

DANCE (DANC)

Graduate Degree Program
College: Arts and Humanities

Abstract

The School of Theatre, Dance, and Performance Studies offers a Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance, encompassing choreography, performance, dance and technology, scholarly research, and pedagogy. Emphasizing creative work and collaboration with TDPS MFA candidates in Lighting, Set, Costume and Media/Projection Design, the program is grounded in rigorous academic study and offers a transformational education to those who are curious, motivated, self-directed and possess a spirit of expansive inquiry and innovation. The program is designed to give outstanding students advanced training, experience in teaching, and opportunities for creative growth. For more information visit the MFA in Dance website at <http://tdps.umd.edu/programs/mfa-dance> (<http://tdps.umd.edu/programs/mfa-dance/>) or the School website at <http://tdps.umd.edu> (<http://tdps.umd.edu/>).

Designed primarily for modern or contemporary dancers with a high skill level and background in creating and performing at a professional level, opportunities abound in the creation of cross-disciplinary projects, presenting choreography in formal and informal settings throughout the three years, performing in guest artist and faculty works, presenting academic work at conferences and symposia, and participating in community-based performance and scholarly events.

The degree culminates with a thesis: an original choreographed and performed creative project, a written thesis, and formal presentation and defense. The third year also includes an off-campus internship option with a professional arts organization, research venue, agency, company, or school.

The competencies that students learn during the program will allow them to teach a broad range of dance and dance-related subjects after they graduate. They will be able to produce and present dance in a number of contexts and modalities, on campus, in professional and site-specific venues, and in the community.

We wish our graduates to exhibit a high degree of insight into the cultural contexts in which dance has developed in the past and continues to develop today. Students are expected to spend a significant amount of time learning about technical aspects of dance as well as promotion and house management and the myriad of other organizational details that go into producing dance performance. They will be actively involved in the practical application of this knowledge as part of their training.

The program is highly selective and auditions are required. The MFA is a full-time three-year program. Financial support is available.

Financial Assistance

Up to four candidates are admitted each Fall, and each of the four are offered financial support through teaching assistantship appointments, or if available, fellowships. Assistantships are never guaranteed and funding can change year to year. All qualified applicants may be nominated for Graduate School fellowships; the deadline for all applications is posted on the TPDS website annually. For more information, visit <http://tdps.umd.edu> or call 301-405-6694.

Contact

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Website: <http://tdps.umd.edu/programs/mfa-dance> (<http://tdps.umd.edu/programs/mfa-dance/>)

Courses: DANC (<https://umd-curr.courseleaf.com/graduate/courses/danc/>)

ADMISSIONS

General Requirements

- Statement of Purpose
- Transcript(s)
- TOEFL/IELTS/PTE (international graduate students (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/english-language-proficiency-requirements/>))

Program-Specific Requirements

- Letters of Recommendation (3)
- CV/Resume
- Description of Research/Work Experience
- Writing Sample (optional)
- Sample of Work: Share video weblinks and time stamps of what to review that totals 10-15 minutes of video footage. The sample collection should include examples of applicant's choreography, performance (footage of applicant moving), and (if possible) teaching with a description to include name of the work(s), performers, and other choreographers. Examples of weblinks can include the applicant's professional website links of Vimeo/YouTube links entered into the Multimedia Requirements section of the application

Applicants should have a strong undergraduate preparation in dance technique and dance composition. They should have completed the following undergraduate courses or their equivalent: improvisation, kinesiology, dance teaching methods, dance production, Laban Movement Analysis, and two semesters of dance history or one semester of history and one of dance philosophy, ethnology or aesthetics. Undergraduate deficiencies will be considered on an individual basis.

Application Deadlines

Type of Applicant	Fall Deadline	Spring Deadline	Summer Deadline
Domestic Applicants			
US Citizens and Permanent Residents	January 23, 2026	N/A	N/A
International Applicants			
F (student) or J (exchange visitor) visas; A,E,G,H,I and L visas and immigrants	January 23, 2026	N/A	N/A

RESOURCES AND LINKS:

Program Website: <http://tdps.umd.edu/programs/mfa-dance> (<http://tdps.umd.edu/programs/mfa-dance/>)

Application Process: <https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions> (<https://gradschool.umd.edu/admissions/>)

REQUIREMENTS

- Dance, Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) (<https://academiccatalog.umd.edu/graduate/programs/dance-danc/dance-mfa/>)

FACILITIES AND SPECIAL RESOURCES

The campus is located just eight miles from Washington D.C., offering a convenient 30-minute commute to the nation's capital. D.C. is home to cultural landmarks such as the Smithsonian and the Kennedy Center, as well as a vibrant array of dance, art, and music. Additionally, Washington D.C. serves as a hub for policy and public discourse surrounding the arts.