The Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance

Academic Requirements

Table of Contents

- Residence Requirements
- Bachelor of Fine Arts Curriculum Requirements
  - Course Requirements
- Master of Fine Arts Curriculum Requirements
  - Course Requirements

Residence Requirements

The four year Bachelor of Fine Arts and Certificate of Fine Arts programs and the Master of Fine Arts and Advanced Certificate of Fine Arts programs require a minimum of two years full-time study with the final semester being in residence.

Bachelor of Fine Arts Curriculum Requirements

The Bachelor of Fine Arts degree is conferred when a student successfully completes a minimum of 120 units and fulfills all curriculum, performance, choreographic, and production requirements of The Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance, and those of the School of Critical Studies. Certificate of Fine Arts candidates do not complete Critical Studies requirements; the remainder of their program is identical to that of BFA candidates. Critical Studies requirements are detailed and course descriptions are provided in the Critical Studies section of this Course Catalog. The entire faculty of The Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance makes all judgments about eligibility for a degree or certificate.

The curriculum is designed to ensure that all students excel in four primary areas: technique/performance, composition/choreography, dance production, and contextual studies. The School of Dance maintains an active production schedule and students are consistently involved in rehearsal processes leading to performance. Performances throughout the year present work by students, faculty, and guest artists. Auditions are held regularly and all students in good standing are eligible to audition throughout the school year.

Students are required to enroll in Contemporary, Hip Hop and Ballet Techniques every semester. Students must also complete six semesters of Composition/Choreography. All choreographic work to be performed at CalArts must be shown to the faculty and student body for critique and guidance during the regularly scheduled Choreo/Performance Lab prior to performance. Students are required to complete a yearlong course in the fundamental skills of theatrical production, such as basic principles of lighting design, sound design, costume construction, and video recording. In addition to the required coursework in design and technology, students must complete 6 units of production crewing.

Within the métier, all dance students take courses in dance history, cultural studies, and anatomy of movement. Additionally, students take courses within the School of Critical Studies and other métiers in a broad range of courses designed to provide a breadth of exposure, critical thinking skills, and interdisciplinary collaborations. In addition to the elective courses offered in the dance school, Balinese and African dance are offered through the music school.

Students accepted as transfer students are evaluated at the time of acceptance to ensure appropriate placement in the program. All decisions regarding leaves of absence must be approved by the full faculty. Each student works closely with his or her mentor who provides individualized support and guidance in maximizing the opportunities for personal and professional development through the four years of study.

All students participate in annual reviews with the full faculty. Students must successfully pass the mid-residency review in the spring of the BFA-2 year to continue within the program. Students must successfully pass the graduation review in the final semester to be eligible for conference of the degree of Bachelor of Fine Arts. The BFA program is accredited by the National Association of Schools of Dance and requires successful completion of a minimum of 120 units.

Learning Outcomes

Over the course of study, the Bachelor of Fine Arts candidate will:

1. Demonstrate a strong, dexterous, versatile facility in contemporary dance techniques
2. Apply knowledge of the choreographic process and a broad view of dance as an art form relevant to today's art practices
3. Apply practical experience and understanding of all aspects of dance performance production
4. Demonstrate skill sets for creative problem solving including initiating collaborative dialogue with other artists and art forms.
5. Communicate their own artistic vision and needs through spoken and written word
6. Students will use the professional tools they are taught to create options for career advancement
Bachelor of Fine Arts Course Requirements

The following courses are required but do not constitute a student’s entire program. Students are required to complete an additional 2 semesters of Composition/Choreography electives (courses notated with an asterisk). Students must also complete 6 units of Production Crewing.

First Year
- DTCH 121, 122 Contemporary Techniques
- DTCH 101, 102 Ballet Technique
- DPER 101, 102 Choreo/Performance Lab
- DCHR 130, 131 Composition I
- DPRD 111, 112 Production Technology for Dance
- DAIC 101, 201, Intro to Critical Dance Studies, Dance After 1960s
- DAIC 220 Music For Dancers: Styles and Rhythm
- Winter Session: Minimum one unit including one technique class

Second Year
- DTCH 221, 222 Contemporary Techniques
- DTCH 201, 202 Ballet Technique
- DPER 201, 202 Choreo/Performance Lab
- DCHR 230, 231 Composition II
- DTCH 261, 262 Hip Hop Techniques
- DAIC 120 Music for Dancers: Audio Lab
- DAIC 102, 202 The Anthropology of Dance, Body in Performance
- DSCM 230, 231 The Anatomy of Movement
- Winter Session: Minimum one unit including one technique class

Third Year
- DTCH 321, 322 Contemporary Techniques
- DTCH 301, 302 Ballet Technique
- DPER 301, 302 Choreo/Performance Lab
- DPRD 360 Dance Film Foundations (Fall or Spring)
- DTCH 361, 362 Hip Hop Techniques
- DPRD 432 NEXT! Preparing for My Future in Dance (Fall)
- Winter Session: Minimum one unit including one technique class

Fourth Year
- DTCH 421, 422 Contemporary Techniques
- DTCH 401, 402 Ballet Technique
- DTCH 461, 462 Hip Hop Techniques
- DPER 401, 402 Choreo/Performance Lab
- Winter Session: Minimum one unit including one technique class

Elective Courses for Undergraduates

Additional Elective Courses for BFA 3s and 4s
- DTCH 141, 142 Repertory Partnering
- DTCH 230 Dance Genres
- DTCH 255, 256 Pilates Reformer I
- DTCH 352 The Conscious Dancer
- DTCH 392 Dance Practices
- DPER 121 Voice for Dancers
- DPER 311 Faculty/Guest Repertory
- DPER 320 Hip Hop Repertory*
- DPER 340 Contemporary Repertory*
- DPER 452 Between Dance and Theater (Spring)*
- DCHR 320 Hip Hop Composition*
- DCHR 360 Creation + Critique
- DCHR 415 Choreographer/Composer Seminar
- DCHR 440 Choreography* (Open to BFA 4s by Permission of Instructor)
- DPRD 361 Advanced Dance/Image Projects*
- DPRD 440 CineDance (Spring)*
- Undergraduate Independent Study Project

*These courses fulfill the Composition or Choreography requirement.
Master of Fine Arts Curriculum Requirements

The MFA Program at CalArts is designed to serve as a laboratory for artistic development in the art of choreography. MFA students come to the program with a track record of professional experience and a desire to use the creative environment and rich resources to deepen and extend their choreographic vision and practice. The program challenges and supports dance artists in creating work, from conception to full production in various contexts. MFA students produce three original works in the first year and a Thesis Concert in the second year. There are also opportunities to cultivate their expertise in the art of teaching, with particular emphasis on preparation for being effective contributors to dance education in college and university contexts. Seminars focus on preparation for sustainability as working professional artists, and professional development in higher education. The curriculum is provided for the development of media literacy and competency, in audio, video, digital media technologies. An optional supplemental concentration in Integrated Media is available.

The program is a two-year, 60 credit terminal degree, and includes teaching opportunities and a variety of Assistantships. Proximity to the schools of visual art, music, theater and film/video provide rich opportunities for collaboration and interdisciplinary projects. The high technical and artistic standard of the BFA students enrich the choreographic processes for the MFA students, bringing their talent and generative enthusiasm to the creative process. MFA students regularly audition BFA students to cast their work. The curriculum complies with NASD standards and best practices for masters level programs and is accredited by both the National Association of Schools of Dance and the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. The Sharon Disney Lund School of Dance MFA Program at the California Institute of the Arts is designed to support advanced choreographic development and individual cultivation as artists and artist/educators.

Learning Outcomes

Over the course of study, the Master of Fine Art candidate will:

- Hone choreographic craft in service of their artistic vision.
- Produce a thesis concert in the second year of residency that reflects their personal aesthetic incorporating collaborations with other artists in the Institute.
- Acquire knowledge and practical experience necessary to provide leadership in all areas of dance production and promotion.
- Build a skill set to effectively represent their choreography for career advancement.
- Acquire knowledge of contemporary art practices in the field of dance, locating their own artistic interests within the aesthetic landscape of contemporary dance.

Master of Fine Arts Course Requirements

The following courses are required but do not constitute a student's entire program.

First Year

- DTCH 570 MFA 1 Physical Practice
- DPER 501, 502 Graduate Choreo/Performance Lab
- DPRD 580, 581 MFA-1 Project
- DPRD 505, 506 Music Seminar (Fall)
- DPRD 525, 535 Graduate Forum (Spring)
- DPRD 559, 560 Dance Film Foundations
- DPRD 632 Next! Preparing for my Future in Dance (Fall)
- DCHR 540 Choreography
- DCHR 560 Creation + Critique
- One of the following each semester: DAIC 520 Critical Dance Studies, DAIC 530 Performance Studies, DAIC 540 Choreography and Texuality, DAIC 550 Extreme Body in Performance or DAIC 510 Special Topics in Performance Studies
- DCHR 580 MFA Dance Pedagogy required for Institute Dance Instructors
- Winter Session: Minimum one unit
- CCSE 055 Artspeak 4 required for international students

Second Year

- DTCH 670 MFA 1 Physical Practice
- DPER 601, 602 Graduate Choreo/Performance Lab
- DCHR 615 Graduate Choreographer/Composer Seminar
- DPRD 625, 635 Graduate Forum (Spring)
- DPRD 680, 681 MFA-2 Thesis Project
- One of the following each semester: DAIC 520 Critical Dance Studies, DAIC 530 Performance Studies, DAIC 540 Choreography and Texuality, DAIC 550 Extreme Body in Performance or DAIC 510 Special Topics in Performance Studies
- DCHR 680 MFA Dance Pedagogy required for Institute Dance Instructors
- Winter Session: Minimum one unit

Back to top