

HANDBOOK FOR MFA IN DANCE

University of Maryland, College Park
School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies

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Who's Who in the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies

Administrative Structure

Maura Keefe, Director of TDPS

mkeefe1@umd.edu

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.

Daniel Conway, Director of Graduate Studies

dconway1@umd.edu

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.

Crystal Gaston, Coordinator of Graduate Services

cgaston@umd.edu

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.

Crystal Davis, Head of MFA

cudavis@umd.edu

The **Head of MFA** in Dance is appointed by the Director of the School, in consultation with the Dance faculty. The Head of MFA acts as chief advocate and School representative for the MFA in Dance Program. The Head of MFA also consults with the Associate Director on matters pertaining to the MFA in Dance Program, including curriculum, advising, scheduling, recruitment, and annual recruitment budget. The Head of MFA also advises the Director of Graduate Studies on financial awards (including fellowships, non-teaching assistantships

and teaching assistantships) to MFA in Dance students which have been decided upon in consultation with the Dance Program faculty. The Head of MFA also advises all MFA in Dance Program students, supervises and conducts annual evaluations of Dance Program adjunct graduate student faculty, and forwards recommendations to the Director of the School.

Production and Technical Support

Bobby Hunter, Production and Events Coordinator rhunter1@umd.edu

Renee Nyack, Program Management Specialist rnyack@umd.edu

Jenn Schwartz, Production Manager jlschwar@umd.edu

Kate Spanos, Marketing Communications Coordinator kspanos@umd.edu

Catalina Toala, Interim Director of Business Operations ctoala@umd.edu

Teaching Support

Susan Miller, Coordinator of Student Services smille13@umd.edu

Alvin Mayes, Head of Dance Performance and Scholarship amayes@umd.edu

See the [TDPS Faculty and Staff Directory](#) for a more comprehensive list of all faculty, staff, and graduate students.

Have questions about who to communicate with for specific requests/concerns? [See the Quick Guide for more information.](#)

Requirements for the MFA in Dance

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 up to ten credits must be completed. Students are additionally funded for up to four credits each Winter term, which may be used for elective credits.

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 10-15 minute thesis presentation, followed by an oral examination (defense)

Responsibility of the Student

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 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 may be found [here](#), and additional forms may be found [here](#).

Each graduate student in the program is responsible for submitting a Graduate Student Activity Report at the end of each academic year. This annual collection of data is important to the future of your graduate program, and reported to and by the College of Arts and Humanities and The Graduate School. The level of funding for your program is determined by those reports. Please fill these forms in carefully. Remember, the value of your degree depends on the reputation of the program you graduate from. Help us keep that reputation high.

Course & Credit Requirements

1 st YEAR		
	FALL	CREDITS
DANC648	Modern Dance Technique	1
DANC600	Graduate Dance Research	3
DANC604	Graduate Studies in Dance Pedagogy	3
DANC608	Graduate Choreography I: Creative Process	3
		10
	SPRING	CREDITS
DANC648	Modern Dance Technique	1
DANC766 OR DANC784	Graduate Movement Observation and Analysis OR (alternate years) Dance in Global Context	3
DANC708	Graduate Choreography II: Collaboration	3
DANC611	Dance Technology and Media	1
TDPS789	Professional Development Workshop (alternate years)	(1)
	Electives	1-2
		10

2 nd YEAR		
	FALL	CREDITS
DANC648	Modern Dance Technique	1
DANC719	Graduate Choreography III: Projects	3
DANC610	Dance Production	1
DANC699	Thesis Writing Workshop (alternate years)	(1)

	Electives	4-5
		10
	SPRING	CREDITS
DANC649	Modern Dance Technique	1
DANC766 OR DANC784	Graduate Movement Observation and Analysis OR (alternate years) Dance in Global Context	3
	Electives	6
		10

3 rd YEAR		
	FALL	CREDITS
DANC649	Modern Dance Technique	1
DANC777 OR DANC799	Credit (6 credits) OR (alternate semesters) Master's Thesis Project in Dance (6 credits)	(5-6)
	Additional Electives	3-4
		10
	SPRING	CREDITS
DANC649	Modern Dance Technique	1
DANC777 OR DANC799	Graduate Internship in Dance (1-5 credits)/Graduate Elective Credit (6 credits) OR (alternate semesters) Master's Thesis Project in Dance (6 credits)	(5-6)
	Electives	3-4
		10

Electives

MFA dance students are encouraged to take electives in Theatre and Performance Studies courses including seminars in critical theory; voice; design courses in costumes, media, lighting and/or scenic; puppetry; playwriting; Alexander technique; theatre history; and dramaturgy. Coursework counting towards the degree requirements must be 400-level coursework and above. Coursework below 400-level will not count toward the 60-credit degree requirement or be funded by tuition remission.

Course offerings vary year-to-year. Independent studies are possible, and must be proposed by the student and approved by the Head of MFA.

Students may utilize elective credits for courses outside of TDPS so long as the classes are 400-level or above. Students often take courses that fulfill the requirements of one of several Graduate Certificates, such as Digital Studies, Museum Scholarship, or Women's Studies, offered through UMD. More details on Graduate Certificates [can be found here](#).

Advising and Class Registration

To plan your courses for a new semester, reference the course and credit requirements and browse the [Schedule of Classes](#) on Testudo. Complete the Course Advising Sheet with your proposed schedule and send it to the Head of MFA. Then schedule an advising meeting with the Head of MFA.

Complete the Graduate Student Schedule Form with your Head of MFA-approved schedule and send this form to the Coordinator of Graduate Services. Once received and confirmed, you will be able to register for classes.

[See Quick Guide for more information.](#)

Internship

The internship process is designed for MFA candidates to work 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. This cannot be a paid internship if it is to be completed during the academic year; it may be a paid internship if completed over the summer.

This process includes the following steps:

Step 1: Meet with Head of MFA in Dance to discuss possible internship projects in the spring of your second year.

Step 2: Write a one-page application for faculty review, outlining how the internship relates to your professional interests and career/artistic goals. Describe the status of the organization and how it is situated in the dance field. Propose a timeline for the internship.

Step 3: Submit for faculty review.

Step 4: Receive notification from the Head of MFA of the faculty's approval or request for further information.

Step 5: After approval of your internship, submit your internship contract.

Step 6: After completing your internship, submit your written report and ensure all other "Grade Fulfillment Requirements" are met.

225hrs total completed during the internship for 5 credit internship
135hrs total completed during the internship for 3 credit internship
90hrs total completed during the internship for 2 credit internship

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](#), 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.

Policies on Assistantships

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.

The renewal of an assistantship is not automatic and is dependent on available resources in the TDPS. It is also dependent upon ongoing job performance and making satisfactory progress toward a degree, both requirements reviewed each term by the faculty. Satisfactory progress includes full-time graduate enrollment, maintaining a 3.0 GPA as required by the Graduate School, completing the required courses, and passing all required exams on schedule.

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.

See [Policies for Graduate Assistantships](#) for more information.

Graduate Assistantship Assignments

The following are the elements considered in the Dance Program Area when assigning graduate students to Graduate Assistantships (GA) and Teaching Assistantships (TA) and Graduate Teaching Assistantship Instructor (GTA).

Graduate Assistantships (GA): Administrative support assignments (i.e. recruitment, marketing, research assistant, production assistant, etc.); term also used to refer to all assigned work for graduate assistants.

Teaching Assistantship (TA): Assistant and support a faculty teacher of record for a course.

Teaching Assistantship Instructor (GTA): Assigned teacher of record status responsible for your own course.

Assignments are decided by the faculty based on the needs of undergraduate curriculum; the educational needs of TDPS, especially related to General Education; and the administrative needs of TDPS, including production, marketing, and recruitment. The faculty will also consider the individual needs and professional goals of the Graduate Assistant, as well as promoting robust and diverse teaching experiences.

Expectations

You are required at the beginning of each semester to fill out a Statement of Mutual Expectations for each Graduate Assistantship Assignment. After filling the form out with your Supervisor(s), you will send the form(s) to the Coordinator of Graduate Services.

Typical Assignment Structure Schedule

	Fall	Spring
1st year	Primarily Teaching Assistantships and Administrative hours. Generally, no Graduate Teaching Assistantship Instructor.	Teaching Assistantships and Administrative hours. Graduate Teaching Assistantship Instructor for Studio Courses, and Guest lectures in DANC200 courses.
2nd year	DANC200 (Introduction to Dance Gen. Ed.) primarily	DANC200 (Introduction to Dance Gen. Ed.) primarily
3rd year	Graduate Teaching Assistantship Instructor for Studio Courses and Administrative hours.	Graduate Teaching Assistantship Instructor for Studio Courses and Administrative hours.

*Coverage of non-major dance courses is a priority for coverage. Special consideration can be given for teaching a non-dance course within TDPS.

Outline for Graduate Teaching Assistantship Instructors

As a GTA, you are the instructor-of-record of a course. In most instances, these courses are pre-existing. You are, however, solely responsible for building your own course syllabus based on the given course description and objectives.

The Syllabus

The UMD Teaching & Learning Transformation Center provides [this syllabus template](#). You are free to adapt this template to suit your needs. You may request to reference archived syllabi from previous semesters from the Coordinator of Student Services. Your course syllabus needs to be submitted to the Head of MFA, the Coordinator of Student Services, and the Head of Dance Performance and Scholarship for review and feedback at least five days before classes begin. [See the Cheat Sheet for more information](#).

Your course syllabus should be finalized and ready for your students by the first day of classes.

ELMS Course Site

The UMD Teaching & Learning Transformation Center [provides instructions for designing and publishing your course site](#). You are free to adapt your ELMS course site to suit your and your students needs. There are many helpful resources and tools that are available, such as grading, Turnitin (academic integrity), organizing course content, and enrollment management.

Additional Research Funding, Grants, Awards & Production Opportunities

Funding Opportunities

The Annual Jim Henson Award for Puppetry (\$1500)

The Henson Award is offered to undergraduate or graduate students in the TDPS for the creation of a puppet project or performance. Call for applications goes out late in Fall semester. Awards must present/perform their work in a showcase late in Spring Semester. You may not be awarded for two consecutive years

TDPS Board of Visitors Student Award (up to \$2500)

The Board of Visitors Student Award was established by the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies Board of Visitors in 2018. Sophomores and juniors with good academic standing are eligible to apply for this merit-based award to fund projects supporting career training and choices in the performing arts or entertainment industries. These projects may include performance, design, choreography or research; study abroad programs; and unpaid internships. Call for applications goes out late in Fall semester.

The International Program for Creative Collaboration & Research (IPCCR)

IPCCR initiates international collaborations for the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies at the University of Maryland, awards collaborative initiative grants to its faculty and graduate students, develops grant proposals to support the school's work and manages its World Outreach classrooms and studios. Grants are awarded in cycles throughout the year, and calls for proposals go out each semester. [More information here.](#)

The College of Arts & Humanities (ARHU) Fellowships, grants and awards.

ARHU provides Travel Awards for research and presentations, research fellowships, and awards for Graduate Student Assistantships. Many of these awards have several submissions throughout the year, and several of them include a nomination process from within TDPS. [More information here.](#)

TDPS Research Funding

TDPS has additional funding which 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. See the Head of MFA and Director of Business Operations for more information.

External Fellowships

The Graduate School collects and updates a list of available external fellowships. [The list can be found here.](#)

Production Opportunities - Main Season

The **Main Season** at the School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies consists of four theatre productions and four dance productions that take place in the Clarice Performing Arts Center. Calls for proposals for the TDPS Main Season go out during the Fall Semester for the *next* academic year. Season selection is completed by committee in January or February. The four dance productions include:

Fall MFA Thesis Concert (FMFA)

- Shared by two Third Year MFA students. Typically in October.

Fall Dance Concert (FDC)

- Typically, faculty and guest artist works only.
- Graduate and undergraduate students may perform in faculty and guest artist works.
- Lighting design support. Limited scenic, media, and costume design support.

Spring MFA Thesis Concert (SMFA)

- Shared by two Third Year Dance MFA students. Typically in February or March.

Spring Dance Concert (SDC)

- A mix of dance works by faculty, graduates, and undergraduates.
- A call for proposals from students will go out late in Fall Semester.

Production Opportunities - Experimental Performance Series

The **Experimental Performance Series** is a self-directed, extracurricular experience in the process of producing your own work. Applications for the following year are due early in Spring semester. There are typically five slots throughout the year that are divided between accepted applicants. This is open to graduate and undergraduate students across all areas of TDPS; a small budget (\$100-200) and limited production support (lighting, projection, simple props and costumes may be pulled from the shop). Selected applicants will have a faculty mentor.

In addition, there is an Experimental Performance Series slot allotted for a **Shared Graduate Dance Concert**. Typically in April, any Dance MFA students may present work without any application process. Length of each work is determined by the amount of students presenting. Limited production support (lighting, projection, simple props and costumes may be pulled from the shop).

Additional Opportunities

Special Performances

Special informal performances can be organized with permission from the TDPS Director. These should be proposed several weeks in advance and do not include budgetary or production support.

First Fridays

First Fridays are informal works-in-process showings held on the first Friday of each month throughout the semester. The host rotates, and in most cases, anyone (TDPS undergraduate, graduate, staff or faculty) can share a draft of a performance work and receive feedback. In most cases, the event is held in Studio 2 from 5:30pm-7pm.

Clarice Performing Arts Opportunities

The Clarice Performing Arts Center also has events such as the [NextNow Festival](#) for which artists are encouraged to apply to have their work shown. If you are interested in performing work at the NextNow Festival, it is open to all artists and is independent of TDPS. For more information, contact the Clarice Performing Arts Center.

Thesis Requirement

MFA in Dance Thesis Process

There are four components of the thesis project: creative process, 25-35 minute performance, 50-70 page written thesis, and thesis presentation/defense. This document details the thesis proposal process and lays the foundation for the creative process, performance, and defense.

Fall of Year Two

Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal serves as an introduction to the project. The proposal demonstrates preparedness to embark on a creative project and place choreography in a larger context within the written portion of the thesis. The thesis proposal written component is developed during DANC719 in Fall of the second year.

A solid thesis proposal:

- A. Explains the kinds of choreographic questions you may explore and the ways you might answer them. Movement ideas and practices, choreographic approaches, themes, and sources of inspiration can be included.
- B. Anticipates the ways in which your choreographic research and your written research may intersect. This may include a series of guiding questions for your research exploration.
- C. Considers choreographers/dancers/dance forms that provide a context for your creative work
- D. Reviews the types of dance studies and other resources you will access and an explanation of the ways you anticipate they will be useful, with bibliography included.
- E. Addresses practical and artistic questions
 1. What images and ideas are you using to begin the collaborative process relating to projection design, sets, scenery, costume, music?
 2. What are your anticipated number of performers, including non-UMD performers?
 3. Are there additional collaborators?
 4. What is your proposed audition, casting plan, and rehearsal schedule?
 5. What semester and venue do you propose (see below)?

Thesis Proposal Presentation

The individual, in-person presentation you make to the faculty will take place the second half of the fall semester of your second year.

- The presentation should be 15-20 minutes in length, with up to 10 minutes afterwards for Q&A with faculty. 30 minutes total maximum time.
- It must include a movement component. It may include other presentation elements.

Thesis Committee Chair

In consultation with the Head of MFA Dance, identify and invite your Thesis Committee Chair (see Chair eligibility below) as soon as possible. The Chair is an important part of the thesis process, as a mentor, main reader of the written thesis, and artistic advocate. You will meet regularly with your Chair.

Thesis Committee

Consider and identify a list of preferred other Thesis Committee Members early in the process. You need at least two, but no more than three additional committee members, creating a three- or four- person committee in total (including your chair). Committee members can be Dance, Theatre or non-TDPS faculty. If you invite faculty who do not teach graduate level courses, or are not on this campus, the Graduate School must approve them. Your committee will be available to advise you on your project, give you feedback during showings, come to rehearsals, etc. Once the chair has approved a near final draft of the written thesis, the committee members read it. Following revisions and edits required by members, the committee ultimately approves it.

- Crystal Davis, Adriane Fang, Maura Keefe, Sara Pearson, Kendra Portier, Patrik Widrig, can serve as chairs.
- Sam Crawford, Alvin Mayes, Marielis Garcia, and all other TDPS full-time faculty can be on committees.
- Faculty not on your committees may be invited to showings/rehearsals for feedback. Keep in mind showings are scheduled to accommodate cast and production staff. Rehearsals can be a productive time to get thorough feedback from committee members as the showings often focus on production needs.

Please note, faculty can only serve on a limited number of committees. Committee consideration relates to who shares a concert, and which semester you hope to present the thesis concert. The Head of MFA in Dance will request your list of preferred committee members. After the Thesis Proposal Presentation, you will be notified whether your proposal was approved and, if so, your final committee list.

Production Manager

The TDPS Production Manager is an important collaborator in this process. Schedule a time to meet individually with the TDPS production manager at least once during the proposal process. Continue to meet often with the production manager to share ideas AND build a

rapport. A strong relationship benefits you and your project over the course of research, development, and production.

Spring of Year Two/Fall of Year Three

MFA Dance Thesis Production Process

The TDPS production process consists of four main phases – **conceptual, design, integration** and **implementation**.

- **The conceptual phase** begins with the written proposal and presentation and continues into the design phase, which occurs the semester before your projects are performed.
- **The design phase** consists of roughly four formal meetings, with other meetings happening as necessary. Choreographers will be asked to present their ideas at the first meeting. They should be prepared to show videos with draft movement material. Individual connections and dialogue between you and your designers are critical for success.
- **The integration phase** is when we determine if we can achieve the designs based on money and labor allotted for the project. We do our best to accommodate, but be aware that there are instances when adjustments need to be made to fit within the resources that we have.
- **The implementation phase** is when the physical elements of the project get built, bought, sewn, etc. Once this phase has begun it is difficult to make substantial changes. Usually if a change is requested at this point something else must be adjusted due to time or budget. During this final phase the whole production team (designers, stage managers, shop staff) meets at least twice to look at the work that has been completed so far, answer questions, make minor adjustments, etc. The implementation phase includes the tech process. Once the show has been teched, we stop all changes and perform it, as it has been built, rehearsed and teched.

Production Details

- You will have the **option** to work with TDPS MFA Designers for your projects. Designers are assigned by the faculty heads of the design program, based on the needs of the design students and their curriculum. Choreographers will not be able to choose their TDPS designers, though if a specific designer and choreographer are interested in working together, they should speak to the Head of Dance MFA who will facilitate a conversation with the design area faculty.
- **You may choose to bring in Guest Artists for your thesis concert**, including designers, dancers, composers, etc. Please know this requires production funds assigned after the proposal process. You may have to adjust your plans once those funds are allocated. There is a guest artist fund of approximately \$1200 (pending budget approval), to be used at choreographer's discretion. Any non-UMD performer receives \$150/performance. Typically, this limits the number of guest artists to two.

- Props, costumes, and sometimes scenery can be purchased from TDPS after the production is complete. The choreographer must pay full price for the cost of the item/materials; nothing is owed for labor. You must notify the Production Manager during the design phase that you are interested in purchasing. This does not commit you to doing so, it simply allows us to move forward supplying items that could be taken away as opposed to using stock items we do not wish to part with. If you choose to purchase, you will be required to complete forms that commit you to properly crediting your designers for their work in any future productions where these items are used.

Collaboration and Communication

The thesis candidate is the Artistic/Project Director of their project. Your relationships with designers, performers, and any other people involved in the process can be considered a directed collaboration; you can be in dialogue with other project participants regarding ideas and input, but you hold the overall artistic vision and have the final say with choices. Think about how you will initiate and maintain this, how to support and maintain the relationships, and how to invite and support others throughout your process. Remember, part of your role is to regularly communicate updates to your committee, designers, stage manager, production manager and other key involved parties.

Shared Thesis Concert

All MFA concerts performed in the Clarice venues are shared, although there is an expectation that you will achieve your individual vision. Some aspects of the shared concert come up early in the process but should not dictate the artistic choices you will make for your separate projects. You may discover intersecting ideas, but you do not have to create a cohesive evening. Share resources are:

- Marketing – poster, program, social media campaign, etc.
- Timeframe – performed as part of the same concert in one evening.
- Venue/Location: In the building – within the Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center
- Use of the space/scenic elements / technical equipment
- Shared scenic, costume, sound and media designers
- Shared light plot (each thesis project may have their own lighting designer)
- Shared Assistant Stage Managers (in most instances, each thesis project has their own stage manager)

Sharing cast members between two MFA students who share a program is strongly discouraged.

FALL/SPRING OF YEAR THREE

Performance

Each performance is shared by two graduate students presenting their 25-35 minute work. Two graduate students will be assigned dates for Fall of their Third Year, and two graduate students will be assigned dates for the Spring of their Third Year.

MFA Dance Thesis Writing & Documentation Process

The written thesis is 50-75 pages long and engages choreographic and theoretical research. The thesis may consider choreographers/dancers/dance forms that provide a context for the creative work, as well as research questions based in dance studies, performance studies, media studies, art and performance history, and any other intersecting disciplines. 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 reference material must be submitted along with the paper.

Candidates should check the [Graduate School website for all deadlines](#) related to the submission of their thesis, and keep track of these dates.

Thesis Presentation/Defense

The thesis presentation is a 10-15 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, and conclusions. It may be thought of as presenting a summary to an audience who has NOT seen the performance or read the written thesis – how would you give them an experience of your research process? Candidates are welcome to include additional revelations that may have occurred in the time between finishing the paper and giving the presentation. Candidates are welcome but not obligated to incorporate visuals (PowerPoint, video, images, etc.). Invited guests and the public may be present.

After the presentation, the committee will ask questions (Invited guests may ask questions afterwards at the chair's discretion.) The candidate and invited guests then leave the room for committee deliberations about the creative project and the written thesis. The committee decides whether or not they pass, with or without rewrites. The candidate returns for the committee decision which may include:

- the candidate passes without rewrites
- the candidate passes with rewrites (address concerns, additions)
- the candidate does not pass

The entire Thesis Presentation process must be no more than 1 hour and must be scheduled on a weekday during the hours of 9am-5pm. The student is responsible for arranging the date, time, and location of their thesis defense 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 space should be reserved for two hours to provide additional time as needed.

Once successfully defended, the student is responsible for completing the following:

- Checking the [Graduate School website for all deadlines](#) related to the submission of their thesis.
- Reviewing the [University of Maryland Electronic Thesis and Dissertation website](#) or the [University of Maryland Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide](#) for additional information on these procedures.
- Ensure Thesis Committee Chair and Committee members sign required [forms](#).
- Completing the [Thesis and Dissertation Electronic Submission Form](#).
- Uploading the thesis to ProQuest [here](#).

The candidate must apply for graduation, and confirm online with UMEG, as well as with CGS and Head of MFA, that all required coursework has been completed.

Quick Guide

See Crystal U. Davis for questions about advising, schedules, and assistantships.

See Crystal Gaston for questions about registration and enrollment processes.

See Bobby Hunter about scheduling studio space and production support.

See Renee Nyack about facilities and office spaces.

See Catalina Toala about payroll, invoices, and honoraria.

See Maura Keefe regarding proposals for new innovations.

See Susan Miller for questions about creating syllabi for your classes.

Steps to Register for Classes

- Choose classes, referencing the [program requirements](#), [Course Catalog](#), and the [Schedule of Classes](#).
- Fill out the Course Advising Sheet and send it to Crystal U. Davis.
- Schedule an advising appointment with Crystal U. Davis.
- Complete the Graduate Student Schedule Form, and secure a signature from Crystal U. Davis.
- Send signed Graduate Student Schedule Form to Crystal Gaston to unlock registration.
- [Register for courses on Testudo](#)

Course Syllabus

Your course syllabus needs to be submitted to Susan Miller (Undergraduate Academic Advisor), Crystal U. Davis (Head of Dance MFA), and Alvin Mayes (for review and feedback at least five days before classes begin for feedback and records.

Statement of Mutual Expectations

Your Statement(s) of Mutual Expectations for each Graduate Assistantship Assignment are filled out with your Supervisor(s), and sent to Crystal Gaston within the first three weeks of each semester.

Graduate Student Activity Report

Your annual Graduate Student Activity Report needs to be sent to Crystal Gaston, Crystal U. Davis, and Daniel Conway during the last week of classes in Spring Semester.

**As a general rule, students should always allow three to five working days before a deadline to secure assistance or signatures on any forms from any of the above. Working days do not include weekends or holidays. Always follow up to ensure that materials were submitted and received at their final destination.