



UMBC

Department of **Dance**



UMBC Department of Dance offers challenging and innovative instruction in technique, performance, composition, history, dance/technology, and production. The program integrates the study of dance as a discipline within a liberal arts program.

Our program develops the “whole” dancer, integrating the physical with the intellectual, and the analytical with the expressive. Students train in a wide range of styles with core faculty and visiting artists, gaining new perspectives about the changing world of contemporary dance. Our goal is to produce unique dance artists who have something to “say” as dancers and choreographers. We challenge our students to perform to their fullest potential, to test their limits as choreographers, and to question and think critically about dance.

The department prepares future dancers, choreographers, educators and scholars, through a core curriculum that includes traditional and experimental techniques, creative exploration, historical and aesthetic context, technology, and production skills.

Our department is dedicated to providing opportunities for students at all levels of skill to study dance. Students entering the program with little or no dance training are required to complete preparatory courses in addition to major requirements. Students entering the program with a high level of dance training may be placed on the Accelerated Pathway to the B.A.

Students may also prepare for certification to teach dance through a dual program administered by the Department of Dance and the Department of Education.



"3:1" (2022) by Dance Major & Linehan Artist Scholar, Jillian Taylor / Photo: Kiirstn Pagan
Deven Fuller (L) & India Blake (R)

"Getting to perform in highly technical works such as Brandon Russell's "Seasons Reimagined" along with more abstract contemporary works has pushed me to strengthen my technique, stamina, and presentation, while reaching outside of my comfort zone and growing in my artistry."



*Jillian Taylor
Dance Major & Linehan Artist Scholar
2019-2024*



"Mechanics of Memory" (2022) by Dance Major, Michaela Emmerich / Photo: Kiirstn Pagan
Sarah McHale (F) & Joanna Pedro (B)

B.A in DANCE


The B.A program prepares future dancers, choreographers, educators and scholars, through a core curriculum that includes traditional and experimental techniques, creative exploration, historical and aesthetic context, technology, and production skills. Students may pursue elective study in a number of disciplines and related subject matter.

The department offers a variety of approaches to performance and choreography and gives students opportunities to experience them through participation in choreography by faculty and visiting artists, and through independent study in choreography under a faculty mentor. There are opportunities to perform in every semester.

Minor in DANCE

The Minor offers students the opportunity to study dance technique and to gain some breadth of knowledge about modern dance, ballet, the history of dance, and the process of creating and performing dance. The department holds auditions during the first weeks of each semester. All minors and non-majors enrolled in a technique class are invited to student concert auditions.

Go to dance.umbc.edu for more info

A photograph of three dancers in black performing a contemporary dance piece on a dark stage. The dancers are in dynamic, low-to-the-ground poses. One dancer in the center is looking directly at the camera, while the other two are positioned behind them, one with their back to the camera and the other partially visible. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the dancers against the dark background.

Our graduates go on to performing careers that include professional dance companies, Broadway and Off-Broadway shows, national touring companies and Disney; teaching careers in private dance studios, public education, colleges and universities; related professions including physical therapy, arts management, arts advocacy, and much more.

"Right after graduation, I was hired by the Howard County Public School System, and have been the sole Dance Teacher at River Hill High School for the past 12 years. The Dance program at UMBC provided me with rigorous training in a loving environment. The faculty always pushed me to continue to perfect my technique and challenged me to explore new styles of movement. I know that I am where I am today, thanks to the training I received at UMBC."

*Jennifer Hennessie
B.A Alum '08
Teaching Certificate*

What dance technique courses are offered? The department offers six levels of contemporary and four levels of ballet. In contemporary modern classes, students study a combination of traditional techniques such as Horton, Taylor, Graham or Limon, Umfundalai Contemporary African Dance technique, eclectic release-based techniques and the technique specialties of visiting and guest faculty.

Is Jazz, Tap, Hip Hop, or Dance Team offered? The department rotates special topics courses that include Intermediate/Advanced Jazz Workshop, Hip Hop Workshop, Tap Dance, African Dance, and other special courses such as Introduction to Indian Dance. Students who are accomplished at Hip Hop are encouraged to explore the UMBC Student Hip Hop crew, Major Definition. Students interested in Ballroom Dance should contact the Ballroom Dance Club, a student organization. The UMBC Dance Team is managed by the Athletic Program.



"Soba" (2018) by Shaness D. Kemp / Photo: Marlayna Demond

How does the department determine my level of technique? The first week of the semester serves as an "audition/placement" period. The instructor will assess whether students have registered for the appropriate class level. It is important to attend first class, and to make any necessary schedule changes during the first two weeks of the semester.

Is there live accompaniment? Most technique courses have live accompaniment. Accomplished pianists play for ballet classes. Percussionists or pianists play for contemporary classes.

Can I major in two departments? Absolutely. Many dance majors are double majors. Many dance majors have minors.



"Umph To It" by Ryan Bailey (alum '16) / Ryan Bailey / Baltimore Dance Project Concert 2023 / Photo: Kiirstn Pagan

Who gets to perform?

Students have many opportunities to perform at UMBC. At the beginning of each semester the department holds auditions for several concerts. Each semester there is a Senior Concert featuring work by senior dance majors enrolled in the Senior Projects course, a First Works Concert featuring student choreography, and an end-of-semester Dance Showcase featuring student, faculty and guest artist choreography.

Who gets to choreograph?

Dance majors or minors take DANC 335 Independent Projects in Choreography and present their work on the First Works Concert. Students interested in gaining more experience in choreography may register for advanced Independent Study, and submit their work for the Showcase concerts. All dance majors must complete a Senior Projects piece in order to graduate.

Can I study abroad? UMBC has a robust Study Abroad program. Visit UMBC's [Study Abroad website](#) for information about applying to study abroad. Dance students work with a dance advisor to select a course of study while abroad. Our Department offers a faculty-led study abroad program to Denmark.

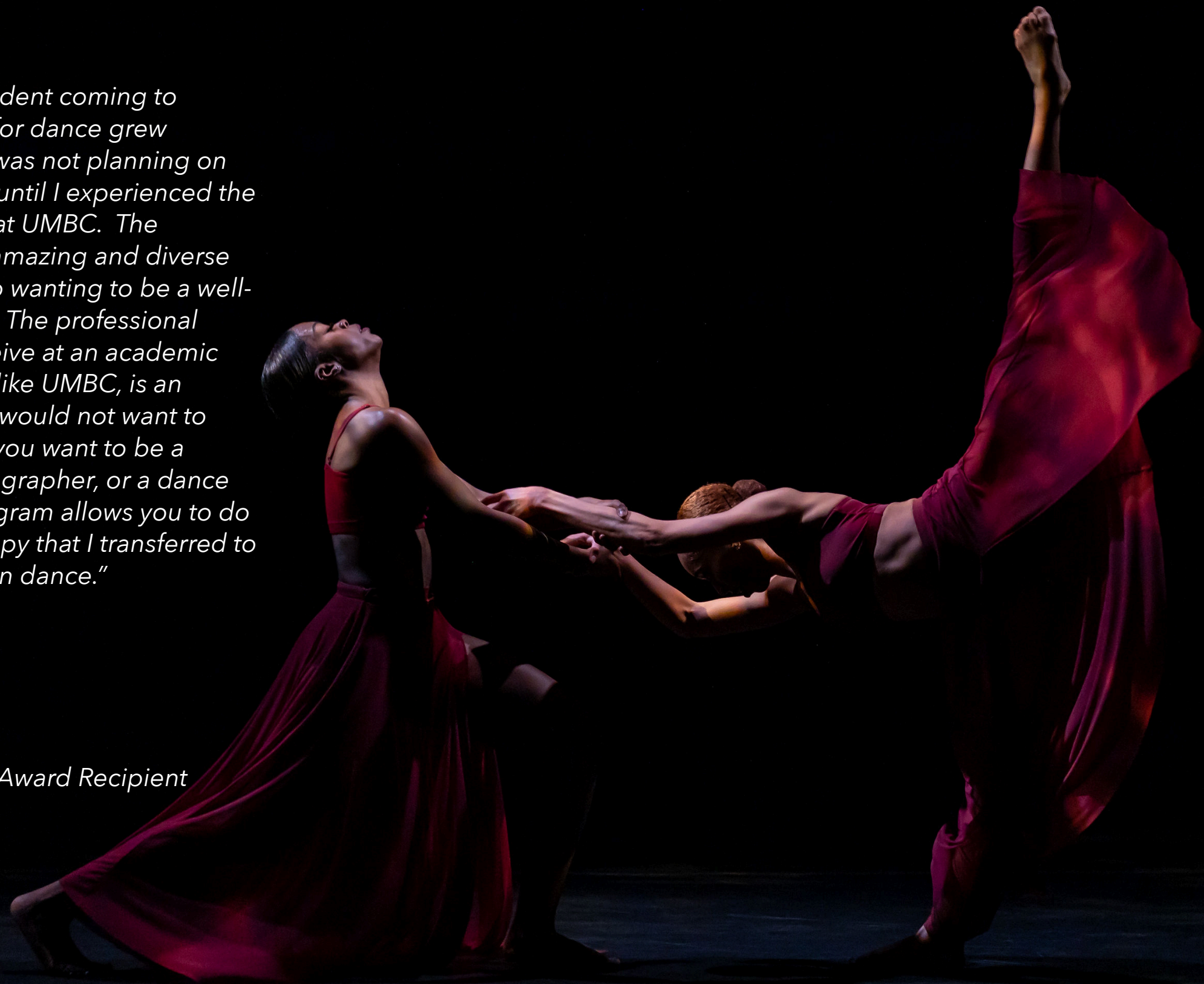
What are the facilities like? The Department has three large dance studios, one small studio, and dressing facilities. Performances are held in the Proscenium Theatre and the Dance Cube, a smaller performance venue with audience seating.

The Linehan Artist Scholars

Program is for talented students who are serious about pursuing their art in a university setting. The program is a four-year scholarship and mentorship program for students who enter UMBC as freshmen with a major in the arts. Rigorous academics and challenging coursework prepare artists for success in multiple fields. [Read more here.](#)

"As a transfer student coming to UMBC, my love for dance grew tremendously. I was not planning on pursuing dance until I experienced the dance program at UMBC. The teachers are all amazing and diverse when it comes to wanting to be a well-rounded dancer. The professional training you receive at an academic focused school, like UMBC, is an opportunity you would not want to waste. Whether you want to be a dancer, a choreographer, or a dance teacher, this program allows you to do it all. I am so happy that I transferred to UMBC to major in dance."

*India Blake
Dance Major &
Fine Arts Dance Award Recipient
2021-2024*





Application Process

Please visit the [office of undergraduate admissions](#) for information on applying to UMBC. All applicants to the Dance program must first be accepted to the University. Interested students are encouraged to [schedule a tour](#) of the Performing Arts and Humanities Building.

To become a dance major at UMBC, entering students should declare their intention to major in Dance and attend the audition. Students accepted into the program must pass a “gateway” course (Inter. Contemporary Dance Technique II) with a B or better.

Audition

The audition is for scholarships and class placement levels for incoming Freshmen and Transfer Dance Majors and it takes place every January. Prospective students will attend an audition class and then perform a solo in any genre of dance (not longer than 2 minutes).

You must register for the audition via getacceptd.com / registration opens in October.

All applicants will automatically be considered for a **Fine Arts Dance Award** (open to incoming freshmen and transfer students). Students interested in being considered for the prestigious **Linehan Artist Scholars Program**, open to incoming freshmen only, must also apply to the [Linehan Artist Scholars Program](#).

Go to dance.umbc.edu/auditions for more information

Faculty & Instructors

Carol Hess, Chair

Shaness D. Kemp, Faculty

Ann Sofie Clemmensen, Faculty

Brandon Russel, Lecturer

Sandy Lacy, Instructor

Jill Vasbinder, Instructor

Alison Crosby, Instructor

Constance Dinapoli, Instructor

Monica Dale, Instructor

Brian Jones, Technical Director

Doug Hamby, Emeritus Faculty



"Something I can't Put Into Words" (2023) by Dance Major, Abigail Chapman / Photo: Kiirstn Pagan
Deven Fuller / Michaela Emmerich / Photo: Kiirstn Pagan

"2:1" (2023) by Dance Major, Abigail Chapman / Photo: Kiirstn Pagan
Katelyn O'Connor & Sophia Pappalotto

"Semiotics" (2023) by Dance Major, Rebecca Mwendwa / Hannah Wallace / Photo: Kiirstn Pagan

Visit Us

dance.umbc.edu



*"My study abroad experience through UMBCdance's **DanceDenmark** was an incredible journey of cultural exchange and personal growth. Dancing alongside talented individuals from all around the world allowed me to immerse myself in diverse cultures and ideologies, expanding my perspective on art and life. I not only witnessed historical sites but also delved deeper into the rich history and traditions of Denmark, broadening my understanding of the world. Interacting with dancers from different backgrounds, I had the privilege of learning about their unique lived experiences, fostering a deeper sense of empathy and appreciation for diversity. Beyond the dance studio, spending time with my peers in the program created lifelong connections and friendships. This study abroad experience marked a significant milestone in my life, opening doors to new horizons and leaving me with cherished memories."*

*Michelle Ye
Dance Major & Linehan Artist Scholar
2018-2021*



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