



University at Buffalo

Department of Theatre and Dance

College of Arts and Sciences

Master of Fine Arts

Dance

2025-2026

Student Handbook

INTRODUCTION TO MFA DANCE PROGRAM & HANDBOOK

Graduate study in UB's Department of Theatre & Dance is comprised of Theatre & Performance Studies programs (MA and PhD) and a Dance program (MFA). The Graduate Studies committee, comprised of graduate advisors and core graduate faculty, oversees the curriculum and administration of the program, headed by a Director of Graduate Studies (DGS).

The policies and procedures outlined in this handbook are a program specific supplement to the university's Graduate School policies and procedures (found on The Graduate School website at grad.buffalo.edu), and serve as a resource for both graduate students and their advisors. The policies and requirements listed here are in effect for the entirety of the academic year. The handbook edition that contains the students' university and degree requirements is determined by their academic year of entry. These handbooks contain information on official policies and procedures relating to registration, advising, academic standing, degree requirements, and operational standards. All students should consult both handbooks for departmental and university policies.

The MFA Dance program conforms to all [Graduate School Policies](#) regarding registration, grading, and degree requirements (e.g., those dictating leaves of absence, course resignation, and course attendance, among others). These are available in their complete listing online, although some material may be repeated here for emphasis. Please be sure that you are familiar with these policies. Students should consult the Office of the Registrar for [class schedules](#) and [academic calendars](#) (including dates for registration, drop/add periods, and class resignations) for related information.

Every effort has been made to ensure consistency with the policies of UB and the Graduate School. In the event of contradiction with established policies, this handbook may be revised accordingly. Students will be informed via the graduate student listserv of any changes or updates to the handbook.

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SECTION I.

MFA DANCE

Description

The MFA Dance Program at the University at Buffalo is a three-year, 60 credit hour program with an emphasis on practice-based, creative research. Students focus on embodied inquiry through choreographic creation and performance while engaging with a comprehensive core curriculum of practice and theory courses that emphasize the development of the whole artist—body and mind. With close faculty mentorship and numerous opportunities to create and present work, students cultivate the knowledge and skills necessary to become the next generation of innovative dance makers, leaders, teaching-artists and artist-scholars.

The program welcomes students from various backgrounds ranging from recent BA/BFA graduates to returning professionals wishing to deeply engage with the dance-making process. Each student is encouraged to integrate their unique interests into innovative ways of seeing, thinking about, communicating and being in the world through dance. Students take advantage of the dynamic range of robust curricular offerings at UB by devising an individualized secondary emphasis, such as new media, embodiment, queer studies, visual studies, cognitive science, affect studies, somatics, ethnography, history, geography, or architecture, among many other areas of inquiry. By following a personalized sequence of study, together with their core courses, students create a research path that fits their interests, culminating in an MFA thesis project.

Objectives

The goal of the MFA in Dance at UB is to provide a comprehensive graduate dance education, focusing on dance making as embodied inquiry. Because the MFA in Dance is the terminal creative degree in higher education, students graduating with their MFA from UB are required to reach a high level of proficiency in the creative research area of dance making. As part of their training as dance artists, students are given meaningful opportunities to develop and hone their practical and theoretical skills and knowledge in performance, pedagogy, history, aesthetics and criticism, research, production, technology and theories of the body, with the understanding that these skills enhance and support the working artist and provide further career opportunities as teaching-artists and artist-scholars.

Unique to this program is the emphasis on integrative learning and collaborative art making. Thus, students are also required to demonstrate synthesis and integration of a 10 credit secondary area of study and of their collaborative art making experiences through the development and performance of thesis production work and comprehensive oral and written exams.

Program Overview

The MFA in Dance requires:

- A minimum of 60 credits
- A minimum GPA of 3.0
- Successful completion of comprehensive exams
- Successful completion of Master's Thesis Project with written component

The MFA in Dance is a 3-year, 60 credit hour program intended for returning professionals and recent baccalaureate graduates seeking concentrated study in dance making practice and theory. Students will be accepted to the program through a rigorous selection process that includes an audition, an interview, and review of work samples, writing samples, undergraduate transcripts, and letters of recommendation.

MFA Dance Minimum Requirements
Physical Practice – 10 credits
Creative Process – 9 credits
Thesis Project – 9 credits
History, Research, Theory – 12 credits
Applied Anatomy and Theories of the Body – 3 credits
Pedagogy – 5 credits
Electives – 12 credits (at least 5 outside Dance)

All MFA candidates will create a 20-minute dance work for a culminating thesis concert or a substantial performance project based on their unique research. Students will also produce a written body of work in the form of 3 comprehensive exam questions. One question is to be completed in spring semester each year of the three years they are enrolled in the program. Exam questions will contextualize the students' work historically, politically, and socially and will serve as additional documentation of the students' creative process and final thesis concert. Exam questions will be reviewed by graduate faculty and rewritten if not satisfactory. A passing grade is required on each

exam question for students to progress within the program. Students must also orally defend their thesis project in order to earn the MFA in Dance degree. Content from students' secondary area of study will be integrated into their thesis project and exam questions.

Students must maintain a minimum overall 3.0 GPA and earn a "B" or higher in all coursework. Students who do not meet these requirements may be put on academic probation and risk dismissal from the program.

Student Learning Outcomes

The common body of knowledge and skills necessary for successful completion of a Master of Fine Arts in Dance at the University at Buffalo is in alignment with the accreditation criteria of the National Association of Standards in Dance (NASD).¹

It is the goal of the MFA in Dance at UB that upon completion of the program, an individual shall exhibit the ability to combine and synthesize the competencies below through demonstrated excellence of artistic skills and a deeply informed personal aesthetic. UB's MFA Dance graduates shall possess the ability to articulate and defend, in both oral and written forms, the principles of this personal aesthetic in artistic, scholarly and pedagogical work; and to use this point of view as a driving principle in artistic creation, collaborative art making, and teaching.¹

Upon successful completion of the MFA Dance Program, students will possess:

1. The creative process skills necessary to create a significant body of work, articulate a well-developed personal aesthetic and explain how this aesthetic informs scholarly and pedagogical work.²
2. A breadth of understanding in dance and related disciplines and the ability to think independently, to integrate, and to synthesize information within the dance discipline and across disciplines.
3. Knowledge and understanding of the forces that have shaped dance throughout history and as an evolving contemporary art form, including representative works, individuals, styles, cultural contexts, events, movement theories, and dance science and somatics.
4. Awareness of current issues and developments that impact the field and the potential to contribute to the expansion and evolution of the art, to advocate for the arts, and to explore and address new questions and

¹ http://nasd.arts-accredit.org/site/docs/NASD_HANDBOOK_AND_ADDENDA/NASD_HANDBOOK_2014-15.pdf

² Student Learning Outcome #1 has been adapted from the NASD standard to specifically focus on dance-making.

issues on local, regional, national, and global levels.

5. Writing and speaking skills to communicate clearly and effectively to the dance community, the public, and in teaching situations.
6. The ability to work collaboratively and productively within a diverse global community of artists and to acknowledge and respect diverse aesthetic viewpoints.
7. Familiarity with current technologies utilized in the creation, documentation, preservation, and dissemination of work.
8. A knowledge of bibliographic resources in dance, including Web-based resources, and the skills to access these resources.³

³ Student Learning Outcomes #2-8 are directly excerpted from the NASD Handbook, pg 111-112.

SECTION II.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Secondary Area of Study

Unique to the program is the requirement for students to have a secondary area of emphasis. This outside concentrated study is intended to broaden student's knowledge beyond dance and to inform their creative, scholarly and pedagogical studies.

Students will articulate a secondary area of study in consultation with and approval from their advisor and the Director of Graduate Studies. Students will be required to communicate, in both written and oral defenses, ways in which their secondary concentration informed the research and development of their MFA thesis project.

Requirements (60 credits total)

The MFA Dance curriculum includes coursework in physical practice, artistic creation, pedagogy, history, research, and theory. To inform and augment this training, students will articulate a secondary area of study a topic of their choosing. To successfully progress through the program, students must maintain an overall GPA of 3.0 and earn a "B" or better on all required credit hours, including non-dance electives. Students will demonstrate synthesis and integration of coursework by completing a choreographic thesis project and by passing comprehensive written and oral exams.

Courses - *Course descriptions can be found in the online catalog.*

1. Physical Practice, 10 credits

- Students are required to take at least 5 credits in one technique area. Remaining 5 credits will be selected in consultation with student's advisor.
- Students, in consultation with their advisor, will select a one or two credit option for each technique class based on individual needs. One-credit courses will consist primarily of in-class work. Two credit courses will also include outside reading, writing and practical assignments.

DAC 500 Improvisation, 1-2 credits

DAC 507 Graduate Tap, 1-2 credits

DAC 510 Graduate Modern I, 1-2 credits
DAC 511 Graduate Modern II, 1-2 credits
DAC 520 Graduate Ballet I, 1-2 credits
DAC 521 Graduate Ballet II, 1-2 credits
DAC 517 Graduate Jazz I, 1-2 credits
DAC 518 Graduate Jazz II, 1-2 credits
DAC 544 Dance Studio: Physical Practice, 1-3 cr

2. Creative Practice and Thesis Project, 18 credits

DAC 540 Dance Making I: Resources, 3 cr
DAC 541 Dance Making II: Workshop, 3 cr
DAC 542 Dance Making III: Collaboration, 3 cr
DAC 602, MFA Thesis Project, 9 cr

3. History, Research and Theory, 12 credits

DAC 513 Graduate Professionalization Seminar, 3 cr
TH 610 Performance Research, 3 cr
DAC 530 Political and Cultural Approaches to Dance, 3 cr
DAC 582 Embodied Research and Creative Process, 3 cr

4. Applied Anatomy and Theories of the Body, 3 cr

Students choose one of the following:

DAC 515 Body-Mind Integration, 3 cr
DAC 532 Anatomy/Kinesiology for Dancers, 3 cr
DAC 550 Graduate Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis, 3 cr

5. Teaching, 5 credits

Non-supported MFAs⁴

DAC 606 Supervised Teaching, minimum of 2 credits (taken twice, 1 credit each)

⁴ Non-supported MFA's will gain practical teaching experience and develop pedagogical skills through supervised teaching (606), and the required course (605).

Supported MFAs (Assistantships)⁵

DAC 554 Dance Pedagogy in Higher Education, 3 cr

Plus an additional 2 credits of dance electives

6. Electives, 12 credits

In consultation with their advisor, students will choose electives in their secondary area of study, including dance and/or non-dance courses as appropriate to the students' interests. At least 5 credits must be coursework outside of Dance that supports the student's secondary emphasis. Possibilities include departmental curricular areas such as Anthropology, Media Study, English, Biology, Engineering, Architecture, Visual Studies, etc., as well as transdisciplinary areas of inquiry articulated across departments, such as embodiment, affect studies, performativity, cognitive studies, somatics, memory studies, queer studies, dance science, health and wellness, postcoloniality, etc.

Graduate Transfer Credit

Transfer courses counted toward a previous degree from another regionally accredited graduate school is limited to twelve (12) credits for a Master's degree. Any graduate work transferred from another institution must have commenced not more than ten years prior to the completion of the degree for the credits to be applicable to the graduate degree. Transfer credits do not shorten the duration of the 3-year residency requirement for the MFA. The applicability of course work toward a plan of study is determined by the appropriate area head in conjunction with the director of graduate studies. Students may be required to repeat part or all of a course taken at another institution. The Director of Graduate Studies must approve all transfer credit.

⁵ MFAs with Graduate Assistantships will gain practical teaching experience and develop pedagogical skills through their TA assignments and the two required courses (605 & 554).

SECTION III.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENT GUIDELINES

Written Exams (see Appendix C for guidelines)

Students will complete a substantial body of written work to complement their MFA thesis project. This will be in the form of three comprehensive exam questions. The third exam question serves as a student's thesis project documentation. Students will complete the questions sequentially: One question to be completed each spring during the three years they are enrolled in the program. Due dates will be set by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Exam questions will contextualize the student's work historically, politically, and socially and will serve as an additional record of the student's creative process and final thesis project. The first exam question options will be the same for all first year MFA students. The second and third exam questions will be individually focused on the student's area of interest and thesis project. The student will be expected to integrate content from their secondary area of study into exam answers.

Exam questions will be graded by the student's advisor and one other member of the graduate faculty. If there is not agreement as to whether the student has passed or failed, a third faculty member will grade the exam. A passing grade is required on each question for a student to progress through the program. If a passing grade is not achieved, a student will be allowed two attempts to rewrite the first question and one attempt to rewrite the second question. Areas of weakness will be addressed by the committee. If the student fails to pass subsequent attempts they will be put on probation or dismissed from the program. Only one rewrite is permitted for the final written exam.

Students will be required to defend their thesis project through an oral defense process. The oral defense will take place within two weeks after the thesis project presentation.

The purpose of the comprehensive exams in both oral and written forms is to monitor students' over-arching progress through the three-year program. Comprehensive exam questions provide a point of assessment for the emerging artists/scholars/teachers to articulate, analyze, and synthesize the intersections of their coursework and creative process.

Degree Conferral Application (DCA)

MFA students will complete an DCA form by the spring of their second year. Students must have finalized their Thesis Committee and submitted a final project abstract to their thesis advisor prior to submitting the DCA. The DCA requires that students specify all courses and the approved concept for their MFA thesis project (i.e., thesis abstract). Adjustments or changes to the DCA require approval by the Director of Graduate Studies.

The DCA must include the following attachments:

- Copy of unofficial UB transcript;
- Course syllabi for every course whose title does not clearly indicate the course's relationship to MFA Dance requirements, or which is from another department;
- Copies of any approved graduate petitions for undergraduate courses taken for graduate credit;
- Copies of syllabi and forms for any independent and directed studies courses without an official course description.

Thesis Project Guidelines and Process

All MFA candidates must create an original 20-minute dance work or performance event that is based on a unique research project. Students work closely with their thesis advisor and committee members to create work that showcases synthesis of skills, mastery of craft and a deeply informed personal aesthetic. Students will develop a draft thesis proposal during their fourth semester prior to submitting the Degree Conferral Application (DCA). Final thesis proposals are due to the thesis advisor no later than August 1 prior to the third year. Culminating thesis concerts will be held in the third year of study and will reflect significant preparation and research.

In the third year, after students have completed 48 hours of required courses, students must register for a total of 9 credits of MFA Thesis Project (DAC 602). These credits may be spread out over the final 2 semesters while students complete the remainder of their requirements.

The thesis project is accompanied by written documentation (approximately 20-30 pages) that provides the critical and methodological context for the work. Because every project is different, the specific requirements for the project will be determined in consultation with the major advisor/chair and other members of the graduate faculty. Students are responsible for all logistics related to production, including venue, production rights, and other potential practicalities for production.

Thesis Proposal

1. Thesis Project Objectives
 - a. Please describe your thesis project idea and objectives, being sure to answer the following questions:
 - b. What do you plan to make? What questions/theories/practices will you be investigating? How do you plan to integrate your study in your secondary area of emphasis?
 - c. What final form will this take? (film, live performance, other, etc.) Where will the thesis take place? Who do you anticipate the audience will be? How do you anticipate the audience will

observe your work? (audience interaction, proscenium, remote viewing, audience walk through, etc.)

2. Justification and Significance to the Field
 - a. How will this project contribute to your growth?
 - b. How will this project contribute to ongoing conversations, both choreographic and scholarly, in the various fields it intersects?
3. Methodology and Rationale
 - a. How will you do this work? Whom will you work with and where will you work with them? What resources – time, space, people, technology, specific design elements, etc. – do you need to fulfill the project?
 - b. Why are you qualified? What study has prepared you to undertake this project?
 - c. How will you work with your thesis chair and committee members? What do you see as the role of your chair and committee members?
 - d. How do you plan to document the process of the making of this project?
4. Project Timeline
 - a. Please outline how you plan to proceed through the summer, fall, and spring of your thesis work.
5. Works Cited
 - a. What ideas are you in conversation with? These might be ideas expressed in text – interviews, articles, books, etc. – or in movement – choreographic works, movement practices and techniques, etc.

Thesis proposals should be 8-10 pages in length and will be approved by the thesis committee.

Thesis Project Presentation

It is expected that all members of a Thesis Project Committee will attend at least one public performance or presentation of the thesis showing. In the event that a member of the Thesis Committee is unable to attend the Thesis Project, the faculty member and student may agree *in advance* on a suitable form of documentation (e.g., video recording of performance). In the event that a faculty member cannot attend a Thesis Project presentation and no form of documentation is deemed adequate by either the student or faculty member, then that committee member will be replaced by another member of the graduate faculty most suitable to the project. Students should confirm the dates of any performances or public presentations with all members of the thesis committee at the earliest possible date and no later than **6 weeks in advance** of the presentation. When the dates of presentation are confirmed, invitations to attend should be sent to all members of the thesis committee, the Director of Graduate Studies, and any other relevant members of the faculty.

Documentation

MFA Thesis Projects require both written and video documentation. The student must provide an electronic copy (DVD or other approved format) of the final thesis project to the Graduate Program Administrator no later than two weeks after passing the oral defense or one week prior to commencement, whichever is first. The video must include all appropriate credits.

MFA Thesis Project written documentation (otherwise referred to as the third exam question—see Appendix C for guidelines) should follow conventions and formats consistent with the discipline and agreed to by the student and the major advisor/chair. Generally, MLA or Chicago Manual of Style endnote citations are preferred.

While preparing the thesis documentation, a student should:

- Refer to the Graduate School's General Graduate Degree Requirements to ensure eligibility for degree conferral.
- Recall that the expectations and consequences outlined in this document under **Academic Integrity**. Any violation of these policies may result in immediate dismissal from the program.
- Consult periodically with their committee as per the expectations.
- Set a mutually convenient oral defense date.
- Submit a full and polished final version to the committee at least one week in advance of the oral defense.
- Inform the Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate Program Administrator of the oral defense time and location.

Oral Defense

A public oral defense of the creative thesis project is required for all MFA students. The oral defense is attended by the candidate's major advisor, thesis committee, and members of departmental faculty (as agreed to by the candidate and major advisor). The candidate has the prerogative to open the thesis defense to a larger audience, but this is not required.

The oral defense will take place within two weeks of the thesis project presentation. The defense consists of a brief presentation by the student followed by questions and comments from the committee. Alternative formats may be allowed at the discretion of the thesis advisor/chair and in consultation with the committee members. The purpose of this defense is not, as the name may imply, to challenge the candidate's work, but to allow for an open review of the process. The terms set forth in the project proposal appropriately outline the goals for the project and set the parameters for the defense. Did the research unfold as anticipated? Were there new, unforeseen revelations or complications? This is a discussion to explore the various aspects of the project and to understand the thesis project as a process.

After the question and comment period, the committee confers privately to reach a determination on the status of the thesis. The major advisor notes all feedback and recommendations and is responsible for providing the student with a written summary thereof following the defense. The student is then invited to rejoin the committee and is informed of the outcome, which may include:

- **Unconditional Pass.** No revisions needed. Committee members approve and inform the Director of Graduate Studies. The student may proceed to the final steps for degree conferral.
- **Conditional Pass.** The thesis is passed contingent upon adequate revision. The student must make required revisions and obtain the approval of all committee members. The chair attests that revisions have been approved by all committee members. The student may proceed to the final steps for degree conferral.
- **Determination Postponed: pending revision.** Any committee member who feels that extensive revisions are required and that the thesis is not passable—even on a contingent basis. In this case, the student must make revisions and submit these to the abstaining committee member(s) to obtain approval. When all final revisions have been accepted, the student may proceed to the final steps for degree conferral.
- **Determination Postponed: pending revision & re-defense.** If the thesis project and defense are considered inadequate, the committee may offer the student an opportunity to make substantial revisions and redefend the thesis. In such cases, a strict schedule for revision and redefense must be established and communicated to the student. If the student does not meet the deadline for redefense or is not passed upon redefense, the student will be dismissed from the MFA Program.
- **Unconditional Fail.** If the committee reaches the unanimous conclusion that the thesis's flaws are unresolvable and that the student's work is without merit, the thesis is considered failed and the student will be dismissed from the MFA Program. There will be no opportunity for revision.
- If a passing grade is not achieved on the thesis project and/or the oral defense, a student may be given up to one semester to redress their weaknesses based on committee feedback. This may include partial or complete restaging of thesis project and/or repeating part or all of the oral defense. The student will be responsible for any tuition costs associated with the extra semester.

Graduation Checklist

For candidates completing a Masters' Project, the following must be on file in the Graduate School by prescribed deadlines prior to degree conferral:

- Approved Department Conferral Form (with all necessary attachments, including original transcripts)

In both instances, the Graduate School will verify satisfactory completion of all courses to be applied toward the degree.

Degree Conferral

The Graduate School confers degrees three times per year: February 1; June 1; and September 1. Refer to the Graduate School's details on [degree conferral deadlines and requirements](#) (also noted above under **DCA**). .

Participation in Commencement

Each May, the College of Arts & Sciences holds a commencement ceremony to acknowledge graduating students. This is only a ceremonial event; it is neither equivalent to degree conferral nor is participation required (though it can be very meaningful). Students who pass the oral defense at least two weeks before the graduate commencement date may participate in commencement even if revisions are not complete. Otherwise, students must wait until the next academic year's ceremony.

SECTION IV.

ADVISEMENT

Graduate Advisement and Mentorship

Students work closely with the dance faculty, their individual advisor, and the Director of Graduate Studies to ensure individual mentoring and student success. Incoming students are assigned an *initial MFA advisor* from the graduate dance faculty. The initial advisor assists the student with course selections and other advising needs; mentors teaching and creative work; helps the student devise a secondary area of study; conducts the first year review; and mentors the first comprehensive exam.

By December 1st of their second year, students select an MFA thesis advisor. By February 1st of their second year, students select one primary committee member (reader) and one additional committee member. The advisor and committee member provide direction, mentorship and evaluation of the MFA thesis project; conduct the second and third year reviews; assess the remaining comprehensive exam questions; and conduct the oral thesis project defense. The committee chair must be from Dance; the remaining two committee members should be 1) a Dance faculty and 2) faculty appropriate to assess the student's secondary area. The student decides with the committee member(s) who will serve as reader in addition to the advisor. Additional committee members are welcome. Advisor and committee assignments must be approved by the Director of Graduate Studies.

Teaching Observations

The Department of Theatre and Dance recognizes that regular teaching observations are an important tool in helping to develop effective arts and humanities educators. Students receiving TA Assistantships who serve as graduate instructors of record for departmental courses will be observed teaching a minimum of twice per semester. In consultation with their advisors, graduate instructors of record will select two faculty (one of whom can be their advisor) to observe their teaching. Students will then invite those faculty to observe their teaching and schedule the classroom visit; these communications should be conducted via email; students may also request to receive oral feedback. Following their classroom visit, faculty observers will provide written feedback on the students' teaching. Written teaching observations will be included in the students' departmental file. With faculty permission, students may use these documents as evidence of teaching effectiveness in future job, funding, or fellowship applications.

Annual Review

The Director of Graduate Studies and the student’s primary advisor, in consultation with other appropriate faculty, will evaluate MFA students annually. Students are required to complete an **annual progress report** in conjunction with this meeting. Faculty will also submit a written review. A copy of the reports will be submitted to the student’s advisor and the Graduate Program Administrator for inclusion in the student’s file. Students are expected to address any deficiencies or areas of weakness discussed in the review.

The annual meeting will review the student’s academic record to include minimally:

- a) Checking overall grade point average;
- b) Monitoring overall progress toward completion of coursework;
- c) Addressing any incomplete and/or resigned courses;
- d) Reviewing student teaching;
- e) Reviewing progress toward preparation and completion of comprehensive exam questions;
- f) Reviewing progress toward preparation and completion of creative thesis project

YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Fall: Initial Advisor Begin coursework	Fall: Initial Advisor DEC 1: Select thesis advisor -Begin Devising exam 2 questions	Fall: Thesis Advisor AUG 1: final thesis proposal to advisor Develop thesis concert
Spring: Initial Advisor Devise secondary concentration First written exam	Spring: Thesis Advisor FEB 1: Select committee -Second written exam -Develop thesis project abstract JUNE 1: submit DCA	Spring: Thesis Advisor Present thesis concert Final exams: written and oral

Graduate Development and Support

In addition to individual faculty mentoring, the graduate program will also sponsor regular colloquia and workshops that provide graduate and professional development and supplement the offerings from the UB Graduate School and the College of Arts and Sciences.

MFA students are expected to attend MFA Salon, a weekly/biweekly opportunity to share creative and choreographic research for feedback and to have pedagogy-focused conversations with the dance faculty. MFA Salon meeting times are determined each semester based on student and faculty availability.

Departmental and graduate administrative staff will provide support for registering, completion of forms (DCA and other), scholarship processing, communication and more.

FACULTY ROLES

Supervising Committee

- The **thesis advisor** (committee chair) functions much like an initial advisor but with the added responsibilities of guiding the student's second written exam, oral defense and MFA thesis project work. Once formally appointed, the committee chair assumes responsibility for completing progress reviews with a student. The chair may be the same faculty member who served as the student's initial advisor, but this is not automatic or required.
- The other **committee members** may also confer with the student individually and during group meetings, but the degree of their involvement may vary. Preferences with regard to frequency and scope of consultation should be discussed and mutually agreed upon by the student, chair, and committee members. At minimum, committee members will: review work generated by the student for the qualifying examination (all stages thereof), and MFA thesis project; provide constructive feedback; attend and vote at oral defenses; and review required revisions.
- A student may approach eligible faculty to inquire about their willingness to serve on their committee at any time after entry into the program. Students must find a committee chair by December 1 of their second year and committee members by December 1 of their second year. Students may not file a *Department Conferral Application (DCA)* or complete the second comprehensive examination until a full committee has been established. Delaying the selection of the committee chair and members will delay graduation. Committee members must be members of the College of Arts and Sciences' Graduate Faculty.
- Students are encouraged to maintain the same thesis committee throughout the remainder of their program. However, if circumstances necessitate changes in committee composition, students should identify new committee members as soon as possible and inform the Director of Graduate Studies. If students have already filed the *Department Conferral Application (DCA)*, they must submit an amended form to change committee members to the Director of Graduate Studies.
- As per Graduate School guidelines, a faculty member leaving UB for another institution may remain on a committee (if they and the student so choose) if the student will defend the thesis within one year. If longer, the departing member must be replaced. A retiring faculty member may stay on a committee if the faculty member, student, and Director of Graduate Studies are amenable.

Communication and Email

Students must check their UB email every day. Email is a first point of contact between advisors, administrators, faculty, students and staff. Graduate students are required to use their UB Mail account to communicate university

business. Students can expect to receive important information via email regarding scheduling, advisement, courses, guest artists, funding, special events and more. When communicating by email, students should remember that they are representing themselves to potential future advisors, teachers, employers, committee members, colleagues and references and thus should strive to be as professional as possible.

Faculty and teaching assistants have mailboxes on the second floor of the Theatre & Dance offices. These mailboxes are used for communication between faculty, staff, and students as well as for USPS deliveries.

SECTION V.

ETHICAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Graduate programs in the Department of Theatre & Dance abide by the highest standards of ethical practices, academic integrity, research responsibility, and professional conduct. Students are expected to adhere to the standards and policies identified below and may be dismissed by the Director of Graduate Studies for any violation thereof.

Ethics Statement

Training and study in dance and theater occasionally involve material that can be personally disturbing, even offensive. This includes issues of gender, race, sexuality, religion, and various other moral concerns. Trust is an essential aspect of all learning environments, especially environments requiring experiential modes of instruction.

Graduate programs in the Department of Theatre & Dance follow the [Ethics Task Force Report](#) distributed by the Association for Theatre in Higher Education (1997). We are committed to ensuring an environment of mutual respect, diversity, and artistic and academic freedom in all domains of research, scholarship, and practice. Students should be familiar with these guidelines and follow them in all of their collaborative work, both with faculty, and with other students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Students are also encouraged to report potential violations of these ethical policies to faculty members, the Graduate Director of Theatre or Dance and to the Director of Graduate Study (DGS). If neither departmental faculty nor the DGS seem appropriate for the circumstances, students may wish to seek advice from those outside the department, particularly in the Office of the Associate Dean for Graduate Education.

In cases involving emotional distress or other areas of physical, mental, or emotional concern, students may wish to consult UB's [Student Wellness Team](#). This office offers [Health Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), and [Wellness Education Services](#).

Academic Integrity

Absolute integrity is expected of every member of the UB community in all academic matters. When a student submits any work for academic credit, s/he makes an implicit claim that the work is wholly their/his own, done without the assistance of any person or source not explicitly noted, and that the work has not previously been submitted for academic credit in any other area, unless previously approved by the relevant instructor or advisor.

The MFA in Dance follows the UB Graduate School's academic integrity policy and procedures, found on the UB Graduate School webpage. These apply to all work conducted while a student is in the program including coursework, exams, thesis writing, creative projects, external performances, and any affiliated performance or production work. All students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the University's academic integrity policies. Violations of these policies may result in dismissal from the program.

AI Policy

UB has no universal policy about student use of artificial intelligence, and therefore instructors are given the freedom to prohibit, allow, or limit the use of AI tools in their classrooms. Students must adhere to the individual AI policies set forth in their course syllabi; violations of AI policies are recognized as academic dishonesty cases by the university and will be charged and sanctioned as such.

In the Department of Theatre and Dance, students are prohibited from using or consulting generative artificial intelligence tools in the creation, modification, or evaluation of text submitted in any graduate-level exams (proctored or unsupervised), exam revisions, and thesis and dissertation work. In the case of exams, students are prohibited from the use of AI tools in the creation and revision of the text of the exam questions as well as their answers. Students are also prohibited from the use of digital tools designed or marketed to improve the style or quality of writing, as well as the solicitation of advice or feedback on student-generated writing or other content, including via chatbot, large language model, or digital writing assistant.

Violations of this AI policy on an examination will result in several or all of the following, depending on the infraction:

- immediate failure of the exam (with or without the possibility of retaking the exam);
- academic probation; report of violation to the Office of Academic Integrity;
- sanctions as determined by the Office of Academic Integrity and the graduate committee (including remediation);
- and dismissal from the program.

Violations of this AI policy in thesis or dissertation work result in several or all of the following, depending on the infraction:

- immediate failure of the thesis or dissertation (with or without the possibility of revisions);
- academic probation;
- report of violation to the Office of Academic Integrity;

- sanctions as determined by the Office of Academic Integrity and the graduate committee (including remediation);
- and dismissal from the program.

Professional Conduct

Student enrolled in the MFA Dance program represent the program, department, and university in all professional engagements. It is expected that students adhere to standard professional conduct in both creative and academic work.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE & PROGRESS

The work required to earn an MFA is held to the highest standards of artistic and scholarly breadth, depth, and rigor. Expectations of excellence apply not only to the quality of students' work but also to the pace of their progress through the program. As per procedures outlined below, students may be dismissed from the program for substandard performance or failure to progress.

Student Records and Plans of Study

The student academic file is a record of the student's complete course of study. This record includes the Curriculum Checklist and plan of study, registration forms, qualifying exam results, thesis materials, assistantship paperwork, and other materials related to the student's matriculation. Original materials remain in the student's permanent file in the Department of Theatre & Dance, but the student and advisor may retain copies.

Each student, in consultation with their advisor, their program head, and the Director of Graduate Studies, develops their individual course of study. This plan includes projected courses and the projected length of time to complete the MFA thesis project. This plan is intended to guarantee the integrity of a student's matriculation, but it is not a binding agreement and may be changed with the consent of the student, their advisor, and their program head. Plans are generated during the first semester and should be updated every semester during the advising period. The original plan of study should be on file by the end of the first semester.

The MFA program is a full-time, three-year program. Students are expected to complete the program 34-36 months following matriculation, barring extraordinary circumstances. Students who have not completed their degree after 36 months of continuous enrollment without extenuating circumstances may be asked to leave the program. Requests for time extensions must be submitted in writing to the Director of Graduate Studies (and copied to the

Graduate Program Administrator) at least 1 month prior to the dismissal deadline. These extensions are available for up to one year total and cannot be extended further as per the policies of the UB Graduate School.

Full-Time Student Course Load

Twelve (12) credit hours is defined as a full-time load for graduate students who are not receiving university assistantship or fellowship. Nine (9) credit hours is defined as full-time for MFA students who are receiving a Teaching Assistantship from the university. Students wishing to enroll in more than full-time credit hours per semester covered by their Assistantship may be liable for the additional tuition charges.

Students working on their thesis project who are enrolling in less than the requisite credit hours per semester may submit a **Certification of Full Time Status** form to the Graduate School to maintain full time status through conferral.

Continuous Registration Requirement (Leave of Absence)

Graduate students are required to maintain continuous registration from matriculation through conferral during the standard academic year (not including summer and winter intersessions). If a graduate student does not maintain continuous registration without filing for a Leave of Absence, this will result in program dismissal.

Students needing to take time away from their program may request a Leave of Absence for one or two semesters, which will preserve your place in the program and your academic standing at the time of leave.

Registration Procedures

Students are required to meet with their advisor once a semester to review curricular progress and approve of course loads. Following advisement, students must submit their approved registration form to the Graduate Program Administrator for enrollment in departmental classes. Enrollment in courses outside the department is the responsibility of each student, including obtaining instructor permission as needed. This may require liaising with other departments as the Graduate Program Administrator cannot enroll Theatre & Dance students in courses outside of the department.

It is the student's responsibility to set up advising appointments, communicate registration needs to the faculty and Program Administrator in a timely fashion, and to confirm accurate enrollment in his/her HUB Student Center prior to the start of the semester. This includes verifying accurate courses, sections, and credit amounts.

Students who do not schedule advising appointments and register by the end of the semester are not guaranteed placement in courses of their choice, which may result in delay in progress toward degree.

Academic Standing

Continuation in the Department of Theatre & Dance graduate programs is contingent on satisfactory progress toward degree completion, academic performance, and general attitude and conduct as displayed in the ability to work with peers and faculty, including timely correspondence and attendance at all mandatory meetings and advisory sessions. In order to remain in good standing, a student must:

1. Maintain a minimum 3.0 overall grade point average
2. Achieve a grade of "B" or better in all required coursework
3. Complete all required academic reviews and meet with your advisor no less than one time per semester
4. Comply with all departmental and university policies
5. Make sufficient academic progress and growth in enrolled program
 - MFA students are expected to be enrolled full-time and complete the program 3 years following matriculation, barring extraordinary circumstances.

Academic Probation

Students who fail to meet the minimum academic standards will be placed on probation for the subsequent semester in which they fail to meet these requirements. Steps necessary to remove the probation status will be discussed with the student at the time s/he is notified of probationary status. In extreme instances, students may be dismissed from the department effective immediately.

Students may receive a warning during the semester if they fail to maintain deadlines, have excessive absences or are not meeting minimum requirements at midterm grades, fail to respond to departmental and advisor communications, or are deemed as in danger of falling below academic standards. Warnings may be verbal or written. If concerns are not addressed by the end of the semester, students will be placed on probation for the following semester.

Probationary notification will specify remedial steps and a corresponding schedule to which a student must adhere in order to avoid dismissal. In addition to consultation with the advisor/thesis chair, the DGS also may convene an academic review with the student and advisor to identify obstacles to progress and to devise a plan for improved pace and productivity.

At the end of the probation semester, students are required to meet with their advisor and program head to review progress and timeline as established in the probation letter. Following this review, students may be returned to good academic standing, continue on probation if adequate progress is not made, or be dismissed from the program if student fails to address concerns or make progress.

Steps to address academic concerns may include, but are not limited to:

- **B-, C+ or C in a course:** The student must repeat the course or another that fulfills the requirement. The student must consult with the advisor/DGS about their performance and remedial strategies. Others may attend at the discretion of the advisor/chair. A summary of the meeting including any corrective actions must be sent to the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) for inclusion in the student file. Please note that receiving this grade may delay graduation.
- **D, F, or U in a course:** The student must repeat the course or another that fulfills the requirement. The Director of Graduate Study may request an academic review with the student, advisor/chair, and others at the discretion of the advisor/chair and DGS. At the review, specific remedial steps and a corresponding timeline will be established. These consensual terms will be written up by the DGS, sent to all attendees, and saved in the student file.
- **Below 3.0 overall GPA:** The student is placed on academic probation. The DGS will convene an academic review with the student, advisor/chair, and others at the discretion of the advisor/chair or DGS. At the review, specific corrective actions and a corresponding timeline needed to lift the probationary status will be established. These consensual terms will be written up by the Program Director, sent to all attendees, and saved in the student file.

The Director of Graduate Studies may take additional action if a student does not respond to requests for an academic review; appear at a scheduled academic review; or uphold terms devised at the review. Such action includes but is not limited to one or more of the following: placement on academic probation; withdrawal of funding support; restriction from course registration; or program dismissal.

Program Dismissal

The Director of Graduate Studies may dismiss from the program any student who does not uphold ethical, professional, or academic standards. This includes but is not limited to: ethical or professional misconduct; failure to meet minimum academic standards; and failure to progress. In these cases, students will be notified when in jeopardy of program dismissal. The student will have an opportunity, if reasonable and feasible, to redress the concern or to present claims on their behalf.

In addition to circumstances under which the DGS may take explicit action to prompt program dismissal, students may also be effectively dismissed if they do not maintain continuous registration or if they do not meet Graduate School time limits (i.e., degree conferral within 4 years after beginning MFA coursework). In such cases, a student will not receive advance notice of dismissal risk. Students have the right to petition for retroactive registration and time extensions; however, these will be granted at the discretion of the DGS and only under extenuating circumstances.

As per Graduate School guidelines pertaining to dismissal, students who are dismissed on academic grounds (i.e., violations of academic integrity, substandard performance, failure to progress, failure to maintain continuous registration, or exceeding Graduate School time limits for degree completion) will have a service indicator placed on their record that will prevent them from future registration. If a student wishes to reapply to the same program or another at the university, they must submit a formal request for reinstatement.

OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE & INFORMATION

Communication

The Department of Theatre & Dance and the University at Buffalo communicates regularly via email, and students are encouraged to check their buffalo.edu account regularly for updates and announcements. All communication will be sent to university accounts only. Other updates and announcements will also be found in the HUB Student Center, and in UBLearns for individual courses. Additional updates and information can be found on The Graduate School website (grad.buffalo.edu).

Copy Machine & Printers

The Department of Theatre & Dance has one copy machine located on the second floor of Alumni Arena. Graduate students may obtain a copy code from the Theatre and Dance Office in 285 Alumni Arena. This machine is for official school business only. Students are also encouraged to use the printers and copiers available in the University Libraries.

Library Privileges

All students of UB have access to the university libraries and the services they offer. For Theatre & Dance reference support:

Deb Chiarella

Arts & Sciences Libraries

<http://library.buffalo.edu>

dtc3@buffalo.edu

[Ask A Librarian](#)

Mail

Faculty and staff mailboxes are located in 285 Alumni Arena. Mailboxes for the graduate students are located in the Graduate Student Office in 284 Alumni Arena. Individuals are responsible for checking their mailboxes on a regular basis. Campus mail is for official university business mail only. The departmental mailing address is

Department of Theatre & Dance

University at Buffalo

285 Alumni Arena

Buffalo, NY 14260

Mail is delivered daily to the department from Campus Mail and as needed by UPS, FedEx, etc. The mail is sorted and placed in mailboxes as soon as possible after delivery. Large packages and deliveries made to the main office are held in the main office; please pick up any packages as soon as possible after notification of delivery.

Graduate Student Office

Graduate students with an assistantship have use of the Graduate Student Lounge for office hours and course preparation. All graduate students have access to the Graduate Student Lounge for study, meetings, and other activities related to your program. Students will have access to the office computers and printer.

The Graduate Student Office is a multi-purpose space; it is the responsibility of all graduate students to maintain the cleanliness and order of the office, and to be respectful of all students and their belongings in the space. Any maintenance issues that arise should be brought to the attention of the Theatre & Dance main office staff immediately. The Graduate Student Office should remain locked when not in use.

Outside Productions/Activity

Outside activity is defined as any private practice, production, artistic work, additional teaching or research, or other professional activity, compensated or uncompensated, which is not part of the students' assigned duties including classes and assistantships. Conflict of interest is defined as any conflict between the private interests of the student and the public interests of the university, including any activity that interferes with the full performance of institutional responsibilities or obligations. Conflicts of interest, including those arising from university or outside activities are prohibited.

While graduate students may seek outside opportunities, it is important to balance these opportunities within the curricular requirements of the MFA Dance program. Students are advised to share their projects with their advisors, and to seek integration of their creative and research activity into their curriculum.

SECTION VI.

GRADUATE FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Teaching Assistantships

Applicants to the MFA program may audition for a departmental teaching assistantship. If awarded, the student will receive a tuition scholarship and a graduate stipend. Students will be expected to teach non-major courses, TA for departmental courses, and perform other related departmental duties as assigned.

Tuition Waivers

CAS provides MFA students who receive a Teaching Assistantship with full tuition coverage. The exact number of credits varies depending on the student's prior experience and education (i.e., how many MFA credits will transfer), but the funding is typically sufficient to cover two years of full-time coursework and one year of thesis project credits. Once tuition credits are exhausted, students are personally responsible for registration fees.

Graduate Assistantships

Assistantships may entail a wide range of duties and responsibilities, including research and teaching. TA's are assigned by the DGS in consultation with graduate faculty and the Department Chair, and with consideration for student skills and interests. A Graduate Assistantship assignment is equal to 20 hours/week over the academic calendar year starting the week before classes begin and concluding at the end of the spring term. All aspects of the position (e.g., duties, timesheets, feedback) are overseen by the direct faculty supervisor and the DGS.

Scholarships and Fellowships

Students may be eligible to apply for UB sponsored funding opportunities:

- **Graduate Opportunity Program (GOP)** The Graduate Opportunity Program (GOP; formerly GEOP) provides tuition scholarships to New York State residents who participated as undergraduates in certified EOP, HEOP or SEEK programs within New York State and completed their undergraduate degrees are eligible to seek support through the GOP. All disciplines are eligible.

- ***Mark Diamond Research Fund*** The Mark Diamond Research Fund (MDRF) gives grants to graduate students for research expenses related to their thesis or dissertation. PhD students may apply for up to \$2,500, MFA students for up to \$2,000, and Master's students for up to \$1,500. The MDRF grant is only for University at Buffalo graduate students in programs participating in the Graduate Student Association and who have not waived the student activity fee. Applicants should be in the latter stages of research.

Outside Funding

Students are encouraged to seek out grants, fellowships, and scholarships to support academic study, conference travel, or research projects. Students not receiving teaching assistantships through the Department of Theatre and Dance are free to pursue paid positions through other units at UB (e.g., GA positions in the Gender Institute or the Humanities Institute). Students holding assistantships must obtain departmental permission for additional work acquired within the SUNY system.

Students may also qualify for national fellowship programs (<http://www.fellowships.buffalo.edu/>), and can apply for on campus jobs (http://grad.buffalo.edu/FinancialSupport/jobs_assistantships.html).

CREATIVE PRACTICE (9 credits)

Course	Course Title	Credits	Semester	Grade	Notes
DAC 540	Dance Making I: Resources	3			
DAC 541	Dance Making II: Workshop	3			
DAC 542	Dance Making III: Collaboration	3			
Total		9			

HISTORY, RESEARCH, & THEORY (12 credits)

Course	Course Title	Credits	Semester	Grade	Notes
DAC 513	Graduate Professionalization Seminar	3			
TH 610	Performance Research	3			
DAC 530	Political and Cultural Approaches to Dance	3			
DAC 582	Embodied Research and Creative Process	3			
Total		12			

APPLIED ANATOMY & THEORIES OF THE BODY (3 credits) *Students choose one of the following DAC 515: Mind-Body Integration; DAC 532: Anatomy/Kinesiology for Dancers; DAC 550: Graduate Laban/Bartenieff Movement Analysis*

Course	Course Title	Credits	Semester	Grade	Notes
Total		3			

ELECTIVES (12 credits) *At least 5 credits must be outside of Dance.*

Course	Course Title	Credits	Semester	Grade	Notes
Total		12			

TEACHING (5 credits) *Non-supported MFAs take DAC 606: Supervised Teaching for a minimum of 2 credits (1 credits each time); Supported MFAs take DAC 554: Dance Pedagogy in Higher Education (3 cr.) and an additional 2 cr. of dance electives*

Course	Course Title	Credits	Semester	Grade	Notes
DAC 606	Dance Teaching Seminar	1			
DAC 606	Dance Teaching Seminar	1			
DAC 554	Dance Pedagogy in Higher Education	3			
Total		5			

THESIS PROJECT (9 credits)

Course	Course Title	Credits	Semester	Grade	Notes
DAC 602	MFA Thesis Project	3			
DAC 602	MFA Thesis Project	6			

Total					

	TOTAL CREDITS				
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ADVISEMENT CHECKLIST

	Dept. Rec'd	Dept. Approved	Graduate School Sent	Graduate School Approved	Notes
Signed Acceptance Letter					
Signed TA Offer Letter					
Official Transcripts Received					
Initial Advising					
1 st Semester Registration					
1 st Semester Advising					
2 nd Semester Registration					
2 nd Semester Advising					
Written Comprehensive Exam 1					
Year 1 Review					
3 rd Semester Registration					
3 rd Semester Advising					
4 th Semester Registration					
4 th Semester Advising					
Written Comprehensive Exam 2					
Year 2 Review					

DCA					
5 th Semester Registration					
5 th Semester Advising					
6 th Semester Registration					
6 th Semester Advising					
Written Comprehensive Exam 3					
Year 3 Review					
Thesis Concert					
Exit Survey					
ADVISING NOTES					
Date					

APPENDIX B.

WRITTEN AND ORAL DEFENSE SCHEDULE

[View Year 1 and Year 2 Exam Rubric](#)

Year 1: Exam Question #1

Students choose one of the following questions to answer:

Question #1: Which theories of embodiment/movement/culture are impacting how you see your artistic practice and research? How?

Question #2: How is your work or creative process informed by and responding to a specific practice tradition in contemporary dancemaking? Which communities, companies, and/or artists are leading practitioners of a specific practice trend/tradition, and how is your work entering their conversation?

Timeline:

Students select their question during their second semester, prior to Spring Break. Please be in conversation with your advisor about which question you wish to answer, and inform the Director of Graduate Studies.

Finished paper due dates change each spring and are mid-April.

Students will receive assessment no later than two weeks after the exam deadline.

If a student is required to rewrite their exam, the rewrite is due 1 week after receiving assessment, and final assessment will be provided within 1 week after receipt of the rewrite.

Guidelines:

Students will generate a minimum of 10 pages of original writing in response to the question.

Answer will be written at home. The use of outside sources is expected.

Format:

10 page minimum (not including cover page and works cited); 12pt Times New Roman font; double spaced; 1-inch margins with page numbers.

Citations:

Citation within the text will be footnotes in MLA style.

Complete "Works Cited" in MLA format, must be attached.

Assessment:

Exam Question #1 will be graded by the student's initial advisor and one other graduate faculty member. A third grader will be used in the event the student receives one pass and one fail.

Three outcomes are possible*:

- **Passing:** No further action is necessary.
- **Revisions needed:** The student will have one opportunity to address the committee's concerns as per terms set by the committee. If corrections are accepted, the exam will be considered successfully completed. If corrections do not satisfy the committee, the exam will be designated as failed.
- **Failure:** In cases of exam failure, students will have one opportunity to retake exams. Upon a second failed exam, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Students will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Depth of inquiry—how well student answered the question
- Clarity of writing—how well the paper is crafted
- Standard use of grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.

*Students who violate standards of academic integrity are not entitled to a second examination opportunity.

Year 2: Exam Question #2

Timeline:

By March 1st, the thesis advisor in consultation with the student will formulate 3 questions, one in each category specific to the interest of the student: a) seminars, b) choreographic works presented, and c) pedagogical influences and experiences. Students will receive one of the three questions as selected by their advisor.

Students will receive the question by email from the Graduate Administrator at 8am on the Monday of Spring Break.

Finished paper is due in electronic form to the Graduate Administrator by 5pm on the Friday of the week classes resume.

Students will receive assessment no later than two weeks after the exam deadline.

If a student is required to rewrite their exam, the rewrite is due 1 week after receiving assessment, and final assessment will be provided within 1 week of receipt of the rewrite.

Guidelines:

Students will generate 8-10 pages of original writing in response to the question. Answer will be written at home. The use of outside sources is expected.

Format:

10 pages (not including cover and works cited); 12pt Times New Roman font; double spaced; 1-inch margins with page numbers.

Citations:

Citation within the text will be footnotes in MLA style.

Complete "Works Cited" in MLA format, must be attached.

Grading:

Exam Question #2 will be graded by the student's thesis advisor and one other graduate faculty member. A third reader will be used in the event the student receives one passing and one failing grade.

Three outcomes are possible*:

- **Passing:** No further action is necessary.
- **Revisions needed:** The student will have one opportunity to address the committee's concerns as per terms set by the committee. If corrections are accepted, the exam will be considered successfully completed. If corrections do not satisfy the committee, the exam will be designated as failed.
- **Failure:** In cases of exam failure, students will have one opportunity to retake exams. Upon a second failed exam, the student will be dismissed from the program.

Students will be assessed based on the following criteria:

- Depth of inquiry—how well student answered the question
- Clarity of writing—how well the paper is crafted
- Standard use of grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.

*Students who violate standards of academic integrity are not entitled to a second examination opportunity.

[View MFA Thesis Rubric](#)

Year 3: Oral Defense

Students are responsible for scheduling their oral defenses based on committee availability and are encouraged to schedule them for no later than the first week of May. Please schedule your defense by March 1st to ensure committee availability. Thesis documentation is due to the committee no later than one week before the defense. Students may invite whomever they choose to attend the defense, and defenses are open to the department.

APPENDIX C.

DANCE PERFORMANCE and CHOREOGRAPHY POLICIES 2024-2025

PERFORMANCE POLICIES

- Zodiaque will consist of primarily undergraduate performers.
- Graduate students can perform as guests in Fall/Spring Zodiaque concerts on a case-by-case basis (through audition or faculty invitation)
- ChoreoLab performers may be undergraduate or graduate students.
- ChoreoLab performers may include faculty/guests on a case-by-case basis.
- ECS performers may be undergraduate or graduate students.
- MFA Fall Showcase and MFA Thesis concert performers may be undergraduate or graduate students.
- Graduate performers are eligible to be cast in graduate, faculty or guest work.

FALL

Student	Zodiaque	ECS	MFA Showcase	MFA Thesis	ChoreoLab
First Years	n/a	1 role -performer	1 role – performer	1 role – performer	2 roles – performer
Undergrad ZDC	Assigned by ZDC Director	1 role – choreographer OR 1 role - performer	1 role – performer	1 role – performer By permission of ZDC Director	1 role – choreographer OR 1 role - performer*
Undergrad Major – Soph/Jr/Seniors not in ZDC	n/a	Up to 2 roles as performer OR 1 role as choreographer AND 1 role as performer	1 role - performer	1 role - performer	Up to 3 roles as performer OR 1 role as choreographer AND up to 2 roles as performer
Undergrad Minors	n/a	1 role – performer	1 role - performer	1 role - performer	1 role – performer

MFA	By Invitation of ZDC Director	By invitation of choreographer			
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SPRING

Student	Zodiaque	ChoreoLab	MFA Thesis
First Years	n/a	2 roles – performer	1 role – performer continuing from fall
Undergrad ZDC	Assigned by ZDC Director	1 role – choreographer OR 1 role - performer*	1 role – performer By permission of ZDC Director, continuing from fall
Undergrad Major – Soph/Jr/Seniors not in ZDC	n/a	Up to 3 roles as performer OR 1 role as choreographer AND up to 2 roles as performer	1 role – performer Continuing from fall
Undergrad Minors	n/a	1 role – performer	1 role – performer, continuing from fall
MFA	By Invitation of ZDC Director	By invitation of Choreographer	By invitation of Choreographer

* Returning ZDC dancers and ZDC seniors can request to accept one additional performance or choreographic role in the MFA Thesis concert or ChoreoLab (not ECS). This request is discussed during after concert meetings and may result in changes in number of Zodiaque roles for that semester.

CHOREOGRAPHY POLICIES

Zodiaque (Fall and Spring)

- Choreographers will primarily consist of faculty and guests.
- Current UB MFA students may be invited by the director to choreograph for Zodiaque.

- Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Director

Emerging Choreographers Showcase (Fall)

- Emerging Choreographers Showcase will consist primarily of undergraduate choreographers, but may include up to 20 minutes of graduate choreography.
- ECS casting will be done by student choreographers in consultation with the ECS director.
- Undergraduate Student choreographers must have taken Choreography 1 or be currently enrolled in Choreography 1. Choreography 2 is strongly suggested.

ChoreoLab (Spring)

- ChoreoLab will consist of undergraduate, graduate, faculty and guest choreographers.
- ChoreoLab casting will be done by the choreographers of ChoreoLab in consultation with the director.

MFA Concerts (Fall and Spring)

- Casting for MFA concerts will be done by choreographers in consultation with faculty.
- All MFA students can choreograph in the MFA Fall Showcase.

* Departmental concerts include Zodiaque Dance Company, Emerging Choreographers Showcase, ChoreoLab and MFA concerts.

Rehearsal Notes:

MFA Thesis choreographers can have 4-6 hours of rehearsal per week.

MFA Thesis works may rehearse with undergraduate dance majors a maximum of 20 hours/semester.

MFA FALL SHOWCASE AND THESIS CONCERT POLICIES

Credit

- For MFA Fall Showcase: MFA choreographers and performers can register for one credit of DAC545 (Choreography) or DAC543 (Performance) under their advisor (with the exception of choreographers of thesis work, who are enrolled in thesis credits). MFA students are not required to register if they do not plan to receive credit and can participate in the MFA Fall Showcase at will.
- For the MFA Thesis Concert, MFA choreographers receive thesis credits and MFA performers wishing to receive credit register for one credit of DAC543 with the concert director. MFA performers are not required to register if they do not plan to receive credit and can participate in the MFA Thesis Concert at will.

Department Support

- The department will provide a house manager
- The department will provide one technician for tech and the run.
- The rep plot will be focused and available for basic light cues. All lighting design must work within the rep plot parameters.

Student Roles/Responsibilities

- All MFA's can choreograph for the Fall Showcase.
- All MFA's are eligible to perform in both the Fall Showcase and Spring Thesis.
- MFA's will determine their own casting following the UB Dance PERFORMANCE AND CHOREOGRAPHY POLICIES.
- 3rd year MFAs will share leadership of the MFA Fall Showcase, under the mentorship a faculty member.
- MFA's are responsible for lighting design and stage management and/or for hiring/securing a lighting designer and stage manager. (SM/LD will not be provided by usual department channels.) Please coordinate with the department's current Production Manager.
- MFA's are responsible for ticketing/ushering. Volunteers need to be arranged by the faculty supervisor or the named student lead.
- All MFA students can make work for department venues regardless of their funding status.