 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. 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.

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.

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 encouraged to seek a variety of performance opportunities with fellow graduate students, undergraduates, 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.

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 Director of Graduate Studies for Dance 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 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 and semesters will be determined based on the individual’s exceptional professional experiences.

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

Admission Requirements

The deadline for all applications is December 1. The dance program does not accept applications or transfer requests for spring admission. After the December 1 submission deadline, the Director of Graduate Studies will pre-screen applications to determine if each person is a fit for our program. Applicants will be notified by December 20 if they will be invited to the on-campus audition. Applicants are expected to show a high level of proficiency in dance performance and choreography. International students may request to audition in digital format.

Applicants who want to be considered for program support (https://www.colorado.edu/theatredance/admissions/degrees/mfa-dance/graduate-assistantships-and-teaching-application) in the form of teaching positions must also submit the Teaching Application portion of the application. Applicants with outstanding teaching qualifications will be invited to a teaching audition the day before the on-campus audition.

The specific audition dates and detailed information about the on-campus audition can be found on the department’s Dance MFA Application (https://www.colorado.edu/theatredance/admissions/degrees/mfa-dance/dance-mfa-application) webpage.

Graduate Record Exam (GRE) scores are not required for the MFA in Dance application.

Prerequisites

- Hold a baccalaureate degree in dance, or equivalent dance experience with a degree in another field
- Have an undergraduate GPA of at least 2.75 and meet the Graduate School’s Minimum Admission Requirements (https://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/admissions/how-to-apply)
- Demonstrate proficiency in dance performance and choreography

Program Requirements

Required Courses and Credits

The three-year program requires a minimum of 60 credit hours, at least 50 of which must be completed on campus at CU Boulder. At this time there is no low-residency option for the MFA program. The curriculum focuses on performance, choreography, scholarship and a secondary area of specialization. Grades lower than a B- cannot be applied towards graduation; a 3.0 GPA is needed to graduate.
Dance - Master of Fine Arts (MFA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THDN 6009</td>
<td>Research and Teaching in Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 5001</td>
<td>Graduate Technique (to be taken four times)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE XXXX</td>
<td>Additional Technique Classes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 5012</td>
<td>Concert Production</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 5017</td>
<td>Dancing Histories: Sex, Gender and Race in U.S. Concert Dance</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 5053</td>
<td>Advanced Dance Composition</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 5056</td>
<td>Graduate Teaching Seminar</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 5064</td>
<td>Music and Dance Seminar: Collaboration</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 5601</td>
<td>Alexander Technique for Graduate Students</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DNCE 6073</td>
<td>Choreography (taken twice with different instructors)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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Seminar
Select two of the following:
- THTR 5010 Introduction to Performance Studies
- DNCE 5048 Performance and Community Engagement
- DNCE 6017 Cultural Collisions and Ethics in Dance and Movement Performance
- DNCE 6047 Dance Studies
- DNCE 6969 The Graduate Project

Electives ²
- Secondary Emphasis
- Additional Electives

Total Credit Hours 60

1 Students must complete Advanced Composition, both Choreography courses, and Concert Production prior to concert semester.
2 Students who do the Aerial or Somatic Off-Campus Secondary Emphases will only complete 5 credit hours of electives.

MFA Project/Research Paper
The culmination of graduate study is the MFA Project and Research Paper. 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. We celebrate many varieties of creative projects and possess the imaginative expertise of an outstanding production team.

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 personal practice, 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

Year One
Fall Semester
- DNCE 5001 Graduate Technique

Spring Semester
- DNCE 5012 Concert Production
- Electives and/or Independent Study

Credit Hours 9

Year Two
Fall Semester
- DNCE 5001 Graduate Technique
- DNCE 5017 Advanced Dance Composition
- Electives and/or Independent Study

Credit Hours 6

Spring Semester
- DNCE 5064 Music and Dance Seminar: Collaboration (if not taken 2nd semester)
- Seminar
- Electives and/or Independent Study

Credit Hours 2

Year Three
Fall Semester
- DNCE 6969 The Graduate Project
- Electives and/or Independent Study

Credit Hours 7

Spring Semester
- DNCE 6969 The Graduate Project
- Electives and/or Independent Study

Credit Hours 7

Total Credit Hours 60

Secondary Emphasis
We wholeheartedly assert that a liberal arts education cultivates a healthy balance of critical thinking, creativity and communal excellence. In this spirit, MFA candidates choose at least one secondary area of study to give variety and dimension to their training.

Secondary Emphases Within Our Campus
Students may choose an emphasis that can be fulfilled by courses taken within the department and/or in other campus departments. Secondary emphases vary between two and five courses, depending on the choice of subject. The university setting is particularly well-suited to broad educational goals, given the wide assortment of subjects available at the CU Boulder campus. 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 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)
- Hip-hop Studies Certificate (https://www.colorado.edu/theatredance/dance/academics/hip-hop-studies-certificate)
- Ethnic Studies Certificate (catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/programs-study/ethnic-studies/comparative-ethnic-studies-graduate-certificate)
- 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)
- Critical Theory Certificate (catalog.colorado.edu/graduate/colleges-schools/arts-sciences/programs-study/germanic-slavic-languages-literatures/critical-theory-graduate-certificate)
- Digital Humanities Certificate (https://www.colorado.edu/crdds/dhcg)
- Arts Administration Certificate (https://www.colorado.edu/music/academics/graduate-advising/graduate-certificate-arts-administration)

**Secondary Emphases with an Off-Campus Partner**

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 program, 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 Aerial Dance Studio (http://www.frequentflyers.org)® (located in Boulder) 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 and have been approved by the Director of Graduate Studies for Dance 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® at Gyrotonic Bodhi (https://www.gyrotonicbodhi.com) studio in Boulder, 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 Graduate Studies for Dance. The certification program or intensive studies must be successfully completed before the MFA degree will be awarded.

**Learning Outcomes**

- To cultivate, clarify and develop each student’s artistic voice.
- To prepare and empower students to pursue their strongest curiosities, expand their intellectual palate and help them distinguish skill sets to thrive in the application of their new knowledge, both in their graduate studies and in the professional world.
- To investigate traditional and innovative approaches to movement generation, choreography and performance.
- To deepen somatic awareness and increase fluency in a wide variety of dance disciplines.
- To actively engage in dance research, with particular attention to discovering relationships between scholarship, creative work and embodied practice.
- To examine pedagogical goals and strategies from aesthetic, cultural and anatomical perspectives.
- To present choreography/creative work on a regular basis and to perform in the creative work of faculty, student peers and guest artists working in a variety of aesthetic and technical styles.