

# MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN DANCE

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The Department of Dance at Sam Houston State University offers a 60-hour program of study leading to the Master of Fine Arts degree in Dance, the terminal degree in studio arts. The degree normally takes three years to complete. The program is designed to provide intensive studio experience with substantive choreographic and performance opportunities, underscored by a broad exposure to the philosophical, theoretical, and creative process context of dance as an art form. A creative or performance thesis is required for graduation. Competitive Graduate Assistantships are awarded each year to students based on qualifications and academic standing. A returning professional track is available for qualified candidates.

The curriculum emphasizes choreography and performance, including a significant number of dance technique classes, particularly for candidates coming directly from undergraduate study. Dance professionals in career transitions will find that the program allows considerable latitude to formulate plans of study that meet their needs. The curriculum also includes courses in:

- Composition
- Production
- Dance theory
- Pedagogy
- Somatics
- Research methods
- Integrated technology
- Professional issues in dance

Elective hours may be used outside the Department of Dance for coursework that may apply to the candidate's thesis production or other research interests.

**Additional information:** Reference the Program Landing Page (<https://www.shsu.edu/programs/graduate/dance/>) for additional information, such as cost, delivery format, contact information, or to schedule a visit.

The application process for the MFA in Dance is two-fold. Candidates must apply for acceptance to Sam Houston State University through the Office of Graduate Admission (<https://www.shsu.edu/dept/graduate-admissions/prospective-students.html>). They must also audition for acceptance into the Department of Dance MFA program.

To apply for graduate study at SHSU, submit the following materials:

1. Graduate Studies Online Application submitted online through ApplyTexas (<https://www.shsu.edu/admissions/apply-texas.html>) with the application fee.
2. Transcripts of all previous college work.
3. Confirmation of undergraduate degree conferral.

Once the Graduate Studies Online Application is received, prospective students may upload the following supplemental materials online at SHSU Self Service Center (<http://www.shsu.edu/checkstatus/>):

1. Resume/curriculum vitae.
2. Three letters of recommendation.
3. Letter of inquiry.

In addition to the online application for admission to SHSU graduate studies, prospective MFA students must also demonstrate preparation for graduate study in dance to the dance faculty.

1. Submit links to your video portfolio of choreography and performance to Dionne Noble ([dln008@shsu.edu](mailto:dln008@shsu.edu)). **Do not upload this to the self service portal.**
2. Audition and interview with the dance faculty. Auditions are scheduled on-site. Arrangements can be made for a long-distance audition including a Skype interview if the applicant is not able to come to scheduled auditions. The audition includes:
  - Submission of a writing sample.
  - Interview with the dance faculty.
  - Technique audition in both ballet and modern dance.
  - Performance of a self-choreographed solo.

Admission is based upon an aggregated evaluation of all application components.

Code	Title	Hours
<b>Master of Fine Arts in Dance</b>		
<b>Specified Courses</b>		
DANC 5333	Development of Advanced Skills In Dance	15
DANC 5360	Seminar In Dance Production	3
DANC 5371	Theory Of Dance	3
DANC 5373	Laban Movement Analysis	3
DANC 5376	Dance Composition I	3
DANC 5378	Dance Composition II	3
DANC 5380	Dance Composition III	3
DANC 5384	Dance Pedagogy in Higher Education	3
DANC 5385	Research Methods In Dance	3
DANC 5388	Dance and Integrated Technology	3
DANC 5389	Professional Issues in Dance	3
<b>Prescribed Electives</b>		
Select 9 credit hours of the following:		9
DANC 5092	Special Topics	
DANC 5093	Independent Study	
The graduate faculty in Dance will entertain petitions from the candidate to take courses from other disciplines pending appropriate justification within the overall course of study designed by the candidate in consultation with the graduate advisor.		
<b>Thesis</b>		
DANC 6098	Thesis	3
DANC 6099	Thesis	3
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>60</b>

Successful completion of a comprehensive oral examination is required for graduation. This exam, which is administered by a committee of three dance faculty, is administered during the final semester. Oral examination committees are appointed by the Graduate Advisor in consultation with the Graduate Committee and the student. Additional comprehensive examination information (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/graduate-and-professional/academic-policies-procedures/degree-requirements-academic-guidelines/#comprehensive-examination>) is located in the Graduate Degree Requirements (<https://catalog.shsu.edu/archives/2025-2026/graduate-and-professional/academic-policies-procedures/degree-requirements-academic-guidelines/#degree-requirements>) section of the SHSU Graduate Catalog.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) marketable skills initiative is part of the state's **60x30TX plan** and was designed to help students articulate their skills to employers. Marketable skills are those skills valued by employers and/or graduate programs that can be applied in a variety of work or education settings and may include interpersonal, cognitive, and applied skill areas.

The MFA in Dance is designed to provide graduates with the following marketable skills:

- Substantive choreographic and performance skills to support artistic exploration.
- Ability to communicate clearly in writing and speech.
- Qualification to teach dance techniques and related dance coursework in higher education.
- Effective leadership, management, team-building, and independent work strategies.
- Strengthened creative thinking and problem-solving skills that include the ability to innovate, inquire, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information.