

Introduction to Masters in Fine Arts, Dance

Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University

Introduction

Welcome to the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University Rutgers University! This handbook will serve as a useful guide for you throughout the years of study and training within the dance department. It addresses expectations for graduate students as an MFA student and candidate, and informs them of departmental policies. PLEASE **read carefully** and keep this information to refer to when necessary.

A Brief History of Rutgers University

Chartered in 1766 as Queen's College, Rutgers is the nation's eighth oldest institution of higher learning and has a centuries-old tradition of rising to the challenges of each new generation. Soon after opening in New Brunswick in 1771—with one instructor and a handful of students—the college was caught up in the struggle for independence. During the war, classes were suspended on several occasions as students, faculty, and alumni joined the fight for freedom. That revolutionary legacy is preserved today in the university's name—in 1825, Queen's College became Rutgers College to honor trustee and Revolutionary War Veteran Colonel Henry Rutgers.

History of the Department of Dance – Founded in 1981

Courses in dance at Rutgers began in the 1920s in The Department of Health and Physical Education at Douglass College. In those days, Douglass had its own admissions standards, faculty, and curricula. Even though the college matriculated only women, students from other divisions of the university could take Douglass College courses.

Faculty interested in dance in the early days were primarily physical educators who supplemented their dance training through study at the American Dance Festival's summer workshops with such modern dance pioneers as Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Charles Weidman, Hanya Holm, and José Limón among others.

In 1963, Dr. Margery Turner joined the department with expertise in both swimming and dance. Determined to offer a dance major at Rutgers, she systematically developed a curriculum similar to a Bachelor of Arts degree that students could elect to take beyond the dance courses that students frequently took to fulfill the schools' two-year physical education graduation requirement. With a few additional courses, this later became the original Bachelor of Arts dance program at Rutgers.

Patricia Mayer became part of the faculty in 1970. As a child, she had been a student of the nationally renowned dance educator Virginia Tanner in addition to receiving one of the first professional Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees offered by the Department of Modern Dance at the University of Utah. Professor Mayer later received the equivalent of the Masters of Fine Arts degree in Dance from the University of California at Los Angeles. She has the distinction of being the first professional dancer to receive tenure at Rutgers. Dr. Turner and Professor Mayer worked together to create the first college degree program in dance offered in New Jersey. The first student to receive a degree in dance from an institution of higher education in New Jersey did so from this program.

Over the next ten years, Dr. Turner and Professor Mayer worked together to design and build the infrastructure of the Bachelor of Fine Arts Dance major. In 1981, the Department of Dance was founded and the first class of Bachelor of Fine Arts students in dance was matriculated at the Mason Gross School of the Arts. This was the first Bachelor of Fine Arts degree program in New Jersey.

At that time, the new department was moved from the Loree Building to the newly constructed Nicholas Music Center. Dr. Turner served as the Department's first chair, followed by Professor Mayer. Professor Paulette Sears joined the Department of Dance as the first new faculty member hired for the new department in 1981. She served as chair from 1987-1993 and from 2007-2010. Professor Mayer served as chair for over twenty-years, the longest tenure as chair so far in the history of the department.

In 2006, Professor Mayer secured a prestigious Academic Excellence Grant from Rutgers University in support of the development of the first master's degree in dance within the State of New Jersey. Between 2007 and 2010, with support from Professor Mayer, Professor Julia M. Ritter collaborated with The Rutgers Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University administrators, The NJ State Department of Education, The National Dance Education Association and multiple regional educators and principals to create the graduate Ed.M. degree program with Teacher Certification in Dance Education. As the first graduate degree in dance offered in New Jersey it includes the five-year dual BFA + Ed.M. track that is the first of its kind in the nation. Dr. Barbara Bashaw joined The Department of Dance faculty in 2009 to serve as Director of the EdM program, and since that time has founded additional teacher training programs to serve the thriving New Jersey dance community.

Hired in 2003 as Assistant Professor of Dance Studies, Dr. Jeff Friedman was charged with conceptualizing and implementing a new MFA in Dance graduate degree. Over several years, Dr. Friedman generated vision, degree program goals, curriculum design, and numerous new courses to fulfill that charge. Through Dance Chair Julia M. Ritter, the new MFA degree in Dance achieved acknowledgement from Rutgers University administrators and the NJ State Department of Education. In 2015, the National Association of Schools of Dance accrediting agency awarded the new MFA degree in Dance Program Approval status, inaugurating its first cohort of MFA graduate students in Winter 2017. The new degree program will serve working dance professionals with a minimum of 5 years' experience in the field.

Other than Margery Turner, Patricia Mayer, and Paulette Sears, distinguished retired department faculty include Don Redlich and Claudia Gitelman

In 2011, the Department of Dance celebrated its 30th anniversary and continues to build upon the excellence of its founders by offering a diverse curriculum within several major and minor programs. Offering training in dance performance and dance education, the department expects outstanding creative achievement from its students. Students have the opportunity to explore artistry in a comprehensive educational environment.

The Department of Dance is Accredited by

**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS OF DANCE
11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Suite 21
Reston, Virginia 22090
Telephone: 703-437-0700**

Dance Department Administrative Structure

Dean, Mason Gross School of the Arts	George Stauffer, PhD
Associate Dean, Mason Gross School of the Arts	Lisa Baratta
Dean of Students, Mason Gross School of the Arts	Mandy Feiler
Chair and Artistic Director	Julia Ritter, PhD
Vice-Chair, Dance Department	Keith Thompson, MFA
Production Coordinator, Dance	John Evans, MFA
Graduate Director, MFA degree	Jeff Friedman, PhD, CMA
Interim Graduate Director, EdM in Dance Education	Frederick Curry, MA, CMA
Department Administrator	John Gallagher, MPA
Undergraduate Coordinator	Elaine Chu, MA
Graduate Administrative Assistant	Colleen H. Klein, MA
Department Administrative Assistant	Debra Farruggia, MBA
Department Administrative Assistant, Recruitment	Syde Orange

Undergraduate Degrees Offered

In addition to service courses for the general student population, the department offers the following undergraduate programs of study:

- BFA in Dance
- BA in Dance
- Minor in Dance
- BFA/EdM, 5-year program

Graduate Degrees Offered

The department offers the following graduate programs of study:

EdM in Dance Education

The EdM Dance Education program community realizes how important it is for students to continue their artistic pursuits. This is because we understand artistry and teaching as symbiotic by nature. The individual's own evolving artistic knowledge is the foundation from which we encourage the development of a dance teaching practice as a new channel of artistic inquiry. Grappling with how to transform artistic knowledge into meaningful learning experiences for others is what is at the heart of graduate study in our program.

Enriched by a unique partnership between the [Graduate School of Education](#), New Jersey's premier college conservatory, [Mason Gross School of the Arts](#), and partnerships with schools and professional agencies, the Dance Education Program is a nationally accredited degree program and a model of excellence for the preparation of dance educators. Students finish the program with a solid education degree, a teaching portfolio, the option for K-12 dance teacher certification and multiple career options or advancement within dance and the education field.

Conferred by the highly ranked Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University, the EdM dance degree in Dance Education offers three tracks towards completion:

BFA/EdM, 5-year program This track is a unique 5-year program that combines the undergraduate BFA degree in dance with coursework in the School of Education, beginning in the Junior and Senior undergraduate years. The 5th year is an internship placement and culminates in a final portfolio presentation. Graduating Ed.M. students are certified in 36 states, including New Jersey and New York.

Post-Bacc with Certification This track is designed for individuals who possess a baccalaureate degree and who wish to pursue PK-12 dance teacher certification and a master's degree in education at the same time. Certificates are recommended only in conjunction with the completion of the requirements for the EdM degree.

Straight Masters This track is for the professional dance educator who has already obtained an undergraduate degree in dance from an accredited university and has already obtained K-12 teacher certification in New Jersey or another state. Valid K-12 teacher certification is required for the non-certification track and may include the New Jersey Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Standing (CEAS) and New Jersey Standard certificate as well as New York Initial and Professional certificates or other comparable certification from other states.

Degree-granting unit: Rutgers University Graduate School of Education

NOTE: The EdM degree is based on an Academic Year schedule.

Master of Fine Arts, Dance (MFA)

Overview/Purpose

The MFA in dance degree is a terminal degree in dance serving working dance artists with a minimum of five years' experience in the field who want to expand their range by integrating a variety of new artistic and dance studies fields. Students engage with advanced technical training in a variety of movement methods, including contemporary, classical, and somatic practices, and apply those skills in staged performances. Students also engage in a rigorous sequence of creative; dance studies; critical pedagogy; professional practice, leadership, and advocacy; and elective coursework that fully informs returning students toward future engagement in the dance field as working professionals and potential faculty in higher education.

Guided by the belief that dance is a fundamental embodied practice for understanding the human condition in a globalized context, the degree establishes students as creatively literate world citizens who can develop interdisciplinary solutions to address complex contemporary issues. The rigorous 60-credit curriculum is led by graduate dance faculty who model excellence in interdisciplinary research.

Degree Program goals include developing and enhancing the pedagogical, scholarly and artistic knowledge of candidates within an integrated curriculum, preparing them to obtain positions in higher education and in dance and other professional fields, while maintaining and expanding their creative research, especially investigating interdisciplinary modes of movement-based inquiry. Please refer to the degree program goals listed below:

MFA Degree Program Goals

The six-degree program goals below detail departmental expectations for graduate-level scholastic growth in the areas of performance, creativity, dance studies, pedagogy, cross- and interdisciplinary research, and leadership in the field.

Performance

- Refine conservatory training in contemporary, classical, world dance and somatics to cultivate greater interpretive skills for professional artistic presentation as well as train toward an advanced level of pedagogical demonstration.
- Develop multiple performance opportunities including, independent, faculty, and globally-based guest artist works and opportunities as interpreters for choreographic thesis projects.

Creativity

- Acquire comprehensive skills in improvisational and choreographic strategies to strengthen advanced choice-making in the creative process and research.
- Develop a praxis of integrated theoretical frameworks and studio projects that develop a range of cross- and interdisciplinary creative processes and research methods.

Dance Studies

- Build firm scaffolding of critical thinking and writing skills through theoretical coursework.
- Establish a comprehensive range of dance studies competencies including philosophy, aesthetics, history, and technology as they intersect with creativity and performance.

Pedagogy

- Develop and refine a knowledge and understanding of critical dance pedagogy that becomes the foundation for excellence in transformative teaching.
- Acquire advanced competency in creating course materials such as syllabi and multiple forms for assessment and measurement supporting pedagogical accountability and reinforcing student self-management and regulation in the classroom.
- Apply historical, cultural, and critical pedagogical frameworks to teaching in-studio technique, performance, and creative practices as well as academic coursework.

Cross- and Interdisciplinary Creative Research

- Understand and value both cross- and interdisciplinary modes of research that integrate dance with other artistic, humanities, and/or science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields.
- Develop and refine theoretical and artistic vocabularies and methods for advanced creative process and research in cross- and interdisciplinary artistic works.
- Create a final thesis project that fulfills a mature artistic vision for cutting-edge cross- and interdisciplinary creative work.

Leadership in the Field

- Acquire advanced communication skills through a firm foundation of assignments and personal assessments that require both oral and written components.
- Develop advanced technological literacy through coursework to support transformative teaching and research excellence in chosen areas of study.
- Understand the scope of dance as a field with multiple pathways to success toward entering the professional field ready to lead and advocate for a clear set of dance values and beliefs.

The Dance Department recognizes the importance of benefiting the field as a whole by preparing MFA candidates in higher education fields of teaching, research and service, while contributing highly-informed artist/scholars to the contemporary field of interdisciplinary movement-based creative research.

Degree-granting unit Mason Gross School of the Arts

Relationship of program to the general dance field

We are committed to the National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD) standards of a 60-credit minimum, two-year program supporting multiple goals of pedagogical, scholarly and artistic training and research. Rutgers' MFA Coursework is scheduled to allow for one or two days off per week, enabling students to continue pursuing professional commitments in the field. Required program credits are concentrated in the first year of study, including 2 summer sessions and 1 winter session, to achieve degree candidacy. During the 2nd year MFA candidates pursue thesis research and production preparations, selecting from part-time on-campus and off-campus options, as discussed with the program director.

Due to the unique abilities and research interests of the Graduate Faculty in Dance, the creative process and research curriculum has a substantial focus on cutting-edge cross- and interdisciplinary creativity. Please refer to individual faculty for specific creative and academic research interests. [MGSA Dance Faculty](#)

The degree program provides substantial pedagogical training with a four course sequence including Dance in Higher Education, Pedagogy for On-line Dance Education, Graduate Colloquium 1: Pedagogy and Assessment and Measurement for Dance in Higher Education. Based on prior teaching experience and pedagogy training, MFA students will be assigned undergraduate courses in both dance studio and academics, including both face-to-face and on-line course teaching opportunities. Graduating MFA students will be thoroughly prepared with a substantial theoretical, methodological and practical base for teaching in higher education.

Because of the breadth and depth of opportunities offered throughout the entire University's curricula, graduate students have options for developing special interests in a variety of elective coursework. For example, Special Topics courses in, Dance Practice, Dance Somatics, Dance Technology and Dance Studies will be available on a rotating basis each semester. Additional elective courses are available, pending eligibility and availability, throughout Mason Gross School of the Arts Theater, Music and Visual Arts department courses. Additional electives from throughout the university's humanities and S.T.E.M. areas are also available, pending eligibility and availability.

Certification in Vinyasa Yoga and Polestar Pilates is also available.

Curriculum

The MFA program is a 60 credit two-year residency program. Eligibility for admission is based on a minimum of five years creative and/or interpretive work in the professional field of choreography and/or performance. The degree is fashioned to prepare students for entering both higher education and the professional field with substantial training in performance, choreography, pedagogy and theory. The curriculum has an emphasis on cross- and interdisciplinary creativity, allowing students to pursue multiple skill sets in a variety of creative, humanities and S.T.E.M. fields, culminating in a final creative thesis project.

Designation of Academic Year

Academic Year 1 (AY1)

- Summer Session
- Fall Semester
- Winter Session
- Spring Semester

Academic Year 2 (AY2)

- Summer Session
- Fall Semester includes Thesis Research
- Spring Semester includes Thesis Defense

CURRICULAR STRUCTURE Total credits required and credit distribution

- 60 total credits required
- 34 Studio Studies credits required
- 16 Academic Studies credits required
- 10 Elective credits required
- **Concentrations/specializations**
 - Within Studio Studies: Creative, Performance, Somatics, Production
 - Within Academic: Dance Studies, Pedagogy and Professional Practice
 - Within Electives: Dance Practice/Somatics/Technology/Studies, with additional options in Theater, Visual Arts, Music; Humanities and S.T.E.M. fields

The MFA operates as a continuous enrollment full time residency program. Winter Session in AY2 may also be selected for elective on the approved Praxis Plan for elective credit.

ACADEMIC YEAR 1 (AY1)	MATRICULATION Summer Session	Fall semester	Winter Session	Spring Semester
ACADEMIC YEAR 2 (AY2)	Summer Session ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY; END RESIDENCY REQUIREMENT	Fall semester Thesis Research plus other requirements	Spring semester March-May Thesis Production/ Presentation Defense plus other requirements GRADUATION	

In the case of a purely media production (such as screen dance events or other options), alternative sites from Rutgers University, Douglass campus must be described in detail through the completed thesis proposal by the last business day of June, prior to Academic Year 2.

Teaching and Part Time Lecture Appointments

Teaching development is a primary goal of the MFA degree program. To accomplish this goal, pedagogical theory, method and practical knowledge are provided through a four-course pedagogy sequence, required for the completion of the proposed MFA degree.

These courses include:

- 1) Assessment for Dance in Higher Education
- 2) Dance in Higher Education,
- 3) Graduate Colloquium 1: Pedagogy
- 4) Pedagogy for On-line Dance Education

In addition to course-work, MFA graduate students will be appointed to Part-time Lecturer positions as opportunities for applying pedagogical theory and method in practice:

- Academic Year 1 (Fall or Spring semesters): Upon successful completion of Dance in Higher Education course, each graduate student is appointed to a PTL position as Teacher of Record in a course assigned from the undergraduate studio dance curriculum.
- Academic Year 2 (Fall or Spring Semesters): After successful completion of On-line Pedagogy for Dance Education, during Fall or Spring semesters, each graduate student is appointed to one online academic course and one face-to-face studio course PTL position, as available. NOTE: Assignments to specific courses are made according to skills and teaching experience.
- In addition, as a requirement of any PTL appointments, graduate students must attend and successfully complete the Graduate Colloquium 1: Pedagogy course, facilitated by a full-time faculty member in the Dance Education area. This seminar provides opportunities for presentation, shared discussion, and problem-solving of teaching and pedagogy issues arising during practical application in the classroom.

Students who have departmental teaching responsibilities must honor their professional obligations as instructors. Otherwise, their contracts will be revoked. It must be understood that, in teaching performance and academic dance studies, especially online and at beginning levels, where students cannot be expected to motivate and guide themselves effectively without direction, regular classes are of utmost importance. It is the instructor's responsibility to arrange a regular class schedule. It is especially important for the instructor to keep accurate records of how many classes each student attends, and to report any attendance problems promptly.

Degree Policies and Procedures

Time degree limits: MFA Students have a maximum of 5 years to complete their degrees. Extensions can be petitioned in writing to the Graduate Director and Dean of Students. With the approval of the Graduate Director and the Dean, the school might make an exception to this maximum time limit.

All students are urged to consider the educational and economic benefits of completing their programs quickly. Soon after being admitted to graduate study, each student should consult with a faculty adviser and work out a reasonable timetable for meeting the requirements. Part-time students should consult their program concerning expected times of completion. International students whose visa requires them to "make normal progress toward the degree at all times" will want to check with the [Center for Global Services](#) to determine if their visa permits an extension beyond the normal maximum time limits for their program.

Student Assessment

All graduate students receive course and performance rubrics for each course in which they enroll throughout the MFA program. Evaluation of classroom work process and product is provided through a variety of assessments, according to individual faculty of record's discretion.

Fall Academic Year 1, by the end of November, all MFA degree students are required to provide an artistic statement of goals developed over the initial one year of coursework and mentoring. This statement represents an aggregate of the student's artistic work in performance (technique and repertory), creative process (improvisation and choreography), somatics and pedagogy theory, method and practical competencies. Evaluation takes the form of an informal discussion with the Graduate Director during December of Fall semester, Academic Year 1.

During *Graduate Colloquium 2: Research* course, all MFA degree students will have developed and presented a formal Thesis Prospectus that states their specific goals and objectives towards completion of the final MFA thesis project (see requirements and timeline below). The completed 1st draft must include official forms with original signatures of both a Thesis Committee Chair and a Second Committee Member, both from within the Dance Department Graduate Faculty (see requirements below). A Third Thesis Committee's signature, if applicable, of agreement to participate from outside the Dance Department is also. A first draft of the Thesis Prospectus is due on the last Monday of March, Academic Year 1.

Any assessment that uncovers insufficient progress may result in suspension of enrollment in the MFA degree program curriculum until further consultation with Dance Dept. Faculty and the Graduate Director. Insufficient progress is defined generally as any single course grades below a B and a cumulative grade point average below 3.0. Students in these circumstances may be placed on probation or be asked to leave the program.

Matriculation

Students who must interrupt their studies may, with the approval of the Graduate Director, register for Matriculation Continued for a maximum of two semesters. (Students on temporary visas who interrupt their studies must in most cases leave the United States during such periods.) Matriculation Continued also is the proper registration when there is no other appropriate registration category for a student. For example, students who have completed their formal coursework and recitals and are preparing for comprehensive examinations would register for Matriculation Continued (08:703:800) for a maximum of two semesters. There is no tuition fee for this registration, although a student fee is charged. Once the limit of 2 matriculation continued has been reached, the student must register for one credit. Matriculation continued semesters count in the total time allowed for completion of the degree.

Academic Standing and Advisement

The criteria for meeting graduation requirements include both the accumulation of credits as stipulated by the university, and the student's growth and progress in the program. In order to assist the student, scheduling an appointment with the Graduate Program Director before the last day of the Fall semester and midterm Spring Semester is encouraged. All pertinent information discussed is submitted to the Graduate Administrative Assistant and the meeting updated within Rutgers Grad Portal.

Graduate Courses

Regular attendance is required in all graduate courses. An instructor may establish a specific policy on attendance at the beginning of the semester. Otherwise, the following guidelines normally apply: Requests for absence from a class because of professional obligations (for example, participation in a performance) will not normally be refused, provided that:

- The student notifies both the instructor and the Graduate Program Director well in advance, preferably at the start of the semester;
- The student submits a request for absence to the Graduate Program Director in writing, via e-mail with appropriate documentation (when participating in outside events during the semester, the candidate should be sure that all programs and publicity make mention of the candidate's affiliation with the Rutgers Department of Dance, Mason Gross School of the Arts.
 - A suitable agreement is worked out between student and instructor regarding material missed in the student's absence.

Upon return from outside engagements, copies of programs, certificates, or other official documentation should be submitted to the Director of the Graduate Performance Program.

Professional Leave of Absence Students may find that opportunities for professional work and engagements present themselves during their course of study at Rutgers University, particularly in Mason Gross School of the Arts. Within the Dance Department, we are committed to assisting students find the best pathways and trajectories into the professional world of dance including assisting them in deciding between the merits and potentiality of professional opportunities in conjunction with the requirements of their degree regulations. Students requesting leaves of absence for professional commitments need to be aware that their course of study may be interrupted such that their return to the program will require additional time and financial expense in completing the degree, including summer session, additional semesters and other obligations. That said, proposals for professional leaves of absence should be presented to the Graduate Director for review. They, in return, will discuss with the Chair as appropriate regarding the opportunity and how the leave will affect the student's progression through their university program.

When possible, students should contact the Graduate Director at least a month before the first day of classes. Students requesting a leave of absence once the semester is underway must contact the Office of Student Accounting to learn if any tuition refund is possible. It is the responsibility of students to handle their financial affairs regarding tuition and refunds.

Thesis Committee

The Thesis Committee consists of 2 members of the Dance Dept. Faculty and are selected in consultation with each MFA student and Faculty, based on prior understanding of the MFA students' interests and skill sets. NOTE: Thesis Committee Chair must be a member of the Dance Graduate Faculty. Second Committee Members may be faculty from outside the Dance Department; these may be drawn from identified Affiliate Faculty or other faculty. Any non-Dance Graduate Faculty Committee member must submit a formal notification to the MFA Graduate Director identifying themselves as potential Committee Members for a particular MFA candidate and stating their willingness to serve. For the purposes of submitting paperwork, the MFA candidate must identify their Thesis Committee Director by name, along with both additional Thesis Committee Members.

No committee members may be replaced, except for reasons of illness or leave of absence by one of the committee members. Therefore, it is important to clarify all proposed sabbatical and competitive grant leaves for all Thesis Committee members before submitting final paperwork for the Thesis Committee to the Graduate Secretary.

The Committee is committed to read, edit, and offer critical and constructive assistance for all components of the Thesis project, including thesis creative production, all final papers and the final multi-media presentation. Thesis Committee members are to whom the MFA candidate directs their thesis defense. Committee members are responsible for discussion and evaluation of final thesis materials. Early discussions with Committee members may include decisions about the type of creative works to be presented; site selections, depending on current status based on a degree check by the Graduate Program Assistant on credits completed and further credits required.

Thesis Prospectus

The Thesis Prospectus is meant to codify the initial research and production goals and objectives of each MFA student's thesis project. It is crucial to note that research, in this case, is defined as an integrated theoretical and practical "praxis" undertaking that includes both creative and scholarly inquiries. These inquiries should be devised to generate a "praxis" integration of foundational elements and understandings for the final thesis project. The final project includes the production of creative performance, in a selected format and site; a final Professional Paper that supports the creative project; and a final related Statement of Teaching Philosophy. Finally, all three of these elements should be represented in a final integrated web-based Portfolio

Required Elements:

The following elements are required for the Thesis Prospectus, in first draft form, due in typed 12-point black font, printed, paginated and stapled 8.5X11 pages, using 1" margin all-around format. Submit two identical print and digital versions, one each delivered to the Graduate Director and the *Colloquium 2: Research* instructor for their review. The draft Thesis Prospectus should include:

- Title Page for the combined Thesis Project that represents creative and scholarly elements of the project:
 - Includes title: "Draft Thesis Prospectus for 'MFA Student's full name'";
 - "Title of Thesis Project TBD," including all 3 elements of the Project
 - Due date of Thesis Prospectus

- Abstract Page(s): 500-word prose abstract naming and briefly describing the creative and scholarly elements that are the basis for the final Project, including defining the type of presentation proposed, site location for the Thesis Project, and brief statement of rationale for integration of additional subject disciplinary areas that denote cross-/interdisciplinary nature of proposed Thesis Project
- Two or more annotated Literature Reviews in subject discipline areas relevant to the proposed Thesis Project, in formal bibliographic/video graphic/webliography reference formats. All reviews must include:
 - A minimum of 10 relevant resources each, including
 - Print text resources
 - Video resources
 - Web resources
 - Other additional relevant sources, TBD, including interviews with human subjects
 - Include required Human Subjects proposal, for the scheduled IRB committee meeting
- A 5-page prose proposal for thesis research includes:
 - 3-pages of discussion of integrating creative and creative scholarly research for the proposed Thesis Project
 - Within the time requirement of maximum 30 minutes, the type of final presentation event(s) proposed, for example, but not limited to:
 - Concert dance (solo, group, suite of multiple types, etc.);
 - Installation;
 - Site-specific/site-sensitive work;
 - Dance and video/Screen dance, etc.);
 - Please include a brief justification for presentation type directly related to proposal abstract and literature reviews of additional subject discipline areas,
 - Proposed location of event(s), including:
 - Standard theaters such as on-campus Loree Dance Theater
 - Budget for off-site thesis project, based on prospectus
- 2-page “Work Plan” for *Thesis 1: Research* (Fall semester AY2) and *Thesis 2: Production* (Spring semester AY2), including:
 - Identify all performers of all types and other creative collaborators,
 - Plans to secure rehearsal site,
 - Proposed dates and locations of required interim showing(s) of creative work
 - Proposed dates of technical and dress rehearsals, and final Productions (2 required per MFA candidate)

All off-campus sites beyond New Brunswick requiring rental of space, equipment or other materials must be secured by the MFA student themselves. Please check all necessary permitting requirements

Advancement to Candidacy

All MFA students will formally present their Thesis Prospectus, as a typical 20-minute scholarly conference presentation including oral and technological formats, as needed as part of *Colloquium 2: Research* course during the month of April, AY1. A maximum 20-minute question and answer period will follow. All Thesis Committee members are required to attend the presentation, to provide feedback and evaluation of the Prospectus. Additional feedback is provided by the Graduate Director, designated instructor of *Colloquium 2*, Dance Department faculty, and other members of the MFA graduate student cohort. Requested revisions may be suggested.

Based on a comprehensive degree check by the Graduate Program Administrative Assistant, students who complete required coursework, and submission of a final revised Thesis Prospectus by the first Monday of June, AY1, including all required forms and signatures, advance to Candidacy upon receipt, review and acceptance of the final Thesis Prospectus.

Additional revisions of the Thesis Proposal may be requested by student's Committee Chair and/or MFA Graduate Director. A revised Thesis Proposal will be due by the last Monday of June, AY1, pending approval by the first Monday of July, AY1. Any further revisions, after this due date, will be taken under consideration by the Graduate Director, pending further review. Upon approval of the Thesis Prospectus by the Thesis Committee, in consultation with the MFA Graduate Director, pending all revisions resolved, MFA students officially advance to MFA Candidacy status on the 2nd Monday of July, AY1.

Any evaluations that indicate further insufficient progress at the end of Academic Year 1 may result in expulsion from the program, pending consultation with the Dance Dept. Faculty and the Graduate Director. Probationary Academic Year 2 students who continue to progress insufficiently, including grades for individual courses below B and a cumulative grade-point average below 2.0 may be asked to leave the program.

Interim and Final Thesis Materials

Works-in-progress Showings for all MFA Candidates

- 1) Show work(s)-in-progress, at least once during Fall semester AY2 to Thesis Director and Second Thesis Committee member. Formal feedback will be provided.
- 2) Develop a draft Technical Rider for the Spring semester interim showing; submit directly to the Department Technical Director by the end of Fall semester AY2
- 3) Show work(s)-in-progress during 2nd week of January, Spring semester AY 2 to determine and finalize technical requirements for final production of the Thesis Creative Project. Committee Chair and Second Committee Member must be present, along with technicians, as possible, plus the Dance Department Technical Director, as possible.

If final showing of the thesis creative project is determined to be off-campus, an installation or at a site-specific location, be prepared to clarify these site differences at the final interim showing for all Thesis Committee members and the Technical Director, including all logistical and budgetary preparations for technical and production support outside of Rutgers Dance Department.

Final Thesis Production requirements

A final production of the MFA thesis Creative Project is required for graduation of all MFA Degree Candidates. The production is evidence of each Candidate's successful achievement for professional standards showing mastery in producing movement-based works in a variety of dance/performance genres/screenings, compositional forms and production elements. Productions are generally shared between 2 or 3 MFA candidates and will be scheduled during post-Spring Break March AY2 dates, as available. Unless otherwise authorized as self-produced projects in locations other than the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus, on-campus productions will be shared events of 2 or 3 MFA thesis projects, including screen dance projects.

A total of 30 minutes of produced work(s) are required in order to show and evaluate breadth and depth of creative process and research; interim showings of works-in-progress going over the time limit will receive feedback on editing presentation of works. Types of compositional forms are not prescribed in order to support the creative exploration of creative potential. For example, works could take the form

of a suite of solo works, a large-scale 30-minute group work, or combinations of duet, trio, quartet forms, etc. A work may take form of an integrated suite of smaller works, dramaturgically linked, or a succession of separate works, both addressing a particular research question or set of questions. In addition to set concert dance choreography, improvisational, site-specific, installation and dance for video/screen dance works are understood as legitimate productions of creative process and research, given a well-developed dramaturgy.

The breadth of dance genres produced are also not prescribed, supporting the options for exploring site-based, classical, contemporary, globalized and fusion-based dance practices and compositional options. Cross- and interdisciplinary works are required by reference to the creative process and research curriculum course work and through access to a variety of experienced faculty mentors. Multidisciplinary productions, including live or recorded elements of theater, music and visual arts, are encouraged. Technologically-advanced work is encouraged within the limits of production at Rutgers-New Brunswick facilities. Any works requiring additional technological support should notify Thesis Directors of alternative venue requirements. Screen dance productions are also encouraged.

In order to support the production of thesis projects, a final Technical Rider listing technical requirements, including but not limited to sound, lighting, projection, prop and set designs, costumes and other production elements must be provided to the technical director at the end of Fall semester AY2 in anticipation of the January work(s)-in-progress interim showing.

Publicity and All Printed Materials

All printed and publicity materials for all student productions must be approved by the dean's office after they have been approved by the dance faculty advisor for the event, before they can be released to the public in any format.

Bios On Programs

Performer's' bios may not be longer than fifty words and must be approved by the faculty advisor/director for the event before they are printed in the program. MFA candidate's bios are a maximum of 100 words.

Draft Thesis

The MFA Thesis is framed as the equivalent of a "Professional Paper," such as those submitted to a peer-reviewed journal. This frame is meant to provide a template for future publications that may emerge in the future.

Two complete copies of an interim draft of the final thesis Professional Paper and Statement of Teaching Philosophy must be submitted to both the Committee Chair and Second Committee Member for their review. Items include:

- Revised thesis abstract, as amended from prior submission, based on current research findings
- 2nd draft prose thesis Professional Paper, minimum 35-40 pages, in an appropriate research format (MLA or Chicago style accepted). This paper details:
 - **Introductory statement:** Discussion of general scholarly research in relation to the Creative Project. This can include discussion of inspirations from within and outside of MFA coursework, as needed, and development of general ideas for the integrated praxis you will present in the rest of this paper
 - **Frameworks:** The theoretical and conceptual frameworks used for supporting creative thesis research, citing print and/or oral and/or web/media resources, as needed, as well as participant/observation findings from studio work and personal reflections. These discussions should draw significantly on completed literature reviews

- **Methods:** A section on research methods, citing types of improvisation and choreographic strategies, cross- and/or interdisciplinary methods and, additionally, as needed, technological methods used in dance for video/screen dance or other installation formats. Again, any methodological resources from literature reviews should be cited, as appropriate.
- **Analysis:** A comprehensive analysis of how theories, concepts and research methods support the generation of cross- and/or interdisciplinary creative research
- **Statement of findings:** An interim statement of creative research findings, including a statement of technical requirements, as amended, including any citations of literature reviews, as appropriate.
- A revised statement of proposed Work Plan completion, including a revised proposed schedule for Spring Semester Thesis 2: Production.
- Works Cited pages, including both print, oral, web and/or media, plus any other resources cited, as appropriate
- Draft of revised **final statement of teaching philosophy** including:
 - 150-word prose abstract, describing teaching philosophy
 - Prose Statement of Teaching Philosophy in the form of a 10-page document, in an appropriate research format (same as thesis research paper format), including citations from all research references, as needed
 - Additional Works Cited pages, including both print and media, plus other resources, as appropriate

Final papers, including both the final Professional Paper and the final Statement of Teaching Philosophy paper, are due the first Monday in April AY2 for review by all Committee Chairs and Second Committee Members. Any final revisions requested by the Thesis Committee will be returned to the Candidate by the last Monday in April AY2, in order to allow time for final submission of Thesis Research Papers by the following first Monday in May (1 week) after returned revisions.

Final evaluation

The final evaluation of all MFA degree candidates includes the research, production and presentation of a final creative thesis project, in either live performance format, on- or off-site, including but not limited to contemporary choreography, installation projects, screen dance, combinations of the above, or other formats, to be determined. In addition, the final Professional Paper and Statement of Teaching Philosophy are required. A final Presentation that integrates creative and scholarly inquiry, and pedagogical statement is also required.

Final Presentation Requirements

Each MFA degree candidate will present a 20-minute total multi-media presentation to the Thesis Director, Second and Third Committee Members, Graduate Dance Faculty, additional dance faculty, and graduate and undergraduate students, and members of the general public, including invited family and friends. The final presentation should act as an integration of the Professional Paper, Statement of Teaching Philosophy and final Creative Production. This presentation can be seen as the equivalent of a job talk for a dance-related tenure-track position at a Research 1 University and show high quality professional standards for both oral, textual, and technological skill sets.

The presentation must be live unless authorization is requested from the Committee Chair for an off-site presentation, with technical potential for Skype and/or other video transmission from an off-site location beyond the 70-mile radius of Rutgers-New Brunswick. The presentation is post-production of the final thesis Creative Production and submission of final thesis Professional Paper and Statement of Teaching Philosophy and should contextualize the Creative Production, including a statement of the

artist/scholar's mission for the project, articulating that mission in terms of how they situate themselves in the professional field of dance and, in particular, how that mission serves each MFA candidate's artistic, scholarly and pedagogical philosophies. A set of research questions must be posed and results of creative process and research articulated in relation to those questions. A maximum of 10 minutes can be used, during the 30-minute presentation, for showing illustrative creative work samples. An additional 20 minutes, beyond the 30-minute presentation, is required for questions and answers of the Candidate from Thesis Committee members.

The final presentation occurs during the final reading days of Spring semester AY2. All Candidates for the degree should be prepared to present on any of the two reading week days. All determinations regarding final evaluation and granting the MFA degree occur during Final Exam week in May AY2.

Final Portfolio Requirements

A final digital portfolio of work completed within course-work is also required. This portfolio provides the MFA graduate with a substantial documentation of high-quality works, including performance, creative, pedagogic and scholarly formats. The portfolio includes course syllabi and teaching evaluations; selected formal papers submitted for credit in dance studies courses; video graphic materials created as documentation of works-in-process and final works for credit in dance studio courses; other graphic materials that provide adequate documentation of student progress in the program; and a current C.V. and a final statement of artistic and teaching philosophies.

1. This portfolio will be submitted by the first Monday of June at the end of Spring semester, AY1 to the Graduate Director
2. Portfolio will be reviewed by a committee of Graduate Faculty.

Graduate Ceremony

Students coursework will be submitted and evaluated at Mason Gross School of the Arts prior to the conferral of the MFA in Dance. Students, are welcomed, however to participate in the Mason Gross commencement ceremony once their coursework is completed.

Policies and Procedures for the Rutgers University Graduate Student

Registration

Students may register via [WebReg](#) at our website, , generally, until the semester begins. Changes to existing registrations may be made during the first two weeks of classes. Courses are identified by a five-digit registration index number, in addition to the course number. It is the registration index number that is used in registration. Closed courses and courses that require departmental permission require a special permission number in addition to the registration index number. The department offering the course controls distribution of special permission numbers. Special permission numbers cannot be used to waive prerequisites. A written permission to the registrar is required. Frequently Used Terms:

Course title: These can be abbreviated on either form (e.g. "Lessons" for "Performance study")

School Number: The most likely school numbers are

- Mason Gross = **School 08**
- Graduate School = **School 16**

Subject Number:

206: Mason Gross MFA Dance courses

702: Mason Gross Academic courses

Course Number: Normally these will be as follows

5xx: First-year master's courses

6xx: Second-year master's courses

7xx: Thesis courses (MFA)

-section number: this is useful on the form only if there are multiple sections of something.

-credit hours: Academic courses -- 16:700:xxx-- are almost all 3 credits (except for independent study or some of the thesis or research courses). Most academic courses in Mason Gross (08:206:xxx) are 1-3 credits.

Net ID: University policy requires all students to have a Network ID (NET ID). It is required for on line address updates, PAC number changes, on line bill payment, viewing transcripts and grades, establishing email and computer accounts, as well as accessing other services. If you have formally accepted admission, [activate](#) your Net ID as soon as possible.

Once you have activated a NET ID, create your [MyRutgers](#) portal.

All students are also required to provide a [personal emergency contact](#) for Rutgers University.

Id cards: Information regarding student identification cards can be provided by the RuConnection Office.

Term bills: Students who register early will receive an email alerting them to pay their term bills online. Students registering in person near the registration deadline will be asked to pay at that time.

[Academic calendar:](#) The beginning and ending dates of each semester, the University holidays and the exam schedule can be found on the University academic calendar.

[Schedule of classes:](#) Maps to campus and classrooms are also available on the "SOC." The schedule is not available on paper.

Distance learning assessment: All MFA graduate students must proceed through a distance learning (on-line learning) skills assessment test to determine any remediation required for participating in either hybrid face-to-face/on-line or completely on-line graduate MFA courses. This skills assessment will take place in the Fall prior to Winter matriculation in the hybrid Winter Session Dance in Higher Education course. Remediation will be facilitated by Arts On-line staff.

Credit hour prefixes: WebReg will offer you the option of registering with a credit hour prefix. Prefixes are required for undergraduate courses, to clarify their relevance to your program, but are not used with graduate courses.

Prefixes are as follows:

- E - Course does not count in average or toward degree
- G - 300-400 level undergraduate course taken for credit toward current graduate degree program—MFA students must provide this prefix when taking this type of course
- N - course taken not-for-credit (audit)
- S or U grade, no final exam, course appears on transcript.

[Counseling Services](#) is available for all students through Rutgers Counseling, ADAP and Psychiatric Services (CAPS).

Student health insurance

Full-time (9 credits) students have a fee included in their tuition bill for the [Rutgers University Health Services](#) and BASIC Insurance. Part time students may pay this fee and enjoy the same benefits. All international students in F or J immigration status are required to purchase the university's BASIC and MAJOR MEDICAL health insurance plans unless they have proof of alternative coverage that meets or exceeds the University's coverage requirements. Regardless of the number of credits carried, international students automatically have included on their term bills charges for both basic and major medical coverage.

Graduate Students may have special needs regarding their healthcare. Some helpful links include:

- [Resources](#).
- [Travel Medicine](#).
- [Student Insurance](#).

For urgent medical attention always contact Rutgers Police or dial 9-1-1.

Academic Integrity

As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. This academic integrity policy is designed to guide students as they prepare assignments, take examinations, and perform the work necessary to complete their degree requirements. Visit the [academic integrity](#) website for detailed information.

Rutgers University allows the following grades to appear on transcripts: A, B+,B,C+,C, D and F. There is no A+ or A- grade.

Plagiarism

Please refer to the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy for a specific detailed definition of plagiarism and various forms of plagiarism. The Dance Department expects all students to adhere to these guidelines. To this end, all papers must be written in a student's own words and from their perspective. **The same paper may not be used to satisfy a requirement for multiple courses.**

Dance is an intensely demanding and physical activity. As such, it is important that dancers discuss with their instructors any physical conditions or injuries that may put them or fellow dancers at risk for harm or would unduly impede their work in class and in performance. In the case of serious or chronic injuries, medical clearance is required before resuming training and dancing. Students requesting accommodations should contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) who will work with the student and department to determine whether an accommodation is possible.

Policies and Procedures for the Mason Gross Dance Student

Required Training in Concussion Wise Program

All faculty, staff and students in the Dance Dept. are required to complete the appropriate Concussion Wise & Heart Wise Program. The Concussion Wise Program is designed to bring more awareness in recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussions as well as appropriate treatments for themselves and others. As both a student and part-time lecturer, completing this online program in a timely manner is critical.

Ticket Policies/Cultural Opportunities MFA students are allowed one student rush ticket per performance for on-campus events in the Victoria J. Mastrobuono Theater. The student rush ticket policy does not apply to events held in the Loree Dance Theater. Rush tickets are not guaranteed; if the concert or event is sold-out, rush tickets will not be available. The student rush policy does not apply to off-campus events, such as events at the State Theater and other off-campus venues.

Student Expectations of the Faculty

All faculty members meet all scheduled classes or find an adequate substitute. On occasion the demands of professional engagements will cause a faculty member to be absent from campus. His or her classes will be covered by other members of the dance department and/or by a professional substitute. While the faculty share basic concepts about dance training, different teachers present the student with different styles of dance techniques or even with different aesthetic philosophies. Students may be asked to work differently on similar material. These variations in concerns reflect the broad landscape of modern dance that one will encounter during their professional studies here and elsewhere. It would be incorrect to say the dance training here is based upon any one recognized technique.

Faculty members bring to the studio a background of training in various techniques and aesthetic influences as well as their professional careers as artists and educators. The extensive movement background and flexibility of thinking that Rutgers students acquire is recognized by the dance world as graduates enter the profession.

The MFA Director is available to address all student concerns by email, telephone, and in person.

Locker Rooms and Use of Studios

MFA students can store their items in a locker in the dressing rooms on the bottom floor of Nicholas Hall. We have many guests in our facilities and want to keep our spaces clean and organized.

Students are not allowed to bring anything but warm-up clothes, water and a notebook into the studio. A small indoor bag may be brought into the studio if a student does not have a lock for valuables. No phones, or phones must be silenced, in the studios during classes. No food, drink (other than water) or street shoes are allowed in the studios. **Please do not leave items in the hallway while in classes.**

Any items left by students in the hallway outside of class are subject to removal and discarding.

Soma Center Policies and Procedures

Mission

The Soma Center offers all Dance Dept. students opportunities to augment and enhance their technical and artistic growth through progressive attention to principles of movement integration, body-mind awareness, and neuromuscular education in a variety of movement contexts. Somatic work in the Soma Center includes private and group training, mat exercises, use of props and training on motion-specific equipment. The Soma Center specifically offers Pilates training under the supervision of certified trainers. The Soma Center is also used as a learning center by Dance faculty for Kinesiology, Anatomy, Yoga, Laban Movement Analysis and Bartenieff Fundamentals.

Eligibility

Training in Pilates apparatus for students is sponsored by funds from the Dance Department. Dance Dept. Graduate Students are able to make use of the equipment provided it is not reserved or being used by a BFA student. Use of the Pilates apparatus requires training and supervision by the Soma Center Pilates Trainer, who is certified by the Pilates Method Alliance.

Policies – Equipment Use

1. Cardio equipment (Elliptical and Spin Bike): Following an in-service session regarding set-up, safety and sanitation, students may use the cardio equipment on a first-come, first-served basis from 8:00am to 5:00pm when private or group trainings are not in session. Following an in-service session regarding set-up, safety and sanitation, full and part-time faculty and staff may use the cardio equipment on a first-come, first served basis when not in use by students.
2. Pilates apparatus: Students must complete initial training on Pilates apparatus with the Pilates Trainer. On a case-by-case basis, students may be allowed to work independently with apparatus with the trainer's authorization.
3. Props (balls, Bosu, weights): All props must stay in the Soma Center. They are not for use in the studios.
4. Smartboard: The Smartboard is for faculty and staff use only.

Procedures

1. Waivers Everyone training in the Soma Center will be required to sign a waiver.
2. Appointments and Cancellations
Students are expected to be responsible in scheduling, changing and canceling their appointments via communication directly with their instructor. There are only a limited number of slots so it is imperative that a student cancels and allows another student to sign-up for that session. Private sessions must be cancelled at least 24 hours in advance. If a student is scheduled for a quartet session, 48 hours' notice of cancellation is required. Students are responsible for contacting their instructor to cancel.

If a student fails to show up for an appointment without cancelling 24 or 48 hours in advance, respectively, the failure to attend will be logged as an unexcused absence from their Technique class. If a student fails to cancel two sessions, in advance, respectively, they risk being placed on artistic probation and losing their privileges to train in the Soma Center for the remainder of the semester.

Graduate Student Policy on Injuries and Physical Therapy

Physical therapy treatment for MFA and GSE graduate students is not available through the Dance Department, however MFA and Graduate School of Education, dance education (GSE) students who participate in technique and/or repertory for Graduate Independent Study or Graduate Special Topics credit may visit the Licensed Athletic Trainer in the Soma Lab if they sustain acute injuries during credit bearing classes. All appointments must be made before 4:30 the day prior to the request.

MFA and GSE students who sustain injury during non-credit bearing rehearsals should seek the attention of the Rutgers Health Services Sports Medicine Physician or a home physician. All appointments must be made before 4:30 the day prior to the request.

MFA and GSE students who are found to subsequently need on-going physical therapy must make an appointment with RHS Sports Medicine Physician on campus at Hurtado Health Center. If necessary, the RHS Sports Medicine Physician will provide a referral for physical therapy in New Brunswick or a more convenient location. MFA and GSE graduate students are responsible for these services through their individual medical plans.

It is highly suggested that students organize their own personal first aid kit with the items listed below and learn to make the best use of them.

Return to Class/Technical Projects

In order to return to full participation to dance performances and rehearsals, students working with outside providers must fax all medical documentation, physical therapy notes, office visit notes, etc. to the Rutgers Health Services Sports Medicine physician for review. The RHS Sports Medicine physician will make the final determination of the student's ability to return to full dance activity.

Nutrition for Dancers

It is especially important for dancers to do as much as they can on their own to maintain their energy and health. Following a sound and nutritious diet is essential. This is a challenge when spending long days on campus. To that end, the dance student lounge provides a microwave and refrigerator. Planning one's meals will help them stay nourished and reduce trips out to get food, which can be particularly hard on dancers' bodies when the weather turns cold.