

# MASTER OF ARTS IN PERFORMANCE STUDIES

The Master's in Performance Studies at Texas A&M University is built around a multifaceted understanding of performance. Using a wide range of qualitative methods and theoretical frameworks (from dramaturgical analysis to ethnography and phenomenology), our graduate faculty has expertise in the study of religion and spirituality, theater, media and technology, popular music, state affairs, law, diplomacy, martial arts, urbanism, dance, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality.

Our two-year graduate program offers a true mix of scholarship and practice: besides learning and discussing ideas from a close reading of texts, students have room to explore other modes of knowledge transmission, such as concerts and exhibitions. We keep our graduate classes small to give each student ample opportunity to engage more deeply with the course materials in class discussions. Our students often come from all parts of the world, which stimulates cross-cultural debates in our seminars.

Students can choose between three tracks: Thesis, Performance and Portfolio, and Comprehensive Examination. The thesis track requires the submission of a 40-60-page monograph and is recommended for students who want to focus on their writing skills. The Performance & Portfolio track entails putting together a performance (from an online platform to a theater play). The Comprehensive Examination track allows the student to examine the field of performance studies more broadly. In all three tracks, students develop their research projects with the guidance of an advisor.

Our MA prepares students to pursue a broad range of career paths, particularly in cultural institutions (such as museums), intercultural industries (such as tourism), and in the media/communication sector (music production, for instance). Our recent graduates have found jobs as project coordinators at organizations such as Texas Folklife (<https://texasfolklife.org/>), Safe Space (<http://www.safespaceonline.org/>), EMERGE Fellowship (<https://www.emergefellowship.org/>), PBK (<https://www.pbk.com/>), Hands on Nashville (<https://www.hon.org/?fbclid=IwAR0Hi7G75DJkfNkMtnDx96aBpHNDoezPWB3-WB9Jf2ifOSOp6sw-CeOWy6M>), and the Oleksandr Dovzhenko National Center. (<http://www.dovzhenkocentre.org/eng/about/>) Others have used the skills learned in the program to embark on an artist-scholar career. Students interested in continuing their academic training have been admitted to highly competitive PhD programs around the country (Indiana University, Northwestern University, University of California, Davis, among others).

## Program Requirements

### Program Requirements

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### Student's Advisory Committee

After receiving admission to graduate studies and enrolling for coursework, the student will consult with the Director of Graduate Studies concerning appointment of the chair of his or her advisory committee. The student's advisory committee for the master's degree will consist of no fewer than three members of the graduate faculty, representative of the student's fields of study and research. The chair, or one of the co-chairs, of the advisory committee must be from the student's department, and at least one or more of the members must have an appointment to a department other than the student's major department.

The chair, in consultation with the student, will select the remainder of the advisory committee. The student will interview each prospective committee member to determine whether he or she is willing to serve. Only graduate faculty members located on Texas A&M University campuses may serve as chair of a student's advisory committee. Other graduate faculty members located off-campus may serve as a member or co-chair (but not chair), with a member as the chair. The chair of the committee, who usually has immediate supervision of the student's research and thesis, has the responsibility for calling required meetings of the committee and for calling meetings at any other time considered desirable.

If the chair of a student's advisory committee voluntarily leaves the University and the student is near completion of the degree and wants the chair to continue to serve in this role, the student is responsible for securing a current member of the University Graduate Faculty, from the student's academic program and located near the Texas A&M University campus site, to serve as the co-chair of the committee. The Department Head or Chair of Intercollegiate faculty may request in writing to the Associate Provost and Dean of the Graduate and Professional School that a faculty member who is on an approved leave of absence or has voluntarily separated from the university, be allowed to continue to serve in the role of chair of a student's advisory committee without a co-chair for us to one year. The students should be near completion of the degree. Extensions beyond the one year period can be granted with additional approval of the Dean.

If the chair of the student's advisory committee is unavailable for an extended time in any academic period during which the student is involved in activities relating to an internship, thesis or professional paper and is registered for courses such as 684, 691, 692 or 693, the student may request, in writing, that the department head appoint an alternate advisory committee chair during the interim period.

The duties of the committee include responsibility for the proposed degree plan, the research proposal, the thesis and the final examination. In addition, the committee, as a group and as individual members, is responsible for counseling the student on academic matters, and, in the case of academic deficiency, initiating recommendations to the Graduate and Professional School.

The committee members' approval on the degree plan indicate their willingness to accept the responsibility for guiding and directing the entire academic program of the student and for initiating all academic actions concerning the student. Although individual committee members

may be replaced by petition for valid reasons, a committee cannot resign *en masse*.

## Degree Plan

The student's advisory committee, in consultation with the student, will develop the proposed degree plan and it must include study in more than one area of specialization, but these areas may be contained within the course offerings of a single department. The degree plan must be completed and filed with the Graduate and Professional School prior to the deadline imposed by the student's college, and no later than 90 days prior to the date of the final oral examination or thesis defense.

This proposed degree plan should be submitted through the online Document Processing Submission System located on the website <https://ogsdpps.tamu.edu> (<https://ogsdpps.tamu.edu/>).

A student submitting a proposed degree plan for a Master of Arts degree should designate on the official degree plan form the program option desired by checking "thesis option" or "non-thesis option."

Additional coursework may be added to the approved degree plan by petition if it is deemed necessary by the advisory committee to correct deficiencies in the student's academic preparation. No changes to the degree plan can be made once the student's Request for Final Examination or Request for Final Examination Exemption is approved by the Graduate and Professional School.

## Credit Requirement

The thesis option Master of Arts degree requires a minimum of 36 semester credit hours (SCH), including 6 hours of PERF 691. A minimum of 36 semester credit hours of approved courses is required for the non-thesis option Master of Arts degree (performance and portfolio and comprehensive examination).

## Transfer of Credit

A student who has earned 12 hours of graduate credit in residence at Texas A&M University may be authorized to transfer courses in excess of the limits prescribed above upon the advice of the advisory committee and with the approval of the Graduate and Professional School. Courses taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution with a final grade of B or greater might be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution. Otherwise, the limitations stated in the preceding section apply. Coursework in which no formal grades are given or in which grades other than letter grades (A or B) are earned (for example, CR, P, S, U, H, etc.) is not accepted for transfer credit. Courses appearing on the degree plan with grades of D, F or U may not be absolved by transfer work. Credit for thesis research or the equivalent is not transferable. Credit for coursework submitted for transfer from any college or university must be shown in semester credit hours or equated to semester credit hours. An official transcript from the university at which the transfer coursework was taken must be sent directly to the Office of Admissions.

Courses used toward a degree at another institution may not be applied for graduate credit. If the course to be transferred was taken prior to the conferral of a degree at the transfer institution, a letter from the registrar at that institution stating that the course was not applied for credit toward the degree must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

Grades for courses completed at other institutions are not included in computing the GPA.

## Limitations on the Use of Transfer, Extension and Certain Other Courses

Some departments may have more restrictive requirements for transfer work. If otherwise acceptable, certain courses may be used toward meeting credit-hour requirements for the master's degree under the following limitations:

1. The maximum number of credit hours which may be considered for transfer credit is the greater of 12 hours or one-third (1/3) of the total hours of a degree plan. The following restrictions apply:
  - Graduate and/or upper-level undergraduate courses, taken in residence at an accredited U.S. institution or approved international institution, with a final grade of B or greater, will be considered for transfer credit if, at the time the courses were completed, the student was in degree-seeking status at Texas A&M University, or the student was in degree-seeking status at the institution at which the courses were taken; and if the courses would be accepted for credit toward a similar degree for a student in degree-seeking status at the host institution.
  - Courses previously used for another degree are not acceptable for degree plan credit.
2. The maximum number of credit hours taken in post-baccalaureate non-degree (G6) classification at Texas A&M University which may be considered for application to the degree plan is 12.
3. A zero credit 684 or 685 course is only allowed for non-thesis option master's students. A zero credit 681 course can be used for either thesis or non-thesis option master's students. Other courses, including 691 research hours, are not eligible for zero credit.
4. Not more than 12 hours may be used in any combination of the following categories:
  - Not more than 6 hours in combination of 691 (Research) or 684 (Professional Internship) may be used. Under normal circumstances, non-thesis masters students may not use 691 hours on their degree plan. However, for non-thesis masters students who are using 691 hours on the degree plan, see the Non-Thesis Option section on the Program Requirements page in the graduate catalog for the degree they are pursuing.
  - Not more than 6 hours of 685 (Directed Studies) may be used.
  - Not more than 3 hours of 690 (Theory of Research) may be used.
  - Not more than 3 hours of 695 (Frontiers in Research) may be used.
5. A maximum of 2 hours of 681 (Seminar).
6. A maximum of 9 hours of advanced undergraduate courses (300- or 400-level).
7. For graduate courses of three weeks' duration or less, taken at other institutions, up to 1 hour of credit may be obtained for each five-day week of coursework. Each week of coursework must include at least 15 contact hours.
8. No credit hours of 684 (Professional Internship) may be used for the degree of Master of Arts non-thesis option with the exception of a student pursuing the Master of Arts in Philosophy, non-thesis option, who may use up to 6 hours of 684 (Professional Internship).
9. Continuing education courses may not be used for graduate credit.
10. Extension courses are not acceptable for credit.

11. For non-distance degree programs, no more than 50 percent of the credit hours required for the program may be completed through distance education courses.
12. To receive a graduate degree from Texas A&M University, students must earn one-third or more of the credits through the institution's own direct instruction. This limitation also applies to joint degree programs.

Exceptions will be permitted only in unusual cases and when petitioned by the student's advisory committee and approved by the Graduate and Professional School.

## Thesis Option

An acceptable thesis is required for the Master of Arts degree for a student who selects the thesis option program. The finished work is expected to be a competently executed development and exposition of the student's original research topic. Guidelines for the preparation of the thesis are available in the *Thesis Manual*, which is available online at <http://grad.tamu.edu> (<http://grad.tamu.edu/>).

After successful defense (or exemption) and approval by the student's advisory committee and the head of the student's major department, a student must submit his/her thesis in electronic format as a single PDF file. The PDF file must be uploaded to the website, <http://grad.tamu.edu> (<http://grad.tamu.edu/>). Additionally, a signed paper approval form with original signatures must be received by the Graduate and Professional School. Both the PDF file and the signed approval form are required by the deadline.

Deadline dates for submitting are announced each semester or summer term in the "Graduate and Professional School Calendar" (see Time Limit statement). These dates also can be accessed via the website <http://grad.tamu.edu> (<http://grad.tamu.edu/>).

Each student who submits a document for review is assessed a one-time thesis/dissertation processing fee through Student Business Services. This processing fee is for the thesis/dissertation services provided. After commencement, theses and dissertations are digitally stored and made available through the Texas A&M Libraries.

## Thesis Proposal

For the thesis option Master of Arts degree, the student must prepare a thesis proposal for approval by the advisory committee and the head of the major department. This proposal must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School at least 20 working days prior to the submission of the Request for the Final Examination.

Compliance issues must be addressed if a graduate student is performing research involving human subjects, animals, infectious biohazards and recombinant DNA. A student involved in these types of research should check with the Office of Research Compliance and Biosafety at (979) 458-1467 to address questions about all research compliance responsibilities. Additional information can also be obtained on the website <http://rcb.tamu.edu> (<http://rcb.tamu.edu/>).

## Non-Thesis Option

For the non-thesis option, a thesis is not required. A final defense is required for all non-thesis Master of Arts students.

A student pursuing the non-thesis option is not allowed to enroll in 691 (Research) for any reason and 691 may not be used for credit toward a non-thesis option Master of Arts degree.

Instead of 691, non-thesis students must take one 685 with their advisor in the last semester to focus on their final projects.

## Comprehensive Examination

The written examination has at least seven questions, organized into two main sections. The first section involves a range of issues in Performance Studies. This includes questions related to the history of the field (when, how, and why it emerged, for instance), prominent Performance Studies scholars, and theoretical and methodological trends. The second section focuses on issues directly related to the student's topic(s) of interest. The Committee Chair will request multiple questions from the Committee member(s) but will be responsible for constructing the bulk of the examination. It is up to the student to meet with committee members on an individual basis to discuss how best to prepare for the CE (e.g., creating a bibliography, summarizing concepts, or engaging with specific debates in the field).

## Performance and Portfolio

There are no specific rules regarding the format, length, location, or content of the performance. However, practical considerations such as budget, scheduling, space availability, and university rules must be taken into consideration at an initial stage. It is up to the student to present the scope, feasibility, and research goals of the performance project in the Prospectus defense at the end of the first year. A clearly defined plan for completing the project will be expected. Performances that fail to materialize due to poor planning will not count toward the Master's degree. For that reason, it is crucial that the student works closely with their advisor and other committee members, communicating with all parties involved and developing a clear and realistic timeline prior to the defense. The student should discuss the performance plan with the Director of Graduate Studies within two weeks after defending the Prospectus to ensure feasibility.

Additionally, while the performance may involve collaboration with other people, the candidate plays the central role in conceiving, designing, and/or presenting the performance and bears all responsibility for its successful completion.

The student and advisor will define the type of artifact to be created, (e.g., film, intermedia event, sonic environment, curated exhibition, etc.) the means of presenting it to the committee, and the process of documenting it for the portfolio. For live performances, students should verify all committee members are able to attend the performance.

The portfolio must include a short bio, documentation of the performance, and a critical essay. The student will submit a professional portfolio to the committee within two weeks after presenting the performance. The portfolio must include:

1. A professional bio of 250 words.
2. Documentation of the performance:
  - a. Drafts or sketches from the different stages in the development of the performance.
  - b. Video and/or photos of the event (if the project is an event such as a play, concert, or exhibit).
  - c. Additional documentation (programs, fliers, or reviews) should be submitted as well).
3. An essay containing the following sections:
  - a. A critical discussion (minimum 5,000 words) of topics that informed the performance, such as performances, artworks, artists, scholars, social/cultural issues, historical events, theories, and methods.

- b. A reflection on the challenges, achievements, and possibilities brought about by the implementation of performance as a means of social/cultural intervention.
- c. A plan detailing professional goals and institutions or organizations to be targeted for future work.

## Final Examination/Defense

All three tracks require a final examination (or defense). A student must pass a final examination by dates announced each semester or summer term in the Graduate and Professional School Calendar. To be eligible to take the final examination, a student's GPA must be at least 3.000 for courses on the degree plan and for all courses completed at Texas A&M which are eligible to be applied to a graduate degree, and there must be no unabsolved grades of D, F or U for any course listed on the degree plan. To absolve a deficient grade, the student must repeat the course at Texas A&M University and achieve a grade of C or better. All coursework on the degree plan must have been completed with the exception of those hours for which the student is registered. For thesis-option students, an approved thesis proposal must be on file in the Graduate and Professional School according to published deadlines prior to the final examination or submission of the request for exemption from the final examination.

A request to hold and announce the final examination must be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School a minimum of 10 working days in advance of the scheduled date for the examination. The Graduate and Professional School must be notified in writing of any cancellations. A student may be given only one opportunity to repeat the final examination for the master's degree and that must be within a time period that does not extend beyond the end of the next regular semester (summer terms are excluded).

The Report of the Final Examination Form must be submitted with original signatures of only the committee members approved by the Graduate and Professional School. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must also be submitted to the Graduate and Professional School. If necessary, multiple copies of the form may be submitted with different committee member original signatures. If an approved committee member substitution (1 only) has been made, his/her signature must be included on the form submitted to the Graduate and Professional School.

## Thesis Option

For thesis option students, the final examination covers the thesis and all work taken on the degree plan and at the option of the committee may be written or oral or both. The final examination may not be administered before the thesis is available to all members of the student's advisory committee in substantially final form, and all members have had adequate time to review the document. The examination is conducted by the student's advisory committee as finally constituted. A thesis option student must be registered in the University in the semester or summer term in which the final examination is taken. Persons other than members of the graduate faculty may, with mutual consent of the candidate and the major professor, attend final examinations for advanced degrees. Upon completion of the questioning of the candidate, all visitors must excuse themselves from the proceedings. A positive vote by all members of the graduate committee with at most one dissension is required to pass a student on his or her exam. A department, or interdisciplinary degree program, may have a stricter requirement provided there is consistency within all degree programs within a department or interdisciplinary degree program.

A thesis option candidate may petition to be exempt from his/her final examination provided his/her degree plan GPA is 3.500 or greater and he/she has the approval of the advisory committee, the head of the student's major department, or intercollegiate chair, if appropriate, and the Graduate and Professional School. It is required that the petition for exemption be submitted the same semester the student intends to submit the thesis.

## Non-Thesis Option

For the non-thesis option, a thesis is not required. A final comprehensive examination is required for all non-thesis Master of Arts students. No examination may be held prior to the mid-point of the semester or summer term in which a student will complete all remaining courses on the degree plan.

A student pursuing the non-thesis option is not allowed to enroll in 691 (Research) for any reason and 691 may not be used for credit toward a non-thesis option Master of Arts degree.

A maximum of 6 credit hours of 685 (Directed Studies), and up to 3 credit hours of 690 (Theory of Research) and up to 3 credit hours of 695 (Frontiers in Research) may be used toward the non-thesis option Master of Arts degree. In addition, any combination of 684, 685, 690 and 695 may not exceed 25 percent of the total credit hour requirement shown on the individual degree plan.

For the Comprehensive Examination, the final defense is the oral portion of the examination. After receiving the student's responses, the Chair will share the document with the rest of the committee and schedule the Oral Examination. The Oral Examination is usually scheduled two weeks after the committee members have received the student's written responses.

The Performance and Portfolio Defense is an oral discussion between the student and her/his committee -similar to the Defense in the Thesis track and the Oral Examination in the Comprehensive Examination track. The student's collaborators (if any) may also attend the Defense.

The department head or the chair of an intercollegiate faculty (if appropriate) for the program may approve an exception for a PhD student who changes to a non-thesis option MA degree program after at least one year of PhD studies to use 691 credits toward a non-thesis option Master of Arts degree. The department head or chair of an intercollegiate faculty (if appropriate) for the program may approve an exception for a master's student who changes from a MA thesis option degree to a MA non-thesis option degree program to use 691 credits toward a non-thesis option Master of Arts degree. In both cases, the student is allowed to use a maximum of 8 credit hours of 685 and 691 combined. Departments, Colleges, and Interdisciplinary Degree Programs may opt to establish higher standards. Further any combination of 684, 685, 690, 691 and 695 may not exceed 25 percent of the total credit hour requirement shown on the individual degree plan. All requirements for the non-thesis option Master of Arts degree other than those specified above are the same as for the thesis option degree.

## Additional Requirements

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## Residence

In partial fulfillment of the residence requirement for the degree of Master of Arts, the student must complete 9 resident credit hours during one regular semester or one 10-week summer semester in resident study at Texas A&M University. A minimum of 1 credit hour must be in a non-distance education delivery mode. Semesters during which the student is enrolled in all distance education coursework will not count toward fulfillment of the residence requirement. Upon recommendation of the student's advisory committee, department head or Chair of the Interdisciplinary Program, if appropriate, and with approval of the Graduate and Professional School, a student may be granted exemption from this requirement. Such a petition, however, must be approved prior to the student's registration for the final 9 credit hours of required coursework.

Students who are employed full-time while completing their degree may fulfill total residence requirements by completion of less-than-full time course loads each semester. In order to be considered for this, the student is required to submit a Petition for Waivers and Exceptions along with verification of his/her employment to the Graduate and Professional School.

See Residence Requirements (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/#degree requirementstext>).

## Continuous Registration

A student in the thesis option of the Master of Arts program who has completed all coursework on his/her degree plan other than 691 (Research) is required to be in continuous registration until all requirements for the degree have been completed.

See Continuous Registration Requirements (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/#registrationandacademicstatustext>).

## Time Limit

All degree requirements must be completed within a period of seven consecutive years for the degree to be granted. A course will be considered valid until seven years after the end of the semester in which it is taken. Graduate credit for coursework which is more than seven calendar years old at the time of the final examination (oral or written) may not be used to satisfy degree requirements.

A student who has chosen the thesis option must have the final corrected copies of the thesis cleared by the Graduate and Professional School within one year of the semester in which the final exam is taken, or a final exam exemption petition was approved. Exams taken in between terms will expire at the end of the term that ended prior to the exam. For example, a final exam taken and passed during the fall 2022 semester will expire at the end of the fall 2023 semester. A final exam taken in the time between the summer and fall 2022 semesters will expire at the end of the summer 2023 semester.

## Foreign Languages

For the degree of Master of Arts, a reading knowledge (usually represented by two years of college study) of at least one foreign language is normally required.

## Application for Degree

For information on applying for your degree, please visit the Graduation (<http://catalog.tamu.edu/graduate/academic-expectations-general-degree-requirements/#degree requirementstext>) section.