MASTER’S DEGREE IN CHOREOGRAPHY, 120 cr.

Structure of the master’s degree programme in choreography, 2019–2025

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The Master's Degree Programme in Choreography consists of two years of full-time contact studies. The programme develops the students' independent artistry and their comprehensive and critical understanding of current questions, practices and strategies of choreographic art and contemporary performance as well as of the interactive relationship between art, society and the environment. In addition to the independent work and responsibility of the student, the pedagogy of the programme emphasizes the sharing of words and actions, diversity, and the importance of interaction and collaboration. Studies emphasize also an orientation towards artistic research and the application of current research and artistic approaches to the course contents.

The starting point of studies is a conception of art as an exploratory and creative, proactive and social activity. Art operates at multiple sensual, corporeal, aesthetic and conceptual levels, avoiding one-dimensional definitions of instrumental value and always redefining the field of both personal and social freedom, responsibility and meaningfulness.

Contemporary art and the artist are seen as participants in an interactive and connected reality, where including and impacting environmental, technological and social ecologies require a constant review and reassessment of choreographic agency and the forms, methods and mediums of art.

In the studies, these premises are investigated through both the student's own points of interest and through the possibilities offered by art and research processes, practices and conceptualizations. For dance art this means a careful study of core concepts such as choreography, composition, representation and context, placing them in new relationships that may be processual, multi-disciplinary, virtual and reflective.

Corporeal perception of movement, creative choreographic exploration and performative, material and immaterial relationships also constitute foundational elements of the art of choreography. Together with work-specific themes and aims, they form a framework in which audience and community, art and artist meet, and where these relationships can be investigated and renewed within a specific work of art.

Comprehensively, the studies offer students a broad, methodical, community-centred and discursive interface for the field and working environment of contemporary choreography.

Studies consist of thematic studies in choreography and artistic projects, contextual studies in contemporary performance and theory, production and professional field studies through a Nordic network of collaboration (NCP), optional studies and an MA thesis.

The programme collaborates with Uniarts Helsinki’s other degree programmes in various ways. It offers students exceptional opportunities for artistic activity, making use of the academy’s performance facilities and production services. The programme is actively involved in
international partnerships and educational cooperation, considering the international nature and field of activities of a choreographer’s work.

The Master’s Degree Programme in Choreography advances students’ readiness for doctoral studies and artistic research, collaborates with the Theatre Academy’s Performing Arts Research Centre (Tutke) and is also an essential agent in the Theatre Academy’s international publication series Kinesis, which publishes research studies on dance.

In addition to the programme’s artistic director (the professor), the teaching staff comprises visiting teachers and professors, lecturers, artists and other experts in the field.

**The Nordic Choreographic Platform (NCP)**

The programme participates in developing and establishing Nordic cooperation in the field of MA education in choreography. Parties to the collaboration project are The Danish National School for Performing Arts, The Oslo National Academy of the Arts and Uniarts Stockholm. NCP forms part of the annual syllabus of the degree programme in choreography, with varying ways of implementation. Participation in the NCP programme provides students with a multi-faceted learning environment and broadens their future professional field by offering the possibility of networking with other students and producers alike.

**Learning outcomes**

Students who have completed the Master’s Degree Programme in Choreography possess a critical awareness of the viewpoints impacting contemporary art, the strategies of related art forms and, more broadly, the movements, changes and challenges of global society. They are able to read, observe and identify the ways in which art communicates in society and how art forms change over time. They have their own views of artistic approaches to current issues and of what forms of choreographic work and thought these could produce.

Students are familiar with different choreographic practices and methods of creating performance, and able to organize their own artistic process and communicate it to other members of the work group and to producers. They are able to create an independent choreographic work from a plan, document their work and present it to others. Students are familiar with artistic research and theoretical discourse relating to choreography and performing arts, and possess the necessary skills for post-graduate studies in the field. Based on the knowledge and skills offered by the programme, students possess a readiness to communicate the issues of their own field of art and to independently ponder these issues. They are capable of networking and actively seeking out new forms of working as well as different operational strategies within the arts. They are able to perceive the different roles and opportunities of the artist, now and in the future. They are able to operate creatively, critically and constructively in the field of art and society, actively participating in the collegial reform of choreography as an art form and its operating environment.
T-TK20100 THEMATIC STUDIES IN CHOREOGRAPHY AND ARTISTIC PROJECTS 60 cr

This study module consists of practical, historical and theoretical studies in choreography through workshops and theme seminars; personal artistic projects; study modules on artistic practices and advanced independent studies. The advanced independent studies can be linked to any area of theme studies in choreography, the specifics of which will be discussed with the professor of the degree programme in connection with preparing the student’s personal study plan.

Students are given the opportunity to carry out artistic projects that form part of their studies with the help of the Theatre Academy’s resources and degree programme cooperation, but this is not necessary provided that students independently carry out their projects, fruitfully and under supervision, in other environments.

In addition to independent study, studies mainly take the form of small-group study in workshops, reading seminars and reflections on artistic productions where collegial interaction, discussion and sharing create a joint, collective learning environment that provides support for the studies.

Learning outcomes:

Students possess a personal, creative and structured understanding of the multidimensional ways in which choreography may be implemented as art and of the different frameworks in which a choreographer may work within the field of art and society as a whole. They have individual views on artistic approaches to current issues and the forms of choreographic work and thought these may produce. They understand the different stages of the artistic process and the formation of an artwork, are able to plan and implement works of choreography, and able to operate in creative interaction with an artistic work group. They are able to document their work and present it to others, as well as contextualize their work within the frameworks of contemporary art and performance. They are able to approach the field of performing arts in a spirit of openness, participating in the creative and collegial renewal of the choreographic tradition, concept and operating environment.
Choreography 1: Composition and the artistic research process, 11 cr

This study unit works with conceptual pairs of key importance to dance performance, such as choreography/composition, representation/presentation, corporeality/materiality, and content/form. Special focus is placed on the concept of composition, its significance and possibilities in artistic work. In addition to workshops, this study unit comprises an independent artistic solo project and its performances as well as reflecting on and presenting said project in a small group.

Period 2.
Facility and support service resources are determined in the instructions for performance facility and support service resourcing. During this study unit, students participate in an introductory study unit by production services and technical production services, introducing students to production processes and responsibilities and technical implementation.

Learning outcomes:

a) Student are able to perceive various choreographic, artistic and conceptual approaches to composition through the history and theory of choreography and its current situation. They are able to analyse and identify structural elements of a choreographic composition and their function and significance to the composition as a whole. They are able to analyse performances from the perspective of composition, and are familiar also with composition ideas of related art forms.

b) Students have become familiar with various structural elements of composition and their significance and possibilities in their own artistic work. They are able to creatively use this knowledge in their choreographic work, in delineating and processing artistic questions and themes. They are able to engage in constructive cooperation with their student colleagues throughout the artistic process.

c) Students understand the different stages of the artistic process and are able to reflect on their own process through advance artistic planning, process documentation and a written composition analysis.

Choreography 2: Contemporary choreography: questions and practices # 1, 12 cr

This study unit consists of studies, lectures, literature and workshops processing various artistic questions, working methods and practices of contemporary choreography, as well as of short artistic processes where different approaches to choreography are sketched out. Some of the studies and artistic processes can be implemented in cooperation with other degree programmes, particularly with the students of the MA programme in dance performance.
The aim of this unit is to shed light on the background of different aims and methods of choreography, broaden the field of choreographic questions and methods, as well as create space for students to experiment, find and process their own methods of choreography and artistic thinking.

This study module will take place in the spring of the first year. Performance period during period 4. Facility and support service resources are determined in the instructions for performance facility and support service resourcing.

**Learning outcomes:**

a) Students have become familiar with different artistic premises, aims and methods. They have broadened their experience and understanding of the artistic and contextual possibilities of choreography, as well as the methods of processing the artistic questions and themes to a choreographic performance.

b) Students are capable of engaging in creative interaction with their student colleagues and to plan and create choreographic studies together. They also identify their own choreographic aims and are able to develop and share methods of choreographing in order to carry these out. They are able to reflect on their own artistic goals, methods and processes and to communicate these to others.

**Choreography 3. Contemporary choreography: questions and practices #2 14 cr**

This study unit consists of processing issues relating to the broadening and diversification of contemporary choreography contexts and operating environments, as well as of an artistic project implemented in cooperation with the degree programme in dance and students of other artistic disciplines.

This study module will primarily take place in the autumn of the second year. Period 2. Facility and support service resources are determined in the instructions for performance facility and support service resourcing. During this study unit, students participate in an introductory study unit by production services and technical production services, introducing students to production processes and responsibilities and technical implementation.

**Learning outcomes:**

a) Students are familiar with various social, communal, site-specific or virtual (AV/VR/AR) premises, methods and opportunities of choreography and are able to situate these in the current field of art. They are able to create connections between their artistic thinking and the surrounding reality, broadening and reforming the roles and possibilities of choreography.
b) Artistic Collaboration Project (ACO)/ Students understand the aims of movement-based, collegial artistic processes and are able to function creatively, methodically and responsibly in an artistic work group. Students understand the special characteristics and possibilities of each art form in a multidisciplinary process and are capable of developing their own artistic work in constructive and interactive collaboration with students and work groups of other artistic disciplines. They understand the dynamics of the artistic process and the different stages of creating a work of art. They are able to perceive all the different parts making up the whole as well as the thematic, production and institutional environment. Students are able to constructively reflect on both the joint artistic process and their own artistic work.

Contents: Students will primarily work within the current framework of contemporary dance and performance, in multidisciplinary work groups and degree programmes, as well as within the framework offered by the Theatre Academy and Aalto University. At the end of the study unit, the artistic projects of the work groups will be presented at a shared evening of performance jointly put together by the work groups and the students. This study unit is implemented in collaboration between the MA programmes in choreography, lighting and sound design at the Theatre Academy, the MA programmes in scenography and costume design at Aalto University and the 3rd year students of the BA programme in dance at the Theatre Academy.

Introduction to artistic collaboration and the Artistic Collaboration (ACO) project, 2 cr

At the start of the study unit, students become acquainted with one another’s artistic projects and present their own artistic interests and references as a foundation for forming artistic work groups and promoting the artistic process. During this study unit, students also learn about select methods of group work and group dynamics and how to apply these to the formation of artistic work groups and artistic planning. The study unit includes a residential period, the aim of which is to help students get to know each other and interact.

Learning outcomes:

Students are able to articulate and communicate their own artistic interests and working methods and examine their relationship to the chosen field of art. Having completed the course, students possess a basic understanding of different art forms’ approaches to contemporary artistic and aesthetic questions, methods, processes and working conditions. They are able to discuss these and participate in the artistic process in a manner that is creative, committed and constructive.
Students are also familiar with the basics of group dynamics and preconditions for collegial collaboration, both as equal members of a work group and through the perspectives and demands of their own field of art.

This course serves as an introduction and orientation to the Artistic Collaboration Project (ACO) and to the formation and processing of artistic work groups.

**Artistic research 2 cr**

This study unit consists of an introduction to academic artistic research in its international context as well as to the premises and processes of the Theatre Academy’s Performing Arts Research Centre. During this study unit, students will also become better acquainted with certain choreography or performing arts research, its methods and aims. The study module will take place during spring of the second year.

*Learning outcomes:*

Students are familiar with Finnish and international structures of academic artistic research, the aims, processes and methods of the research, and are able to evaluate the significance of artistic research to the field of art and society as a whole. They are able to apply this knowledge to their own artistic work and articulate its academic characteristics.

**Artistic practices 1-2, 4 cr**

This study unit consists of guided and independent practice of corporeal/artistic practices, reflection on their background, premises and frames of reference, as well as maintaining and presenting a practice diary. The study module is partly completed independently over the course of two academic years.

*Learning outcomes:*

Students are capable of working with movement in a way that is independent, perceptive and investigative. Students are also able to mine their own experiential movement-research and the corporeality of others for levels of meaning that support the choreographic work. They are familiar with different embodied practices and are able to apply and develop these on the path to finding methods that support their own artistic work.

**History and theory of choreography 1-2, 10 cr**
This study unit processes the history and theory of dance art through perspectives and development stages that are important to contemporary choreography. The aim of these studies is to provide a solid interface for concepts, history and theory in order for students to locate references in support of their own interests and a living relationship to the history and current phenomena, makers, artworks and frames of reference. Core concepts such as choreography, composition, representation and presentation, as well as artwork and performance, are investigated as part of the evolution of the arts, giving them ever shifting and new interpretations within the framework of today’s discursive relations.

Studies also process the relationship between contemporary choreography and social, ecological, ethical, environmental and philosophical themes, for instance post-humanism, post-colonialism, feminism, technology, equality and questions of identity. These are not investigated as binary opposites but through critical reflection and as multi-disciplinary potentialities for art forms, new mediums and content.

The study unit consists of lectures, seminars and workshops, literature as well as essay and review assignments. Studies primarily take place during the first academic year and the autumn term of the second academic year.

Learning outcomes:

Students are familiar with and understand the historical, philosophical and theoretical foundations of contemporary choreography. Students are familiar with significant turning points and phenomena in the field and are able to conceptualize and articulate the different ways in which choreography constructs its meanings. Students are able to perceive what kind of performative and choreographic forms the artistic processes of different themes may take, as well as construe the relationship between artistic process, framework and art form.

Students are able to put into perspective and apply different choreographic goals and methods to their own artistic work, find areas and themes of artistic and discursive interest and conceptualize and communicate the premises, meanings and aims of their work. They are able to create and convey choreographic knowledge and participate in the current cultural discussion on performing arts in society.

Nordic Choreographic Platform, 1-2, 5 cr

The programme participates in developing and establishing Nordic cooperation in the field of MA education in choreography. Parties to the collaboration project are The Danish National School for Performing Arts, The Oslo National Academy of the Arts and Uniarts Stockholm. NCP forms part of the annual syllabus of the degree programme in choreography, with varying ways of implementation.
The NCP programme provides students with an international learning environment and broadens their future professional field by offering the possibility of networking with other students and producers alike. NCP provides students with the opportunity to participate in Nordic choreography events and gain an understanding of differences and similarities. Through NCP, students become acquainted with different discourses in choreography pedagogics and artistic research, broadening the students’ understanding of the education as well as the professional field of dance art.

**Learning outcomes:**

Students have become familiar with choreography education in the Nordics, other students of the field, different learning environments and production venues. Having participated in NCP studies in different Nordic countries, they have broadened their understanding of the various aims and methods of choreography pedagogics as well as learned about work possibilities and the professional field of dance performance in the Nordics.

**CONTEXTUAL STUDIES, 25 cr**

This module consists of studies in contemporary performance practices and theories, aesthetics and philosophy, strategies and structures of production and adjacent art forms, with the aim of providing a solid background for choreography. Studies also include individual study planning, study orientation, degree programme meetings and a thesis seminar. Studies take place in the form of lectures, seminars and workshops, as collaboration between different degree programmes and through the joint studies of the Theatre Academy. It is also possible to add advanced independent studies to the module. These can be attached to any area within contextual studies, and students agree on their completion as individual studies together with the Professor as the personal study plan is drawn up.

**Learning outcomes:**

Students are familiar with the core premises behind the aesthetics, theories and practices of contemporary performance and contemporary art and are able to put various artistic, social and philosophical frameworks into perspective in their own artistic work. They are able to artistically interact with makers, supporters and producers of performing arts and to participate in a critical and constructive debate in the field of contemporary art. Through study orientation, students gain an understanding of their study path, development needs and artistic direction.

**Contemporary performance and theory 1-2, 10 cr**
This study unit includes theoretical and practical studies that broaden and establish the concepts of contemporary performance; seminars and workshops, study literature and written assignments. Studies process e.g. areas of dramaturgy and performance dramaturgy, investigating the limits, connections and preconditions of performance as well as the various environments in which performance may take place. Studies also investigate the premises of the related audio-visual, physical and technological environments as well as current themes of contemporary performance and possible ways of handling and implementing these in artistic processes.

This study module will be completed over the course of two academic years. The study unit consists of the degree programme’s own studies and of workshops and courses implemented through collaboration with other degree programmes.

**Learning outcomes:**

Students know and are able to analyse theoretical and methodical premises of contemporary performance as well as various ways in which performance may manifest itself. They are familiar with the basics of dramaturgy and performance dramaturgy as well with the starting points of related art forms. Students have investigated the limits, connections and preconditions of performance as well as the various environments in which performance might take place. Students are also familiar with the premises and practices of related audio-visual, physical and technological environments and are able to apply their knowledge and skills to their own artistic work.

**Perspectives on contemporary thinking and philosophy 1-2, 3 cr**

This study unit consists primarily of reading seminars and lectures on art philosophy and contemporary thinking. The study module is completed over the course of two academic years.

**Learning outcomes:**

Students possess an understanding of the philosophic dimension of art as well as of the interaction between philosophy and different phenomena of art. Students are familiar with the most important trends of contemporary philosophy and capable of locating for themselves points of references from contemporary thought. They have a comprehension of the nature of philosophical thought and perceive its relationship to their own artistic work.

**The professional field and basics of production 1-2, 6 cr**
Studies process the production aspects, practices and operating environments of dance art and contemporary performance as well as chart new production possibilities for artistic activity. Studies introduce the Finnish and partly the international operating environment, as well as the most important actors of the field. Studies include practicing the presentation of artistic activities and the public presentation of thesis projects.

Parts of this study unit can be implemented together with the course in artistic production thinking in the Degree Programme in Directing.

*Learning outcomes:* Students know the basic structures and requisites of production in the field of choreography and are familiar with the Finnish and international infrastructure of the field, its institutions and producers. They possess the basic knowledge necessary to produce performances and understand the contexts of performance and presentation. They are able to critically review the relations between creative economy, art and society and to find new, personally significant opportunities for practicing their artistry in society.

**Study orientation 1-2, 3 cr**

The study unit consists of an introduction to study content, structure and completion methods, study skills and pondering the study culture together with student colleagues. Studies also include creating a personal study plan (HOPS), degree programme meetings, feedback discussions and developing the content and practices of the curriculum together with the degree programme leader.

*Learning outcomes:* Students orientate towards pondering the contents, aims and significance of MA studies to themselves. They possess the necessary information on study progression and completion, learning goals and examinations. They prepare a personal study plan in aid of a life as a professional in the arts. They are capable of reflecting on and evaluating their learning and the teaching, as well as providing constructive feedback to the degree programme and Uniarts Helsinki.

**Thesis seminar, 3 cr**

In the thesis seminar, students gain an understanding of what the thesis process includes and their own responsibility for furthering it within the framework of Theatre Academy resources and in keeping with the timetable. By reading earlier theses, learning the basics of academic writing and data collection and understanding the goals of the thesis project, they are ready to begin planning their own thesis project. This study unit is to be completed during autumn of the second year.
Learning outcomes: Students are familiar with the thesis process, understand the significance of the thesis and know its goals, and possess the necessary basic knowledge and skills to produce a written thesis.

OPTIONAL STUDIES 10 cr

In this study module, students become familiar with freely selected subjects that are useful and important to them, thereby deepening their knowledge and skills as part of their artistic training. Some of the individual studies may be completed as advanced independent studies under mandatory studies.

The specifics of this entire study module are agreed upon through personal study plan discussions with the professor of the degree programme. Students have the opportunity to complete optional studies or select courses from the joint studies available at the Theatre Academy and the University of the Arts, studies provided by other universities in Finland and abroad, as well as acquire some of the study credits in the form of artistic or communal projects in the professional field.

Learning outcomes: Students are able to identify their personal development needs and are capable of selecting supporting studies. Students are able to independently familiarize themselves with subjects that are important to their own quality as artists and thereby deepen their knowledge and skills as part of their artistic training.

MASTER’S THESIS 25 cr

Learning outcomes: In the thesis, students demonstrate that they meet the artistic and intellectual goals listed in their personal study plan. Students demonstrate that they have the ability to work in independent and creative artistic processes and that they possess good intellectual knowledge of their professional field, along with the appropriate skills to communicate considerations through art. The thesis consists of both artistic and written parts.

Artistic thesis, learning outcomes:

Students are able to perform an independent artistic work. Students are able to create a work of art that covers all the stages of a choreographic work and gives a picture of both the students’ ability to work as professional choreographers and of their potential to discover their quality as artists.

Written thesis, learning outcomes:
The written thesis demonstrates thorough possession of choreographic premises, methods and terminology connected to the work of art as well as profound knowledge of the art field and familiarity with the subject of the thesis. Students demonstrate their ability to analyze and develop the research and methodological suggestions of the thesis that reveal the many layers and complexities in the nature of artistic practices and interpretations. In the thesis the students thus demonstrate their ability to communicate and independently ponder issues related to their own field of art at an advanced level.

The written thesis can, but does not need to, be directly linked to the artistic work.

Prior to the thesis project being approved students are to complete a written maturity test that shows in-depth knowledge of the topic of the thesis. The maturity test constitutes an abstract of the written section of the thesis.