

Thesis Contract

This document serves in lieu of a syllabus for the course D6970, Thesis Research - Masters.

It is our sincere desire that MFA students the Department of Modern Dance be successful in their course work and advanced thesis research leading to the completion of both the thesis creative project and written thesis document. To facilitate success in the completion of the MFA degree, the faculty has developed a thesis protocol for all MFA students and their thesis committee. The contract below outlines important and necessary communication protocol for a beneficial working relationship between the student and his/her thesis committee throughout the thesis process.

This document serves as a contract between you, and your thesis committee. The purpose of your thesis committee is to guide you through the thesis process, assist in its implementation, dialogue with you about your work, and voice any concerns or recommendations that the committee may have in order to best assure your success. Regular and consistent contact with your thesis committee will greatly assist in all aspects of the thesis process, including the actual writing of the thesis and preparation for orals. Therefore, it is essential and mandatory to have your supervisory committee members as advisors to witness all stages of your thesis work. This contract is to formalize and record the involvement of your committee in order to assure regular meetings with your thesis committee in regards to both the creative and theoretical/written components of your thesis work.

It is expected that each student in one's thesis work be self-motivated, self-directed and personally responsible for getting the work done in a timely and mature manner. It requires that a student be open to feedback, articulate in their thinking, and fully invested in all aspects of one's thesis work. Doing so allows each candidate to work with their thesis committee 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 parental and forceful role, thereby placing the student in a less mature and empowered position. Please work to avoid the later scenario, which can place stress upon all involved.

Grading/evaluation of thesis work will involve multiple factors, to include:

- Meeting with your committee as required in this document and keeping to expected timelines. It is the student's responsibility to organize and schedule committee meetings.
- Openness to and participation in committee feedback and dialogue.
- Perceived effort and commitment to one's thesis work.
- Quality of thesis work.
- Personal and artistic growth as a result of one's thesis work and process.
- Depth of reflection regarding one's thesis work.

Creative Component

Each thesis must include the creation and presentation of a minimum of 20 minutes of creative work completed in one's third year beyond the work done in required courses. The form of this work is to be developed, discussed and ultimately approved by one's thesis committee. Exceptions to this requirement must also be discussed, developed and approved by one's thesis committee. The work can be done all within one project or may be divided into several smaller works. It may involve choreography, performance, video, community based research, etc. The majority of one's creative work must relate specifically to one's thesis unless approved by one's thesis committee. The development of all creative work as a part of the 20-minute requirement must include the mentorship and involvement of the thesis committee prior to its presentation. This includes discussion of artistic development, presentation form, presentation venue and assessment of its ability to fulfill the creative thesis requirement.

To assist in the oversight of thesis work, each candidate must meet with their committee at the beginning of the fall semester to present a proposal as to how they will fulfill their 20-minute creative requirement. The candidate will again meet with their committee at the end of the fall semester, after the graduate concert, to reassess one's thesis plan.

All creative thesis work shown in the fall formal graduate concert **must** be seen in process a minimum of three times by one's committee prior to tech and dress rehearsals (given faculty schedules, it is not necessary for all committee members to be at every showing, but each committee member must see the work at least twice.) One of these three required viewings may be the salon showing of works usually scheduled a month before the graduate concert, with the work also being seen at least once before and after this salon showing. Failure to do so will automatically preclude the presentation of one's thesis work in that venue, and as a consequence may either jeopardize being able to complete one's graduate work or may require an extra semester's work. All other projects and presentations in alternative venues must include the involvement of one's thesis committee, to be determined through discussion with one's thesis committee. A salon showing at the end of spring semester will be provided for candidates to present work not shown on the graduate concert. The salon showing is offered as an opportunity to show one's work to the full faculty, particularly if one's full committee was not able to attend the presentation of a candidate's creative work. The work may be shown as a live performance or video documentation.

Theoretical/Written Component

The written thesis is a 25-40 page document unless the committee recommends or agrees to an alternative length. You must hold an initial committee meeting immediately after a committee has been formed. You are subsequently required to meet at least monthly with your committee regardless of the progress made since your last meeting. Failure to meet with your committee as required above may result in serious consequences (e.g. a lower grade for thesis work) and difficulty in the successful completion of thesis work (given faculty schedules, it is not necessary for all committee

members to be at every meeting, but each committee member should be given updated thesis written materials for feedback). Deadlines for submitting regular drafts of the written component will be developed in consultation with the committee. Failure to adhere to these deadlines may result in one not being able to complete his/her graduate work or may require an extra semester's work.

Candidate date

Committee Chair date

Eric Handman, Director of Graduate Studies date