



THEATRE, DANCE, &
PERFORMANCE STUDIES

Handbook

MFA in Dance

Table of Contents

Contents

I. General Information	5
Program Description.....	5
Administrative Structure of the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS) (tdps.umd.edu)	5
II. Requirements for the MFA in Dance.....	7
Program Design and Duration	7
Program Requirements.....	7
Admissions	7
III. Application.....	8
MFA in Dance Application Requirements:.....	9
Information for International Graduate Students	9
Audition	10
IV. Example 3—Year Timeline	11
1 st YEAR.....	11
2 nd YEAR.....	11
3 rd YEAR.....	12
Course & Credit Requirements	13
Mandatory coursework.....	13
Electives	13
Incompletes.....	14
Student Outcomes.....	14
V. Production/Performance Requirement.....	15
Thesis Concert.....	15
Thesis Committee	15
Thesis Paper.....	16
Thesis Presentation (Defense).....	16
VI. TDPS Policies on Assistantships and Research Funding.....	17
VII. Residency	17
VIII. Probation and Dismissal	18
IX. Grievances.....	18
X. Sexual Content Protocol.....	18
XI. Graduate Student Activity Report.....	25

General Information

Program Description

The University of Maryland's School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS) offers a 60-credit, three-year, full-time MFA in Dance degree encompassing choreography, performance, dance and technology, scholarly research, and pedagogy. Emphasizing creative work and collaboration with TDPS MFA candidates in Lighting, Set, Costume and Media/Projection Design, the program is grounded in rigorous academic study and offers a transformational education to those who are curious, motivated, self-directed and possess a spirit of expansive inquiry and innovation.

Auditions are required and admission is for Fall semester acceptance only.

Opportunities abound in the creation of cross-disciplinary projects, presenting choreography in formal and informal settings throughout the three years, performing in guest artist and faculty works, presenting academic work at conferences and symposia, and participating in community-based performance and scholarly events.

The degree culminates with a thesis: an original choreographed and performed creative project and a written thesis. The third year also includes an off-campus internship with an arts organization or research venue in the Washington, DC area such as the Kennedy Center, Dance Place, Dance Exchange, Dance USA or the National Dance Education Organization.

Administrative Structure of the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies (TDPS) (tdps.umd.edu)

- a. The **Director of TDPS** is appointed by the Dean of Arts and Humanities and is the chief administrative officer of the School. The person holding this office has the final say on all financial decisions involving TDPS funds—including graduate assistantships, travel funds, and matching funds for awards from other units of the university—and approves the assignments for winter and summer term teaching.
- b. The **Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)** is a faculty member appointed by the Director of TDPS. The DGS acts as the chief advocate and representative of all graduate programs in TDPS and works with the faculty to ensure that each of our four graduate programs is in compliance with all policies and procedures established by the university and the Graduate School. The DGS, in conjunction with the Coordinator of Graduate Services, makes annual reports on all TDPS graduate programs to the Graduate School, the Office of the Dean of Arts and Humanities, and the Director of TDPS. The Heads of the graduate programs in TDPS report to the DGS. The DGS collects data on placements, publications, production work, awards and honors, and other data important to the promotion of the graduate programs; they must also be informed of all issues relating to a student's progress towards the degree. The DGS signs all relevant forms sent to the Graduate School or Registrar's Office. Students should always allow three to five working days before a deadline to secure the signature of the DGS (working days do not include weekends or holidays).

- c. The **Coordinator of Graduate Services (CGS)** is a full-time staff member who keeps records related to the graduate programs and is the primary facilitator for helping students get their paperwork submitted on time. The CGS works closely with the DGS to coordinate all contact between TDPS graduate students and the Graduate School, the College of Arts and Humanities, the Bursar's Office, the Registrar's Office, and the university administration. Any student wishing the assistance of the CGS in submitting paperwork must send the forms at least three days in advance, must have them completely filled out, and must follow up to ensure that the materials were submitted and received at their final destination.
- d. The **Head of MFA in Dance** is appointed by the Director of the School, in consultation with the Dance faculty. Whenever possible, this position should be rotated and the term of service should not exceed three years. Whenever possible, this appointment should be made from among the tenured faculty. Act as chief advocate and School representative for the MFA in Dance Program. Consult with Associate Director on matters pertaining to the MFA in Dance Program, including curriculum, advising, scheduling, recruitment, and annual recruitment budget. In consultation with the Dance Program faculty, coordinate recruitment of MFA in Dance candidates. Advise the Director of Graduate Studies on recruitment of MFA in Dance students. Advise the Director of Graduate Studies on financial awards (including fellowships and assistantships) to MFA in Dance students which have been decided upon in consultation with the Dance Program faculty. Coordinate assignment of graduate teaching assistantships with Dance Program faculty. Coordinate Learning Outcome Assessments (LOA) with Director of Graduate Studies as needed by ARHU. Advise the Director of Graduate Studies, and the PCC committee on the scheduling of MFA in Dance courses and seminars. Work with the Dance Program faculty to promote and monitor special programs, symposia, and seminars for MFA in Dance students. Advise all MFA in Dance Program students. Supervise and conduct annual evaluations of Dance Program adjunct graduate student faculty and forward recommendations to the Director of the School. In coordination with Dance Program faculty, conduct bi-annual evaluations of Dance Program graduate student assistantship teaching and duties as well as progress in academic coursework. Prepare documentation of these evaluations for student files. Attend production meetings, showings, design runs, dress rehearsals and opening nights of Main Stage MFA in Dance Thesis productions.

II. Requirements for the MFA in Dance

Each graduate student in the program is responsible for meeting all degree requirements, for submitting all paperwork (with all required signatures) by the required deadlines, and for confirming that all paperwork has been properly received by the Graduate School or Registrar's Office. The student's advisor, the Head of the MFA program, the CGS, and the DGS can assist, but the student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all requirements are met and that all paperwork is submitted on time. Deadlines and forms may always be found on the Graduate School's website:

gradschool.umd.edu

Program Design and Duration

The School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies' MFA in Dance program is a rigorous, three-year, full-time training that guides each candidate in the development of their unique personal artistic and scholarly voice. It offers each candidate multiple performance opportunities throughout the three years.

Course work during the first year is prescribed; the second year provides increased flexibility; the third year consists of focusing on the thesis project during one semester and the internship in the other semester.

In each semester, a total of 10 credits must be completed.

Program Requirements

- Full-time enrollment in the three-year MFA in Dance program
- Minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.0 over 60 graduate semester units
- Creation and production of a 25-35 minute choreographic project
- Submission of 50-75 page written thesis and choreographic project recording
- Successful completion of 15-20 minute thesis presentation, followed by an oral examination (defense)

Admissions

The University of Maryland's Graduate School accepts applications through its [ApplyYourself/Hobsons](#) application system. Before completing the application, applicants are asked to check the [Admissions Requirements](#) site for specific instructions.

III. Application

The MFA in Dance program only starts in Fall of each year, with an application deadline prior to the audition date. Please see the information below to prepare for the application.

For additional information, please contact:

Crystal Gaston, TDPS Graduate Services Coordinator: cgaston@umd.edu OR

Patrik Widrig, TDPS Head of MFA in Dance: widrig@umd.edu

All components and requirements for the application must be completed and received by the deadline date before a review of any materials sent with the application can take place.

As required by the Graduate School, all application materials are to be submitted electronically:

1. [Graduate Application](#)

2. Transcripts

3. A current CV: This document should accurately reflect your completed educational background and all of your professional and related experiences to date. Please be thorough and comprehensive, as your C.V. is critical in our determination of appropriate potential fellowship nomination.

4. Statement of Purpose: Please compose a brief but engaging narrative, relating your research and movement practice interests to pursuing a degree in our program. Your essay should situate you within the field at the present time, gathering significant details of your previous experience, clarifying your current involvement and interest in dance, and speculating about your future intentions within the field. We are interested in getting to know something about you as a dance professional through this writing: what have you done that has led you to apply to UMD, how do you articulate your aesthetic sensibility, what do you hope to accomplish in your studies. Please keep the length to 3-4 pages double-spaced and create it in a Word or pdf file that can be easily uploaded.

5. Work Sample(s): Submit Vimeo, YouTube, etc. links to recordings of samples of your work. These samples should demonstrate your expertise and interests, such as excerpts of your choreography, documentation of your performance and teaching, or dance media projects. All materials must be accompanied by a clearly written legend identifying the contents, including title, order of materials, date and explicit identification of your contribution. It is also helpful if you can guide us by identifying yourself in performance clips that include more than one person. Film clips may be edited or unedited and should be limited to 10 minutes.

6. Writing Sample: The Graduate Studies committee reviews writing samples to determine applicants' potential research and creative interests and to assess their competency as writers. Please submit a substantive piece of writing, one that demonstrates your thoughtfulness and capacity to handle language with fluency. Your submission may be about 4 pages double-spaced but no more than 20 pages; this might take the form of a critical review, process paper, or scholarly essay.

7. Letters of recommendation: Submit names and email addresses of three recommenders for the electronic recommendation forms to be sent to them.

8. Non-refundable application fee (\$75) for each program to which an applicant applies.

MFA in Dance Application Requirements:

- You must have earned a 4-year baccalaureate degree from a regionally-accredited U.S. institution, or an equivalent degree earned at a non-U.S. institution with at least a 3.0 GPA. For potential graduate students who DO NOT have an UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR IN DANCE: You may still apply and audition; however, you may be required to take coursework at the undergraduate level in order to meet prerequisites for some graduate courses.
- The MFA in Dance program does not require the GRE but does require an audition and interview.
- All International students must show evidence of acceptable scores on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). See information on the International Educational Services website for specific admissions requirements, including minimum TOEFL score.

Official transcripts from all universities attended will need to be sent to:

University of Maryland College Park
Enrollment Services Operation – Attn: Graduate Admissions
Room 0130 Mitchell Building
College Park, MD 20742

DANC is the program code for the MFA in Dance.

The electronic submission of application materials helps expedite the review of an application. Completed applications are reviewed by an admissions committee in each graduate degree program. The recommendations of the committees are submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School, who will make the final admission decision. Students seeking to complete graduate work at the University of Maryland for degree purposes must be formally admitted to the Graduate School by the Dean. To ensure the integrity of the application process, the University of Maryland authenticates submitted materials through turnitin.com admissions.

Information for International Graduate Students

The University of Maryland is dedicated to maintaining a vibrant international graduate student community. The office of [International Students and Scholars Services](#) (ISSS) is a valuable resource of information and assistance for prospective and current international students. International applicants are encouraged to explore the services they offer and contact them with related questions.

The University of Maryland Graduate School offers admission to international students based on academic information; it is not a guarantee of attendance. Admitted international students will then receive instructions about obtaining the appropriate visa to study at the University of Maryland which will require submission of additional documents. Please see the [Graduate Admissions Process for International applicants](#) for more information.

Contact

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Hobsons online application's helpdesk for any technical issues. For questions related to the admissions process, prospective students may contact the [Graduate School](#).

Audition

The MFA in Dance program at UMD holds an audition in early February of each year. Recommendations on acceptance into the program and for funding are made by early March of each year. Later applications are considered when space and funding is available.

Sample Audition Schedule:

9-10	Arrive + Space available for warmup
10-10:10	Introductions
10:10-10:40	Modern Dance Technique Class
10:40-11	Improvisation Class
11-11:30	Choreography Class
11:30-12	Overview of Program, the Clarice, and the Region
12-12:30	Tour of Facilities
12:30-1	Lunch provided by TDPS Dance program (current MFA in Dance candidates will be present to share their experiences in the program and answer questions)
1	Writing Assessment + Self-assessment
	Beginning of 10-minute individual interviews with Dance Faculty

Acceptance into the TDPS MFA in Dance program requires admission to the university graduate school as well as admission to the program. The application is reviewed by the TDPS Dance faculty, and all MFA applicants are expected to attend the February audition unless other arrangements are made with the TDPS Graduate Services Coordinator or the Head of MFA in Dance.

IV. Example 3—Year Timeline

1st YEAR

EVENTS

- August or early September – orientation for dance graduate students following TDPS orientation
- October (midterm) – individual student meetings with faculty group
- March (midterm) – individual student meetings with faculty group
- Spring semester – Shared Graduate Dance Concert
- May (end of year) – cohort meets with Head of MFA in Dance and Production Manager, summarizing the year and planning for summer contemplation of potential thesis research (reviewing guidelines for thesis concerts)

BENCHMARK REQUIREMENTS:

- Create and perform a 6-12 minute work in an informal end-of-year showing or Shared Graduate Dance Concert
- Create website/portfolio

2nd YEAR

EVENTS

- September – individual meetings with Head of Dance MFA to review Thesis Plan
- November/December – Written thesis proposal and thesis presentation
- January – meet with faculty member to review thesis presentation responses, identify choreographers for shared concerts (with input from cohort, final decision lies with dance faculty in consultation with Production Manager)
- Spring Semester – Second Season
- Spring semester – Shared Graduate Dance Concert
- Spring semester – identify thesis chair and committee members; meet with thesis chair to develop individual timeline for third year
- Spring semester – Fall thesis concert design meetings, auditions, etc.
- Spring Semester – meet with Head of MFA in Dance to confirm Fall internship details

BENCHMARK REQUIREMENTS

- Create and present 12-18 minutes of choreography on informal or semi-produced program
- Update website/portfolio

3rd YEAR

EVENTS

- Summer rehearsals for Fall concerts
- September – meet with thesis chair, review timeline for thesis creative project and written thesis
- September/October – design and production meetings for fall shared concert
- October/November – design and production meetings for spring shared thesis concert
- October – meet with Head of Dance MFA to confirm Spring internship details
- Fall Shared Thesis Concert
- October – academic job application season begins
- December – potential outline of written thesis submitted to thesis chair
- Spring Shared Thesis Concert
- Written Thesis process for Fall choreographers: December/January, mid-February Thesis Presentation (Defense) date
- Written Thesis process for Spring choreographers: March, early April Thesis Presentation (Defense) date
- Spring semester – Shared Graduate Concert
- Late April – deadline to upload concert video and written thesis
- May – Commencement

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

- Create and present a fully produced 25-35 minute choreographic work
- Write 50-75 page thesis paper and submit final copy to the committee
- Successfully defend the thesis
- Submit the thesis to the Graduate School
- Complete semester-long internship with an arts organization outside of UMD/TDPS

Course & Credit Requirements – Mandatory coursework

1st YEAR		
COURSE	FALL	CREDITS 10
DANC648	Modern Dance Technique	2
DANC600	Graduate Dance Research	3
DANC604	Graduate Studies in Dance Pedagogy	2
DANC608	Graduate Choreography I: Creative Process	3
SPRING		CREDITS 10
DANC648	Modern Dance Technique	2
DANC766 OR DANC784	Graduate Movement Observation and Analysis OR (alternate years) Dance in Global Context	2
DANC708	Graduate Choreography II: Collaboration	3
DANC611	Dance Technology and Media	3
2nd YEAR		
COURSE	FALL	CREDITS 10
DANC649	Modern Dance Technique	2
DANC719	Graduate Choreography III: Projects	3
DANC610	Dance Production	3
	Electives	2
SPRING		CREDITS 10
DANC649	Modern Dance Technique	2
DANC766 OR DANC784	Graduate Movement Observation and Analysis OR (alternate years) Dance in Global Context	3
	Electives	5
3rd YEAR		
COURSE	FALL	CREDITS 10
DANC649	Modern Dance Technique	2
DANC777 OR DANC799	Graduate Internship in Dance OR (alternate semesters) Master's Thesis Project in Dance	6
	Electives	2
SPRING		CREDITS 10
DANC649	Modern Dance Technique	2
DANC777 OR DANC799	Graduate Internship in Dance OR (alternate semesters) Master's Thesis Project in Dance	6
	Electives	2

Electives

MFA dance students are also able to take electives in Theatre and Performance Studies courses including seminars in critical theory; voice; design courses in costumes, projection, media and/or sets; puppetry; playwriting; Alexander technique; theatre history; and dramaturgy.

Incompletes

Students are expected to complete all courses they take. Exceptional circumstances may lead a student to request an incomplete ("I") in a course. Incompletes are governed by the [Graduate School Incomplete Contract \(www.ter.ps/incomplete\)](#), which must be signed by both the student and the instructor and filed with the CGS and the Head of MFA Dance. Students are expected to finish all related coursework by the end of the following term: for fall semester incompletes, students have until the end of the spring semester; for spring semester incompletes, students have until the start of the next fall semester. Under exceptional circumstances, students may request one additional semester/term to clear the "I" grade, which will be considered by the faculty on a case-by-case basis.

Failure to clear an "I" grade within the required period will result in a failing grade, which constitutes a failure to make adequate progress towards the degree; along with other factors, this may add to the grounds for a loss of funding or removal from the program. Any student with an incomplete must check in with their advisor and the instructor of the course on a regular basis to detail what actions are being taken to finish the incomplete course requirements. The advisor will report on the student's progress to the Head of MFA Dance.

Student Outcomes

The successful MFA in Dance candidate is informed by dance theory as a performing artist and demonstrates the following attributes and values:

- **Curiosity**
- **Innovative thinkers/creators**
- **Agile/skillful /eclectic movers**
- **Articulate advocates**
- **Caring/competent educators**
- **Knowledgeable citizens**
- **Responsible collaborators**

V. Production/Performance Requirement

Shared Thesis Concert

For their thesis, MFA in Dance candidates create and realize a choreographic project. Each student must meet all deadlines for that production and the execution must be acceptable to all members of their thesis committee. The written component of the thesis includes all relevant visual material, including research images, drawings, renderings, and production photographs.

They are **25-35 minutes** long, part of the TDPS Mainstage Season programming, and the culmination of a several months long, four-stage process (conceptual, design, integration, implementation).

The thesis concert will take place either in the Fall or Spring semester of the third year.

These concerts are shared with at least one other MFA in Dance candidate-with an expectation that each candidate will achieve their individual vision. They are produced in collaboration with TDPS lighting, set, costume and media/projection design grads. Some aspects of the shared concert come up early in the process, but should not dictate the artistic choices each candidate makes for their separate projects. The candidates may discover intersecting ideas but do not have to create a cohesive evening. This list defines what resources are shared:

- Publicity – poster, program, social media campaign, etc.
- Timeframe – performed as part of the same concert in one evening
- Location: In the building – within the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
 - It is assumed thesis concerts will take place in the Dance Theatre
 - Thesis concerts do not have to take place in a theater space, but they must be WITHIN the Clarice building
 - One evening's concert can switch venues, but still MUST be one evening. From an audience viewpoint, one half of the performance must flow into the other half.
- Use of the space/scenic elements/technical equipment
- Shared scenic designer/design of the space (should you choose to incorporate scenic design)
- Shared costume designer
- Shared projection designer (depending on availability of projection MFA program designers)
- Stage management: we anticipate separate stage managers for each thesis project, with shared ASM's for the concert.
- Shared light plot, although each thesis project has a separate lighting designer.

Due to the rehearsal schedule demands, sharing cast members between two MFA students who share a program is strongly discouraged. This includes one graduate student dancing in another graduate student's thesis concert on the same evening.

Thesis Committee

The Thesis Committee consists of the Chair (any tenured/tenure-track Dance faculty member) and at least two, but no more than three additional committee members. Committee members can be Dance, Theatre or non-TDPS faculty. For faculty who do not teach graduate level courses, or are not on this campus, the Graduate School must approve them. Faculty who leave UMD (except Emeriti) are Graduate Faculty for one year and are then nominated as Special Members.

Note: By special permission a committee member can be from outside the University of Maryland.

Outside faculty must have special expertise in the defense's subject area not available among the UMD faculty. They must be nominated and approved for Special Membership in the Graduate Faculty of the University of Maryland and must either be physically present at the defense or virtually present by way of a Graduate School-approved teleconferencing technology. There are generally expenses related to having outside faculty members present at a thesis defense and this funding must be approved before any invitation to join the thesis committee is extended.

Thesis Paper

The written thesis is 50-75 pages long and brings together more traditional scholarship with choreographic research. The thesis may consider choreographers/dancers/dance forms that provide a context for your creative work, as well as research questions based in dance studies. It may also include reflections on contextualization, evaluation of the creative research process and the project, synthesis of overarching themes, and visual representations.

In addition, a video recording of the thesis performance must be submitted along with the paper.

Thesis Presentation (Defense)

- The thesis presentation is a 15-20 minute oral overview of the written paper and the project overall. It is an account of the candidate's hypothesis, creative explorations/process/goals, choreographic project, questions, conclusions. It may be thought of as presenting a summary to an audience who has NOT seen the concert and read the paper – how would you give them an experience of your journey? A candidate is welcome to include additional revelations that may have occurred in the time between finishing the paper and giving the presentation. If appropriate to the project and the audience's understanding of it, a short performative element may be included.
- You are welcome but not obligated to incorporate visuals (PowerPoint, etc.)
- Invited guests and the public may be present.
- The committee will then ask questions (invited guests may ask questions at the chair's discretion)
- The candidate then leaves the room for committee deliberations about the creative project and the written thesis (guests must leave the room.) The committee will deliberate and decide, while the candidate is out of the room, whether or not they pass, with or without rewrites, and if the paper needs to be reread by everyone or if the chair can approve the rewrites.
- The candidate returns for the committee decision
 - the candidate passes without rewrites
 - the candidate passes with re-writes (address concerns, additions)
 - the candidate does not pass
- Paperwork:
 - the candidate has applied for graduation
 - Master's courses have been signed off on, etc.
 - the chair will have a signoff sheet for the thesis defense, which comes from the Graduate School. The committee can sign at the end of the defense if the candidate has passed, even if they still have rewrites to do.

The student is responsible for arranging the date, time, and location at their committee's convenience. The student is also responsible for reserving a space with the appropriate TDPS staff, and for notifying both the Director of Graduate Studies and the Coordinator of Graduate Studies once the details have been set. The defense should be scheduled for two hours.

Once successfully defended, the student is responsible for completing the **Thesis and Dissertation Electronic Submission Form** (www.ter.ps/PubForm) and uploading the thesis to ProQuest here (www.ter.ps/ProQuest). See the **University of Maryland Electronic Thesis and Dissertation website** (www.ter.ps/UMDETD) or the **University of Maryland Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide** (www.ter.ps/filing) for additional information on these procedures. The student is responsible for checking the Graduate School **website** (www.ter.ps/deadlines) for all deadlines related to the submission of their thesis.

VI. TDPS Policies on Assistantships and Research Funding

TDPS offers teaching and research assistantships; the university also provides a limited number of fellowships to augment these assistantships. Financial support is typically provided for three academic years to a student who remains in good standing and successfully completes their assigned duties. Tuition remission is included in most assistantships and fellowships:

- Assistants receive tuition remission for 10 Credit Hours every fall and spring semester, and 4 Credit Hours in the short winter term. There is no tuition remission for summer terms. Any hours above those covered by the assistantship assignment must be paid for by the student.
- Those who are on fellowship or are funded from external sources can take up to 12 Credit Hours a semester.

Limited funding may be available to support student research, travel, and conference attendance. Applications can be submitted for Fall and Spring deadlines and include a description stating the purpose and outcome of the trip, and an anticipated budget for the research/travel.

VII. Residency

TDPS recommends students establish residency in the state of Maryland as soon as possible. Requirements, procedures, and the Petition for Change of Classification for Tuition Purposes form may be found **here** (www.ter.ps/ResPet). Establishing residency in Maryland (though not in DC or Virginia) allows students to pay in-state tuition should they exhaust or lose **funding**. While graduate assistants are eligible for in-state status, their classification will not be changed until they submit the necessary petition paperwork. More information is available here (www.ter.ps/ResClass).

VIII. Probation and Dismissal

MFA in Dance guidelines for probation and dismissal conform to School and Graduate School standards.

As indicated in the contract letter signed by every graduate assistant, failure to perform assigned duties satisfactorily is grounds for a loss of funding. When possible, a student will be put on probation for one term and will receive a letter clearly stating the grounds for the probation and what actions must be taken by the end of the probationary period. Funding will continue for as long as the terms of the probation are met. This is not required, however, if the faculty determines that the student's continuation as an assistant would have negative consequences for other students in the program. In such cases the loss of funding will be immediate.

Students who fail to make adequate progress towards the degree or who have not maintained a "B" average upon completing 10 or more graduate credits can be put on a semester or year-long academic probation. Students will receive a letter clearly stating the grounds for the academic probation and what specific actions must be taken by the end of the probationary period. Such probation can lead to a non-renewal of funding and/or to a recommendation that the student leave the program. Should the terms of the probation not be met, the student will be withdrawn from the program.

In accordance with university guidelines, the faculty reserves the right to request, at any time, the withdrawal of a student who cannot or does not maintain the required standard of scholarship, or whose continuance in the university would be detrimental to their health or the health of others, or whose conduct is not satisfactory to the authorities of the university. Additional information about the dismissal of students may be found in [the Code of Student Conduct \(www.ter.ps/code\)](http://www.ter.ps/code).

IX. Grievances

If you would like to appeal or file a grievance, please follow the [special appeals process](#) or [the grievance procedure](#) in the Graduate School Catalog.

X. Sexual Content Protocol

UMD SCHOOL OF THEATRE, DANCE, AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES PROTOCOL FOR REHEARSING MATERIAL WITH SEXUAL CONTENT, CONSENSUAL TOUCHING, AND DEPICTING SEXUAL ASSAULT

(adapted from Yale School of Drama protocol)

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment and sexual assault are not tolerated at **University of Maryland School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies**. All members of the community have these ethical obligations: to refrain from participating in these behaviors: and to take steps, where possible and safe, to interrupt them when witnessed.

To review University of Maryland Sexual Misconduct Policy & Procedures, see:
<https://www.president.umd.edu/administration/policies/section-vi-general-administration/vi-160a-0>

At the same time, the School defends artists' rights to express themselves. This document is designed to facilitate such expression through processes that also respect collaborators' personal boundaries, and eliminate incidents of sexual misconduct in rehearsal and performance.

Research shows that people are better able to reduce the number of such incidents when, in addition to focusing on the prohibition, they are able to adopt positive, effective strategies for creating an equitable and supportive environment. Therefore, every member of the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies community needs relevant tools and must regularly practice ways to rehearse material with sexual content and/or staging of consensual sexual touching and/or depictions of sexual assault respectfully and constructively, in order to build confidence and rapport with collaborators, so that all parties may rehearse and perform in safety.

Dance is a very different discipline from theatre, with physical contact and touching a part of the history and culture of a variety of different dance forms. Dance courses and choreography frequently include touching in a non-sexual way as part of both pedagogy and artistic expression. In choreographic situations, choreographers should establish a rehearsal environment where the respect for individual and personal boundaries is paramount. Dancers should affirm their willingness to be in physical contact with the choreographer and/or other dancers, and a protocol for declining different levels of physical closeness should be articulated and reviewed. For coursework in dance, as well as TDPS performance- and practice-based courses, faculty should inform students that a course may include touching as part of the

learning process. Movement classes frequently involve “hands-on” corrections and kinesthetic guidance. In this context, the function of touching is for specificity of movement clarity, bodily placement, and physical alignment.

All dramatic literature includes—or may be interpreted to include—the subject of human sexuality, and performance rehearsal and production of many works may include overt sexuality, nakedness, and/or the staging of sexual touching and/or depictions of sexual assault. Like many other subjects of performance, these issues and practices can and do make people uncomfortable. Nonetheless, there are significant artistic and professional opportunities that depend upon a mature approach to these subjects. Student performers and their collaborators can master such an approach while in training, so as to make work confidently throughout their careers.

University of Maryland School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies takes responsibility for providing these protocols to all members of the community who may be working in rehearsal or performance—faculty, staff, students, and guest artists—and all members of the community explicitly accept responsibility for upholding these standards to the best of their abilities, by signing and returning to the Director of the School page 5 of this document.

DEFINITIONS

DEFINITION OF SCENES AND CHOREOGRAPHY WITH SEXUAL CONTENT

Scenes and choreography with sexual content are those in which either the plain meaning of the text/performative moment or the ensemble’s interpretation of the text/performative moment reference sexuality, including attitudes, actions, and sexual language, whether graphic or suggestive, as well as states of dress and undress, including but not limited to nudity and partial nudity

DEFINITION OF SCENES AND CHOREOGRAPHY WITH CONSENSUAL SEXUAL TOUCHING

Scenes and choreography with consensual sexual touching are those with staging or choreography including these consensual behaviors: kissing, touching of buttocks, breasts, and thighs, at or close to erogenous zones, stroking, body-to-body contact or that deal with simulations of physical penetration, oral sex, touching oneself sexually, and orgies.

DEFINITION OF DEPICTIONS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Depictions of sexual assault are representations of acts which in the plain meaning of the text/performative moment or in the interpretation of the ensemble fit any of these descriptions: nonconsensual sexual touching (including kissing), penetration, or oral sex, when any of the above are perpetrated by force, coercion, incapacitation, or in the absence of affirmative consent. Note: All productions with scenes depicting sexual assault require a named fight director/choreographer.

DEFINITION OF SAFETY

Safety is all collaborators' full confidence that sexual content and sexual touching, including in depictions of sexual assault, will only be rehearsed or performed with the ongoing affirmative consent of all student performers: that **University of Maryland School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies** classrooms, rehearsal halls and theaters will be free of sexual harassment; and also that deviations from these protocols will be addressed immediately by collaborators and the School.

PROTOCOL FOR UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND SCHOOL OF THEATRE, DANCE, AND PERFORMANCE STUDIES PRODUCTIONS:

PRE-PRODUCTION

1. Directors/choreographers discuss scenes with sexual content, scenes with consensual sexual touching, and depictions of sexual assault with **the Director of the School**, who uses discretion in contacting the performance pool to opt in or out of being cast in roles that

include nudity, consensual sexual touching and/or depictions of sexual assault.

2. After casting is complete, the director/choreographer, playwright (if present), choreographer (if any), stage manager, and dramaturg ensure that scenes with sexual content, consensual

sexual touching, or depictions of sexual assault are marked in the stage management notes.

REHEARSAL

3. The stage manager will be the facilitator for all protocols relating to scenes with sexual content, scenes with consensual sexual touching, and depictions of sexual assault. These guidelines will be posted at all rehearsal laboratories. At the first rehearsal, the stage manager will point the posting out to the ensemble, and confirm that all members of the ensemble have signed the attached affirmation. The stage manager will also enumerate the scenes with sexual content, consensual sexual touching, or depictions of sexual assault. During the first week of rehearsal, the director/choreographer, in consultation with the playwright (if present), stage manager, and dramaturg, will have discussions with the student performers and visiting artists who are involved with scenes with sexual content or scenes with consensual sexual touching or depictions of sexual assault, about those scenes.

All ensemble members must be mindful that sexual content, consensual sexual touching, and depictions of sexual assault are to be treated with professionalism and respect by all collaborators: careless references to or jokes about these subjects, or about people's bodies, or the transmission of related photos or other materials, may constitute sexual harassment.

4. When a scene and choreography with sexual content or a scene with consensual sexual touching is rehearsed, there will be a conversation between the director/choreographer

and student performers or visiting artists, in consultation with the playwright (if present), choreographer (if any), stage manager, and dramaturg. What will be determined is:

- 1. What kinds of behavior, which might constitute harassment in other circumstances, are required or possible in the scene?**
- 2. What kind of physical contact is required or possible in the scene?**
- 3. What body parts are acceptable to be touched?**

If improvisation is involved in these scenes, what the parameters are will be discussed and clarified.

5. When a depiction of sexual assault is first staged, the participation of a fight director/choreographer is required. Closing such a rehearsal to all but personnel (as agreed by the student performers and visiting artists, stage manager, fight director/choreographer, and director/choreographer, all of whom shall be deemed essential) is standard— exceptions should be rare and agreed to by all student performers and visiting artists, stage manager, and director/choreographer. While the fight director/choreographer's ongoing participation is expected, after initial staging, the director/choreographer, stage manager, fight captain, and student performers and visiting artists may collaborate on minor adjustments, and the ensemble may continue to rehearse the material for purposes of review.
6. When scenes and choreography with partial nudity, nudity, and consensual sexual touching are being staged at significant levels of undress or physical contact, the director/choreographer, stage manager, visiting artists and student performers shall discuss whether the rehearsal room will be open or closed. Closing such a rehearsal to all but essential personnel (as agreed by the student/performers, stage manager, and director/choreographer) is standard—exceptions should be rare and agreed to by all student performers, visiting artists, stage manager, and director/choreographer.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENT PERFORMER and VISITING ARTIST

1. In scenes and choreography involving consensual sexual touching, it is each student performer's and visiting artist's personal responsibility to seek ongoing affirmative consent from a scene partner: you must ascertain verbally what is acceptable to your scene or dance partner, before any and all sexual touching, including kissing.
2. You must receive unambiguous confirmation of your partner's affirmative consent to sexual touching. The interpretation of the scene may be ambiguous with respect to any character's intent, but you, the student performer or visiting artist, must have unambiguous clarity with respect to your fellow student performer's or visiting artist's ongoing affirmative consent to sexual touching. This is also true if improvisation is involved—it is far better to stop an improvisation than to breach the trust of another student performer or visiting artist.
3. Third party assurances ("the director/choreographer/teacher/another student performer or visiting artist said it was okay") are unacceptable. Ongoing affirmative

consent can only be given by the student performer/visiting artist or student performers/visiting artists being touched sexually.

4. Spontaneous changes to staging involving sexual touching are unacceptable, unless they fall within previously agreed boundaries. Safety trumps spontaneity in every circumstance.
5. In rehearsals, if a student performer or visiting artist accidentally touches a body part that was not stated as being acceptable, the student performer or visiting artist touching accidentally will verbally let the scene partner know that this has occurred, and will ask permission to continue with the work within agreed parameters.
6. Student performers and visiting artists should communicate forthrightly about their personal boundaries and limits, since both parties need to know what has been affirmatively consented to. The first step is always a conversation with your scene partner(s). This may be difficult for some student performers and visiting artists who are reticent about stating their sexual boundaries. If this is so, seek help from your director/choreographer or a faculty member. Do not let yourself be coerced or rushed into accepting something that will make you feel unsafe. You may approach any faculty member, the director/choreographer, production or stage manager, the School Director, at any time about the sexual content or activity in any scene.
7. If at any time in rehearsal a student performer or visiting artist feels unsafe (that affirmative consent has not been given, that a harassing act has taken place, or that a mistake in protocol has occurred) the student performer or visiting artist may say, “Hold”—this requires any other student performer, visiting artist, the director/choreographer and/or stage manager, or faculty member if it is in a class, to temporarily suspend the action in rehearsal. At that time the student performers, visiting artists, director/choreographer, stage manager and/or faculty member can discuss how the rehearsal may proceed safely and in a productive manner.
8. In the event any student performer or visiting artist feels uncomfortable speaking up in rehearsal for a production or class, the student performer or visiting artist may contact any faculty member, the director/choreographer, production or stage manager, or the School Director, at any time privately, either in person or via email. The goal of such communication should be to move the conversation back into the rehearsal hall, so that the student performer or visiting artist is fully empowered to receive and give affirmative consent to the scene or dance partner(s).
9. In any situation, it may be necessary for the class or ensemble to take a break, while the faculty member or stage member or production manager and/or director/choreographer talks with the student performers or visiting artists about the scene.
10. Should any stage or production manager, director/choreographer, or teacher be unreceptive to a student performer’s or visiting artist’s concerns about sexual content and sexual touching, the next step is for the student performer or visiting artist to speak with the Director of the School.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS

1. It is the responsibility of the teacher to alert students when they are assigned scene or dance work that may involve consensual sexual touching, including kissing. Best practices at **University of Maryland School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies** include contextualizing explorations of sexuality in the classroom. Students will acknowledge they understand that they are consenting to explore sexuality and/or consensual sexual touching.
2. In rare circumstances, student performers in class may be assigned or choose to work on a scene or dance that gives rise to a depiction of sexual assault. Student performers should only choose such work in consultations with teachers: teachers should only make such assignments in consultation with the student performers; and all parties should be confident that these protocols will be used by the student performers to rehearse the scene or dance in safety for the purposes of the class.
3. Teachers will honor a student's right to pause during a scene or dance, if the student feels unsafe. Teachers who have questions with respect to implementation of these protocols should contact the Director of the School.

PROTOCOLS FOR STUDENT/PERFORMERS REHEARSING A SCENE OR DANCE FOR CLASS

1. When a rehearsal is private, i.e., with no faculty, director/choreographer, production or stage manager present, it is especially important to acknowledge and respect boundaries in rehearsing scenes/dances with sexual content or consensual sexual touching, including kissing. Early in the process, student performers or visiting artists will talk about the sexual content of the scene, and will say what is physically acceptable to them within the context of rehearsal.
2. If a student performer or visiting artist feels unsafe at any point, the student performer or visiting artist may say, "Hold" to temporarily suspend the rehearsal, and the sexuality, sexual touching, or protocols should be discussed. If an agreement on rehearsing such moments cannot be reached, then the student performers or visiting artist may rehearse other moments, or may agree to suspend the rehearsal. They should then, either individually or together, take their concerns to the class's faculty member.
3. 3. In rare circumstances, student performers or visiting artists may be assigned or choose to work on a scene or dance for class that gives rise to a depiction of sexual assault. Student performers or visiting artists should only choose such work in consultation with teachers; teachers should only make such assignments in consultation with the student performers or visiting artists; and all parties should be confident that these protocols will be used by the student performers or visiting artists to rehearse the scene or dance safely for the purposes of the class.

Affirmation of Understanding and Commitment (To be signed and returned to the School of TDPS Director)

I, (print name here) _____, have read and understand

The **University of Maryland School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies'** Protocols for Rehearsing Material with Sexual Content, Sexual Touching, and Depictions of Sexual Assault.

I have read **University of Maryland School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies'** policies and definitions pertaining to sexual misconduct and understand that "sexual assault" includes penetration, oral sex, and/or sexual touching, which includes kissing, in any of these four circumstances:

1. By physical force—overpowering the victim.
2. By incapacitation—with a victim who does not resist by virtue of being drunk, under the influence of drugs, or passed out.
3. By coercion—the pressure of a non-physical threat.
4. In the absence of affirmative consent.

I further understand that the definition of "sexual harassment" includes, among other behaviors:

1. Sexual remarks or jokes or stories that are insulting or offensive.
2. Inappropriate or offensive comments about someone's body, appearance or sexual activities.
3. Saying crude or gross sexual things or trying to get someone to talk about sexual matters when they don't want to.
4. Transmitting offensive sexual remarks, jokes, stories, pictures or videos to people that don't want them.
5. Continuing to ask someone to go out, get dinner, have drinks or have sex even though they said, "No."

I am committed to ensuring an environment free of sexual assault and harassment, and I affirm that I will follow **University of Maryland School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies'** rehearsal guidelines to the best of my ability at all times.

Signed,

Signature _____

Date _____

XI. Graduate Student Activity Report

This information will be collected every spring. You will not receive your renewal contract until the form is received.

Return to [First semester and year---end reviews](#)

Due _____

For all information that is right justified, enter data after colon.

For all information that is left justified, enter data below line.

Email this form back to Dr. Lee at eklee@umd.edu & Crystal Gaston at cgaston@umd.edu Please save a copy of this form so you can just add updates each year.

Name:

Program:

Advisor:

Years in program as of May 31 of this year:

Years of funding remaining after May 31 of this year:

TA Assignment (this year):

Fellowship (this year):

Professional production work: (Title, company, your position --- i.e. choreographer, dancer, collaborator, etc. --- dates. Include those professional assignments accepted but not yet undertaken.)

Productions:

Non-professional production work: (same details as above.)

Conference presentations: (Paper title, conference, location, date.)

Conferences attended without giving papers:

Grants (including travel grants), awards, honors:

Service and community activities: (Professional, university wide, TDPS, other.)

Courses taught while at the University of Maryland: (include courses taught at other institutions.)

Requirements of program still to be met and dates by which you expect to meet them:

If you have been hired for a job for next year, please provide name of institution/organization, job title and starting date.

MA's only:

Thesis title or topic:

Date prospectus approved:

Date of thesis defense:

Thesis committee members (chair first):

MFA's only:

Pre-thesis production/area/date:

Thesis production/area/date:

Thesis committee members (chair first):

PhD's only:

Dissertation title or topic: Date admitted to candidacy:

Expected dates for taking comprehensive examinations:

Date prospectus approved by committee:

Date of dissertation defense:

Dissertation committee members (chair first):

Notes and queries: (anything you want to add. Anything you want to ask about.)