

**FOUNDATION DEGREE
BA (HONS) DEGREE
PROSPECTUS 2022 2023**



**national centre
for circus arts**



welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to the National Centre for Circus Arts. We need performing and creative artists in our world now more than ever. It is a great time to be taking that step into a career as a circus artist by training with us on the higher education programme. You will have taken amazing and various journeys to bring you to this point of making a choice about your further training. Now you need to consider what will help you to develop your technical circus skills, your own creative voice, the place you want to take in our world, and how you will tell those stories and create those experiences that change our society. The National Centre can support you to develop in those disciplines and give you the fire, tools and fuel for a lifetime of discovery and achievement as an artist.

It is also a really exciting place to spend your time – London remains the centre for so much inventive and artistic endeavour, and from our base in Hoxton you are well and truly immersed in all that London can offer.

Our staff are a group of passionate specialists with years of professional experience who are committed to making sure each student has the best possible practical training for their future career. We are dedicated to ensuring students leave the National Centre ready to take their next steps as independent, dynamic professional artists. I look forward to meeting you at auditions.

Kate White
CEO and Principal

about the National Centre

"the National Centre is an incredible community with teaching, experience, facilities, opportunities and an atmosphere that allows me to reach my full potential as both an athlete and an artist."

Lucy Gilroy, FD1 student rep 19/20

The National Centre for Circus Arts is a registered charity and one of Europe's leading providers of circus education. Based in a magnificent Victorian power station adjacent to Hoxton Square, we involve thousands of people in the creation and performance of circus arts every year.

Our diverse range of work includes professional development opportunities for aspiring and established performers, recreational classes for adults, and progressive training for under-18s in the London Youth Circus. Our higher education programme comprises a Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) Degree in Circus Arts. We enrol around 27 new students each year, and our graduates have gone on to join companies such as Giffords, Cirque du Soleil, Ockhams Razor, Cirque Eloize, and Seven Fingers, or set up their own circus production companies such as Barely Methodical Troupe and Alula. We have been fostering the development of circus professionals across the UK for over three decades.

Our Higher Education Mission is to be...

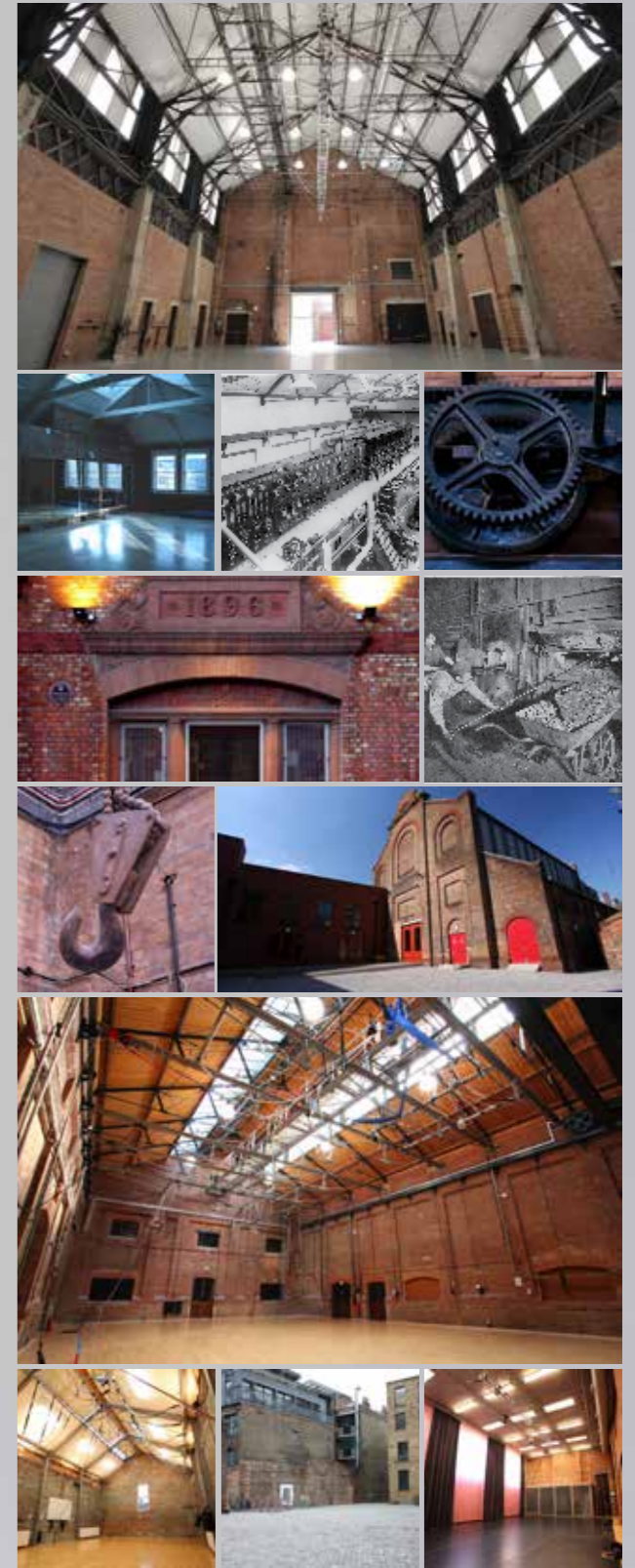
1. A centre of artistic excellence
2. Experimental and innovative
3. Nurturing bravery and boldness
4. Embracing the idea of trial and error as part of the process of discovery
5. Developing creative openness in our students and teachers
6. A research facility
7. Actively and strategically searching out the next generation of artists and collaborators
8. A liminal space
9. Creating excitement within the organisation and outside.
10. Valuing circus artistry by driving:
 - Curiosity
 - Cultural engagement
 - Challenging
 - Industry perceptions
 - Collaborative practice



“it is a beautiful building to study in and the facilities support our learning across a range of disciplines.”

Retaining the features and character of an imposing industrial space, our building began life as an electricity generating station in 1896.

The site was rescued from dereliction in 1994 and, following extensive restoration and reconstruction, the building gained a new lease of life as a unique facility in the UK for circus arts.



Our facilities include:

- Combustion Chamber** – our largest space at an impressive 425 sq m
- Generating Chamber** – our second largest space at 280 sq m
- Creation Studio** - A purpose-built rehearsal studio for circus, theatre and dance
- The Courtyard** – a large outdoor space
- The Library** – providing specialist circus resources
- The Body Shop** – a training space with gym equipment

foundation Degree

Duration: 2 years (full-time) September-July

Entry Requirements

- Applicants must be 18 or over on entry.
- Applicants will be able to demonstrate their intent to pursue professional employment in circus arts.
- Applicants will be required to demonstrate a proficiency in both written and verbal English language. For the Foundation Degree in Circus Arts this would normally be GCSE English or equivalent International English Language Testing System. Overseas students may be required to take a Secure English Language Test (SELT) prior to entry in order to meet VISA requirements.
- Applicants must fulfil parts 1 and 2 of the admissions process. If the applicant is from outside the UK or they are unable to attend an audition day they may request to submit a full video audition (instead of attending part 2), however, we recommend attending the live audition.

We encourage applications from all backgrounds and offer places solely on the basis of potential and suitability for a career in circus. If you need access support for your audition, please get in touch with the Admissions and Registry Manager.

What you will learn

The Foundation Degree in Circus Arts aims to develop a broad range of skills required as a professional circus artist. Students will go through a specialisation process to enable them to find one circus discipline best suited to them, developing their technical and creative vocabulary. Alongside circus discipline training, students will study other areas such as:

- Movement and composition
- Theatre
- Acrobatics
- Theories of performance and practice
- Devising
- Ensemble work
- Circus producing and production management

All degree students undertake a series of extracurricular theory and practical sessions aimed at providing them with a good understanding of the fundamentals of circus rigging and safe practices. These sessions contribute to them graduating as rounded circus practitioners. Students are expected to take a hands-on approach to the maintenance and upkeep of their own and the school's circus equipment.

The Technical and Rigging department also work closely with students to find creative rigging solutions and offer support during the creation of their performance pieces. Degree productions are professionally produced and supported to a high standard.

“the degree course is the backbone of circus training in the UK.”

Yaron Lifschitz

the specialisation process

Specialisation happens during term 1 of the Foundation Degree. It is a collaborative process between the student and staff, leading to a decision about which circus discipline is suited both physically and creatively to that person.

The National Centre offers these disciplines

Juggling and Manipulation

Ball, club and ring juggling

Hula hoop

Hats, cigar boxes, ball spinning and 'gentleman juggling'

Acrobatics

Hand to hand

Chinese pole

Acro dance

Hand balancing

Banquine

Big Space*

Cyr wheel

Teeterboard

Trick bike

Tightwire

Slack rope

*Big Space discipline options will be by specific invitation only based on:

- Availability of teachers
- Space restrictions
- Ability

Aerial

Single point trapeze

Static trapeze

Doubles trapeze

Hoop

Rope

Silks

Straps

Multi cord
(basic level of rope and silks required)

Net/loop
(basic level of rope and silks required)

Aerial Pole
(basic level of Chinese pole required)

Cradle



Duration: 1 year (full-time) September-July

Entry Requirements: Applicants should hold a Foundation Degree from the National Centre for Circus Arts or another school listed as a recognised Full Type 1 member of [FEDEC](#). A full list of schools and further entry requirements can be found [here](#).

What you will learn

This one-year course consolidates the technical level of a specific circus discipline and its integration with a personal artistic approach. As well as physical skill development, there is a strong focus on artistic exploration and creativity, contextual studies and planning for the future.

Alongside further circus discipline training, students will study:

- Circus in the 21st century
- Business planning
- Negotiated performance task
- Directing
- Movement and composition
- The ensemble

The admissions process is made up of two parts

Part 1: Apply and Submit Video

- Fill out our online degree application form. Applications open at the beginning of October and close the following March each year. The deadline will be confirmed on our website.
- Pay the £25 application fee. (Fee waivers are available through the CDD [here](#))
- Submit your video link within the application. See part 1 video guidance and criteria [here](#).
- Once we have received your application form, video and payment, we will invite you to part 2 (a one-day audition) so long as you meet the entry requirements.

Part 2: Attend an in-person audition

- Part 2 auditions are held in London around March/April time each year. Specific dates will be confirmed on our website [here](#).
- Over the course of the day, candidates will follow working sessions similar to classes held on the programme. The day will include (order and times may vary):
- Meet and greet
- Movement
- Theatre
- Presentations
- Selected candidates will be asked to stay for an interview and a Q&A session

Video Auditions

Applicants that are based outside of the UK or are unable to attend one of our scheduled part 2 audition dates can apply to audition fully by video. Video audition requests will be based on individual circumstance. Our full video audition requirements and criteria can be found on our [here](#).

How will you be assessed?

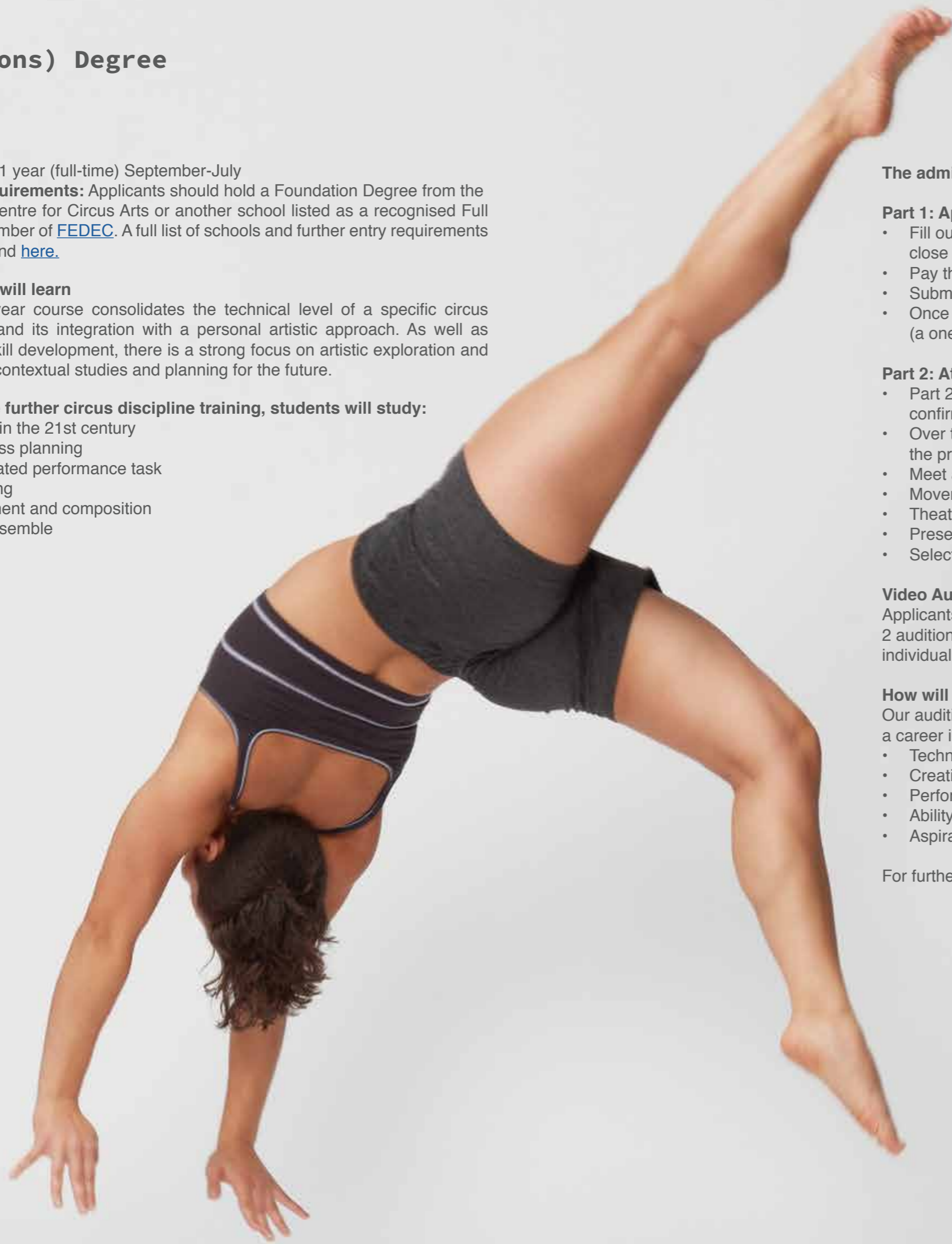
Our audition panel will be looking for your potential and suitability to study on our course and pursue a career in circus arts. The part 1 and 2 audition criteria cover the following areas:

- Technical skills
- Creativity
- Performance skills
- Ability and willingness to take instruction and direction
- Aspirations and motivations

For further details about the admissions process please visit our [website](#)

“i learned to use circus as a language to express my thoughts and ideas to audiences.”

Jessica Miller, BA graduate 16/17



fees and funding

Undergraduate Fees for the Foundation Degree and BA (Hons) in Circus Arts in 2022 / 23 are subject to government confirmation.

Students classed as 'Home Fee' status

'Home' Fees for the 2021-22 academic year were set at £9250 on entry*.

Students classed as 'Overseas Fee' (sometimes referred to as 'International') status

You will be required to pay the full cost of your tuition fees. 'International' Fees for the 2021-22 academic year were set at £17,930 on entry*. If necessary, government loans, scholarships or sponsorship should be sought from your country of origin. All students classed as international fee status must have funding or, if self-funded, appropriate funds in place, prior to starting the programme.

For fee status eligibility, you can find information on the [UKCISA website](#) and [Department for Education's Guidance](#).

*Home and International fees for subsequent years may be subject to increases year on year in line with inflation and Government Policy. This will be clearly communicated to applicants when they are offered a place, if not before.

Student Loans

Eligible Home Fee students that are new to higher education can apply for a tuition fee loan through the Student Loans Company. You will not have to pay anything up front, and you will not have to repay anything until after you have graduated and are earning a minimum salary. For more information on the current repayment thresholds, please visit the government Student Finance page [here](#). Depending on your residency status you may also be able to apply for a maintenance loan for living expenses from the government. This is means tested and dependent on household income.

Scholarships and Bursaries

Through the National Centre for Circus Arts and the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama, home fee status students may also be able to receive additional financial support in the form of fee discounts and cash bursaries. These are allocated each academic year and all eligible students are considered. More information can be found [here](#).

Student Support

National Centre students have access to:

- Counselling and guidance for mental health and wellbeing
- Academic and English Language support
- Physical health support
- Financial assistance

Further information on our student support services can be found [here](#)

living in London

The National Centre for Circus Arts is located in the heart of East London, one of the world's leading performing arts capitals. London is the most diverse city in the UK, representing over 270 nationalities and 300 languages. The National Centre is proud to call Hoxton our home – a bustling hub for creatives, birthplace of the 90s Brit Art scene and minutes away from Brick Lane, Columbia Road and Shoreditch High Street. The nightlife, restaurants, cafes and shops are second to none – check out our [Google Map](#) of favourite student spots for our highlights.

London also hosts an increasing array of circus showcases, including the London International Mime Festival, biennial festival CircusFest and Underbelly Festival. Theatres such as Jacksons Lane, Shoreditch Town Hall, the Roundhouse and Stratford Circus have helped to catapult circus into the centre of London entertainment.

Accommodation

We appreciate that finding accommodation in London can be a daunting task, especially for international students. The National Centre for Circus Arts does not have its own student accommodation; however, we do help our new students find their own accommodation in flatshares with other National Centre students. We find it is beneficial for our students to live together due to the intensity of the degree programme and the mutual understanding of its challenges.

An information pack will be sent to successful applicants detailing helpful information on finding and securing accommodation.



“living in East London is a progressive part of the city. i really enjoy the culture.”

Talisman Gabriel, BA Student

“an accessible and social city.”

Maisie Harrison, FD2 Student Rep

“each year has a Year Manager from the degree team who talks to everyone in the year group they manage. they are able to take the time to listen to us and find the support the student needs.”

Alicia Pettan Brewer, BA student rep 19/20



information for international students

The National Centre for Circus Arts welcomes international students each academic year. We understand that studying in a new country is a big step and we endeavour to support our students as much as possible prior to and throughout their time studying with us. A full information pack tailored for international students will be sent to successful applicants.

Visas and Immigration (including EU, EEA and Swiss Students)

The National Centre is registered with UK Visas and Immigration, enabling us to recruit international students. International applicants that are accepted onto a Higher Education course at the National Centre, including those coming from the EU, EEA and Switzerland, will be required to apply for a student visa online at [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) through the new **Points-Based Immigration System**.

Students are responsible for ensuring that they have the correct visa for entry to the UK and have received a decision on their application before they arrive. The UK Border Agency requires you to present your visa and passport on the first day of term at the National Centre for Circus Arts to enable you to enrol. We will make photocopies of these and keep them on file.

Further guidance can be found on our website [here](#) and through www.ukcisa.org.uk and www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk.

English Language Support

Students who do not have English as a first language will have access to and be required to take part in English Language support classes as part of their study with us. Conditional offers may be given on the basis of applicants passing the Secure English Language Test (SELT). Please see entry requirements on page 5 for more information.

where will it take you?



Our graduates go on to various routes of employment such as performance, directing, teaching, postgraduate study and more. Many remain closely linked to the organisation as professional members, accessing training and networking opportunities. Some graduates take on teaching roles at the National Centre, particularly with our youth and recreational programmes. Those who perform around the world often return to train in the space whenever they are back in the UK.

Here are some of our graduates' stories

Craig Reid BA, 2008

Since graduating from the National Centre, Craig has become an international cabaret sensation with his hilarious and unique take on the art of hula hooping, including his infamous Elvis act! His performance credits include prestigious touring cabarets like La Soirée, La Clique and Velvet, as well as Vegas residencies with Absinthe and most recently lighting up the Las Vegas strip in hit show Opium. He reached the semi finals of Britain's Got Talent, performing to 14 million viewers, and has been awarded three Guinness World Records.



Lydia Harper BA, 2013

Lydia was a founding member of Silver Lining, a contemporary circus company formed with other National Centre graduates. Lydia created and performed in two shows with Silver Lining before embarking on the creation and 4-year tour of Cirque du Soleil's Avatar-inspired show TORUK - The First Flight, as an acrobat and artist coach. Now back in the UK, Lydia is preparing to produce and direct a small-scale show addressing beauty standards and body expectations in the circus industry.



LJ Marles BA, 2011

LJ's talents were clear to see as a member of our London Youth Circus. He went on to complete the BA programme, graduating in 2011. Since then, LJ has performed internationally for the likes of Les 7 Doigts de la Main, La Soirée, 45 Degrees by Cirque du Soleil, Black Cat Cabaret and Palazzo, Vienna. LJ has also been recognised within the circus community for his signature act, tension straps. In 2017 he received the Cirque Phenix award at the 38th Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain, Paris, as well as a silver medal at the Young Stage Festival in Basel. Recently, he has sought to push his performance repertoire to combine aerial and drag, performing tension straps at the Palazzo, Hamburg in the character of Déjà Da'Bomb.

Alongside his performance career, LJ teaches aerial straps, flying trapeze and Chinese pole on the National Centre's degree programme.



The Conservatoire for Dance and Drama

We are proud to be part of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama, a formal collaboration among six member schools who are committed to the delivery of world leading education and specialist vocational training in the performing arts. We train the performing artists and production professionals of the future: actors, circus artists, dancers, stage managers, technical theatre practitioners, choreographers and directors.

After many years as a member of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD) we have recently decided to seek independent registration as a Higher Education Provider (HEP) and are currently in the process of making an application to the Office for Students (OfS). We aim to be independent by 2023. Students currently enrolled will therefore complete their studies under registration with CDD and students enrolling from 2021/22 will complete their 2-year Foundation Degree with CDD but continue with their 3rd year BA (Hons) top up registered with National Centre for Circus Arts. Students enrolling in 2022/23 should be aware that their course may be registered independently with the National Centre.

The courses will continue to be validated by the University of Kent and we will work closely with CDD to ensure there is no disruption to students during this period of transition. For more information please read CDD's [Statement on future direction](#).

Our fellow Conservatoire schools are:

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School
Central School of Ballet
London Contemporary Dance School
Northern School of Contemporary Dance
Rambert School

www.cdd.ac.uk/

University of Kent

The University of Kent validates our Foundation and BA (Hons) degrees. Kent work with us to assure that the quality of our programmes meets the expectations of Higher Education courses in England. On completion of the course, you will receive your award from the University of Kent and will be invited to attend graduation at Rochester Cathedral.

As a Higher Education student at the National Centre you are subject to the regulations of the University of Kent, and the National Centre ensures that its assessment procedures are in line with Kent's regulations.

University of Kent regulations:
[FD Programme Specification](#)
[BA Programme Specification](#)
kent.ac.uk/regulations



teachers and Staff

Adrian Porter – Head of Higher Education Delivery



Adrian is a former national squad gymnast who has been teaching circus for over 25 years. He teaches floor-based and aerial disciplines, specialising in hand to hand, Russian swing, Chinese pole and Icarian Games. He oversaw acrobatic development for the Millennium Dome Show and went on to co-write the first iteration of the Foundation degree program at the National Centre.

As a circus performer, he has shown versatility as a trampolinist at the Royal Festival Hall; troupe maison acrobat in several UK corporate shows; and several projects as an aerialist, notably John-Paul Zaccarini's Hyperactive. Adrian has toured with Cirque du Soleil as head coach, as well as acting as choreographer/dramaturge. His freelance work includes collaborations with the youth circus program at the Roundhouse London and the 2012 Paralympics closing ceremony.

He is a Board member of FEDEC and part of the Erasmus+ drive considering mobility around riggers and technicians across the world. Adrian has established a Research and Ethics committee whose aim is to drive the next stage of circus and performing arts research.

Amy Welbourn – Higher Education Course Manager



Amy has over 15 years' experience working in the performing arts and education sector. She teaches several disciplines at the National Centre, including Cyr wheel, German wheel, acrobatics, trampoline and handstands. Amy has worked internationally as an acrobat, circus performer and teacher and is also a qualified Personal Trainer and Sports Massage Therapist.

Her educational work includes a PGCHE, teaching at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Italia Conti and many other dance, drama and youth centres. Her private work includes coaching those of all levels in circus and acrobatic disciplines on a one-to-one basis for TV and West End theatre. Amy also trained as a gymnast at an international level for 15 years and coached those in the sport.

Glen Stewart – Director of Professional Development



Glen comes from a gymnastics background, first as a competitor and then as a coach. Glen joined the National Centre for Circus Arts as a teacher in 1999 and has enjoyed 20 years of learning and discovery in circus.

Glen's role focuses on linking together Youth Development, Higher Education and Professional Artists training and support. Glen has a particular interest in health, wellbeing, athletic performance and understanding the 'best' approaches to physical learning and how this can all be represented in all areas at the National Centre.

Michaela O'Connor – Higher Education Course Manager



Michaela began her training here at the National Centre. She has performed and taught across the globe in all things aerial, including trapeze, rope, silks, wire/harness, group aerial equipment and clowning. Her performance credits include Dragone, Cirque du Soleil and Cameron Mackintosh.

Michaela has a postgraduate qualification in Higher Education. As well as teaching, she is a physical performer/aerialist and circus consultant.

James McCambridge – Teacher Education Manager



James' teaching career began as a gymnastics coach in 2004 at the City of Lisburn Salto National Gymnastics Centre, working with elite men's artistic gymnastics. James obtained a degree from the National Centre and performed internationally.

Since returning to teaching he has developed an interest in psychology and neuroscience, studying with Z Health Performance Solutions and the Academy of Applied Movement Neurology. James now uses applied neuroscience to work with circus artists and athletes as well as training coaches to implement holistic training strategies into their practice.

Martha Harrison – Higher Education Course Manager



Martha is a circus performer and teacher from London. Her skills include static and doubles trapeze as well as hand to hand. She has performed with Mimbire, a female acrobatic company, since 2010, and is currently an associate performer.

Alongside her performance and teaching work, Martha completed her MA in Gender, Sexuality and Culture in 2013. She published an article in the Routledge Theatre, Dance and Performance Training Journal, discussing gender in circus arts.

Alice Jackson – Teacher Education Manager



A trained gymnast, Alice also has a BA Hons Degree in Dance and Cultures Studies, during which she studied Contemporary and African Dance. Her role spotlights not only what but how we teach circus; develops innovative teaching and learning practise and supports teachers in all programme areas to develop their skills.

Alice also teaches a range of disciplines including flying trapeze, Chinese pole and handstands. She has facilitated and delivered teaching workshops across the UK as well as representing the National Centre at circus festivals and conferences further afield in Europe and Brazil.

teachers and Staff



Arran Peck – Circus Arts Teacher (Physical Training)

Arran has worked in elite sport for over 20 years and has provided practical support to podium-level athletes and winning teams. He is currently leading the delivery of physical training at the National Centre where his remit is to minimise the risk of injury, maximise training time and optimise skilled performance. Before running away to join the circus, Arran worked as the Head of Athletic Development at a Premiership football club. He also spent time as a Performance Coach with professional tennis players from the UK, USA, Switzerland and the Ukraine. Early in his career,

Arran spent two Olympic cycles working for the English Institute of Sport with over 200 Team GB athletes, from over 30 different sports including track and field, judo, rowing and triathlon. These experiences have provided Arran with a great insight into the training and commitment required to achieve change and success.



Joanna Young – Admissions and Registry Manager

Joanna is passionate about the arts and comes from a dance background. She trained as part of the CAT Scheme at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance, going on to complete a BA (Hons) degree at the Scottish School of Contemporary Dance in 2012.

She then went on to work as a dancer and teacher based in Yorkshire before moving over to the world of arts administration in 2017, taking up the role of School Administrator at London Contemporary Dance School (The Place). Joanna now manages the admissions and registry processes for the Higher Education department at the National Centre.



Stevie Taylor - Head of Academic Administration and Student Support

Crashing into this world in the 80s, Stevie Taylor was destined for fame, and had just the right mix of talent and drive to be accepted at the prestigious BRIT school of performing Arts. Graduating with a BTEC in Musical Theatre and the jazziest hands in South London, Stevie wound his way through a labyrinth of theatre jobs until he started in education at the London Contemporary Dance School. For the last 15 years, Stevie has dedicated his life to the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama, first at Rambert School and now at the National Centre.

Living vicariously through a sea of creative students, he has been inspired and supported to undertake a Postgraduate Qualification in Arts Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. His favourite artist is Basquait and he has a lot of hats.



Nikita Shergill – Higher Education Records Officer

Nikita first studied Photography at the University for the Creative Arts and her work has been included in various exhibitions and publications around Europe. Currently Nikita is studying for her Masters in Social Anthropology and has taken a keen interest in social performance, both studying and performing.

She is also a comedy improviser – you may see her improvise in improv jams around London as well as performing with improv team Comediasians. Nikita manages all student assessment-related documentation, working closely with assessing teachers and the delivery team.



Antigone Exton-White – Student Support Manager

Antigone has extensive experience of both pastoral and academic support of students in vocational training, having worked for 20 years at London Contemporary Dance School before joining the National Centre in 2019. She is a dyslexia specialist, with a postgraduate qualification in supporting students with specific learning difficulties through higher education. Antigone is also an English language teacher.

Other staff

As well as our core degree team, the National Centre works with over 35 teachers who teach across a range of circus disciplines, movement, theatre, acrobatics and contextual studies. Additionally, we invite guest artists to work on projects with the students each year.

Our Technical and Rigging department not only ensure the safety of the students, but also teach invaluable rigging and production related skills.

Other departments include fundraising, venue hire, professional artist support, reception & customer services, marketing and communications, building management, recreational services, finance and general administration.

get in touch

FAQs

Got another question that needs answering?
Check out our [frequently asked questions page](#).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate
to contact our Admissions and Registry Manager

Joanna Young

joanna@nationalcircus.org.uk

020 7613 8244

How to find us

Old Street tube - 5mins

Shoreditch High Street Overground - 10 mins

Hoxton Overground 10 mins

Liverpool Street - 15 mins

St Pancras International - 2 stops,
Northern Line

National Centre for Circus Arts

Coronet Street, London, N1 6HD

[View on Google Maps](#)

A woman with voluminous curly hair is performing aerial silk. She is wearing a grey long-sleeved top and is holding onto a red silk rope. The background is a plain, light color.

**“i learned to use circus as a
language to express my thoughts
and ideas to audiences.”**

Jessica Miller, BA graduate 16/17