



Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance

Graduate Handbook

M.F.A.

in Choreographic Inquiry

2026-2027

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INTRODUCTION

Defined by a dynamic blend of theory and practice, World Arts and Cultures/Dance (WACD) is led by a renowned faculty of scholars, activists, curators, filmmakers, and choreographers dedicated to critical cross-cultural analysis and art-making. We draw upon multiple disciplines and artistic approaches while encouraging students to position their work within broad social contexts. Our M.F.A. in Choreographic Inquiry promotes adventurous dance and performance-making and engages with global discourses around the body and performance.

The graduate program offers a Ph.D. degree in Culture and Performance, and a Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) in Choreographic Inquiry. The M.F.A. in Choreographic Inquiry offers students opportunities to engage multiple movement practices as they develop research in the form of new choreography. Students may supplement their choreographic work with media studies, critical dance studies, and study outside of the department that pertains to each student's conceptual interests.

While operating with considerable independence, the two graduate degree areas (Ph.D. in Culture and Performance and M.F.A. in Choreographic Inquiry) are unified by the department's common concerns for aesthetic production, corporeality and performance, the dynamics of tradition, social justice, and culture-building in contemporary societies. Connections are forged between critical theory and artistic practices and attention is given to the changing social roles and responsibilities of artists, practitioners, and scholars of the arts in the U.S. and worldwide.

Graduates have excelled in fields including technology and the arts, videography, documentary work, public service, education, theatrical/events production, performing arts, urban planning, law, environmental activism, public health, and medicine. They have made careers in community non-profits and activist groups, government arts agencies, museums, and arts foundations. Potential careers for M.F.A. graduates also include positions in research universities and colleges, and M.F.A. graduates are active as choreographers/performers in their own companies or with other professional organizations.

The faculty and staff of WACD are committed to students' educational success. Every effort will be made to remain flexible and accommodating in response to continuing and/or emerging public health, civic and personal concerns.

M.F.A. DEGREE PROGRAM

An abbreviated version of the information below can also be found in [Division of Graduate Education's Program Requirements online](#). UCLA's Standards and Procedures is also a valuable reference that provides detailed information and sets forth general policies, many of which emanate from the Academic Senate and its Graduate Council, regarding completion of degree requirements, master's and doctoral committees, examinations and foreign language requirements. [General regulations concerning graduate courses, standards of scholarship, disqualification, appeal, leave of absence, in-absentia registration, withdrawal, normal degree progress and a number of other matters are also included](#).

The WACD M.F.A. in Choreographic Inquiry is a two-year program designed to support and hone the research of choreographic artists and to prepare them for a professional career and teaching at the university level. The program focuses on the ethics and aesthetics of art-making, exploring contemporary cultural and political issues with an attention to dance-making in a global and interdisciplinary context. Our M.F.A. students receive direct mentorship from our accomplished faculty, and have access to guest artists and speakers, both in our department and across the UCLA campus. Their studies culminate in a capstone concert or portfolio.

We welcome international as well as US based choreographers from all backgrounds and with a range of physical abilities. We receive students whose work engages a wide array of movement idioms and traditions, such as West African dance, hip hop, tap, postmodern dance, dance theater, vogue femme, ritual work, folklorico, raqs sharqi, jazz, Bharatanatyam, contact improvisation, and more. The department also encourages students to connect with the broader dance, art, and performance scenes in Los Angeles, to bridge the divide between academy and community.

Our M.F.A. program is unique in that Choreographic Inquiry is a graduate degree within the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance, which offers undergraduate degrees in Dance and World Arts and Cultures and a PhD in Culture and Performance (CAP). The M.F.A. and CAP students regularly interact in the studios and classroom, have access to some parts of the other cohort's curriculum, and attend each other's presentations, which makes for a high level of intellectual engagement.

Students must successfully complete a total of 72 units, which breaks down to 12 units per quarter for six quarters. WAC/D is in session during Fall, Winter, and Spring quarters with summers reserved for independent research and individual pursuits. A minimum of 44 units must be taken at the graduate/professional level. These units address the three program areas: creative practice, theoretical/critical studies, and production/practicum experience. The remaining 28 units are electives that may be taken at the upper division and graduate level and typically include movement practice courses, field work, independent study, and courses outside the department.

Much of the M.F.A. program requires a dedicated studio practice. For information on studio booking and access, [see here](#). For additional information and assistance, contact Arsenio Apillanes at arsenioa@arts.ucla.edu.

The M.F.A. degree in Choreographic Inquiry is structured around eight essential benchmarks:

1. Critical/Theoretical Studies Paper: pg 15
2. The First Year M.F.A. Showing and Review: pg. 10
3. M.F.A. Capstone Project Proposal Presentation/Committee Formation, pgs. 16-23.
4. Production Calendar and Budget, pgs. 18 & 20 .
5. Final Showing/M.F.A. Advancement to Candidacy, pgs. 18 & 21.
6. The Capstone: Concert or Portfolio Model, pg 12 & 16-23.
7. Oral Examination and Reflection Paper, pgs. 19 & 22, .
8. Production Notebook/Video, pg. 24-25.

Advising

The M.F.A. degree in Choreographic Inquiry is organized around the relationship between the individual student, the student's adviser, the full M.F.A. faculty, and, once the student's Capstone Proposal has been accepted, the student's M.F.A. Capstone Plan Committee. Entering students will be assigned a faculty adviser from among the department's M.F.A. faculty for the first year. This adviser will take primary responsibility for academic counseling. Students meet with their respective faculty adviser each quarter to plan their program of study for the subsequent quarter. Each student's progress is assessed periodically by the full M.F.A. faculty.

Successful completion of the first-year curriculum determines whether students may continue in the program. Academic progress is assessed periodically by the M.F.A. faculty and documented in the Annual Review form. The form is an integral tool for faculty in determining funding and teaching assistantships for M.F.A.s.

It is the student's responsibility to

1. *Fill out their portion of the review form,*
2. *Ensure that their Faculty Adviser or M.F.A. Faculty Committee Chair fills out their portion,*
3. *Send the form to the department's Student Affairs Officer. Please be aware that the review should be completed in a timely manner to enable accurate evaluation of student performance.*

The Student Affairs Officer is available to assist you as you progress through the program and *quarterly meetings are strongly encouraged* to help you on track.

Foreign Language Requirement

None

Course Requirements

Students must successfully complete a total of 72 units. The 72 units of course work required for the degree must include a minimum of 44 units of graduate and professional courses (200 and 400 series). Courses must be taken for a letter grade (unless a course is offered as S/U only) to count towards degree progress and students must maintain a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0. No more than four units of WL Arts 596A may be applied toward the degree, and the course must be designed in consultation with the faculty adviser.

The required courses are distributed as follows:

(A) Creative practice - 20 units

- Dance 211A-D; additional units may be selected from Dance 222, Dance 274B, or 490)
- **Theoretical/critical studies seminars** - 12 units
- Chosen in consultation with the student's faculty adviser (Dance or WL Arts 200-series courses). Up to 4 of those units may be taken from appropriate graduate-level courses outside the department, with approval from the student's faculty adviser or Capstone Committee Chair.
- **Production/practicum experience** - 12 units
- Dance C243; additional units may be selected from production/design courses: Dance 441, C271 or others in consultation with student's faculty adviser
- **Electives in all areas** - 28 units
- e.g., education, movement studies, internship, field work, movement practices

Students are expected to be actively engaged in movement practice(s) throughout their studies. To continue into the second year of the program, students must successfully complete the first-year curriculum by earning a minimum grade of B in Dance 211A-C.

Required Courses	Units
Dance 211A	4
Dance 211B	4
Dance 211C	4
Dance 211D	4
One creative process course (may be 490, 274B)	4
One of the following courses: WL ARTS 201, WL ARTS 203, WL ARTS 204, or Dance 252	4
Two 200-series theoretical/critical studies seminars	8
Dance C243 (offered every other Fall quarter: 2025, 2027...)	4
Three production courses in addition to C243 B (may be 441, 271)	8
Elective courses (may be 100, 200, 400 or 500-series)	28
TOTAL REQUIRED UNITS	72 Units

M.F.A. SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Below is a **sample schedule** outlining the graduation requirements for students pursuing the M.F.A. in Choreographic Inquiry. Courses in **BOLD** are required core courses and must be taken in the quarter indicated. Courses with an underline are for students who plan to be Teaching Assistants (WL ARTS 495 – Required for TA employment and WL ARTS 496 - OPTIONAL).

These courses are not credited towards the M.F.A. degree. **Otherwise, this sample schedule is a suggestion as to how a student may complete their degree requirements pursuing our two-year Concert Model.** For an alternate model, see Portfolio Model, pg. 17.

Please note:

- Normative time to degree for the M.F.A. in Choreographic Inquiry is six academic quarters (two years). With faculty approval, students can elect to take as many as nine academic quarters (three years) to complete their studies, with the understanding that funding is prioritized for the first six quarters.
- Course offerings are subject to change.
- Dance courses numbered 100+ can be applied towards graduate-level elective credit.
- Movement practice courses numbered 2-99 cannot be applied towards graduate level credit; please consult your SAO to learn how to receive credit.
- Students must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 units and a maximum of 22 units per academic quarter. Discuss any exceptions with the Student Affairs Officer.
- Students must be registered and enrolled at all times unless they are on official leave of absence.
- **Students should consult with their Faculty Adviser and Student Affairs Officer regularly.**
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure all requirements are met.

Year 1

Fall (12-20 units)	Winter (12-20 units)	Spring (12-20 units)
Creative Practice: DANCE 211A (4 units)	Creative Practice: DANCE 211B (4 units)	Creative Practice: DANCE 211C (4 units)
WL ARTS 495 (2 units) - Teaching Assistant Seminar	Theoretical/Critical Studies Seminar & writing requirements for that course - 200-level (4 units)	Production/practicum experience: DANCE 441 (2 units) - Production Assistant
Production/practicum experience: DANCE C243 (4 units) - Production Arts Seminar (offered Fall 2025, 2027, etc.). If not offered in student's Year 1, student must enroll in Fall Year 2. OR Theoretical/Critical Studies Seminar & writing requirements for that course – 200 level (4 units) in the years that Dance C243 is not offered that Fall.	Elective: Movement Practice (2 units)	Theoretical/Critical Studies Seminar & writing requirements for that course -200-level (4 units)
Elective: Movement Practice (2 units)	Elective	WL ARTS 496 (2 units; Teaching Preparation - OPTIONAL)
Creative Practice: Dance C274B (often with guest artist) (4 units)		

Year 2

Fall (12-20 units)	Winter (12-20 units)	Spring (12-20 units)
Creative Practice: DANCE 211D (4 units)	Production/practicum experience: DANCE 441 (2 units) - Producing Capstone Project	Elective: DANCE 490 (4 units) - Independent study with a member of the Capstone Committee
Elective: DANCE 490 (2 units) - Capstone Proposal Showing	Electives/Movement Practices (4 units)	Production/practicum experience: DANCE 441 (4 units) - Produce Capstone and assemble Production Book/Video
Elective: Movement Practice (2 units)	Elective: DANCE 490 (6 units) - Independent study with member(s) of Capstone Committee	Electives/Movement Practices (4 units)
Production/practicum experience: DANCE C243 (4 units) - Production Arts Seminar (offered Fall 2025, 2027, etc.). If not offered in student's Year 1, student must enroll in Fall Year 2. OR Theoretical/Critical Studies Seminar – 200 level (4 units) in the years that Dance C243 is not offered that Fall.		

Creative Practice - 20 units, including:

Advanced Choreography Sequence

DANCE 211A (Year One, Fall)

- **Focus: Exploration/Experimentation**
- **Showing:** The emphasis is trying new approaches, so this informal showing is not about producing a finished work. It will be held during class time at the end of the quarter. The choreography faculty is invited to attend and provide feedback.
- **Work-in-progress:** No specific length is required. No technical staff assistance provided. Interest is in the student's curiosity as demonstrated by the explorations.

DANCE 211B (Year One, Winter)

- **Focus: Syntax/Craft/Elaboration**
- **Showing:** The focus is continued exploration and experimentation of new approaches to choreography. The showing will be during class time at the end of the quarter. Students are encouraged to follow up with M.F.A. faculty for feedback.
- **Work-in-progress:** No specific length required. No technical support provided. Interest is in seeing a continued focus on exploration of new ideas and choreographic approaches, fine-tuning of craft, and perhaps a deepening of previously explored ideas.

DANCE 211C (Year One, Spring)

- **Focus: Creative Process/Envisioning Capstone Project**
- **First Year Culmination Showing:** Scheduled usually the 9th or 10th week of the quarter, this presentation of choreographic work is a threshold moment for students, where faculty consider the student's progress in the program. Students may develop work from prior quarters or choose to further develop a study created during the current quarter. Approximately 10-15 minutes in total. Focus is on concrete development of choreography, demonstrating progress towards a thesis for the Capstone presentation. The choreography faculty and production team will attend. The student may invite other faculty and guests to attend the showing.
- **First Year Culmination Meeting:** This meeting will take place shortly after the First Year Culmination Showing. In preparation, the student is invited to share further ideas about the development of their work including possible location and dates for the Capstone. Only M.F.A. faculty attend this meeting, though the Production team will be invited to join in aspects of the discussion. If an M.F.A. faculty member can not attend this meeting, they will provide written feedback.

At this time, M.F.A. faculty members will formally review each student's progress towards the degree and recommend or dissuade continuation in the program. Students who have successfully completed the first-year curriculum (including prerequisites) with a "B" or above and passed the showing will be invited to continue into the second year.

DANCE 211D (Year Two, Fall)

- **Focus: Laboratory for development of Capstone Proposal**
- **Showing/Concert/Portfolio Proposal:** The 211D Showing serves as the Capstone Proposal Showing
 - **For students pursuing the Concert Model:** They will be expected to show approximately 15-25 minutes of material they have developed throughout the quarter. The work must be developed substantially in ideas and structure. It is the student's responsibility to coordinate and schedule with collaborators so that they are available for the showing.
 - **For students pursuing the Portfolio Model:** They will be expected to present work on their proposed Portfolio events, detailing the number, proposed schedule, and production expectations of all the events. Students will be expected to present 15-25 minutes of material as relevant to their Portfolio concept. The work must be developed substantially in ideas and structure.

- **Proposal Discussion:** A scheduled discussion in which M.F.A. faculty meet with the student to: 1. Determine if the student passes/provisionally passes their Concert/Portfolio Proposal; 2. Provide feedback to the student. If the student passes/provisionally passes, a committee may be officially formed. Though the student may already have a committee in mind, the student may formalize their Capstone Committee upon successful completion of their Proposal.
- For more details, please review M.F.A. Capstone Project Proposal Presentation/Committee Formation, pg. 14 to 19.

Other examples of courses fulfilling the Creative Practice requirement:

- **DANCE C222** (Music and Dance Collaborations)
- **DANCE C274B:** Projects in Dance
- **DANCE 490:** Independent Projects in Choreography and Performance
- Other courses may be considered in consultation with student's faculty adviser.

Theory/Critical Studies - 12 units at the 200 level Dance or WL Arts. A successful critical/theoretical paper written as part of one of these classes and earning a B or higher in the first year is required for program advancement, and will be included in the final production notebook. Consult your Faculty Adviser for course options each quarter.

It is strongly recommended:

1. That students enroll in PhD 200 level courses;
2. 4 of those units (one course) can be fulfilled by appropriate graduate-level courses outside of the department that pertain, pending approval from the student's faculty adviser or if a committee has been formed, their Capstone Committee Chair.

Production/Design - 12 units, including:

- **DANCE C243:** Production Arts Seminar (offered every other Fall Quarter only)
This seminar provides specific information and processes for the M.F.A. student to successfully self-produce work, at UCLA and professionally, and to develop knowledge and skills for the business side of professional art-making. For returning professionals, the class functions as a professional development seminar. Students should review the departmental information regarding student productions (accessible on Bruin Learn) and take DANCE C243 Production Arts.

This course is a core requirement of the M.F.A. degree.

- **DANCE 441:** Dance Production Practicum (May be repeated for maximum of 8 units)
The Instructor of Record for DANCE 441 is your Faculty Adviser (or Capstone Faculty Committee Chair if Capstone Faculty Committee has been officially constituted). Enroll in this course when serving as a Production Assistant for approved production (such as M.F.A. students' Capstone Projects), for serving as producer of your own final project, and for assembling the Digital Production Notebook.

Production Assistance Requirement: For the purposes of building a supportive community and to gain practical experience, students are expected to serve as a Production Assistant/Stage Manager for their 2nd year peers' Capstone Projects (or

alternatively in a major departmental production as approved by the faculty). The student will receive 2 units (DANCE 441: Production Practicum) for serving in this specific role. This production-related experience usually occurs during the first year of studies in order to be completed prior to the student's own final production.

- If the student has not acquired skills in production, music/sound, and design elements prior to joining the department, the student is highly recommended to take **DANCE C271** (Dance Production: Variable Topics).

Electives - 28 units, including:

- **Dance 490** (May be repeated for a maximum of 16 units) - Independent study or research/Capstone development.
- Electives may incorporate a number of areas of study (e.g., community/civic engagement, education, somatic studies, internship, field work, movement practices). Students with interdisciplinary interests are encouraged to take courses outside the department. Please consult with each course's Instructor of Record.

Beyond basic requirements, course requirements vary and are determined under the direction of Faculty Advisers. It is expected that students actively engage in movement practice(s) throughout their studies.

Teaching Experience

Teaching experience is not a requirement; however, it is highly recommended for those who plan to teach in their area of specialization. Students receive a questionnaire each year from the Department Chair to establish their teaching interests and credentials for the following academic year. The Chair will do their best to accommodate students' interests, whenever possible. *WL ARTS 495 must be taken in Fall Quarter of the student's first year to ensure eligibility for future teaching options, or concurrently in the first quarter the student has a Teaching Assistantship.* WL ARTS 496, Preparation for Teaching in World Arts and Cultures, is a pedagogy course offered in the department, usually in the Spring quarter, but is not required.

Field Experience

Engagement with local communities is strongly encouraged. Students may enroll in Dance 490 (independent study) with a faculty member to construct a project within a community.

Capstone Project Plan

The M.F.A. program follows the Capstone Plan towards completion of degree. An individual project evaluated by the candidate's proposed three-member Capstone Plan Committee is required.

Prerequisites for the Capstone project include:

- Completion of Dance 211A-C
- Completion of either WL ARTS 201, WL ARTS 203, WL ARTS 204, or Dance 252 and the writing requirements for that course.

- Dance 211D and C243 are underway
- A written Capstone proposal for the student's Capstone Project, and a proposal presentation to members of the M.F.A. faculty of the proposed work(s) is accepted.

The written Capstone proposal must include fundamental concepts, objectives, and production plans for the Capstone Project. M.F.A. candidates under the Capstone Plan prepare a culminating presentation (Concert Model) in the second year, or a series of presentations (Portfolio Model), for their respective Capstone Projects. More Specific guidelines for the completion of the written Capstone proposal and the Final Capstone Project presentation will be provided by the department.

After passing the preliminary requirements for the Capstone Project, the student formalizes their proposed three-member M.F.A. Capstone Plan Committee, which advises the student in developing the Capstone Project.

The student is advanced to candidacy once the required 72 units of coursework and all portions of the Capstone Plan's preliminary requirements have been completed. An oral defense of the Capstone project concert material is held with the candidate's M.F.A. Capstone Plan Committee, immediately after the Capstone Project has been completed.

A written (digital) production book with process notes, analysis, and critique, video documentation, and a short-form process-focused video about the Capstone must be completed after the Capstone Project. Specific guidelines for the production book, video documentation, and short-form video will be made available by the department. The production book and videos are filed in the department archives along with the video of the candidate's Capstone Project.

Advancement to Candidacy:

The student may advance to candidacy once the required course work and all portions of the preliminary requirements of the Capstone Plan are passed. The oral defense occurs in the week following the presentation of the Capstone Project, during which the candidate meets with the Capstone Committee to discuss the project, and determine the questions that inform the Reflection Paper.

A Production Book with analysis and critique and a process-focused video must be completed after the Capstone Project. Guidelines for the Production Notebook can be found on pages 19 to 22. Reach out to the SAO for a sample of previous Production Books that you may use as a template. (The production book is filed in the department's digital archives and the process-focused video is posted on the WACD website.)

Please refer to the following sections within this M.F.A. Handbook for more information:

- Critical/Theoretical Studies Paper, pg. 15
- M.F.A. Capstone Project: Concert Model (option 1), pg. 16
- Production Calendar/Checklist (on Bruin Learn), pg. 18
- M.F.A. Capstone Project: Portfolio Model (option 2), pg. 20
- Production Notebook & Reflection Paper, pg. 24
- Signature Page, pg. 24

Thesis Plan

None.

Time-to-Degree (TTD)

Students normally complete the M.F.A. requirements within six quarters of full-time study. The number of required quarters is dependent on the student's need to complete prerequisites or additional coursework on choreographic investigations but may not exceed nine quarters.

DEGREE	NORMATIVE TIME TO ATC (Quarters)	NORMATIVE TTD	MAXIMUM TTD
M.F.A.	6	6	9

CRITICAL/THEORETICAL STUDIES PAPER

The creative work of an M.F.A. student is informed by many sources. In addition to personal experience and insight, it is assumed that a working professional in dance is engaged with ideas, concepts and issues that arise from the larger artistic, social, historical and/or cultural milieu. The purpose of this written requirement of the M.F.A. is to encourage the development of analytical and research skills that complement artistic growth.

To advance to candidacy, each student must complete the major writing assignment of a graduate-level critical studies or theory course. This requirement may be fulfilled in WL ARTS 201, WL ARTS 203, WL ARTS 204, or Dance 252. The topic and structure of the paper will be determined by the requirements of the chosen course and its Professor. The completed paper must also be included in the student's culminating production notebook.

M.F.A. CAPSTONE PROJECT: CONCERT MODEL

The following information is intended for M.F.A. candidates who plan to complete their Capstone Project (i.e., M.F.A. final choreographic project) with a culminating *on-campus* concert or other choreographic project. *It is strongly advised that two M.F.A. candidates co-produce a shared final concert whenever possible*, rather than producing a single-choreographer evening. A shared concert benefits both candidates by combining their departmental funding and resources, attracting larger audiences, and providing a diversity of work within a single production. A shared evening may be the only way to fulfill the Capstone concert, given the demands on the department's performance schedule and resources. **Scheduling discussions for Capstone Concert will occur Year 1 Spring Quarter, organized by the 211C Faculty Instructor.**

Formation of M.F.A. Capstone Committee

The M.F.A. Capstone Committee is composed of three faculty members at a minimum, all of whom are either “ladder” faculty (i.e., they have University titles of Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor) or adjunct. It is advised that three committee members be drawn from M.F.A. faculty/Dance Studies scholars. A fourth faculty member may be invited to join, especially if their research and mentorship can assist the student in areas of specialized interest.

The Capstone Committee cannot be (formally) constituted until after the student passes the Capstone Proposal Showing, typically before the end of Year 2 Fall Quarter. Once approved to move forward, students select a Chair for the Committee from the WACD faculty based on who they feel has emerged as a mentor for them in their graduate school process. [Use the official Committee Nomination form on BruinLearn](#) in order to formalize a Capstone Committee. Submit the completed form to Matt in the WACD Student Affairs Office.

Capstone Concert Proposal

(1) Written Proposal Document

This document is developed and completed by the student in Dance 211D. The Instructor of 211D then shares it with M.F.A. faculty members prior to the Capstone Proposal Showing. The written proposal typically includes:

- **A Statement of Purpose** describing the student's choreographic concept(s) and the central ideas that drive this work or the collection of works. The statement may eventually be useful for publicity, press releases, etc.
- **Venue preference(s)** and dates (include number of shows and scheduling) with reference to the artistic concepts described above, referencing prior discussions with Arsenio Apillanes and Ginger Holguin.
- **Program information and order**, including:
 - Title(s)
 - Approximate length(s)
 - Collaborators (performers, composers, designers, etc.)
- A description of what already exists, and what is planned in terms of the development of individual pieces, and/or future pieces. This includes plans regarding all design and

sound elements, such as set, props, costuming, multimedia design, technical or interactive elements, etc.

- For a shared program, a consideration of the program order (i.e. address issues of aesthetic considerations, production elements, dancers' roles, etc.).

For samples of previous proposals, please ask the SAO.

Concert Proposal Presentation

This presentation includes the following components:

Performance

15-25 minutes of material, which can include entire pieces or sections that are mostly or partially completed. Altogether the concert/event must have a sense of a whole in relation to the Statement of Purpose. This may be accomplished as a live performance (vastly preferable, if working in a live medium) and/or video of the work(s).

Verbal and visual presentation

Following the performance, the student will be required to:

- Explain the artistic concepts defining the choreographic approach and design ideas.
- Provide sketches, mood boards and/or samples for any costumes, sets, or props.
- Briefly summarize the music/sound design.
- Show a visual model (e.g., sketches, 3-D model, etc.) of these plans if creating something that requires reconfiguring the performance space or proposing a site-specific event.

Please note if a student wants a non-M.F.A. faculty member to join their Capstone Committee, this person should be invited to their Proposal/Capstone Showing.

Students must document choreographic studies/rehearsals on video throughout the course of the process.

For information on studio booking and access, [see here](#). For additional information and assistance, contact Arsenio Apillanes.

The student is responsible for reviewing incorporated music/sound/visuals/text in order to determine which selections require copyright permission. The process of obtaining any necessary permission should begin as soon as possible.

Feedback/Evaluation Process

After the presentation, the M.F.A Faculty meet and make a recommendation. Typically, this occurs directly after the showing, but when schedule does not allow, this should happen within a week of the Proposal/Capstone Showing.

A "pass" evaluation indicates that the student should go forward with further refinements and development of the proposed work. The student may now formalize a Capstone Faculty Committee with a Committee Chair and access their Capstone budget allocation (please consult with the Department Manager on any procedures for payment/reimbursement).

A “provisional pass” indicates that the student may formalize a Capstone Faculty Committee and Chair, and that faculty have decided that while the proposal evaluation in general is positive, there are specific elements of the proposal that need further development. The Chair of the committee will communicate the goals the student needs to reach and the timeline by which to reach them. The student will “re-propose,” with the M.F.A. Capstone_Committee present, according to that timeline, typically early Winter quarter.

Note: While a provisional pass still allows the student to nominate their M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee and arrange a concert date with the Production Manager, a full pass is required in order to access the student’s budget allocation.

"No pass" decisions are made with the best interests of the student in mind. It may mean the faculty feels the student needs more time to develop the work and may suggest the concert dates be at a later time. If that becomes the case, the student schedules an additional showing as soon as possible in order to attain a pass. A Capstone Faculty Committee can not be formed, if the student receives a “No pass” decision.

The student must inform the Student Affairs Officer of the outcome of their proposal via email.

Concert Production Meeting (End of Fall quarter/early Winter)

As soon as the proposal presentation has been passed, the student and M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee Chair, in consultation with Arsenio Apillanes and Ginger Holguin, WACD Production and Event Managers, will meet to finalize venue and dates, and develop the **Production Calendar and Budget**. At that time all aspects of the student’s responsibilities as producer and artistic director of the final project work will be reviewed and confirmed. View the [Production Calendar/Checklist](#) here/on WACD Production BruinLearn. The Checklist is a recommended template; tasks, timings and priorities will shift according to the needs of the student’s particular body of artistic work and the date(s) of the performance(s).

At this time, the student should approach a 1st year M.F.A. student to serve as Production Assistant and develop a description and timeline of responsibilities.

The Committee Chair will attend at least one rehearsal in progress during the Winter Quarter. Students are welcome and encouraged to schedule additional studio visits with other committee members. Students should be enrolled in a 490 (Independent Study) with a member of their M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee, to deepen their knowledge of the subject matter of their Capstone and provide curricular touchpoints for its creative and scholarly progress.

Final Showing and Production Review

A Final Showing of the concert/event takes place at a minimum of three weeks before the performance dates. A date should be scheduled in conversation with the student, the Committee Chair and the production team. This showing is primarily for the M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee as well as the design/production faculty and staff. The student may want to invite other viewers. All design elements (music/sound selections, collaborations, etc.) should be in their final stages. A feedback session with the M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee and production team follows this showing.

After the Final Showing and Production Review, the student should schedule regular weekly meetings with the M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee Chair, Production Manager, Production Assistant, and Stage Manager to ensure all aspects of the project are dealt with in a timely fashion.

Masters Advancement to Candidacy (MATC)

The MATC form may only be completed after course requirements have been completed and the Final Showing has been approved by the M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee. It is the student's responsibility to file advancement to candidacy forms for the master's degree in the major department *no later than the second week of the quarter in which the student expects the award of the degree*. Following a normative 6-quarter model, this would be second week of Spring quarter, year 2.

Failure to do so will prevent the student from receiving the degree until the quarter in which the forms are filed and the student is advanced to candidacy, regardless of when the degree requirements were completed. Candidates have one calendar year from the date of advancement to candidacy in which to complete all requirements for the degree. After that point, a petition to extend candidacy is required. The MATC form is completed with the Student Affairs Officer and submitted to the Registrar. It is advisable to keep a copy of the MATC form for your records.

Oral Defense

The oral defense takes the form of a post-production meeting with the M.F.A. Faculty Committee. **It is the student's responsibility, along with their Committee Chair, to set up this meeting** no later than one week after the last performance of choreographic work so that the concert of works can be reviewed as a whole. Given faculty's complicated schedules, M.F.A. students are strongly encouraged to calendar this meeting several weeks in advance. Also included in this review will be a discussion on the completion of the Production Notebook, including the Reflection Paper. Suggested questions and guidelines for the Reflection Paper are developed by the M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee at this time.

M.F.A. CAPSTONE PROJECT: PORTFOLIO MODEL

The Portfolio Model may be considered as:

1. A series (minimum of three, no more than five) of low/no-tech events and/or publications/videos/artworks over the course of one or two quarters that express the student's research in modes that are not fulfilled by a concert presentation. For example, this could be a combination of performance lectures, participatory workshops, public interventions, site-work, durational work, publications, visual artwork, video works, and/or more.
2. A concert or series of events structured through commissions or productions in theaters beyond UCLA. This type of Portfolio may be conducive for students who wish to maintain existing professional commitments throughout the degree process.

A Portfolio may combine any of these approaches, but **excludes a produced Concert in Kaufman Hall.**

Regardless of the modes that the candidate chooses to explore, the Portfolio of works must revolve around a Capstone Committee approved thematic, and the candidate's approach to choreographic inquiry must be evident throughout. Given the serial nature and scheduling of the Portfolio Model, the student must be prepared to self-produce their events, as production support will only be given as available. However, the student will receive the same amount of financial support from the department that is given to students pursuing the Concert Model.

Scheduling discussions for Portfolio Showing will occur throughout Year 1, but no later than Spring Quarter Year 1.

Portfolio events on the UCLA campus must satisfy the following parameters:

1. It is a one-day/night event only.
2. A core WACD Capstone Committee faculty member actively oversees and agrees to be responsible for the event. (In most cases, this would be the candidate's M.F.A. Capstone Committee Chair).
3. WACD staff must be involved/are required to support; all campus regulations, including fire regulations, are observed.
4. Admission is free and the event is not ticketed.
5. Student will work with an M.F.A. Production Assistant.
6. Additional coordination of personnel will need to be worked out with the Production Manager well in advance.

Portfolio events scheduled at other venues/cities must satisfy the following parameters:

1. Student will work with the production resources provided by the contracting venue.
2. Student will have access to the WACD production allocation, amplified by any funds from the contracting venue.
3. WACD will provide studio space for rehearsal, a production assistant, and offer consultation with staff.
4. Student will secure documentation of their work for evaluation and discussion with their Capstone Committee. WACD will not provide financial support for documentation.

Formation of M.F.A. Capstone Committee

The M.F.A. Capstone Committee is composed of three faculty members at a minimum, all of whom are either “ladder” faculty (i.e., they have University titles of Assistant, Associate, or Full Professor) or adjunct. It is advised that three committee members be drawn from M.F.A. faculty/Dance Studies scholars. A fourth faculty member may be invited to join, especially if their research and mentorship can assist the student in areas of specialized interest.

Because the plan for a Capstone Portfolio should be formulated in Spring of Year one, it is suggested that the student work closely with their advisor and/or a chosen faculty mentor to begin planning until a Capstone Committee can be formed, post Proposal.

Portfolio Proposal

If interested in choosing the Portfolio route, it is absolutely crucial that the student present their Portfolio Proposal by Spring Quarter (or earlier) of the first year. A Portfolio project will not be considered after Spring quarter of the first year. A successful proposal will require the student to:

- Articulate what issues are being explored in the proposed events. What forms of knowledge gained in WACD form the basis for these works? How do the proposed pieces contribute to a coherent set of ideas? This portion of the proposal must include a statement demonstrating why the Portfolio Model is the most appropriate means to culminate the student’s M.F.A. studies.
- Include an outline and schedule of the works to be considered as part of the portfolio. The works should be discussed in terms of how they contribute to the overall coherence of the portfolio.
- Propose methods of post-production evaluation for the various performance events. What methods will be used to obtain responses to the works from the site(s) of production? For example: video documentation of post-performance discussions, written responses from audience members, etc.

Follow-up

If the student seeks to make substantial revisions to the Portfolio proposal, these revisions must be approved prior to implementation. Arguments for revisions must address the same information requested in the initial proposal. Proposed revisions should be submitted for faculty approval as soon as possible. Regularly scheduled meetings with the nominated committee Chair are important in order to ensure appropriate feedback and supervision of the work.

Portfolio Events

In the event that a committee member is unable to attend a Portfolio event, video documentation of all Portfolio events should be made available to M.F.A. Capstone Committee members. Again, there should be a sense of integration of the choreographer’s creative goals even though the works will be produced on separate occasions. A coherence of perspective is given to the body of work proposed for consideration as part of the student’s “portfolio.” All Capstone events should be scheduled for no later than 4th week of Spring quarter, year 2,

leaving enough time to complete the Oral Examination, Reflection Paper, and Production Notebook.

Masters Advancement to Candidacy (MATC)

The MATC form may only be completed after course requirements have been completed and the final project (concert or portfolio model) proposal has been approved by the M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee. It is the student's responsibility to file advancement to candidacy forms for the master's degree in the major department *no later than the second week of the quarter in which the student expects the award of the degree*. Failure to do so will prevent the student from receiving the degree until the quarter in which the forms are filed and the student is advanced to candidacy, regardless of when the degree requirements were completed. Candidates have one calendar year from the date of advancement to candidacy in which to complete all requirements for the degree. After that point, a petition to extend candidacy is required. The MATC form is completed with the Student Affairs Officer and submitted to the Registrar. It is advisable to keep a copy of the MATC form for your records.

Oral Examination

The oral examination takes the form of a post-production meeting with the M.F.A. Capstone Committee. In anticipation for the completion of all the works in the portfolio to have been produced and presented, the student and their committee chair should set up a final meeting. This meeting should occur no later than one week after the last Portfolio event so that the Portfolio can be reviewed as a whole. Also included in this review will be a discussion on the completion of the Production Notebook, including the Reflection Paper. Suggested questions and guidelines for the Reflection Paper are developed by the M.F.A. Capstone Committee at this time, but the paper will also include post-production evaluations from each location site.

M.F.A. Program Timeline

What follows is a rough guide intended to help the student direct their choreographic activities and ensure the completion of all degree requirements. Timelines vary based on the individual, but the following details reflect final deadlines for requirement completion. **Where possible, it benefits the student to operate ahead of this schedule.**

Year One – The choreographic focus is on exploratory studies, the development and deepening of work. In addition to the student's choreographic exploration and coursework, he/she will concentrate on meeting the following goals:

Fall

- Coursework & studio exploration

Winter

- Coursework & studio exploration

Spring

- Year 1 Culminating Showing/Evaluation/Meeting:
 - Portfolio model: proposal and decision

- Concert model: project discussions and initial planning

Year Two

Fall

- Writing Capstone Proposal
- Capstone Proposal Showing (as part of Dance 211D)
- Formation of M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee; complete M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee Nomination Form
- Begin documentation process of Capstone process for the Production Notebook

Winter

- Update/Revise original proposal as needed
- Working on Capstone/Concert Model
- Portfolio Events
- Establish regular meetings with M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee, and especially the committee Chair, to follow rehearsals (for Concert Model) or Portfolio events. (enroll in 490)

Spring

- Portfolio Events
- Presentation of Capstone Concert. Meet with M.F.A. Capstone Committee for Post-Production Meeting after all works have been presented and documented.
- File Advancement to Candidacy forms upon planned completion of coursework.
- Submit Production Notebook, including process video, for approval and signatures by the M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee no later than Monday of Week 8.

PRODUCTION NOTEBOOK, VIDEO & REFLECTION PAPER

The Production Notebook and accompanying process video create a record of a student's creative work at UCLA. The notebook captures the final choreographic work(or portfolio of works), constitutes a legacy for future students and researchers, and offers a template for professional archival practices. The notebook should be written in a way that allows clear access to the imaginative contributions of the student/artist. The guidelines can adjust to the student's individual needs, in consultation with the faculty academic adviser and/or M.F.A. Faculty Committee Chair.

Overview

The Production Notebook includes the Signature Page, the Post-Production Reflection Paper, accompanying Appendices (see below), the Critical/Theoretical Studies Paper, the Concert/Portfolio proposal, a URL linked to a **permanent** location (such as the WACD Vimeo site, administered by Will O'Loughlin, Video Manager) of a full-length, high quality video document of the Capstone, and a short form, five to ten minute video about the process and production. These materials are aggregated in a high-resolution PDF document and submitted to the Student Affairs Officer, who completes the final process of notifying the Registrar of the student's eligibility to receive their degree. It is the student's responsibility to check with the departmental Student Affairs Officer on degree completion. The Student Affairs Officer can also provide access to Production Notebooks from past M.F.A. concerts and portfolios for reference.

Guidelines

The following pages are placed in order of sequence in the Production Notebook:

- [Signature Page](#)
- **Title page**, including in the following order:
 - Capstone Title(s)
 - Performance/Event date(s)
 - Performance/Event venue(s)
 - The student's name
- **Table of Contents page**, including:
 - Post-production Reflection Paper
 - Appendices (list as needed)
 - Critical/Theoretical Studies Paper
 - M.F.A. Written Concert Proposal
 - URLs for documentation and process video

NOTE: Please DO NOT include long e-mail strands or other non-essential documentation.

Content of the Reflection Paper

Following the completion of the Capstone, the student engages in an Oral Examination with their Capstone Committee Members. One of the purposes of this meeting is to develop three questions for the student to elaborate on in a 25-35 page Reflection Paper. These questions emerge from the conversation between Committee Members and the student, and are intended

to help the student synthesize the major takeaways from the Capstone Process. Each set of questions is specific to the student but may include topics such as the relationship between the student's research and the Capstone, lessons learned from the development process, or future intentions. During the Oral Examination, first and final draft deadlines are determined. The Committee Chair is the primary reader of the Reflection Paper, but all Committee Members may make notes/suggestions.

Appendices

Appendices must include the following:

- The Program(s) and/or playbills.
- A summary of the production schedule and support staff in detail. Include the Production Assistant's summary of responsibilities report.
- Promotion and publicity materials: summarize efforts to promote the concert. Include examples of posters, flyers, ticket sales, social media, etc.
- Budget projections of expenses and income
- Final budget summary, including original estimated budget and final budget forms.
- Original Concert/Portfolio proposal.
- Event Info sheet and/or Tech Rider.
- Contact sheet or cast and crew list.

Student may also choose to include:

- Notes, sketches on/for the choreography.
- Costume design, props, lighting, and/or multimedia notes and sketches:

A summary of working processes with the respective designers/creative collaborators where applicable, including a 30-word bio of each of the creative collaborators.

- Music/sound design notes; music use rights (if appropriate).

A summary of working processes with the respective designers/creative collaborators where applicable, including a 30-word bio of each of the creative collaborators.

Critical/Theoretical Studies Paper, see pg. 12.

URLs for documentation and short form video

Provide URLs linked to a **permanent** location (such as the WACD Vimeo site, administered by Will O'Loughlen, Video Manager) of the following:

- Full-length, high quality video document of the Capstone
- A short form, **five-minute video** about the process and production. This serves as a record of the process of making your Capstone. It can include rehearsal footage, talking head interviews with you and your cast, voiceover, or something more inventive of your design. It can also include footage from your performance if you like, but this is NOT a sizzle reel, or trailer of your show. It's meant to give some insight into how the performance was developed, which could include information about your process, your collaborators, inspirations, references, etc. Captions and subtitles encouraged.

- Students may consult with the M.F.A. Program Director for further clarification on what to include in this video. Sample videos are on the [WACD website](#). Please note that student may be asked to edit their first draft in terms of content or length, so they should plan accordingly to submit the final version at the time of Production Notebook completion.

Timeline

In order to graduate, a proposed final draft of the Reflection Paper and Production Notebook must be submitted to the M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee and Production Manager by Monday of Week 8 in order to give enough time for feedback and editing. It must be reviewed and signed off by M.F.A. Capstone Faculty Committee members no later than Friday of Week 10.

REGISTRATION, LEAVES, AND ACADEMIC DISQUALIFICATION

For complete information involving graduate study policies, visit [Standards & Procedures for Graduate Study at UCLA](#). Below are some components of the *Standards and Procedures* document with departmental regulations not listed in *Standards and Procedures*.

Readmission

University requirements state that unless granted a formal leave of absence, continuing graduate students who fail to register are considered to have withdrawn from the University and must compete for readmission with all other applicants. Thus, applicants who were previously registered at any time as graduate students at UCLA, whether having completed a graduate program or not, should submit an online Application for Graduate Admission and submit this to Graduate Admissions/Student and Academic Affairs with the application fee. Official transcripts of record for all college and university work completed since last registration at UCLA should be sent directly to the major department. A formal application for readmission is not required for students who are returning immediately from an official leave of absence. Please check with the department's Student Affairs Office for any additional requirements pertaining to readmission.

Leave of Absence

Continuing graduate students in good standing (3.0 GPA or above) who have completed at least one term of UCLA graduate work may, with the support of their department and the approval of the Division of Graduate Education, be eligible for a leave of absence. Graduate students are allowed a maximum of three quarters of official leave of absence. Additional requests are reviewed in exceptional circumstances.

A student may [request a leave of absence](#) for the following reasons: emergency, family obligation (e.g., parenting), medical, military, outside employment, and financial hardship.

Part Time Enrollment

In most cases, completion of master's and doctoral degrees requires full-time graduate study. However, in some circumstances, there may be legitimate reasons for graduate students to reduce their course load.

The "[Policy and Procedures Concerning Part-Time Study in the University of California](#)" allows qualified graduate students, who are unable to attend full-time, to petition to enroll part-time for reasons of occupation, family responsibility, or health. Students who are approved for part-time status are eligible for reduced tuition and fees (see below).

Part-time graduate enrollment is defined as one half or less of a regular full-time course load (12 units of graduate or upper division coursework). Unless part-time study has been approved, students must be enrolled full-time and in good academic standing (GPA of 3.0 and making normative degree progress).

Academic Disqualification

UNIVERSITY POLICY

A student who fails to meet the above requirements may be recommended for academic disqualification from graduate study. A graduate student may be disqualified from continuing in the graduate program for a variety of reasons. The most common is failure to maintain the minimum cumulative grade point average (3.0) required by the Academic Senate to remain in good standing (note that some programs require a higher grade point average). Other examples include failure of examinations, lack of progress toward the degree, poor performance in core courses, etc. Probationary students (those with cumulative grade point averages below 3.0) are subject to immediate dismissal upon the recommendation of their department. University guidelines governing academic disqualification of graduate students, including the appeal procedure, are outlined in [*Standards and Procedures for Graduate Study at UCLA*](#).

DEPARTMENTAL POLICY

A recommendation for academic disqualification is made by the Chair of the department after a vote of the graduate faculty. Before the recommendation is sent to the Division of Graduate Education, a student is notified in writing and given two weeks to respond in writing to the Chair. An appeal is reviewed by the department's graduate faculty. The faculty then submits the final departmental recommendation to the Division of Graduate Education.

FUNDING

Graduate funding can come from a variety of sources including federal financial aid; departmental, school, and Division of Graduate Education funding; as well as Teaching Assistantships, Graduate Student Researcher, and external scholarships. All funding is dependent upon continuous full-time enrollment and remaining in satisfactory standing in the department. For information on how Leave of Absence and Part Time Enrollment impacts funding, please refer to the relevant policies from the Division of Graduate Education. In Absentia enrollment does not affect a student's continuous enrollment. For rules on Leaves of Absence, please see the [Division of Graduate Education's Standards and Procedures for Graduate Studies at UCLA](#); please note the different requirements for resident versus international students. For federal financial aid, please visit the [UCLA Financial Aid and Scholarships Office](#) for eligibility requirements, application, and additional information. [All federal financial aid is managed by](#) their office.

UCLA Division of Graduate Education provides a [comprehensive handbook to acquaint you with the range of opportunities to support your graduate study at UCLA](#). The Division of Graduate Education also provides a search database for additional opportunities. [UCLA GRAPES](#) allows you to search for awards from among 625 scholarships, grants, fellowships, and postdoctoral awards.

Teaching Assistant positions through the department are available through an application process. The department will send out a call for applications during the Winter Quarter. Graduate students interested in searching for Teaching Assistantship vacancies outside of their home department are encouraged to subscribe to use [Division of Graduate Education's TA Marketplace](#) where open positions throughout campus are located.

There will be additional opportunities for scholarships throughout the academic year from WACD, The School of Arts and Architecture, and other external resources.

WACD GRADUATE AFFAIRS: BRUINLEARN

This BruinLearn Resource has the items listed below and includes information specific to, and commonly utilized by, the graduate students within the Department of World Arts and Cultures/Dance.

The forms can also be found online through the Division of Graduate Education site, or by visiting the Student Affairs Officer. Please note the information provided on Bruin Learn does not include all university and non-university sources. Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with additional campus and non-campus resources specific to their needs.

- C.A.P Requirements and Handbooks
- M.F.A. Requirements and Handbooks
- Forms
- TA Handbooks
- Funding and Financial Assistance
- Additional Resources

Students will be automatically added to the Graduate Affairs Bruin Learn, which will also allow you to receive announcements from the WACD Student Affairs Office.

For access, students should visit: <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/98184> and log in with a UCLA logon ID and password.

*The Production Calendar (Timeline Template) and Budget List examples are provided on the [WACD Production](#) BruinLearn, please contact Ginger Holguin, Production Manager for access. <https://bruinlearn.ucla.edu/courses/98127>