

## Course Specification

**Please note:** This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the Course and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she passes the Course. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the Course handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this specification is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

**Degree and Course Title** Foundation Degree in Circus Arts

1. <b>Awarding Institution/Body</b>	University of Kent
2. <b>Teaching Institution</b>	National Centre for Circus Arts
3. <b>School/Division responsible for management of the Course</b>	School of Arts, Division of Arts and Humanities
4. <b>Teaching Site</b>	National Centre for Circus Arts Coronet Street London N1 6HD
5. <b>Mode of Delivery</b>	Full-time
6. <b>KentVision Academic Model</b>	
7. <b>Course accredited by</b>	n/a
8. <b>a) Final Award</b>	Foundation Degree in Circus Arts
<b>b) Alternative Exit Awards</b>	Certificate in Higher Education in Circus Arts
9. <b>CourseCourse</b>	Circus Arts
10. <b>UCAS Code (or other code)</b>	n/a
11. <b>Credits/ECTS Value</b>	240 credits, 120 ECTS equivalent (120 credits, 60 ECTS equivalent for Certificate in Higher Education)
12. <b>Study Level</b>	Undergraduate
13. <b>Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s)</b>	Dance, Drama and Performance (July 2015)
14. <b>Date of creation/revision</b>	<i>March 2020</i>
15. <b>Intended Start Date of Delivery of this Course</b>	From September 2020

**16. Educational Aims of the Course**

The Course aims to:

1. Developing a student's professional competency by providing the opportunity for students to explore and develop a broad range of the foundation technical and artistic skills, as well as the professional etiquette needed to develop as a collaborative artist.

2. Develop a student's technical and creative vocabulary in a specific circus discipline, instilling in them the confidence to practice, experiment and perform.
3. Develop a student's analytical, reflective and critical skills, and the tools to problem solve in a variety of contexts
4. Develop a student's ability to clearly communicate ideas, concepts and information in the context of production and performance as well as in a variety of forms and media.
5. Promote a student's capacity for learning as a life-long activity by providing an introduction to independent learning and the exploration of the student's own individual potential
6. Promote a student's knowledge and understanding of circus and its contemporary context within the performing arts, including the aesthetic, artistic and cultural values informing the ways in which circus is devised, performed and interpreted

### **17 Course Outcomes**

The Course provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas.

The Course outcomes have references to the subject benchmarking statement for Dance, Drama and Performance (July 2015)

#### **A. Knowledge and Understanding of:**

1. The training principles, levels of engagement and safety protocols that constitute the practice of a specific circus discipline (SB4.2)
2. The integration of different performance techniques with circus skills, and an understanding of how to apply those techniques in a variety of performance contexts (SB4.3)
3. Critical evaluation and research methods and the different approaches in the creation and performance of circus (SB4.2)
4. The broader processes associated with production and performance and their place within these in a variety of professional contexts (SB4.3)
5. The limits of personal abilities and knowledge, and how this awareness influences future practice and development (SB5.6, SB5.7)

#### **Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated**

Various teaching and learning approaches are used to enable students to meet Course outcomes, and none of these outcomes are achieved exclusively by one method. These include:

- Practical teacher led sessions
- Scheduled group and independent learning sessions, either self-directed or task-led

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- Devising work for performance, rehearsals and both internal and public performances
- Lectures
- Tutor and student led seminars
- Prescribed reading, viewing of performance and independent research
- Intensive workshops
- Collaborations with professional companies/directors/choreographers

Formative and summative assessment tasks include:

- Continuous assessment of practical work
- Observation of group and individual processes on practical projects
- Submission of written work which may include essays, reviews of performances, funding applications, online portfolios
- Individual or small group seminar presentations
- Contributions in class, including oral, intellectual, practical and creative contributions and evidence of preparation
- The presentation of practical/creative work through public and/or in-class performances

These methods are interwoven throughout the course and are taught and assessed as above with particular emphasis on teaching and learning through practical work.

Students receive ongoing formative feedback in practical classes and summative written feedback from tutors. Achievement is measured against module assessment criteria provided to students and assessors, with reference to grading criteria and in accordance with Course and learning outcomes.

Students must meet the specific attendance requirements for each module in order to be assessed.

Meetings are held each term attended by all assessing tutors to discuss the progress of each individual student. These meetings also function as moderation meetings, where grading and assessment are scrutinised.

Continuous assessment of practical work students may also be moderated through one or more of the following methods, which will be detailed in the student handbooks and the relevant module briefs provided to students:

- Group teaching of circus disciplines, followed by discussion between assessing tutors
- Joint observation of classes followed by discussions between assessors and moderators
- Tutors present during production periods to joint assess with directors and moderate assessment of process elements

### **Skills and Other Attributes**

#### **B. Intellectual Skills:**

1. The ability to engage critically with material leading to informed judgements and conclusions, and to effectively communicate information, arguments and analyses in a variety of forms, to both circus and non-circus related audiences (SB5.3)

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2. The application of reflective and independent thinking to personal practice and the practice of others, communicating conclusions verbally and in writing (SB5.7)
3. Skills which allow the student to undertake further training, develop existing skills, and acquire new areas of competence as well as enabling them to assume personal responsibility as developing artists (SB5.6)

### **Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated**

See section A.

### **C. Subject-specific Skills:**

1. A foundation level of competence in the creative and technical execution of a specific circus discipline, giving the student the confidence to practise, experiment and perform safely and creatively within their own limits (SB5.2)
2. An ability to identify problems and propose creative solutions in relation to their chosen circus discipline and in a broader production and performance context (SB5.2, SB5.3)
3. To demonstrate a range of performance skills and integrate them into their circus practice (SB5.2)
4. The ability to manage themselves as artists in line with professional expectations (SB5.6)
5. The capacity to engage imaginatively with creative practice and to promote artistic and personal growth (SB5.2)
6. An ability to identify Health and Safety issues and to undertake Risk Assessment when required (SB5.6)

### **Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated**

See section A.

### **D. Transferable Skills: *(Non-subject specific key skills)***

1. The ability to evaluate their own performance or personal development as well as the ability to recognise the limits of their current knowledge, through a process of reflection and self-appraisal (SB5.7)
2. Practice of effective time management and organisational skills consistent with professional expectations (SB5.6)
3. The ability to work autonomously outside of scheduled classes, recognising that the need to develop a lifelong approach to learning is essential to continued development (SB5.6)

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4. The ability to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts, using an appropriate range of materials and media (SB5.2)
5. The ability to undertake independent investigation and to retrieve and manage information (SB5.3)
6. The ability to use information technology appropriately as part of the skill-set of a modern performing professional (SB5.2)
7. The ability to be proactive in collaboration with others to achieve common goals (SB5.2)

### **Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated**

See section A.

For more information on the skills developed by individual modules and on the specific learning outcomes associated with any Certificate, Diploma or BA/BSc non-honours awards relating to this Course of study, see the module mapping.

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### **18 Course Structures and Requirements, Levels, Modules, Credits and Awards**

This Course is studied over two years full-time.

The Course is divided into two stages, each stage comprising modules to a total of 120 credits. Students must successfully complete each module in order to be awarded the specified number of credits for that module. One credit corresponds to approximately ten hours of 'learning time' (including all classes and all private study and research). Thus obtaining 120 credits in an academic year requires 1,200 hours of overall learning time. For further information on modules and credits refer to the Credit Framework at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfo.html>

Each module is designed to be at a specific level. For the descriptors of each of these levels, refer to Annex 2 of the Credit Framework at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfoannex2.html>. To be eligible for the award of a foundation degree students must obtain 240 credits, at least 90 of which must be at Level 5 or above.

Students successfully completing Stage 1 of the Course and meeting credit framework requirements who do not successfully complete Stage 2 will be eligible for the award of the Certificate in Higher Education in Circus Arts.

For further information refer to the Credit Framework at <https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfo.html#fallbackawards>.

Compulsory modules are core to the Course and must be taken by all students studying the Course. There are no optional modules.

Where a student fails a module(s) due to illness or other mitigating circumstances, such failure may be condoned, subject to the requirements of the Credit Framework and provided that the student has achieved the Course learning outcomes. For further information refer to the Credit Framework at <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/credit-framework/creditinfo.html>.

Where a student fails a module(s), but has marks for such modules within 10 percentage points of the pass mark, the Board of Examiners may nevertheless award the credits for the module(s), subject to the requirements of the Credit Framework and provided that the student has achieved the Course learning outcomes. For further information refer to the Credit Framework.

Failure will not be condoned or compensated for module CA102 Preparing for Circus (60 credits) and CA211 Circus Discipline 1 (35 credits) as the modules are each worth more than 25% of the stage.

Code	Title	Level	Credits	Term(s)
<b>Stage 1</b>				
<b>Compulsory Modules</b>				
CA102	Preparing for Circus	4	60	1, 2, 3
CA110	Specialisation Assessments	4	10	1, 2
CA105	Introduction to Ensemble	4	15	2
CA109	Performance in Theory and Practice	4	15	2, 3
CA107	Movement	4	10	2, 3
CA108	Play and Performance	4	10	2, 3
<b>Stage 2</b>				
<b>Compulsory Modules</b>				

## UNIVERSITY OF KENT

CA211	Circus Discipline Level 1	5	35	1, 2, 3
CA210	Action, Reaction and Creation	5	15	1, 2
CA212	Movement and Composition 1	5	15	1, 2
CA207	Theory, Practice, Analysis of Performance	5	10	1
CA204	Circus Producing and Production Management	5	10	2, 3
CA209	The Student Devised Piece	5	20	2, 3
CA201	The Ensemble	5	15	3

### 19 Work-Based Learning

Disability Statement: Where disabled students are due to undertake a work placement as part of this Course of study, a representative of the University will meet with the work placement provider in advance to ensure the provision of anticipatory and reasonable adjustments in line with legal requirements.

Where relevant to the Course of study, provide details of any work-based learning element, inclusive of employer details, delivery, assessment and support for students:

N/A

### 20 Support for Students and their Learning

- Induction Course introducing students to all of the elements listed below
- Student Handbook and Appendices
- Module Briefs
- Academic Writing Guide
- One-on-one and small group intensive teaching
- English Language Support
- Careers and Employability Advice from the Circus Development department
- Counselling Services provided by external organisations
- Information Services (computing and library services, including e-resources / Athens)
- Student representation at relevant committees (Student Staff Liaison, Learning & Teaching, Academic Board)
- One to one feedback
- Personal progress interviews and performance profiling
- Individual and group tutorials
- Termly Student Progress Meeting, overseeing the progression of each individual student and identifying specific individual support needs
- Full time Student Support Manager a range of learning, emotional, physical and financial support systems and available for individual support on welfare and well-being issues
- Support for students with a disability / specific learning difficulty including a specialist academic support tutor

## UNIVERSITY OF KENT

- Injury treatment and rehabilitation including individual injury management support and physical therapy
- Year Managers who oversee the pastoral progression of all students on the Course
- Academic Support from the Performance and Academic Leader

For further information please visit the National Centre website, Higher Education section:

<http://www.nationalcircus.org.uk/education-and-learning/further-higher-education>

### 21 Entry Profile

The minimum age to study a degree Course at the university is normally at least 18 years old by 1 September in the year the Course begins. There is no upper age limit.

#### 21.1 Entry Route

For fuller information, please refer to the University prospectus

- All candidates must apply to the school directly and attend audition
- Indicative requirements would be a BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts, Circus, Dance or equivalent, or 5 GCSE's at C or above, including English. Overseas applicants must hold equivalent level qualifications.
- Candidates who are able to demonstrate their potential successfully to complete a degree Course at level 5 will also be considered on the basis of previous experience.
- Applicants whose first language is not English must hold an equivalent qualification to a GSCE in English language or pass the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) at 6.5 pass level or higher.
- Due to the nature of its module structure, APEL candidates are not accepted on to the Foundation Degree in Circus Arts

#### 21.2 What does this Course have to offer?

- A conservatoire level training for those who have the desire and potential to become the next generation of professional circus artists
- To be taught and supported by a dedicated specialist staff, knowledgeable of the circus arts and the business of circus, and with a dedication to the art of circus as a means of expression and not simply a demonstration of physical ability
- A small specialist school with an intimate working environment, close tutor support and contact
- Regular contact with industry professionals, including the opportunity to train alongside working practitioners
- Opportunities to collaborate with leading practitioners, directors and choreographers
- Purpose built facilities specifically suited for full-time circus arts training:
  - 2 main training spaces (one 20m x 14m x 7.5m and another 25m x 17m x 9m) which are fully riggable for aerial activities and equipped for acrobatics and other floor activities.
  - Four additional studios, one of which is also riggable for some aerial work, one of which is fully sprung for acrobatic work
  - Production equipment (lighting, sound equipment, blacks etc) for performance use
- Central London location with access to a wide variety of circus and performance related events



## UNIVERSITY OF KENT

- Affiliation with the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama, providing opportunities to collaborate with students training in other performing arts courses in London and the UK
- Global contacts with other circus training institutions through affiliation to the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools (FEDEC)
- The potential to progress onto the BA (Hons) in Circus Arts

### 21.3 Personal Profile

- The potential to acquire a high level of technical skill and to develop their artistic awareness
- A demonstrable commitment to the practices of creating circus
- An intellectual interest in the processes involved in creating interesting circus performance
- An enthusiasm for group work
- The ability to self-motivate and gain maximum benefit from the Course through engagement with all aspects of the curriculum
- The desire to engage in the creation of circus both in theory and in practice

## 22 Methods for Evaluating and Enhancing the Quality and Standards of Teaching and Learning

### 22.1 Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards

- Student module evaluations
- Annual Course and module monitoring reports, see <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexe.html>
- External Examiners system, see <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexk.html>
- Periodic Course review, <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/taught/annexf.html>
- Annual staff appraisal
- Peer observation
- Quality Assurance Framework, <http://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/index.html>
- QAA Higher Education Review, see <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/InstitutionReports/types-of-review/higher-education-review/Pages/default.aspx>
- Affiliate annual report to the Academic Board of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama
- The National Centre for Circus Arts Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy
- Review and analysis of statistical information
- Policy reviews
- Moderation of marking
- The committee structures of both the National Centre for Circus Arts and Conservatoire for Dance and Drama, as outlined in 21.2
- Student Feedback mechanisms as outlined in 21.3

### 22.2 Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

- Department meetings
- Staff-Student Liaison Committees
- National Centre Learning and Teaching Committee
- National Centre Academic Board

## UNIVERSITY OF KENT

- Conservatoire for Dance and Drama Committee Structure
- Board of Examiners
- School Learning and Teaching Committee (Kent)
- Faculty Learning and Teaching Committee (Kent)

### 22.3 Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience

- Student module evaluations
- Student Voice Forum
- Student rep system
- Annual NSS
- Annual quality survey by the University of Kent
- Student termly group feedback sessions led by student representatives
- Exit feedback sessions
- The continuous day-to-day conversations between staff and students that is possible in a very small school
- Student representation on other School and Conservatoire committees
- The Conservatoire for Dance and Drama Student Advisory Group

### 22.4 Staff Development priorities include:

- Training and staff development opportunities with FEDEC (Federation of European Circus Schools)
- PGCHE requirements
- HEA (associate) fellowship membership
- Annual appraisals
- Support for administrative and teaching staff to undertake relevant training/skills development
- In-house staff training and teacher workshops
- Peer observation of teaching and best practice exchange through school committees and the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama
- Course team meetings
- Research seminars
- Conferences

## 23 Indicators of Quality and Standards

- Results of periodic Course review (March 2011)
- QAA Institutional Audit for the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (2010)
- Annual External Examiner reports
- Annual Course and module monitoring reports
- NSS and DLHE data
- University of Kent QAA Higher Education Review (2015)

### 23.1 The following reference points were used in creating these specifications:

- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education

## UNIVERSITY OF KENT

- QAA Benchmarking statement/s for Dance, Drama and Performance July 2015
- School and Faculty plan
- University Plan/Learning and Teaching Strategy
- Staff research activities
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (August 2008, QAA)
- Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark Statement (May 2010, QAA)
- National Centre for Circus Arts Learning & Teaching Strategy 2015-18
- National Centre for Circus Arts Annual Monitoring Reports 2013, 2014 and 2015

### **24 Inclusive Course Design**

The Collaborative Partner recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the course is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)/declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services.