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 or BFA graduate. The MFA will develop students’ creative, performance, and scholarly work and position them for teaching careers in higher education as well as a variety of other careers in the field of dance. The program provides a well-rounded education that develops concrete skills in performance and choreography, and instills an appreciation of the role that dance plays in history and human culture. Our core training includes classes in modern, ballet, African Diasporic forms, jazz, Hip-Hop and Transnational Fusion dance.

Goals

- 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.

Curriculum

The core MFA curriculum focuses on the development of the individual artistic voice in both performance and choreography. The presentation of new creative work is bolstered, augmented and enriched by the study of theory and cultural history.

MFA candidates are required to choose at least one secondary area of study designed to give variety and professional clout to the student’s training. The university setting is particularly well suited to broad educational goals, given the wide variety of subjects available for involvement. Possible secondary areas of emphasis study are:

- Aerial Dance
- Cultural Studies
- Dance and Technology
- Dance Criticism
- Disability Studies
- Ethnic Studies
- Film/Video/Music
- 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
- Transnational Fusion
- 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. It is expected that students will seek not only to refine their established artistic practices, but also assiduously to stretch themselves in the creative process into less familiar movement, choreographic, aesthetic and expressive modes. Evaluation of artistic output will be based on articulateness, sophistication, theatrical and conceptual completeness and on the extent to which a student has deeply sought change and discovery.

Students are urged to seek a variety of performance opportunities with fellow students, faculty and guest artists. Produced performances are presented at least three times each semester, and informal showings occur regularly during the year. Extensive work with off-campus groups is normally extremely difficult to schedule.

Students are encouraged to think outside of the box both in terms of course choices and creative and scholarly activities. A large portion of the required credits are electives, allowing for a great deal of freedom and individualization of study. It is critical that a student work closely with their advisor in selecting electives in the dance curriculum, courses outside of the department, and creating independent studies and internships that will support the student’s goals. The faculty encourages students to search far and wide through the university’s catalog (http://www.colorado.edu/catalog/2016-17) offerings to discover courses and areas of study that are particularly suited to their individual interests.

Modified MFA Program for Professionals

Those students entering our program with extensive professional backgrounds including teaching, choreography and/or performance may be able to devise 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 our MFA program. The goal of the modified program for professionals is to provide flexibility in the pursuit of individual goals and the filling of specific educational gaps.

The number of required credits (minimum 30) and semesters will be determined based on the individual’s professional and life experience. To maximize flexibility and maintain rigor, the graduate faculty advisor and the student will collaborate to create the best course of study to round out the returning professional’s educational experience and develop new areas of research and creative work.

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 Dec. 1. Applicants who want to apply for program support in the form of graduate part-time instructor (GPTI) positions must apply by Dec. 1. Applicants for the MFA program in dance must audition in person; international students may audition in digital format. Auditions are held in January for admission the following fall. 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
Entering students will be sent a list of questions about their anatomy, dance history, music and production training, both academic and experiential. Students will be asked to provide written answers and send the survey to the graduate assistant prior to arriving on campus. After the answers have been reviewed, secondary deficiencies in these curricular areas will be determined. Procedures for making up any deficiencies will be decided through discussion with the appropriate instructor. Deficiencies are determined early in fall semester 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. Any deficiencies will be noted in your file that is in the graduate assistant’s office. It will also be noted in your file when the deficiency is removed. 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 30 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.

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<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Additional Technique Classes 1</td>
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<td>Concert Production 2</td>
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<td>DNCE 5017</td>
<td>Dancing Histories: Sex, Gender and Race in U.S. Concert Dance</td>
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<td>Advanced Dance Composition 2</td>
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<td>Alexander Technique for Graduate Students</td>
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<td>DNCE 6969</td>
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Electives
Select 14-16 credits of elective courses. 16-14

Total Credit Hours 60

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 professional clout 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

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.

**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 Division 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 a choreographic/creative project accompanied by a paper. In the second year of the degree program, a written proposal for the creative project must be presented and approved. Upon its completion, an oral defense of the project and paper is required. On rare occasions students undertake a scholarly thesis instead of artistic project and paper.

**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.