

DUKE UNIVERSITY DANCE PROGRAM GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION

Policy and Application for Undergraduate Students

PURPOSE

Graduation with Distinction in Dance provides students with the opportunity to undertake an ambitious, original Senior Project that demonstrates academic and/or artistic excellence. Distinction may be achieved through a **written thesis, performance project, or choreographic project**.

Students interested in pursuing Graduation with Distinction should begin planning during the **spring semester of the junior year** in close consultation with a Dance faculty advisor.

ELIGIBILITY

Students with a **3.5 GPA** are eligible to apply for Graduation with Distinction with a Dance major, Interdepartmental Major, or Program II. Students must maintain a minimum 3.5 GPA throughout the Distinction project.

DISTINCTION PROJECT OPTIONS

Students may pursue one of the following:

Written Thesis: An original research project culminating in a substantial historical, analytical, empirical, or theoretical thesis of approximately **30–50 pages**.

Choreographic Project: A substantial original choreographic work, solo or group, of at least **20 minutes**, accompanied by a **15–25-page process paper** analyzing and reflecting upon the project's conceptual, thematic, methodological, and technical dimensions.

Performance Project: A substantial performance-based project of at least **20 minutes**, accompanied by a **15–25-page process paper** analyzing and reflecting upon the project's conceptual, thematic, methodological, and technical dimensions.

Creative projects may take many forms, including lecture-demonstration, technology and performance, site-specific work, an evening of choreography and/or performance, or an interdisciplinary project involving physical expression.

DISTINCTION COMMITTEE

During the **spring semester of the junior year**, the student will identify a **Senior Project Advisor from the Dance faculty**. In consultation with the student, the Senior Project Advisor will form a **three-person Distinction Committee** consisting of:

- The Senior Project Advisor, who serves as Chair;
- One additional full-time Dance Program faculty member; and
- One additional full-time faculty member.

The committee will review and approve the proposal, guide the project, and evaluate the completed Senior Project.

APPLICATION

1. Student Information

Name: _____

Duke Email: _____

Expected Graduation Date: _____

Major / Interdepartmental Major / Program II: _____

Current GPA: _____

2. Distinction Project Information

Provisional Project Title:

Project Type:

☐ Written Thesis

☐ Choreographic Project

☐ Performance Project

Senior Project Advisor / Committee Chair:

Additional Dance Faculty Committee Member:

Additional Faculty Committee Member:

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Please submit a proposal and preliminary bibliography with this application.

The proposal should address the following:

Project Description and Central Inquiry

Describe the project you intend to undertake. What central question, artistic inquiry, problem, or set of ideas will guide the project?

Significance and Motivation

Why is this project important to you? How does it build upon your academic, artistic, choreographic, performance, or research experiences at Duke?

Research and Methodology

Describe the research methods and/or creative methodologies you expect to use. These may include archival research, textual or theoretical research, interviews, ethnographic methods, embodied research, choreographic experimentation, improvisation, performance practice, media or technological experimentation, or other approaches appropriate to the project.

Proposed Outcomes

Describe what you expect to produce.

For thesis projects, describe the anticipated scope and structure of the written research.

For choreography or performance projects, describe the proposed creative work, including its anticipated length, format, collaborators, performance context, and relationship between research and creative practice.

Timeline

Provide a preliminary timeline for research, development, rehearsal, writing, presentation, and completion of the project.

Resources and Budget

Identify anticipated needs for studio or performance space, collaborators, technology, equipment, costumes, media production, travel, research materials, or other project expenses.

Bibliography

Attach a preliminary bibliography identifying the primary and secondary sources that will inform the project.

APPROVAL AND SIGNATURES

By signing below, the student and faculty committee members confirm their willingness to undertake the proposed Distinction Project and their understanding of the responsibilities and timeline described above.

Student

Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Senior Project Advisor / Committee Chair

Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Additional Dance Faculty Committee Member

Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Additional Faculty Committee Member

Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Director of Undergraduate Studies

Name: _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

GRADUATION WITH DISTINCTION STUDENT PLANNING CHECKLIST & TIMELINE

Keep this page throughout your Distinction project.

Use it with your Senior Project Advisor to track major milestones from junior spring through graduation.

Timeline	Requirement	Date / Status
Junior Spring	☐ Declare Senior Project Advisor from Dance faculty	_____
Junior Spring	☐ Form three-person Distinction Committee	_____
By April 1, Junior Year	☐ Submit Distinction Proposal + Bibliography to Distinction Committee	_____
After Committee Review	☐ Address committee feedback and finalize proposal	_____
By April 15, Junior Year	☐ Submit committee-approved proposal and committee information to DUS	_____
Junior Summer	☐ Complete IRB certification, if required	_____
Senior Fall	☐ Enroll in DANCE 487.01: Research Methods in Dance	_____
Senior Fall	☐ Complete research and bibliography	_____
Senior Fall	☐ Submit 25–30-page research paper	_____
Senior Spring	☐ Enroll in DANCE 499: Research Independent Study	_____
Senior Spring	☐ Meet weekly with Senior Project Advisor	_____
Senior Spring	☐ Complete final research / creative project	_____
At least 2 weeks before last day of classes	☐ Submit final thesis draft to Distinction Committee	_____
At least 1 week before last day of classes	☐ Present choreography / performance project publicly	_____
Within 48 hours after performance	☐ Submit process paper to Distinction Committee	_____
Final week of classes	☐ Complete oral defense	_____
Friday before last day of classes, April	☐ Present thesis at Distinction Seminar	_____
Last day of classes	☐ Distinction Committee submits final evaluation / grade	_____

Important Reminders

- Maintain a **minimum 3.5 GPA** throughout the Distinction project.
- Stay in regular communication with your Senior Project Advisor.
- Discuss IRB requirements early if your project involves interviews with human subjects.
- Review the appropriate **Writing, Choreography, and/or Technique & Performance rubrics** at the beginning of the project.
- Discuss project expenses and possible **Trinity Research Enhancement Award** funding with your advisor early in the process.
- Keep copies of all approved proposals, committee feedback, drafts, and final materials.