

APPENDIX F: GUIDE TO STUDENT SUPPORT

The National Centre for Circus Arts is a large and lively community of staff, students, circus professionals and users from many different cultural and educational backgrounds. Adapting to university life or to a new environment can at times be challenging. There are resources available if you have questions or encounter difficulties; this section of the handbook is intended to guide you to the right people or sources of information.

Please take time to read this section of the handbook, refer to it whenever needed and make use of the support available to you. Do not hesitate to utilise these resources, even if you think it is a relatively minor issue.

Student Support on the Higher Education Programmes at the National Centre covers a variety of areas such as support for disabled students, academic support, student finance and health and welfare.

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SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES INCLUDING SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

The National Centre for Circus Arts welcomes disabled students. It is our aim to provide appropriate support so that all students are able to achieve their full potential. Students with a disability will be provided with advice and support from the Student Support Manager. If you have a disability or specific learning difficulty we recommend you contact the Student Support Manager by email or phone.

UK students with disabilities (including Specific Learning Difficulties and long-term Mental Health conditions) can apply for the Disabled Students Allowance (DSA). The DSA usually provides support for students with specialist equipment necessary for your studies, including software and study skills tuition. Unlike a student loan DSA does not have to be repaid. Applications are made through your awarding body, for example Student Finance England. In order to apply for DSA the awarding body will require evidence of any impairment or disability. This may be proof from a Doctor or by an Educational Psychologist. If you require evidence from an Educational Psychologist the National Centre for Circus Arts can arrange this for you once you have begun your course.

If you wish to discuss any aspect of the kind of support we can offer, for example how the Learning Support Agreement works or how to apply for the Disabled Students Allowance, please contact the Student Support Manager, Mara Morgantti Minchillo, on 020 7613 8264, or email to mara@nationalcircus.org.uk.

For further information for students with disabilities studying at a Conservatoire for Dance and Drama affiliate school, please visit: <http://www.cdd.ac.uk/student-info/disability-support/>. Here you will find the Support for Disabled Students Guide, along with videos of student's experiences of studying at a CDD school.

PERSONAL ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Various staff here at the National Centre can help in different ways if you need academic support. If you need help with the content of classes or assessment work, in the first instance you can ask the Student Support Manager to arrange a tutorial with the relevant member of staff. If you make an appointment, you can prepare for the meeting and discuss your concerns away from class.

If you require support for essays and academic work, please see the Student Support Manager who can arrange a tutorial/ additional support for you.

The Head of Academic Administration and Course Managers can all help you with understanding higher education academic learning and can also offer overall guidance or advice about the programme or your marks.

GUIDANCE FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Schools within the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama recognise the challenges faced by students entering Higher Education and that following the demanding training of a conservatoire education can place great demands on a student's physical and emotional energy. With this in mind, they undertake ongoing work to promote mental health and wellbeing.

CDD publishes a leaflet aimed to help students identify signs of mental distress and where to go for support: http://www.cdd.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/AW_Leaflet_A5_student_3.pdf and a student poster designed to help students who are worried about the mental health of someone they know: http://www.cdd.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/AW_Poster_A3_portrait_student_2.pdf.

COUNSELLING

The National Centre for Circus Arts provides counselling services for students. Student Counselling is provided by Zack Polanski.

Zack Polanski is a cognitive hypnotherapist and NLP practitioner. He works extensively with performing artists in London. Each session is tailored to support the individual client and can be very beneficial over a short amount of time. Therapy sessions with Zack Polanski are held at the National Centre and students should insure that a private space is booked for them for this period of time. More information can be found on Zack's website here: <http://www.zackpolanski.com/>

The National Centre pays for the student to have 6 hours of counselling; after this, extra sessions can be paid for by the student or a referral can be made by the counsellor to the school to negotiate payment for continued sessions.

Students can arrange counselling with either the Gestalt Centre or Zack Polanski via the Student Support Manager. Further information can be found on Moodle under the Student Support section

NUTRITION CLINIC

The Nutrition Clinic runs one day per term for one-to-one appointments to discuss nutrition and energy related matters. To make an appointment, please send an email to the Student Support Manager.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE - THE HARDSHIP FUND & PERFORMANCE BURSARY

The Hardship Fund is provided by the Leverhulme Trust and is available to students in cases of severe financial need. Applications can be made throughout the academic year through the Student Support Manager. Applicants must be able to demonstrate severe financial difficulties unconnected with tuition fee requirements.

The Performance Bursary is provided by the Sylvia Waddilove Foundation UK and is available to all undergraduate students. Students may apply for a £1,000 bursary to help support them throughout their production periods (March-July in each academic year). £1,000 will be awarded to one student each academic year.

Application forms can be found on Moodle.

LEARNER SUPPORT

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS WHOSE FIRST LANGUAGE IS NOT ENGLISH

The Higher Education Administration Team organises support for those for whom English is not their first language. Any new student for who English is a second language and who has not had previous experience of academic writing at degree level will be considered for English Language Support sessions. In some cases students may be required to join English Language Support classes at the discretion of the Higher Education team if it is evident from written work that a student is struggling.

LEARNING SUPPORT AGREEMENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES/SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES (E.G. DYSLEXIA)

All students who are identified as having a disability will be invited to meet with the Student Support Manager and Year Manager to confirm a Learning Support Agreement (LSA). This is a written agreement between the student and the school which describes the type of support which is required and the way in which it will be provided. It is a practical and positive way of informing those teaching and working with students of these decisions. With the student's permission copies are circulated to the members of staff named on the agreement. There will be termly appointments to review this plan and make adjustments if needed, but students can also request an appointment to review the plan if they do not feel the support needed is being carried out, or is not enough for their needs.

OTHER INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS

Occasionally the School may suggest a specific learning arrangement for an individual student; in this circumstance it is likely the student will be offered a Learning Support Agreement. It would set out a series of arrangements developed to ensure that the student's particular needs are supported in his or her circumstances. It may be used in cases of injury, illness, or at times of personal difficulty.

In all cases, the Student Support Manager and relevant Year Manager will meet with the student to draw up the Learning Support Agreement. With the student's permission, relevant members of staff will be informed of the decisions made at this meeting, so that the relevant adjustments may be made.

INJURY MANAGEMENT

The Higher Education team will support you through any injury which affects you during your enrolment period. At the National Centre for Circus Arts we aim to prioritise injury prevention and education over a clinical treatment service for injuries. To support students in this area, the National Centre employs a Strength and Conditioning teacher for two days per week – Erin Bowerman, who is at the National Centre on Thursdays and Fridays during term time.

Students have group sessions with Erin and additionally with their discipline group. These sessions are to improve education on physicality and body awareness alongside giving them tools to help them with minor injuries such as sprains and tightness. In conjunction with these sessions discipline teachers and year managers will also be able to support the process of learning with respect to body awareness and physicality specific to injury management and will be actively involved in tailoring individual student needs.

If a student needs to see Erin about something specific (injury management, strength, prehab) they can request a session through the Student Support Manager (Mara). Alternatively a Course Manager can request they see Erin if they have a specific concern.

PHYSIOTHERAPY

As physio treatment is at times required in order to allow a student to progress with their training, the National Centre has established a relationship with an external Physiotherapist. Under Erin's guidance, we can access treatment and diagnostic services for cases that need/would benefit from specialised treatment. The collaboration is designed to support and compliment the work Erin is doing with the students and teachers. All appointments will be made through the Degree Office following a request by Erin.

If Erin feels that the student needs to see the physiotherapist she informs Mara, who books a session on their behalf and will let them know the details of the appointment. On rare occasions Year Managers can request a physio appointment if Erin is unavailable, but this should only happen at times when treatment is considered urgent but not an emergency, and any delay will have a significant impact on student progress (for example during a production). If Erin is not here and staff think that an injury needs immediate attention the student must go to A&E.

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure they attend any physio appointments booked for them – if they miss an appointment without evidence of significant circumstances which prevented them from attending, a student will need to pay for any alternative appointment.

HEALTH INSURANCE

Due to the nature of the timescale involved in obtaining treatments and further investigation (x-rays, scans etc) on the National Health Service (NHS), the National Centre highly recommends that all students take out private medical insurance. The referral period under the NHS can be an extremely slow process, which ultimately hinders recovery and the return to full fitness/ training. You can take out Private Medical Insurance (PMI) under the National Centre for Circus Arts scheme (please see the Student Support Manager for details). Please also inform the Higher Education office if you already have PMI.

ACCIDENT PROCEDURE

Should your injury be a result of an accident at the National Centre, you must inform a member of staff who will take the appropriate action, including contacting the duty First Aider to attend.

PREVENTING INJURY AND MAINTAINING FITNESS

It is vital that you do what you can to maintain fitness and prevent injury. Some elements of modules in your programme of study are designed to help with this and to develop your understanding of the links between nutrition, lifestyle and physical health. Students receive specific classes on injury prevention relevant to their chosen discipline and as the course progresses you will increase your understanding of what best suits you personally and you will be encouraged to develop your own Conditioning Plan.

WARMING UP AND COOLING DOWN

Warming up and cooling down (also called warming down) for all practical activities is an essential part of the course, and students receive specific guidance on this during their programme of study. New students sometimes experience some physical discomfort

because they are not used to the intensity and amount of training. It is important that you try to maintain your fitness during vacation periods to minimise this type of physical discomfort upon your return after a break. Correct warming up and cooling down will help to prevent problems.