

# DANCE, MFA

The Master's of Fine Arts (MFA) degree in Dance at the University of Alabama will develop students' creative, performance, and scholarly work and prepare them for multiple professional destinations as dance artists, scholars, and teachers. The Dance (MFA) degree program will support the development of diverse skills in classical and contemporary dance techniques, dance pedagogy, historical perspectives and critical theory, as well as technical and artistic integration of dance-specific technologies.

## Admissions

**An audition and interview** is required for all MFA applicants. Acceptance into the Department of Theatre and Dance (MFA) program requires admission to the UA Graduate School as well as admission to the department. The audition will include movement classes to demonstrate technical and performance proficiency. Each prospective MFA student will be scheduled for a 20-30 minute individual interview with members of the faculty during the audition process. Applicants will open the interview with a brief presentation that highlights their interests in graduate work at UA and outlines possible areas of emphasis.

**Statement of Purpose:** Compose a narrative, relating research and movement practice interests to pursuing a degree within the UA program. The essay should situate candidates within the field at the present time, gathering significant details of candidates' previous experience, clarifying their current involvement and interest in dance, and speculating about their future intentions within the field. Reviewers are interested in getting to know something about candidates as dance professionals through this writing: what have you done that has led you here, how do you articulate your aesthetic sensibility, what do you hope to accomplish in your studies?

**Curriculum Vitae:** This document should accurately reflect candidates' completed educational background and all of their professional and related experiences to date. The document should be thorough and comprehensive.

**Work Sample(s):** List Vimeo, YouTube or similar resources as hyperlinks in a Word or PDF attachment. These samples should demonstrate candidates' expertise and interests, such as excerpts of choreography, documentation of performances, samples of lighting plots, dance notation, or dance media projects. All materials must be accompanied by a clearly written legend identifying the contents, including title, order of materials, date and explicit identification of your contribution. Film clips may be edited or unedited and there is no time limit.

**Writing Sample:** The Dance Faculty will review writing samples to determine applicants' potential research and creative interests and to assess their competency as writers. Candidates will submit a substantive piece of writing, one that demonstrates their thoughtfulness and capacity to handle language with fluency. This writing submission must be at least 4 pages double-spaced but no more than 20 pages; this might take the form of a critical review, process paper, or scholarly essay.

**At least three letters of recommendation** must be submitted. Letters should speak to candidates' artistic and academic strengths. At least two letters should be from someone at an academic institution (past or present) who can speak to these strengths, even if previous academic work was not in Dance.

**GRE scores are not required.**

See the Admission Criteria section of this catalog for more information.

## Curricular Requirements

Over the course of three years, students will complete a minimum of 60 credit hours in a range of dance studies courses. Students are expected to complete their coursework on the Tuscaloosa campus where faculty may nurture and support their progress through the curriculum. Students will also complete and present a substantial MFA Capstone Project demonstrating a synthesis of craft, artistic vision, and conceptual rigor, as well as professional competence in their selected research area. The Capstone Project is based on creative work, a choreographic/creative project usually presented in a concert, accompanied by a scholarly paper and an oral defense of the project and paper.

Code and Title	Hours
<b>STUDIO/CREATIVE/PERFORMANCE (39 credits) Students will choose from the following options, up to 39 credit hours, 6 of which will include DN 540 and DN 541, and 3 of which will include DN 595 toward the Capstone project.</b>	<b>39</b>
Credit Hours Subtotal:	39
DN 511 Contemporary Tech I-A	
DN 512 Contemporary Tech I-B	
DN 521 Graduate Ballet Technique I-A	
DN 522 Graduate Ballet Technique I-B	
DN 551 Graduate Jazz Technique I-A	
DN 552 Graduate Jazz Technique I-B	
DN 611 Contemporary Tech II-A	
DN 612 Contemporary Tech II-B	
DN 621 Graduate Ballet Technique II-A	
DN 622 Graduate Ballet Technique II-B	
DN 651 Graduate Jazz Technique II-A	
DN 652 Graduate Jazz Technique II-B	
DN 631 Graduate Movement Practice II	
DN 540 Improv and Comp I	
DN 541 Improv and Comp II	
DN 505 Graduate Teaching Practicum	
DN 531 Graduate Movement Practice I	
DN 535 Rhythm, Music and Dance	
DN 640 Collaborative Practice	
DN 650 Creative Process in Dance I	
DN 670 Dance in the Digital Age	
DN 680 Laban/Bartenieff Studies	
DN 500 Performance Practicum I-A	
DN 501 Performance Practicum I-B	
DN 600 Performance Practicum II-A	
DN 601 Performance Practicum II-B	
DN 602 Staging Repertoire	
DN 655 Creative Process in Dance II	
DN 595 Capstone Creative Research	
<b>ACADEMIC (15 credits) Students will choose from the following options, up to 15 credit hours, 3 of which will include either DNCA 503 OR DNCA 565 during the first year, 3 of which will include DNCA 570, and 3 of which will include DNCA 595 toward the Capstone project.</b>	<b>15</b>

	Credit Hours Subtotal:	15
DNCA 503 Graduate Teaching Methods		
DNCA 565 Science of Dance Training		
DNCA 570 Research Methods in Dance		
DNCA 630 Professional Issues in Dance		
DNCA 660 Body Politics in Dance		
DNCA 595 Capstone Scholarly Research		
<b>ELECTIVES (6 credits) Students will choose 6 credits of electives based on their research focus. Courses may be within the dance degree or without.</b>		<b>6</b>
	Credit Hours Subtotal:	6
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>60</b>

## Transfer Credit

Subject to approval by the department chairperson and the dean of the Graduate School, a maximum of 15 semester hours of graduate work may be transferred from another institution. These hours must be in dance or in a closely allied subject, and they must contribute to the student's educational objective.

Graduate School information on Transfer Credit.

## Comprehensive Exam/Capstone

Students will follow the Plan II Program Requirements, as described by the Graduate School, to complete the degree. A final "culminating" or "capstone" experience for a degree is required of all University of Alabama candidates for the master's degree. In the culminating experience, students are expected to integrate prior learning and demonstrate mastery in their field of study. This will take form through the following three required components:

- A choreographic/creative project, presented at a public performance or exhibition
- A contextualizing process and research paper
- An oral defense of the project and paper

By the end of the third semester of the degree program, a written proposal for the Capstone project must be presented to the graduate dance faculty as part of the semester review. The faculty will evaluate the feasibility and innovation of the proposal as well as how the project will further the field of dance. Faculty can either approve the project as proposed or suggest revisions. Students will receive considered advice from faculty, however, the responsibility of articulating an idea and completing the proposed work in a fashion acceptable to the faculty rests with the student.

All students are required to take 3 credit hours of DN 595 Capstone Creative Research which focuses on the creative elements of the project. The course is centered around movement, rehearsal, and creative work building up to regular showings and faculty feedback toward the final creative product showing. Students are also required to take 3 credit hours of DNCA 595 Capstone Scholarly Research in which they will implement the research plan for their MFA Capstone Project focusing more on the scholarly research. The process may include research, reading, writing, interviews, viewings, and working with digital media. This course is designed for the implementation of the MFA Capstone Project research plan leading up to the final written document and oral defense. Students will take 1 credit each of DN 595 and DNCA 595 in their final three semesters of the program. The creative project should be presented at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> semester or the beginning of the 6th semester. The final paper submission and oral defense will occur in the middle of the

6th semester. This process may shift dependent upon recommendations from the student's Capstone Committee.

The written project must be submitted to the committee at least two weeks before the oral defense date which should be scheduled no later than the first week of April. Students' projects and papers must be submitted to their committee Chair in appropriate digital formats. The most preferred format for the final paper is a Portable Document File (PDF). The most preferred format for the creative project is .mov file or a weblink to the work on Vimeo or in UABox. The contents of the files should be appropriately organized as if for publication. The Capstone committee will review student materials and progress throughout the process to ensure that the final product submitted is acceptable. The Capstone committee will determine the grade assignment for DN 595 and DNCA 595, as well as whether the student passes the oral defense of their project and paper. The graduate advisor will store the work in a digital repository for Dance MFA Capstone Projects for Department archival purposes.

## Timelines for Degree Completion Requirements

Graduate School Information on Time Limits.

## Student Progress Requirement

The Dance Program will hold reviews at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> semesters for each MFA candidate. Students in their final year are reviewed through the Capstone Project process. The review is designed to give graduate students an idea of their progress toward the successful completion of their degree program, identify strengths and weaknesses, document areas of professional and personal development, and evaluate assistantship duties (as applicable).

Faculty will provide numerical scores from 1 (unacceptable) to 4 (exceeds expectations) on academic progress, work ethic, professional development, and assistantship duties (as applicable), as well as provide narrative commentary to support the scores. For scores of 2 or 1 in any given area, a student may be placed on probation and a specific plan for improvements will be included to implement in the following semester. Should students not be able to implement the necessary improvements by their next review, continuing to earn a score of 2 or 1, they may be dismissed from the program.

Two weeks before their review, students must complete a self-assessment of their skills and progress in response to the Department Self-Reflection instructions to submit to the Graduate Director. Before the review meeting, the faculty will submit the completed assessment to the student with the scores and written comments, so the conversation can be more focused during the meeting. In addition to the verbal conversation, students may add additional comments to the written review before signing. Signed and completed reviews will be stored digitally by the Department for archival purposes.

## Academic Misconduct Information

Graduate School information on Academic Misconduct.

## Withdrawals and Leaves of Absence Information

Graduate School information on Withdrawals and Leaves of Absence.

## Academic Grievances Information

Graduate School information on Academic Grievances.

## Grades and Academic Standing

Graduate School information on Grades and Academic Standing.

## Graduate School Deadlines Information

Information on Graduate School Deadlines.

## Application for Graduation Information

Information on the Application for Graduation.

Based on students' experience and expertise, select graduate candidates are eligible for assistantships which are applied toward tuition, course fees, and health insurance, and provide a stipend. Students may be considered for a .25 assistantship, which covers half of the tuition, course fees, and insurance costs with a stipend and requires an average of 10 hours per week of work for the program, or a .5 assistantship, which covers full tuition, course fees, and insurance costs and provides a larger stipend while requiring an average of 20 hours per week of work for the program. Assistantship work is above and beyond a student's normal academic load and assignments for their degree program. MFA candidates on assistantship typically serve as TAs for professors, assist with program needs, or teach courses for undergraduate students based on their areas of expertise.

Graduates with funding are evaluated on a semesterly basis. Faculty will provide numerical scores from 1 (unacceptable) to 4 (exceeds expectations) on a review of students' performance of assistantship duties, as well as provide narrative commentary to support the scores. For scores of 2 or 1 in any given area, a student may be placed on probation and a specific plan for improvements will be included to implement in the following semester. Should students not be able to implement the necessary improvements by their next review, continuing to earn a score of 2 or 1, they may lose their funding. Please note that a loss in funding does not equal dismissal from the MFA program for students in good academic standing and who have not been found to have committed misconduct worthy of dismissal.