

# Dance MFA

## Develop and Refine Formal Oral Presentation Skills

**Goal Description:**

MFA in Dance candidates will develop & refine the ability to articulate their choreographic process and philosophical understanding of dance through formal oral presentations.

**Providing Department:** Dance MFA

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Applies Formal Oral Presentation Skills in Philosophical Scholarship**

**Learning Objective Description:**

Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying formal oral presentation skills and a clarity of understanding within their philosophical scholarship.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Evaluation of Oral Presentation of Philosophical Scholarship**

**Indicator Description:**

Required oral presentation of philosophical research will be evaluated on communicative skills, clarity of thought, and a logical approach to the subject matter as shown in the attached rubric. Evaluations take place during required courses.

Attached Files

 [MFA Oral Presentation Rubric](#)

**Criterion Description:**

Oral Presentation skills will be assessed by faculty teaching courses where oral presentations are part of the classroom assignments using the MFA Oral Presentation Rubric. It is hoped that 100% of the students will attain a scoring of at least *satisfactory* in choreography with 80% passing with a score of *excellent* proficiency.

**Findings Description:**

100% of the students scored in the range of proficient or higher

50% of the students scored in the range of strong

The lower of the skills assessed for oral presentations given by students in the classroom was in the area of *Interdisciplinary*: gathering information from multiple areas, synthesis of ideas to make a whole, contribution to the field.

Attached Files

 [Evaluation of Oral Presentation of Philosophical Scholarship 2023-2024.pdf](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Increase General Communication and Interdisciplinary Skills in Oral Presentations**

**Action Description:**

In classwork, the lower of the categories assessed was in the area of *Communication Skills: Independent Voice, Mature Capstone Presentation, Technical Skill of Material Presented*. The skillsets listed under this category should be addressed in the classroom in the coming year to work to improve overall oral presentation skills of graduate students.

For thesis candidates, the lower of the category assessed was in the area of *Interdisciplinary: gathering information from multiple areas, synthesis of ideas to make a whole, contribution to the field*. The skillsets listed under this category should be addressed by thesis committees when they coach thesis candidates on their thesis research presentations to improve overall oral presentation skills of thesis presenters.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### **Applies Formal Oral Presentation Skills in Research-Based Creative Scholarship**

#### **Learning Objective Description:**

Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying formal oral presentation skills and a clarity of understanding within their research-based creative scholarship.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### **Evaluation of Formal Oral Presentation of Thesis**

#### **Indicator Description:**

A required Formal Oral Presentation of Thesis is developed by the candidate based on their written and creative research and is performed for an audience post thesis performance. The 30-minute oral presentation is evaluated on the following categories: communicative skills, clarity of thought, and understanding and contextualization of subject matter by the candidate as shown in the attached rubric.

Attached Files

 [MFA Oral Presentation Rubric](#)

#### **Criterion Description:**

100% of the Formal Oral Presentations of Thesis Research presented by thesis candidates will be assessed by MFA thesis committees using the MFA Oral Presentation Rubric. It is hoped that 100% of the students will attain a scoring of at least *satisfactory* in oral presentations with 85% passing with a score of proficient or higher.

#### **Findings Description:**

80% of the students scored in the range of proficient or higher

Additional Details:

20% of the students scored in the range of satisfactory

20% of the students scored in the range of strong

We came just shy of having 85% of the students scoring in the proficient or higher range.

The area of *Communication Skills: Independent Voice, Mature Capstone Presentation, Technical Skill of Material Presented* was the category where the students scored the lowest.

Attached Files

 [Evaluation of Oral Presentation of Thesis - 2023-2024.pdf](#)

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### **Increase General Communication and Interdisciplinary Skills in Oral Presentations**

#### **Action Description:**

In classwork, the lower of the categories assessed was in the area of *Communication Skills: Independent Voice, Mature Capstone Presentation, Technical Skill of Material Presented*. The skillsets listed under this category should be addressed in the classroom in the coming year to work to improve overall oral presentation skills of graduate students.

For thesis candidates, the lower of the category assessed was in the area of *Interdisciplinary: gathering information from multiple areas, synthesis of ideas to make a whole, contribution to the field*. The skillsets listed under this category should be addressed by thesis committees when they coach thesis candidates on their thesis research presentations to improve overall oral presentation skills of thesis presenters.

**Develop and Refine a Formal Writing Voice**

**Goal Description:**

MFA in Dance candidates will develop & refine a formal writing voice that demonstrates analytic skill.

**Providing Department:** Dance MFA

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Applies Formal Writing Skills within Course Work**

**Learning Objective Description:**

Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying formal writing skills to the course work that is designed to prepare students for thesis writing.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Evaluation of Required Written Work**

**Indicator Description:**

Required written work is evaluated on common standards of writing with a focus on the student's ability to communicate ideas clearly. Four criteria (structure and organization; writing style; MLA format; grammar/usage/mechanics) will be used to measure ability in writing with five possible assessment outcomes (strong, proficient, satisfactory, weak, or unacceptable). Evaluations take place within required graduate level history/theory/literature courses.

Attached Files

 [\\*SHSU - MFA in Dance - Required Written Work Rubric.pdf](#)

**Criterion Description:**

100% of the students enrolled in graduate level history/theory/literature courses will be evaluated by professors of those courses on their writing skills using the MFA Required Written Work Rubric. It is hoped that 80% of the students will pass with a score of proficient or higher.

**Findings Description:**

Observations: 100% of the students scored in the *Proficient* or higher range therefore we met our 2023-2024 goal of having at least 80% of the students scoring in the *Proficient* or higher range. Additionally, the data showed that only 50% of the student writers scored in the category of *Strong*.

The evaluation of the students' writing in course work showed that the students overall scored weakest in the category of *Structure and Organization* and on average scored highest in the area of *Grammar/Usage/Mechanics*.

Attached Files

 [MFA\\_EvalofRequiredWrittenWork\\_2023-2024.pdf](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Focus in on identified weaknesses for graduate level writing**

**Action Description:**

Since the weaker category for students as they completed written assignments in the classroom was *Structure and Organization*, faculty of graduate courses should work with students to organize their thoughts better as they begin a writing project to help with the increase of overall writing scores.

Additionally, in looking at this year's thesis candidates compared to those students moving into thesis who just completed the prospectus stage, there is not a clear correlation between which category of writing may need more emphasis. Therefore, if we wish to push the students who are moving from the prospectus stage to the thesis writing stage on their writing skills, thesis committees should focus on providing guidance on what it is that the group scored lower on in their prospectus writing, which is the area of *Content and Focus*.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### **Applies Higher Level Research and Writing Skills in Thesis Work**

#### **Learning Objective Description:**

Students will demonstrate proficiency in applying higher level research and writing skills to written elements of thesis portfolios.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### **Evaluation of Thesis Research and Writing Skills**

#### **Indicator Description:**

As students develop and present an extended creative work for thesis study, they are required to compose three written documents. Each part of the thesis process has a written component evaluated by a committee. Evaluations for the written component of thesis study takes place within two required courses: Thesis 1 (DANC 6098) and Thesis II (DANC 6099).

**Prospectus:** a proposal situating the student's area of interest within the dance field.

**Literary review:** a 15-25 page paper that provides both summary and synthesis of the breadth of literature existing regarding the student's narrowed line of investigation of a creative research project.

**Reflective paper:** a post-production 8-10 page paper analyzing and reflecting on the student's creative work. The goal of this paper is for the student to sharpen their abilities and summarize their creative agenda in written form.

These documents will be used to evaluate the student's ability to clearly communicate their thesis research through writing. Three criteria (content and focus; analysis and critical thinking; and logic and flow) will be used to measure ability in writing with five possible assessment outcomes (strong, proficient, satisfactory, weak, or unacceptable).

Attached Files

 [\\*SHSU - MFA in Dance - Evaluation of Thesis Writing.pdf](#)

#### **Criterion Description:**

100% of MFA Thesis documents will be assessed by Thesis Committees for each thesis candidate using the MFA Evaluation of Thesis Writing Rubric. It is hoped that 80% of the students will pass with a score of proficient or higher.

#### **Findings Description:**

The thesis writers scored lower in the *Logic and Flow* category, while the Prospectus students scored lower in the *Content and Focus* category.

Additionally, in this year's group of thesis writers, there was one student in particular who struggled with many aspects of writing. All of the other writers scored in the Proficient or higher range on multiple papers.

We did meet our goal of having 80% of the students scored in the proficient or higher range. 81% of papers were scored in the Proficient category or higher

Further detail:  
18% of papers were scored in the Strong category  
18% of papers were scored in the Weak category (higher end)

Attached Files  
 [Evaluation of Thesis Writing - 2023-2024.pdf](#)

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

**Focus in on identified weaknesses for graduate level writing**

**Action Description:**

Since the weaker category for students as they completed written assignments in the classroom was *Structure and Organization*, faculty of graduate courses should work with students to organize their thoughts better as they begin a writing project to help with the increase of overall writing scores.

Additionally, in looking at this year's thesis candidates compared to those students moving into thesis who just completed the prospectus stage, there is not a clear correlation between which category of writing may need more emphasis. Therefore, if we wish to push the students who are moving from the prospectus stage to the thesis writing stage on their writing skills, thesis committees should focus on providing guidance on what it is that the group scored lower on in their prospectus writing, which is the area of *Content and Focus*.

**Development of Distinctive Choreographic Voice**

**Goal Description:**

MFA in Dance candidates will develop a distinctive choreographic voice and demonstrate its skillful application in a performative context.

**Providing Department:** Dance MFA

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS -----

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

**Applies Advanced Concepts in Composition**

**Learning Objective Description:**

Students will demonstrate excellence in applying advanced concepts in composition to the creation of extended choreographic works with a sustained artistic vision.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

**Evaluation of Creative Thesis Presentation**

**Indicator Description:**

As the culmination of the creative thesis, students develop and present an extended, original creative work. Members of the thesis committee mentor the process from proposal through performance. The thesis presentation will be assessed on the following points: the choreography is informed by student’s research; the choreography stands on its own as a work of art; the creative product is reflective of the student’s own distinct choreographic vision.

Attached Files  
 [MFA\\_ChoreographicRubric](#)

**Criterion Description:**

100% of MFA Thesis projects will be assessed by Thesis Committee using the MFA Choreographic Rubric. It is hoped that 100% of the students will attain a scoring of at least *satisfactory* in choreography/creative thesis presentation with 75% passing with a score of *excellent* proficiency.

**Findings Description:**

For the creative thesis presentations, 100% of the students passed with a scoring of *satisfactory* or better but only 60% of the thesis students evaluated scored in the *excellent* range for the 2023-2024 academic year. Our goal for this year was to have 75% of the students score in the excellent range.

Additionally, the lower of the skills assessed was in the area of Critical Analysis which measures the way that the student reflects on and evaluates the creative process and the product, assessing its overall effectiveness in light of the predetermined goals.

Attached Files

 [Evaluation of Thesis Choreography- 2023-2024.pdf](#)

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3****Push students work on multiple skillsets to increase the quality of choreographic work****Action Description:**

The evaluative data for choreographic work that is performed in the classroom by MFA students shows that future instruction should focus on assisting students with improving their *Generation of Movement* and *Transformation of Ideas* through choreography.

For choreographers of thesis works, the lower of the skills assessed was in the area of *Critical Analysis*. A high score in this area would mean that the evaluators could see that the student is fully aware of the creative choices used in the process and is able to reflect on and evaluate their own work in an analytical manner. Working more closely with thesis choreographers in their ability to critically analyze their work could help increase these scores.

**RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2****Evaluation of Required Choreographic Work****Indicator Description:**

Required choreographic work is evaluated on common standards of choreographic effectiveness as shown in the attached rubric. These choreographic evaluations take place within the three required MFA choreography courses: DANC 5376, DANC 5378, DANC 5380. Extensive, qualitative, face-to-face feedback is also provided to the student.

Attached Files

 [MFA\\_ChoreographicRubric](#)

**Criterion Description:**

Choreographic projects will be assessed by the faculty of MFA choreography courses using the MFA Choreographic Rubric. It is hoped that 100% of the students will attain a scoring of at least *satisfactory* in choreographic classroom projects with 80% passing with a score of *excellent* proficiency.

**Findings Description:**

We met our goal of having 100% of the students score in the range of satisfactory or higher and 90% of our students scored in the range of excellent.

Evaluation of the students' choreographic work in the classroom showed that the scores in the categories of *Movement Generation* and *Transformation of Ideas* were lower than in other categories.

Attached Files

 [Evaluation of Required Choreographic Work - 2023-2024.pdf](#)

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

### **Push students work on multiple skillsets to increase the quality of choreographic work**

#### **Action Description:**

The evaluative data for choreographic work that is performed in the classroom by MFA students shows that future instruction should focus on assisting students with improving their *Generation of Movement* and *Transformation of Ideas* through choreography.

For choreographers of thesis works, the lower of the skills assessed was in the area of *Critical Analysis*. A high score in this area would mean that the evaluators could see that the student is fully aware of the creative choices used in the process and is able to reflect on and evaluate their own work in an analytical manner. Working more closely with thesis choreographers in their ability to critically analyze their work could help increase these scores.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

### **Synthesizes and Transforms Ideas and Movement**

#### **Learning Objective Description:**

During the choreographic process, the student will demonstrate an ability to connect, synthesize and transform ideas and movement through the use of appropriate and increasingly sophisticated movement approaches. The student further demonstrates an ability to plan and problem solve during the choreographic process and provides thoughtful responses, in choreographic terms, to critique.

#### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

### **Evaluation of Creative Thesis Presentation**

#### **Indicator Description:**

As the culmination of the creative thesis, students develop and present an extended, original creative work. Members of the thesis committee mentor the process from proposal through performance. The thesis presentation will be assessed on the following points: the choreography is informed by student's research; the choreography stands on its own as a work of art; the creative product is reflective of the student's own distinct choreographic vision.

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#### **Findings Description:**

For the creative thesis presentations, 100% of the students passed with a scoring of *satisfactory* or better but only 60% of the thesis students evaluated scored in the *excellent* range for the 2023-2024 academic year. Our goal for this year was to have 75% of the students score in the excellent range.

Additionally, the lower of the skills assessed was in the area of Critical Analysis which measures the way that the student reflects on and evaluates the creative process and the product, assessing its overall effectiveness in light of the predetermined goals.

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### RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

#### **Push students work on multiple skillsets to increase the quality of choreographic work**

##### **Action Description:**

The evaluative data for choreographic work that is performed in the classroom by MFA students shows that future instruction should focus on assisting students with improving their *Generation of Movement* and *Transformation of Ideas* through choreography.

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##### **Criterion Description:**

Choreographic projects will be assessed by the faculty of MFA choreography courses using the MFA Choreographic Rubric. It is hoped that 100% of the students will attain a scoring of at least *satisfactory* in choreographic classroom projects with 80% passing with a score of *excellent* proficiency.

##### **Findings Description:**

We met our goal of having 100% of the students score in the range of satisfactory or higher and 90% of our students scored in the range of excellent.

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## Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

### Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

#### Closing Summary

The faculty plan is to implement the following to increase outcomes in the areas of writing, choreography and oral presentations for graduate students:

1. Focusing in on the identified weaknesses of graduate writers combined with updated assessment measures to increase the students' writing skills in classwork and in thesis written work.
  1. Required written work: Structure and Organization
  2. Thesis writing: Logic and Flow
2. Mentor students during coursework on presenting oral presentations with an emphasis on improving their ability to present presentations with more *clarity of thought* and increased *general communication skills*. The faculty would also like to see if students can meet the goal of scoring at least a 4.5 out of 5 in three out of four of the categories assessed.
3. Increase Generation of Movement Skills: Since this was the lower category in choreographic skills assessed two years in a row for graduate students, continued encouragement of faculty to push students to work on movement generation in their creative choreographic work in the classroom should prepare the students to create choreographic thesis works with a stronger display of movement generation.

The hiring of another tenure track faculty member, bringing us to six tenure track for the unit, and as indicated as needed for a BFA and MFA of our size in the graduate program review (and the graduate numbers were smaller then), would strengthen our ability to effectively mentor the graduate students in all areas including the specific categories identified above.

#### Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

1. Writing: For required written work, *Structure and Organization* was still the category that ended up with a lower score. For thesis writers, the category of Logic and Flow also ended up with a lower score, same as last year.
2. Oral Presentations: The categories of *Clarity of Thought* and *General Communication Skills* did not receive the lower scores this year. However students only received a 4.5 or higher in one out of four categories assessed. This means that we did not meet our internal goal of students scoring at least a 4.5 out of 5 in at least three categories.
3. Choreography: Although *Generation of Movement* was one of the categories that students scored lower in again this year, their scores in this category were higher than they were last year. This shows that faculty and students have worked to improve this skillset in choreography.

The Department of Dance continues to have only five tenure track members for the unit, which is lower than what was stated as recommended for our program through the MFA Dance Graduate Program Review.

## New Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

#### Closing Summary:

The faculty plan is to implement the following to increase outcomes in the areas of writing, choreography and oral presentations for graduate students:

1. This year 50% of the students scored in the highest scale category of *Strong* for Required Written Work. Faculty will consider adding the goal of aiming to have at least 75% of the students score in this scale category for next year. The faculty will also focus in on the identified weaknesses of graduate writers to increase student writing skills in classwork and in thesis written work.
  1. Required written work: Structure and Organization
  2. Thesis writing: Content and Focus

2. Faculty will mentor students during coursework on presenting oral presentations with an emphasis on the following:
  1. Increased *general communication skills*
  2. Developing of presentations to include a more *Interdisciplinary approach*.
  3. The faculty will add an additional goal of pushing the students to score at least a 4.5 out of 5 in three out of four of the categories assessed.
3. Faculty will push students to increase multiple skillsets in choreography including *Generation of Movement, Transformation of Ideas through Choreography, and Critical Analysis of Creative Process*. A goal is for the faculty to also review the MFA Choreographic Rubric to see if they wish to adjust (raise) the scale range for each category since we reached our goal of having at least 80% of the students score in the excellent range this year.

The hiring of another tenure track faculty member, bringing us to six tenure track for the unit, and as indicated as needed for a BFA and MFA of our size in the graduate program review (and the graduate numbers were smaller then), would strengthen our ability to effectively mentor the graduate students in all areas including the specific categories identified above.