

Graduate Handbook

MFA in Ballet

University of Utah School of Dance

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INTRODUCTION

Goal of the Degree

The Master of Fine Arts in Ballet degree offers students the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of ballet through a variety of approaches and perspectives. Our philosophy for studying ballet at a graduate level is based on a theoretical foundation in which ballet is understood as a performing art and also as a source of cultural, social, and historical meaning and relevance.

Through rigorous coursework in the areas of pedagogy, choreography, scholarly inquiry, and theory, this degree program assists the MFA candidate in developing their skills as a teacher, choreographer, and scholar. Additionally, the graduate program provides opportunities for performance, choreography, collaboration, academic inquiry, and teaching.

Curricular Philosophy

The Master of Fine Arts in Ballet curriculum allows for flexibility and is designed so that students may tailor their studies according to individual interests. Theory courses are foundational, and students take additional coursework in the areas of Pedagogy, Choreography, and Scholarly Inquiry before selecting an area of focus. Graduate projects and elective coursework support the selected area of focus, and the self-designed Thesis project serves as a culmination of each student's research journey during their studies.

Applicants

We welcome applicants from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, including dance professionals interested in transitioning into careers beyond the stage. The MFA curriculum is a two-year program, and an undergraduate degree* is required for admission.

Designed as a two-year MFA program, a significant portion of each candidate's second year is devoted to thesis work. Because of this, admission preference is given to applicants who demonstrate a solid research focus in their application materials.

**For those individuals interested in the MFA program who might not currently hold an undergraduate degree, the School of Dance offers retiring professionals the opportunity to complete a BFA in Ballet in an expedited three-year program. During the final year of the expedited BFA program, students may apply for the MFA program. For additional information about this possibility, contact the Director of Graduate Studies.*

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

School of Dance Director, Luc Vanier

Luc.vanier@utah.edu

801-585-3335

Director of Graduate Studies, Melonie Buchanan Murray (2017)

Melonie.murray@utah.edu

801-581-7071

Director of Graduate Studies, Kate Mattingly (2018)

Kate.mattingly@utah.edu

202-320-1488

School of Dance

info@dance.utah.edu

801-581-7327

Link to School of Dance faculty and staff: <http://www.dance.utah.edu/faculty>

Link to the Graduate School: <http://gradschool.utah.edu>

GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Student Advisory Committees (SACs) are student groups established within each department/school to promote communication and interaction among students, faculty, staff, and administrators. They provide students with more opportunities to offer their voices and perspectives at the department/school level. SACs are both a social and an academic organization within their department and as such they advance involvement opportunities, encourage participation in departmental activities, and work together with others to build the campus community.

Some of the roles of the SACs are to:

- Promote academic and social activities. Examples include lectures, demonstrations, faculty involvement opportunities, freshman-mentoring programs, assisting with departmental orientation process, publishing a newsletter, etc.
- Encourage collaboration with other student organizations
- Provide service opportunities
- Assist in the faculty RPT process
- Build campus community at the University

Each year the School of Dance students elect SAC representatives from each class (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate students).

Link to current School of Dance and College of Fine Arts SAC representatives:
<http://www.finearts.utah.edu/students/student-advisory-committee>.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Admission Requirements and Procedures

We welcome applicants from a variety of backgrounds and experiences, including dance professionals interested in transitioning into careers beyond the stage. The MFA curriculum is a two-year program, and an undergraduate degree* is required for admission.

Designed as a two-year MFA program, a significant portion of the candidate's second year is devoted to thesis work. Because of this, admission preference is given to applicants who demonstrate a solid research focus through their application materials.

The application process consists of two parts:

- 1) Applicants must complete the online application process. Once these materials have been reviewed, the applicant may be contacted for an interview.
- 2) The interview may be scheduled during a campus visit or via Skype and must be arranged directly with the Director of Graduate Studies.

Applicants must submit required materials through the university's Apply Yourself portal.

Before beginning the application process, be sure to have the following prepared:

- Curriculum vitae: The applicant's curriculum vitae should be extensive and include all education, training, professional performance experience, teaching experience, choreography, honors, awards, etc. Applicants are encouraged to include links to personal websites or to samples of their research (i.e., videos of choreography, published articles, etc.)
- Essay/Statement of Purpose: This essay should introduce the applicant to the faculty and express the applicant's expectations of the graduate program. We encourage students to outline research interests and a potential area of research focus for thesis work. The essay may also include information about the applicant's past experience and how their experiences inform their current interest in graduate studies. Submit as a Word document or PDF; the essay should be 1000-2000 words, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, in Times New Roman 12-point font.
- Unofficial Transcripts: The online application portal will prompt applicants to list all academic institutions attended and attach accompanying transcripts.
- References/Recommenders: The online application portal will prompt applicants to list the names and email addresses for two references/recommenders. Applicants should include information for references who can speak to the applicant's potential for success in a graduate program. The references will be contacted via automatic email and asked to submit a standardized form for the recommendation process.

Once applicants have compiled the above materials, they may link to the online application portal here: https://app.applyyourself.com/AYApplicantLogin/fl_ApplicantLogin.asp?id=utahgrad.

**For those individuals interested in the MFA program who might not currently hold an undergraduate degree, the School of Dance offers retiring professionals the opportunity to complete a BFA in Ballet in an expedited three-year program. During the final year of the expedited BFA program, students may apply for the MFA program. For additional information about this possibility, contact the Director of Graduate Studies.*

For additional information regarding university policy regarding admission into graduate programs: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-catalog/admissions/>.

International students (ITAP, Visa)

For information regarding international graduate student affairs:
<http://admissions.utah.edu/international/graduate/index.php>

Language Requirements

As all coursework is delivered and submitted in English, students must be proficient in speaking, reading, and writing in English.

For university policy regarding the language requirements for graduate students:
<http://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-catalog/language-requirements/>.

Leave of Absence/Family Medical Leave policies

For university policy regarding leaves of absence: <http://advising.utah.edu/topics/leave-of-absence.php>.

Any leave of absence from the School of Dance must be proposed in writing and approved by the Director of the School of Dance and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Minimum GPA/Grading Policy

For university grading and GPA policies pertaining to graduate students:
<http://gradschool.utah.edu/graduate-catalog/grading-and-credit-policies/>.

A grade below B- for any course work taken within the School of Dance will place the student on probation and trigger an immediate and mandatory full faculty review of the student. The student is then required to justify their continuance within the program. This review may result in dismissal from the program.

Two grades below B- for courses taken within the School of Dance will result in an automatic dismissal from the program.

A grade below C- in a required graduate course cannot be applied towards a graduate degree and the course must be repeated.

For credit/no-credit courses offered in the School of Dance, students must receive a grade of CR (credit). If a student receives a grade of NC (no-credit), the course must be repeated. A NC grade will place the student on probation and trigger an immediate and mandatory full faculty review of the student. The student is then required to justify their continuance within the program. This review may result in dismissal from the program. Two NC grades for course work taken within the School of Dance will result in dismissal from the program.

Transfer Credits

Transfer credits are only accepted under special circumstances and must be approved by the Graduate School, the Director of the School of Dance, and the Director of Graduate Studies.

Time limit to degree

The MFA in Ballet program is designed as a two-year degree, but under extenuating circumstances candidates may be allowed an extension. The Director of the School of Dance and the Director of Graduate Studies must both approve any proposal for an extension beyond the two-year program.

CURRICULUM

Theory courses are foundational to the curriculum. Additionally, each graduate student completes coursework in the areas of Pedagogy, Choreography, and Scholarly Inquiry before selecting an area of focus. Graduate projects, elective coursework, and thesis research will support the selected area of focus.

Total credits=60

Sample 2-Year Plan

YEAR 1	
Fall	Spring
BALLE 6810—Research Design (3)	BALLE 6820—Seminar in Dance Studies (4)
BALLE 6905—Scholarly Writing (1)	BALLE 6700—Creative Practice I (4)
BALLE 6780—Ballet Pedagogy I (4)	BALLE 6785—Ballet Pedagogy II (4)
BALLE 6410—Hist. Perspectives in Ballet (4)	Elective/Project (3)
Elective/Project (3)	
Total= 15	Total= 15
YEAR II	
Fall	Spring
BALLE 6400—Kinesiology (4)	BALLE 6710—Creative Practice II (4)
Electives/Projects (8)	Electives/Projects (8)
BALLE 6970—Thesis I (3)	BALLE 6972—Thesis II (3)
Total= 15	Total= 15

Pre-requisite for all BALLE graduate courses: “Graduate standing as MFA or School of Dance consent”

THEORY (7 credits required)

BALLE 6810—Research Design (3)

BALLE 6820—Seminar in Dance Studies: Graduate (4)

PEDAGOGY (8 credits required)

BALLE 6780—Ballet Pedagogy I (4)

BALLE 6785—Ballet Pedagogy II (4)

CHOREOGRAPHY (8 credits required)

BALLE 6700—Creative Practice I (4)

BALLE 6710—Creative Practice II (4)

SCHOLARLY INQUIRY (9 credits required)

BALLE 6905—Scholarly Writing (1)

BALLE 6400—Kinesiology (4)

BALLE 6410—Historical Perspectives in Ballet (4)

GRADUATE PROJECTS (9 credits required)

These courses are Independent Study courses proposed by students. Each of these course numbers may be taken four times for credit. Graduate Projects beyond the required 9 credit

hours (3 courses) may be taken as electives. Students are encouraged to enroll in Graduate Projects during the summer, which will allow more time for Thesis work in the 2nd year.

- BALLE 6910—Graduate Project: Production (3)
- BALLE 6911—Graduate Project: Performance (3)
- BALLE 6912—Graduate Project: Pedagogy (3)
- BALLE 6913—Graduate Project: Creative Practice (3)
- BALLE 6916—Graduate Project: Scholarly Inquiry (3)

THESIS (6 credits required)

- BALLE 6970—Thesis I (3)
- BALLE 6972—Thesis II (3)

ELECTIVES (13 credits)

To fulfill elective requirements, students may opt to enroll in graduate courses in Ballet, Modern Dance, or other programs on campus. We encourage students to pursue graduate Certificates (i.e., Gender Studies Certificate, Screen Dance Certificate, etc.) that might broaden and inform students' research interests.

- Graduate elective courses offered through the Ballet Program:
 - BALLE 6200—Pointe/Variations: Graduate (1)
 - BALLE 6290—Ballet Technique: Graduate (3)
 - BALLE 6420—Repertoire: Graduate (2)
 - BALLE 6525—Men's Class: Graduate (1)
 - BALLE 6580—Partner Adagio (1)
 - BALLE 6650—Performance Credit: Graduate (1-3)
- Possible electives offered through the Modern Dance Program:
 - DANC 6320—Aesthetics & Criticism (3)
 - DANC 6330—Graduate Seminar : Dancing Bodies (3)
 - DANC 6350—Graduate Seminar: Movement in Culture (3)
 - DANC 6430—Screendance (4)
 - DANC 6530—Dance Administration (3)
 - DANC 6640—Practicum in Graduate Kinesiology (3)
 - DANC 6740—Graduate Lighting and Production (2)

ADVISING, EVALUATION, AND RETENTION

Year 1 Advising

First-year graduate students are assigned a faculty mentor. The faculty mentor serves as a guide, facilitator, and resource for the student's progress prior to the selection of a thesis committee. Additionally, at the beginning of the first Fall semester, students will meet with the Director of Graduate Studies to:

- Identify proficiencies and deficiencies from transcripts and professional experiences;
- Discuss curricular path and areas of interest;
- Complete/finalize registration for Fall semester.

Throughout Year 1, graduate students should meet with their faculty mentor as needed and as questions arise. Additionally during Year 1, each graduate student will meet with the Director of Graduate Studies for a formal evaluative session mid-Fall and late Spring.

Year 2 Advising

At the start of Year 2, graduate students will request one faculty mentor to serve as a thesis advisor. The advisor will assist the candidate in their thesis proposal and make recommendations for potential thesis committee members.

If there are concerns regarding a student's progress, the student will be advised of these concerns early in the second year in order to maximize a student's potential for success completion of the program. Students are strongly encouraged to seek out faculty for advice, particularly if a faculty member's expertise relates directly to one's area of interest or focus.

Evaluation

While graduate students receive feedback and guidance throughout their studies, students are also expected to be self-motivated, directed, and responsible for seeking faculty contact and counsel. Grades serve to provide an immediate and relative assessment of competency, reflecting one's general progress and standing in the Ballet Program.

The evaluation process consists primarily of semester-by-semester advising, grading in all course work, faculty reviews, and supervision of thesis-related work. Students' academic work and over-all progress will be evaluated in the following ways:

- Observation by faculty in all course work;
- Feedback from instructors in all course work;
- Informal one-on-one feedback on projects/work;
- Graduate Advisor conferences in during Year 1;
- Graduate Director formal evaluative sessions during Year 1;
- Faculty review of thesis proposal;
- Thesis committee involvement in thesis-related work.

Retention

At the end of both Fall and Spring semesters of each year, graduate students are evaluated by the faculty. The evaluation will result in one of the following actions:

- **Positive Faculty Review:** This allows students to progress in the program;
- **Counseled Out:** If a student's ongoing work in any area of the curriculum is unacceptable, they will be graded accordingly and placed on probation, or students may be advised out of the program as per the decision of the full faculty.

Students must maintain the following standards to remain in the Graduate Program:

- **GPA:**
 - Graduate students are required to maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA (B average or higher). Failure to maintain a 3.0 GPA places that student on probation and will trigger an immediate and mandatory full faculty review of the student. At this point, the student is required to justify their continuance within the program. This review may result in dismissal from the program. Once placed on probation, failure to raise one's GPA in subsequent semesters will result in dismissal from the graduate program.
- **GRADES:**
 - A grade below B- for any course work taken within the School of Dance will place the student on probation and trigger an immediate and mandatory full faculty review of the student. The student is then required to justify their continuance within the program. This review may result in dismissal from the Graduate Program.
 - Two grades below B- for courses taken within the School of Dance will result in an automatic dismissal from the Graduate Program.
 - A grade below C- in a required graduate course cannot be applied towards a graduate degree and the course must be repeated.
 - For credit/no-credit courses offered in the School of Dance, students must receive a grade of CR (credit). If a student receives a grade of NC (no-credit), the course must be repeated. A NC grade will place the student on probation and trigger an immediate and mandatory full faculty review of the student. The student is then required to justify their continuance within the program. This review may result in dismissal from the Graduate Program.
 - Two NC grades for course work taken within the School of Dance will result in dismissal from the Graduate Program.
- **PROBATION:**
 - Students placed on probation are ineligible for School of Dance merit-based scholarship support until they again meet School's academic standards. Once a student meets the School's academic standards, the student is considered "in good standing," although their probation will remain on their record.

The ultimate/culminating goal and focus of the Graduate Program is mature, in-depth artistic and scholarly research. Success in completing the Master of Fine Arts degree requires self-directed thought and action by each candidate of a substantive and responsible nature. It also requires

that students act as good citizens in dealing with the faculty, other students, and the School at large. If the full faculty agrees at the end of the first year of study that the collective quality and depth of the work completed to date is below Ballet Program/School of Dance expectations, that student may be strongly encouraged not to continue in the Graduate Program.

THESIS PROCESS

General Statement

The thesis, the essence of an advanced degree, is the culmination of a course of investigation. It consists of the development, implementation, presentation, and then oral defense of in-depth qualitative research, either theoretical or creative in nature. The thesis is intended to provide opportunities to develop and demonstrate the breadth and depth of knowledge necessary to prepare graduates for professional careers in dance. The thesis topic is conceptualized and implemented by each MFA student, focusing on a unified theme that may involve diverse elements of pedagogy, choreography, scholarly inquiry, and/or other areas of interest. Thesis work should include a significant point of view, which contributes to a larger body of knowledge within the general dance profession. The thesis should focus on main areas of strength but should not exclude areas of challenge. While all MFA candidates must demonstrate competency levels in pedagogy, creative practice, and scholarly inquiry during their graduate studies, each must also individually excel in their particular area of research.

Thesis development and implementation will be mentored by the faculty and supported by course work. Each thesis should involve sound theoretical research directly related to the research topic. Investigation grounded in supportive literature and personal reflection will help develop the thesis.

In one's thesis work, it is expected that each student be self-motivated, self-directed, and personally responsible for completing the thesis in a timely and mature manner. This requires that students be open to feedback, articulate with their ideas, and fully invested in all aspects of the thesis project. Doing so allows each candidate's thesis committee to work in its intended role as mentors and advisors. If a candidate does not work to these expectations, the committee must then act in a more forceful way, placing the student in a less empowered position. Please work to avoid the latter scenario, which can place stress upon all involved.

Thesis Mentor

To assist in the development and preparation of the thesis proposal, each student is assigned a faculty thesis proposal mentor. This assigned mentor need not serve on one's actual thesis committee, but will serve as the primary point of contact for the proposal preparation. During the development of the thesis proposal, all faculty members and area appropriate faculty mentors may also advise in the drafting of the thesis proposal.

Proposal

With guidance from the faculty, all MFA candidates will thoughtfully self-design thesis proposals which might include, but are not limited to, any configuration of: a variety of performance and/or choreographic experiences, pedagogical studies, scholarly inquiry, historical inquiry, interdisciplinary artistic works, or interaction with populations within the extended community. Each thesis project will culminate in a written document and may also include an additional element (such as a performance, film, etc.).

The Thesis Proposal is both a written *and* verbal proposal. In keeping with a two-year program, all MFA candidates will complete thesis proposals early in their third semester (Fall of 2nd year). The proposal is intended to identify components of specific interest and possibilities as conceptualized by each candidate. The initial focus of the Thesis I course is thesis proposal preparation.

The thesis proposal is submitted and presented at the middle of the third semester (Fall of 2nd year), in both written and oral form. The written proposal must be submitted to faculty at least one week prior to the scheduled oral presentation and must include:

Part I (5-10 pages):

- A summary of the topic(s) under investigation
- An argument for *why* this is a topic worthy of research
- A clear and concise research question motivating the thesis investigation

Part II (5-10 pages):

- A thoughtful description of *how* the project will be realized
- A clearly defined and achievable timeline for each step toward completion

Part III

- A review of the literature that includes a list of at least 15 resources pertinent to the project.
- Bibliography

All MFA candidates will have a scheduled time to present their thesis proposal to the faculty; dates will be included on the syllabus for the Thesis I course. The presentation should be approached as a *formal* presentation—rehearsed and professionally crafted using technology (video, projection, etc.) as deemed suitable for the project. Candidates should be prepared for questions and discussions following their presentation.

Lack of preparation for the thesis proposal presentation may result in the withholding of approval. If a student is unable to present, or chooses to delay presentation, their progress in the graduate program may be delayed.

Once the formal proposal is made, three outcomes are possible:

- 1) The proposal is accepted;
- 2) The proposal is conditionally accepted, meaning the ideas are worthy but the student must re-conceptualize or adapt the proposal as per faculty suggestions, continuing to refine it at the committee level until it is fully accepted;
- 3) The proposal is not approved and the student must begin with a new plan of action or significantly revise the existing one. The latter is not a typical outcome; students are well advised before their presentations and would not be in this category unless they had been unreceptive or unresponsive to faculty and mentor feedback. If for any reason the proposal as presented is not approved, non-approval will result in either a no-credit grade for the Thesis I course (and the course must be taken again), or a T grade given. A T grade means that work is continuing and a final grade will be assigned once the proposal has been presented again and accepted. If one is required

to repeat the Thesis I course and the work does not improve, then that student may be dismissed from the program. Once full or conditional acceptance of the proposal is obtained, the thesis committee takes over the advising of thesis work. A student will receive written notification of acceptance from the Director of Graduate Studies along with thesis guidelines, a timetable for completion, and a contract covering one's working relationship with his or her thesis committee.

A final copy of the accepted thesis proposal will be kept on file with the Director of Graduate Studies. It serves as a contract between the student and their committee. The student's full thesis committee must approve any revisions to the proposal.

Research Considerations

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

For thesis projects involving research with human subjects, including interviews, video recording, etc., students must first apply to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for project approval. This process can take up to 2 months to complete and must be approved *before* starting any data collection. Visit the IRB website at www.utah.edu/irb or see Associate Professor Pamela Geber who has served on the IRB for more information.

Creative Research Content Policy

The School of Dance's approach to the ethics of creative research is in accordance with the mission of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which was designed to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing of human subjects and promote research practices that are consensual and non-coercive.

All students are advised to balance artistic risks with safety and respect for their peers and audience. For students exploring content and/or methods of a potentially controversial, explicit, or sensitive nature, please be mindful of our on-campus stakeholders, including, but not limited to: your cast, fellow students, family, friends, donors, faculty, university administration, general public and professional colleagues.

All creative research designed by students for School-related performances must be viewed and approved by faculty mentors prior to their premiere. The School has final approval of all works associated with it and reserves the right to remove any works from public presentations should faculty notification and approval be neglected or avoided.

For issues of personal safety and departmental liability, as governed by both School of Dance and University-wide policy, students must fully disclose to their thesis committee, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the School of Dance Director any degree of nudity, acts, language, and/or other material that might reasonably be considered by any member of an audience to be unsafe or objectionable that takes place in works to be performed in any University-sponsored performance, either on campus (MCD Theatre or Studio 240) or off-campus. The School has final approval of all works associated with it.

Thesis Committee

The graduate student, upon successful completion and approval of the thesis proposal then forms his or her MFA thesis committee. The thesis committee consists of three members, one of whom serves as committee chair.

To initiate thesis committee formation, each MFA candidate submits 3-4 names of their choosing to the Director of Graduate Studies, specifying their first choice to serve as the thesis committee chair. Committee members should be proposed on the basis of expertise in content areas relevant to the project/thesis proposal.

When selecting and requesting thesis committee members and chairs, MFA candidates must keep in mind the following:

- Any full time School of Dance faculty member may serve on a committee.
- The thesis committee chair and at least one other committee member must be tenured or tenure-track School of Dance faculty.
- Career-line faculty may serve as committee members, but not as committee chairs.
- Adjunct faculty may serve as committee members with written approval from the Graduate School.
- Outside committee members: MFA candidates may propose one committee member from faculty in other departments or professionals in the community with special permission granted by the Graduate School (Interim Advisors assist in this process). Outside committee members may only be considered if they have already agreed to commit to the schedule of necessary meetings and events as proposed by the MFA candidate and the Graduate Program.

After the MFA candidates have proposed their committee choices, the faculty will meet to finalize each candidate's thesis committee. It is guaranteed that MFA candidates will have at least one Ballet Program faculty member on their thesis committee. Thesis committees are formed in this manner to provide each MFA candidate some input in the formation of the thesis committee, yet also to spread the work more evenly among faculty.

Committee requests should be proposed soon after thesis proposal acceptance and finalized by faculty shortly thereafter. The Request for Supervisory Committee Form identifies who will serve on your committee and should be completed at this time with the Director of Graduate Studies.

It is the responsibility of the MFA candidate to work closely with their thesis committee to bring the thesis to fruition and successful completion. Thesis work is both mentored and sanctioned by their committee. All thesis-related work presented in a public venue must have committee approval prior to presentation. Students must meet with their committee on an on-going basis. These meetings/discussions are important opportunities to hone the project and its

implementation, clarify thinking, and guide in the writing of the thesis and development of creative work.

MFA Candidate Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to:

- 1) Establish a first meeting with the thesis committee immediately after the committees are finalized; during this meeting, students may be asked to further develop/clarify aspects of the thesis proposal, and discuss any proficiencies/deficiencies in regard to the specific demands of the project.
- 2) Sign a thesis contract outlining expectations of the working relationship with the thesis committee regarding meetings and showing of work. This contract is intended to assist working with the thesis committee by outlining expectations of the working relationship between the candidate and the thesis committee regarding meetings and showing of work. Failure to adhere to the thesis contract will result in the student's inability to complete the graduate work, or may require an additional semester(s) work.
- 3) Maintain close contact with the thesis committee, especially the chair, as the thesis work progresses.
- 4) Meet regularly with the thesis committee chair for guidance, feedback, and assistance with project completion.
- 5) Establish and maintain clear timelines are established to allow for ample feedback; timelines should include all predictable elements (i.e., rehearsals, drafts and re-writes, etc.)
- 6) Submit the final thesis draft to all committee members at least two weeks prior to the scheduled oral defense.
- 7) Complete and submit all required Graduate Forms.

Project Implementation

Once the thesis proposal has been accepted and the thesis committee formed, work should immediately begin on the project(s) as described in the thesis proposal. MFA candidates conducting thesis related work must be registered for Thesis I or Thesis II.

Master's thesis candidates must be registered for Thesis credits during the semester of one's thesis oral defense and must accrue at least 6 and up to 12 Thesis Research credits to fulfill degree requirements. An additional requirement of this course is that all those registered will meet regularly under the guidance of a faculty member to read and assist those currently writing their thesis.

Thesis Portfolio

The thesis culminates in the compilation and submission of a thesis portfolio. This will include the written portion of the thesis, but may also include video, digital images, or other research

projects as suitable to the thesis topic. Students are encouraged, but not required, to submit the thesis proposal in an online format, such as a published website.

Thesis Writing Guidelines

The written thesis is a 25-40 page document unless the committee recommends or agrees to an alternative length.

Content

There is no prescribed formula regarding the presentation of content; this will vary from student to student. However, MFA candidates are encouraged to consider future publication potential and write in a fashion that supports this potential.

The written thesis should be concise, demonstrating both a depth of investigation and mature thought. Research design and scholarly inquiry coursework, along with consultation with the thesis committee, should both provide helpful insights.

Formatting and Layout

There are prescribed guidelines, dictated by the university's Graduate School, regarding the formatting and layout of the thesis. Students should consult the *Manual for Theses and Dissertations* available on the Graduate School website (<https://documents.gradschool.utah.edu/thesis-handbook>) to ensure that document guidelines are fulfilled.

In order to facilitate timely graduation, the first draft of the thesis must be submitted to the thesis committee at least 6 weeks prior to the end of the semester in which the oral examination will be completed (see thesis contract for specific deadlines).

Once the thesis committee has approved a semi-final draft, it is recommended that you go to the Thesis Editor for a preliminary formatting check. This will save both time and effort later. To guarantee graduation in the Spring the written thesis must be submitted for format approval to the Thesis Editor by the third week of March. A calendar listing due dates for guaranteed completion in a given semester plus further thesis information may be obtained on the graduate school web site at www.utah.edu/gradschool under the heading, Thesis Office.

To submit a manuscript for final format approval, a candidate must first obtain Final Reading Approval. The thesis committee signs final Reading Approval forms at the oral defense. In order to schedule and hold the oral exam, the written thesis must be entirely completed and prepared for the thesis editor, meaning no significant revisions are required from the committee post orals (the Thesis Editor may require formatting revisions though post orals).

Oral Defense

MFA candidates must accrue a minimum of 6 thesis credits in order to earn their MFA degree. If a candidate does not complete the written thesis and complete the oral defense in the fourth semester, then the candidate will be required to register for at least one thesis credit in the semester the oral exam is completed, even if this means taking more than a total of 6 credit hours.

Candidates meet with their thesis committee in the oral defense to discuss and evaluate the thesis project as well as other aspects of the candidate's graduate study. The format of the oral defense begins first with a formal presentation by the candidate, a 5-10 minute summary of their thesis work, followed by a discussion period based upon questions posed by the thesis committee. The final oral defense serves as an opportunity for the committee to ascertain the candidate's level of informed proficiency within the particular content areas of the thesis, the MFA coursework completed, and areas of general knowledge expected of Master's level graduates within the field.

Candidates may schedule the oral defense only with the approval of the thesis committee once the written thesis is entirely complete, including all revisions as required by the committee. Each candidate is responsible for arranging, well in advance, the meeting place and time (check committee members' availability), and having readied all necessary forms for the orals. Candidates will work with the Department Office Assistant to arrange this. Candidates will inform the Office Assistant of the time of the thesis oral defense at least two weeks prior to the date agreed upon by the committee. All oral defense meetings must be publically announced and open to the public.

If successful, candidates will have demonstrated proficiency in knowledge of the subject matter, completed all necessary course work, presented complete documentation of their thesis project (may include video/DVD), and submitted the written thesis in its final form.

At the conclusion of a successful oral defense, the following forms must be submitted to the Director of Graduate Studies:

- Supervisory Committee Approval
- Final Reading Approval
- Report of Final Thesis Grade Form
- Change of Final Grade Forms (to assign a grade to Thesis Research credits from prior semesters)

The student must then complete all of the paperwork and graduation protocol as described below.

Forms that the Candidate will bring to the Oral Defense: *See the Office Assistant for these*

1. Change of Grade Forms (for any semesters prior to the semester of the oral defense in which the candidate received a grade of 'T')
2. Report of Final Thesis Grade Form (this form records the grade the candidate receives for Thesis II for the semester in which the oral defense is held)
3. Supervisory Committee Approval Form
4. Final Reading Approval Form

Pick these forms up from the Office Assistant a few weeks before your Orals. Once the forms have been completed and have the appropriate signatures, immediately return them to the Office Assistant.

It is the Director of Graduate Studies' responsibility to submit change of grade forms to the Registrar and to post the Thesis grade for the semester in which Orals are held.

In the unusual case a candidate is not successful in the oral defense, the committee meets with the student to identify a pathway for completion. This might include revision of the thesis, additional course requirements, or independent study of research topics to compensate for deficiencies in content areas relevant to the degree may be required. Candidates are not allowed to schedule their oral defense unless there is a strong expectation of success.

Note: Since the oral defense must be completed mid-semester in the semester one expects to graduate, many candidates find the deadlines for thesis completion within their final (4th) semester and subsequent scheduling of oral defense very difficult to meet. One option is to graduate in the following (summer) semester without having to take further credits. This allows a candidate until the *end* of their final (4th) semester to complete the thesis requirements. To do this, all thesis work must still be completed before the end of the semester, including orals (faculty are not available during the summer). If orals are not held and Final Reading Approval obtained by the end of the semester, then the candidate must re- enroll and graduate in the following Fall or Spring semester.

Thesis Timeline

Since the MFA in Ballet is a 2-year degree program, students are encouraged to begin thesis discussions with faculty mentors during their 2nd semester (Spring of the first year) and begin thesis proposal preparation and preliminary research during the summer between the first and second year.

Fall of 2nd Year (3rd semester)

- Prepare thesis proposal (weeks 1-5)
- Present thesis proposal for approval (weeks 5-10)
- Thesis committees requested and finalized (by mid-semester)
- Thesis project implementation begins (2nd half of semester)

Spring of 2nd Year (4th semester)

- Thesis project implanted and mentored by committee.
- Thesis project publically presented (if applicable)
- Thesis written and approved by thesis committee
- Oral defense scheduled and publically advertised.
- Oral exam completed.
- Graduation protocol followed as dictated by the Graduate School.

The following are required deadlines that must be met in order to assure completion of the

thesis in the final semester in the program. Failure to meet these deadlines may put completion in jeopardy, and if a candidate falls too far behind schedule, a thesis committee may mandate a postponement of the oral defense to the following semester.

To graduate in the semester of the oral defense, theses must be submitted to the thesis editor and oral defense must be completed by mid-semester. If the oral defense is held at the end of the semester, a candidate will graduate in the following semester but will not have to pay for further credits.

Thesis-related online resources

Thesis Office: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/>

Thesis Calendar: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/calendar/>

Thesis Handbook: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/handbook/>

Thesis Templates: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/thesis-templates/>

Thesis Forms: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/forms/>

Thesis and Dissertation Boot Camp: <http://postdocs.utah.edu/dissertation-writing-boot-camps/>

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

There are graduate student grant and award opportunities available. The following is a partial list. More information can be found at <http://gradschool.utah.edu> or at the links below:

Graduate Student Travel Assistance

<http://gradschool.utah.edu/current-students/graduate-student-travel-assistance-award/>

CFA Individual Research Student (Undergraduate & Graduate) Travel Award

This travel fund is to support Individual Undergraduate or Graduate Students' travel to present or perform their scholarly or creative research at national or international venues. There is a limit of \$500 max per academic year for each applicant, and funds will be disbursed on a first-come basis. Please e-mail a completed application form to Associate Dean Sarah Projansky and be sure to include a copy of the formal invitation to present or a link to the conference/presenting organization's website listing you as a presenter/performer or be sure to include a paragraph from your department chair, school director, or faculty advisor explaining why this presentation or performance is important to your graduate career and/or education. Please direct any questions about the Individual Student Travel Grants to: sarah.projansky@utah.edu.

For more information: <http://www.finearts.utah.edu/students/current-undergraduates/resources>

Thomas G Stockham Medal for Conspicuously Effective Teaching (Graduate School)

<http://gradschool.utah.edu/tbp/thomas-g-stockham-medal-for-conspicuously-effective-teaching/>

Graduate Research Fellowships and Teaching Assistantships (Graduate School)

<http://gradschool.utah.edu/tbp/graduate-fellowship-opportunities/>

Reza Ali Khazeni Memorial Scholarship for Study Abroad

The Reza Ali Khazeni Memorial Foundation offers a study abroad scholarship for graduate students in Humanities, Fine Arts, Architecture, or Social & Behavioral Sciences. It provides support for graduate student research and study abroad. Applicants must submit applications to the College of Humanities Office (2100 LNCO). Amount: \$4000. Application is here:

<https://humanities.utah.edu/students/2017%20Khazeni%20Scholarship.pdf>

For more information, contact Natalie Montoya: natalie.montoya@utah.edu

WAGS Distinguished Master's Thesis Award (Graduate School)

<http://gradschool.utah.edu/current-students/awards/wags-thesis/>

Subsidized health insurance

For information regarding graduate student health insurance:

<http://gradschool.utah.edu/tbp/insurance-information/>

Residency

For information regarding residency for tuition purposes:

<http://admissions.utah.edu/apply/residency/>

STUDENT/FACULTY CODE

Link to University Policy 6-400: Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities

<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>

Link to University Policy 6-316: Code of Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

<http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-316.php>

Link to Ballet Program Standards & Requirements:

<http://www.dance.utah.edu/current-students/ballet/standards-requirements>

Link to Ballet Program Student Handbook:

<http://www.dance.utah.edu/current-students/ballet/student-handbook>

GRADUATION TIMELINE

To Graduate in the Same Semester as the Oral Defense

Semester Prior

- 1) Complete all creative or project based work (other than written component);
- 2) Meet with thesis committee for in-depth thesis discussion;
- 3) Complete outline form of written thesis;
- 4) Complete major portion of theoretical research;
- 5) Supply graduation office with an Application for Graduate Degree.

Semester Break

Begin Writing

Semester of Oral Defense

- 1) Week 1—Meet with committee for discussion
- 2) Week 2—At least one half of a thesis draft submitted to committee (12 pages minimum)
- 3) Week 3—Meet with committee for thesis draft feedback
- 4) Week 4—Second half of thesis draft submitted to committee (additional 12 page minimum)
- 5) Week 5—Meet with committee for thesis draft feedback
- 6) Week 6—Complete edits of thesis draft thesis as suggested by the committee and resubmit
- 7) Week 7—Meet with committee for thesis draft feedback
- 8) Week 8—Thesis re-write presented to committee in final form, oral defense scheduled
- 9) Week 9—Oral defense
- 10) Week 10—Thesis submitted to Editor, grades submitted to Administrative Assistant
- 11) Week 11-16—Finish with the Thesis Editor

To Graduate in the Semester Following the Oral Defense

Semester Prior (Spring)

- 1) Finish all creative work
- 2) Meet with thesis committee for in-depth thesis discussion
- 3) Complete outline form of thesis
- 4) Complete major portion of theoretical research

Semester Break

Begin Writing

Semester of Oral Defense

- 1) Week 2—Meet with committee for discussion
- 2) Week 5—At least half of a thesis draft submitted to committee (12 pages minimum)
- 3) Week 6—Meet with committee for thesis draft feedback
- 4) Week 8—Second half of thesis draft submitted to committee (additional 12 pages minimum)
- 5) Week 9—Meet with committee for thesis draft feedback
- 6) Week 11—Complete draft of edited thesis as suggested by the committee submitted
- 7) Week 12—Meet with committee for thesis draft feedback

- 8) Week 13—Second thesis re-write presented to committee in final form, oral defense scheduled
- 9) Week 15—Oral defense
- 10) Post Semester End—Thesis submitted to Editor, grades submitted to Administrative Assistant, Finish with the Thesis Editor

GRADUATE FORMS & LINKS

Forms Checklist

- _____ Request for Supervisory Committee
- _____ Master's Application for Admission to Candidacy
- _____ Report of the Final Examination for the Master's Degree
- _____ Supervisory Committee Thesis Approval
- _____ Grade Change Forms (for each Thesis Research course previously assigned a T)
- _____ Final Thesis Reading Approval
- _____ Thesis Release
- _____ Transcripts (unofficial ok)

Explanation Of Graduate Forms

Request for Supervisory Committee:

Completed shortly after the thesis proposal has been approved, this form identifies the members and chair of the thesis committee. Although the Graduate Advisor completes this form, it is the MFA candidate's responsibility to meet with the Graduate Advisor in order to provide him/her with committee member information

Master's Application for Admission to Candidacy:

This is a final record of the coursework the candidate wishes applied to the MFA Degree. The number of credit hours listed must be within one unit of the 60-credit requirement for the MFA in Ballet. The candidate must complete this form and provide it to the Graduate Advisor in their 3rd semester, and update this form each subsequent semester. The form is available online on the College of Fine Arts web site. Final corrections and additions to this form are made at the time the thesis oral defense.

Report of the Final Examination for the Master's Degree:

The thesis committee completes this form at the conclusion of the thesis oral defense. It verifies that the oral defense was completed and passed.

Supervisory Committee Approval:

The thesis committee, indicating the written thesis has been approved, signs this form at the successful conclusion of the thesis oral defense. Preliminary approval of the written thesis must be obtained from the thesis committee before the oral defense may be scheduled.

Grade Change Forms:

The thesis committee chair, at the conclusion of the oral defense, completes this form and submits it directly to the Registrar. This form allows the thesis committee chair to assign grades to Thesis credits from prior semesters.

Final Reading Approval:

This form is signed by the chair of the thesis committee, usually at the conclusion of the oral defense. If the committee requests any changes/rewrites of the written thesis, these changes must be made before this form is completed.

Transcripts:

Candidates submit their transcripts (unofficial is fine), which include grades for all semesters, to the College of Fine Arts along with the Report of the Final Examination for the Master's Degree, Master's Application for Admission to Candidacy form, the Supervisory Committee Approval (copy), and Final Reading Approval (copy).

Thesis Release:

The thesis editor provides this document when all written thesis work is completed and approved. The Thesis Release is required for the granting of the degree. Copies are sent to the College of Fine Arts, Graduation Office, the School of Dance and the candidate. Once received, the candidate should keep their Thesis Release in a safe place until the actual degree is received from the University.

Note: The MFA candidate should bring The Report of the Final Examination for the Master's Degree, Master's Application for Admission to Candidacy form, Supervisory Committee Approval, Grade Change forms and Final Reading Approval with them to the oral defense. Candidates should work with the Office Assistant to assure that these forms are available when needed.

The Graduate School homepage: <http://gradschool.utah.edu>

Graduate School Student Resources (includes important dates, forms, financial resources, and general information): <http://gradschool.utah.edu/current-students/>

Thesis-related online resources

Thesis Office: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/>

Thesis Calendar: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/calendar/>

Thesis Handbook: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/handbook/>

Thesis Templates: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/thesis-templates/>

Thesis Forms: <http://gradschool.utah.edu/thesis/forms/>

Thesis and Dissertation Boot Camp: <http://postdocs.utah.edu/dissertation-writing-boot-camps/>