

**Meeting of National Centre for Circus Arts Board of Trustees
To be held on site**

Date of Meeting: Tuesday 8th February 2022

Time of Meeting: 6.30pm

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies**
- 2. Declaration of Interests**
- 3. Minutes of last Meeting(s)**
Minutes of the last meeting held 16th November '21 – for approval
- 4. Action Tracker & Matters Arising not elsewhere on the agenda**
- 5. Chair's Update** – verbal update by Alison King – any questions to be noted
- 6. RAN Committee**
RAN Report – verbal report by Paul Steggall – any questions to be noted
Minutes of meeting held on 11th January '22
Trustee recruitment – verbal report from Paul Steggall and Kate White
- 7. Audit Committee**
Audit Report – verbal report by Thomas Nowacki – any questions to be noted
Minutes of meeting held on 18th January 2022
Audit tender proposal – for approval
Risk Register – key areas or changes for information
- 8. Finance Committee**
Finance Report – verbal report by Darshak Shah - any questions to be noted
Minutes of meeting held on 25th January 2022
Q1 Management Accounts
Inter-company loan agreement – for approval
- 9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee**
Verbal report by Alison King - any questions to be noted
Minutes of meeting held on 27th January 2022
- 10. Departmental Reports** – any questions to be noted
Operations & Administration
Professional Development
Commercial
CEO (including HE & CDD updates)
OfS review of world-leading specialist funding for higher education providers – draft briefing note
Academic Board – minutes of Academic Board meeting held 2nd December 2021
- 11. Gala update** – verbal update by Dan Cowdrill
- 12. Any Other Business**
- 13. Trustee only session**

Date of next Board Meeting – Tuesday 10th May 2022

ACTION TRACKER AS OF FEBRUARY '22

<u>Description</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Date raised</u>	<u>Date due</u>	<u>Status</u>
The appointment of "Flagstone".	Tony to complete the documentation, pending receipt of further information (including financial statements) from Flagstone	Tony, Darshak, Kate & Finance Committee	09.02.21	For update at next board meeting 08.02.22	In the absence of financial statements for Flagstone, we are considering other options for diversifying out financial risk.
Fundraising Gala 22 February '22	Trustees to contact Kate and Alison with their intentions and pledges.	Trustees	06.07.21	For follow-up at the autumn Board meeting 16.11.21	COMPLETE
Contingency plan	To incorporate a contingency plan into the Risk Register showing the mitigations we would implement should there be signs that the quarterly income target may not be reached.	SMT/Tony	16.11.21	For follow-up at the next Board meeting 08.02.22	COMPLETE
OfS Reporting calendar	To produce a calendar to ensure the developing trends from the business are reflected in any reporting and/or forecasts for the OfS.	SMT/Tony	16.11.21	For follow-up at the next Board meeting 08.02.22	Ongoing Currently awaiting CDD's calendar from the OfS.
Strategy day de-brief	Trustees to feed their thoughts on the key areas of focus back to the SMT so that the results can be brought to the next Board meeting.	Trustees	16.11.21	For follow-up at the next Board meeting 08.02.22	In process

**National Centre for Circus Arts
Coronet Street, London N1 6HD**

**MINUTES – RAN
6.30pm Tuesday 11th January 2022**

(The meeting took place by zoom)

In attendance: Kate White, CEO
Froniga Lambert, COO
Sharon Harble, EA to the CEO (Minutes)
Antigone Exton-White (Student Support Manager)

Trustees: Paul Steggall (Chair)
Kate Cavelle
Betsy Lynch
Alison King

1. Apologies

1.1 There were no apologies.

2. Student Support

- 2.1 Kate W introduced NCCA's Student Support Manager, Antigone Exton-White to the committee. Antigone has been with NCCA for 2 years and is responsible for the general pastoral care of the students. She has worked for over 20 years in similar student support roles at other performing arts organisations, including London Contemporary Dance School and specialises in identifying specialist learning differences. Paul welcomed Antigone to the meeting.
- 2.2 Antigone explained that all first-year students complete a QuickScan questionnaire when they join us. This points out indications of Dyslexia and other conditions such as Dyspraxia or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Students who are identified as having these conditions will receive additional practical support and where possible the Disabled Students' Allowance, which covers some study-related costs incurred due to mental health conditions or other disabilities. NCCA supports an unusually high number of students with ADHD and specific learning differences. 5 of our students have been diagnosed as having an autistic spectrum condition, which is a fairly high percentage but in Antigone's experience, not unusual in the performing arts sector.
- 2.3 The levels of anxiety and depression among the students are fairly high, particularly among those with specific learning differences. In the event that crisis management becomes necessary (for those experiencing extreme anxiety or depression, panic attacks, eating disorders or self-harm) we refer students to ProblemShared, a secure, inclusive and flexible online therapy platform providing therapy and counselling with professional and accredited therapists.
- 2.4 Antigone confirmed that NCCA does not currently have sufficient resource for the type of counselling provision we would obviously prefer. Many of our students have sexuality or gender issues, which, in extreme cases, can require specialist therapy or counselling. In such cases students are sometimes referred to the NHS but also referred to other charities or reputable organisations for specialist counselling.
- 2.5 Antigone assured the committee that NCCA has not reached 'crisis point' in terms of student support. On the contrary, she, Kate W and the HE team all work together to provide cohesive levels of support to the students and to one another. An additional level of support for both students and staff is provided by NCCA's team of Mental Health First Aiders. The team is coordinated by Antigone and NCCA's Buildings and Facilities Manager, Ness.
- 2.6 Antigone has been able to stay in contact with the students either on line during lockdown periods or in person during term time and now has a designated office space where she can meet students on a one to one level, all of which seems to be working very well.

- 2.7 Betsy asked Antigone whether the students have a peer network or mentoring programme that supports their everyday issues. Antigone explained that she is looking at arranging for alumni to come in and talk about their own experiences with the students. We are also planning to offer a 'light version' of the mental health first aid course to students so that they have an additional resource available to them within the cohort.
- 2.8 Ali thanked Antigone for her commitment and suggested that at some point she might like to attend a meeting of the ED&I Committee.
- 2.9 Paul thanked Antigone and reminded her that the RAN Committee members are always available should she need their support in the future.
- 2.10 Antigone thanked the committee. She left the meeting at 7pm.
- 2.11 Kate W confirmed that Antigone is NCCA's first Student Support Manager. We identified 2 years ago that student needs were increasing and that such a role was necessary. Antigone delivers the provision very well but there are also others within the team who provide support when Antigone is not available.
- 2.12 We are able to assess at the audition stage whether NCCA is likely to be able to support a student's particular needs and the agreement we have with each student is extremely clear about the levels of support that we are able to provide. Our syllabus has changed and is developing to reflect the shift in student needs in light of COVID and its associated challenges, particularly anxiety, isolation and low levels of resilience. Resilience has been high on the agenda of most higher education institutions since 2019 and as a result, we have an agreement in place whereby we are able to contact a student's designated next of kin in confidence if we feel that they may be in immediate danger of self-harm. This particular challenge is also fully supported by our Safeguarding Policy.

3. Minutes of the last meeting held

- 3.1 The minutes of the previous meeting (11th October '21) were approved.

4. Action Tracker and matters arising

- 4.1 There were no outstanding actions.
- 4.2 Alison confirmed that she will be holding an appraisal meeting with Kate W in due course.

5. New term update/COVID-19

- 5.1 Froniga reported that, following updated Government guidance, our safety protocols around mask wearing have increased. Some staff members have tested positive for COVID and all staff are being asked to work from home where possible. The senior management team are largely working from home.
- 5.2 With regard to the BA Ensemble production, protocols will continue to be followed, led by us, at Jackson's Lane. Jackson's Lane are planning on selling to full capacity and audience members will be required to wear masks at all times as in all other arts venues. During rehearsals at NCCA the production directors will lead on mask wearing and other safety protocols with students when in the spaces. We are continuing to encourage students, particularly the BAs, to carry out regular lateral flow tests and to take on the personal responsibility of keeping themselves and others safe during the rehearsal and production periods as would be expected of them in any other professional situation.
- 5.3 Recreational classes, degree classes and professional membership training are all continuing to take place in the building.

6. Staff appraisals

- 6.1 The full staff appraisal process is not yet complete. Around 70% of appraisals have taken place, the rest will take place over the coming weeks. Regular informal one to one catch-ups between individuals and their line managers continue in the meantime. Common themes will be reported back to the RAN Committee in the usual way and a full overview of the appraisal process will be brought to the committee in due course (hopefully in time for the next meeting in March).

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 7.1 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee last met on the 11th of November.
- 7.1.1 It had been agreed previously that, with such a wide range of topics available, the ED&I committee does need to remain focused on the main priorities of the organisation. As co-chair of the ED&I committee, Alison recognises that the list of actions coming from meetings is high and will ensure that this is carefully monitored in future.
- 7.1.2 Rob West is no longer able to sit on the ED&I Committee. Paul suggested that perhaps one of the new trustee recruits might be suitable to replace him.
- 7.1.3 It was agreed that since the Board already see the minutes of the ED&I Committee meetings, in future, updates will be brought to the RAN Committee only if necessary.
- 7.2 Organisations from across the performing arts and wider cultural sector have agreed to track their progress tackling racism as part of a newly launched initiative by diversity organisation Inc Arts UK. We are currently looking at whether this might be suitable for us and will add it to the agenda for the next RAN Committee meeting if we feel it is. Froniga and Alison will liaise outside of this meeting.

8. Trustee Recruitment

- 8.1 The closing date for applications is the 28th of February. A small number of candidates have applied directly enclosing their CV and meetings have been arranged for them to meet with Kate and/or Alison. A number of others have also been met with Kate and Alison separately to this, having been connected through a third party.
- ACTION - *Alison and Sharon to share and collate details of all potential candidates so that a simple table showing their skillset and background can be created and circulated to the RAN Committee.***
- 8.2 The committee agreed that whilst we are keen to diversify our Board it is also vital that the caliber of our Board members remains high. We must ensure we have people with the range of abilities necessary to support the organisation successfully. With this in mind we are fully prepared to extend the recruitment process until later in the year if necessary.
- 8.3 It was felt that a reminder to all current trustees would be beneficial.
- ACTION - *Alison to circulate an email to trustees reminding them to share the trustee recruitment details (including a link to the pack) with their colleagues and networks.***
- ACTION - *Alison to ensure the advert has been shared on LinkedIn.***
- 8.4 It was noted that Sue James will now be staying on as a trustee until the end of the year.

9. Any other business

- 9.1 A copy of NCCA's Risk Register was circulated to the committee prior to the meeting. The Risk Register is a useful management tool that we update and refer to regularly and which helps us to focus on particular areas of concern. It is important to note that it is a live document. It works well and the formatting makes it a useful device to refer to and check in with as we update it with actions and plans for the mitigation of key risks. The Risk Register is constantly evolving. It is shared with the Audit Committee twice a year and with the Finance and RAN Committees once a year for comment. It was suggested that some of the ratings might need updating.
- ACTION - *Trustees to consider the document and feed back to the group with comments.***
- 9.2 Preparations for the Gala on 22nd February continue. Table sales are increasing and outgoings are being kept to a minimum. We are prepared for attendee numbers to drop at short notice closer to the time.

Next meeting: Tuesday 22nd March 2022

RAN ACTION TRACKER (AS OF JANUARY 2022)

<u>Specification</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Date raised</u>	<u>Date due</u>	<u>Status</u>
Student Support	Student Support Manager, Antigone Exton White to be invited to a future RAN Committee meeting, to share themes and meet the committee informally. Date to be confirmed in due course.	Kate W	11.10.21	N/A	COMPLETE Antigone provided a thorough verbal update at the January RAN meeting.
Staff Appraisals	Full update of staff appraisals to be presented to the RAN Committee.	Froniga	11.10.21	For update at next RAN meeting 22.03.22	A brief verbal update was given on 11.01.22. A full overview of staff appraisals to be brought to the RAN Committee once the process is complete.
Trustee Recruitment	Alison to circulate an email to the trustees reminding them to share the trustee recruitment details (including a link to the pack) with their colleagues and networks.	Alison	11.01.22	Immediately	In process
	Alison to ensure the advert has been shared on LinkedIn.	Alison	11.01.22	Immediately	In process
	Alison and Sharon to collate candidates' details into a table for circulation.	Sharon & Alison	11.01.22	Immediately	In process
Risk Register	Trustees to consider the document and feed back to the group with comments.	Paul, Betsy, Alison & Kate C	11.01.22	Immediately	In process

National Centre for Circus Arts
MINUTES – AUDIT COMMITTEE
NCCA, Coronet Street, London N1 6HD
6.30pm Tuesday 18th January 2022
(Meeting took place by zoom)

In attendance: Thomas Nowacki (Chair)
William Underhill (Trustee)
Sue James (Trustee)
Kate White (CEO)
Froniga Lambert, COO
Sharon Harble, EA to the CEO (Minutes)

1. Apologies

1.1 Tarun was unable to attend the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

2.1 The minutes of the Audit Committee meeting on 19th October 2021 were approved in principle.

3. Action Log

3.1 The action log was updated.

4. Internal audit report, COVID 19 response lessons learned

4.1 Financial statements – the audit was completed after the last meeting (19th October), amendments were made by James (MKS) and an explanation provided where necessary, as requested.

4.2 Thomas and William pointed out that it is rare to find an audit report that requires ‘no more to be done’. The committee congratulated Kate and team on an excellent outcome during what was an extraordinarily difficult and challenging time.

5. Internal auditors post - CDD, next steps

5.1 As discussed previously, some of the CDD schools have initiated conversations with KCG about retaining their services post-CDD, the argument being continuity of service. KCG have agreed that it will be possible within good governance for us all to retain their services and, following William’s conversation with Alan Lees at KCG, that the Teckal exemption would not apply to NCCA in order for this to happen. The committee agreed that with the amount of change coming up with the move away from CDD it would be better not to change both internal and external auditors in 2022.

5.2 Having checked with the other schools, Froniga confirmed that so far, one is intending to retain the services of KCG and one is not.

5.3 Froniga will be speaking to Alan Lees over the coming days about our 2022 external audit and will ask him about the potential cost involved in us retaining KCG’s services as part of that conversation.

5.3.1 KCG intend to focus their 2022 audit on our move away from CDD. William questioned the value in this, considering the OfS will be undergoing a similar process as part of our application for self-registration and that this process will be complete before the audit takes place. Our application to the OfS for self-registration already includes a vast amount of documentation and that last week’s QSR (Quality Standards Review) carried out by the OfS asked us for extensive and detailed information and verification regarding our teaching processes. It is unlikely that a further internal audit would provide anything that hasn’t already been identified by the OfS by one or other of these processes.

6. External auditors, audit tender recommendation, agree process & timeline

- 6.1 The Audit Tender Recommendation report from Tony Bonnar was circulated prior to the meeting. Tony asked that the committee consider and approve the proposal to commence a tender process for the 2021/22 External Audit. The process would begin in February and a recommendation made to the Audit Committee in April. A special meeting of the Audit Committee would be held on 6th of May and the results presented to the Board for formal approval on the 10th of May. The decision by the Audit Committee to proceed with the tender process would formally trigger a notice period for MKS, unless the decision is to continue to use their services.
- 6.2 Kate confirmed that an appointment in May would allow time for a new auditor to prepare for an external audit to take place in July.
- 6.3 It was noted that the tender process could result in the reappointment of Moore Kingston Smith.
- 6.4 William suggested that, according to Tony's comparison table, our fee to Moore Kingston Smith, currently slightly in excess of £20,200 across NCCA, CSPCL (Circus Space Property Company Ltd.) and CSEL (Circus Space Events Ltd.) appears rather high, considering no work was done to validate the migration of data from SAGE to NetSuite. Kate and Froniga agreed that the process had proved more challenging than usual, largely due to our assigned (part time) Audit Manager which meant that the overall process was disjointed and slow.
- 6.5 It was noted that William will not be available to meet on the 6th of May.
ACTION - * Kate to review the timetable with Tony and arrange a different date for the committee to meet (other than 6th May).
- 6.6 After due consideration the committee approved Tony's proposal in principle.

7. Risk Register review

- 7.1 The Risk Register is shared with the Audit Committee twice a year and also now with the Finance and RAN Committees once a year for comment. It was suggested at the last RAN Committee meeting that some of the ratings might need updating. Since that meeting the new Chair of the RAN Committee, Paul Steggall has made a number of changes to the document and also the valid point that some risks may no longer be relevant. The Senior Management Team will continue to review the document in the usual way and will adjust where necessary, taking Paul's comments into account. Thomas agreed that if any risk were considered no longer relevant, then it should be removed from the document.
- 7.2 In answer to Sue's question, Froniga explained that there is no timeline against the risk *loss or reduction in Arts Council NPO funding* as we could be at risk of losing ACE funding at any time, not necessarily due to any fault of our own (as discussed at the last Trustee Strategy Day). Thomas assured Sue that any urgent matters, whether or not they appear on the Risk Register, such as loss of funding, would be brought to the Board via an emergency meeting by Kate outside of the normal governance structure. William assured Sue that the Finance Committee would be alerted to any financial risks as a first line of defense as a matter of course. Thomas reminded Sue that the Risk Register is presented to the full Board annually and that any key but non-urgent risks are highlighted at that point.
ACTION - *Audit Committee to formally present the Risk Register to the Board on an annual basis and to highlight any key changes in the risk profile over the past year.
- 7.3 In answer to Thomas's query about the mitigations for the risks *failure to meet fundraising targets* and *failure to meet earned income targets*, it was agreed that the impact for each could be higher.

7.4 The Risk Register is constantly evolving and reviewed regularly (on average four times a year) by the Senior Management Team, more often if a new risk presents itself. Kate and Froniga both agreed that removing risks that were no longer relevant would make the document more manageable.

8. Financial procedures update

- 8.1 Our financial procedures are undergoing a review alongside the implementation and rollout of our new finance system, NetSuite. The process of raising sales invoices has been successfully trialed and the finance team are about to run a similar trial with purchase orders. Until now these processes have been very longwinded and time consuming. The next stage in the transition will be for individual budget holders to be given access to the NetSuite system via their own dashboards. Tony is planning for this to happen once the Q2 Management Accounts are complete. The full process will continue to be monitored by Tony and the Senior Management Team and any outstanding issues will be flagged prior to the next internal audit.
- 8.2 The migration of data from SAGE to NetSuite went very smoothly and the financial year end went through with very few queries. We have a dedicated account manager who is always available, despite being based in Thailand. The level support we have received from her and from NetSuite overall has been extraordinarily high.
- 8.3 NetSuite has made reporting far easier for the finance team which means they are able to provide more accurate information to the Senior Management Team more quickly. Communication between the finance team and the Senior Management Team has improved immensely.
- 8.4 Thomas asked about the level of support NetSuite had provided in reconciling the balances between the old system (SAGE) and the new system (NetSuite). It was suggested that Tony provide a detailed update on the transition to the Audit Committee at the next meeting.

ACTION - *Tony to give a detailed update on the transition from SAGE to NetSuite on 29th March.

9. Fundraising Policy

- 9.1 A previous iteration of the policy came to the Audit Committee 18 months ago. Work has continued on the document and Commercial Director Dan Cowdrill has been addressing the key issues that Thomas had raised.
- 9.2 Thomas agreed that the document was now far clearer but, under *Gift Acceptance Process*, queried the practicality of needing to refer any Gifts over £25,000 to the Board for approval. The committee agreed that, for reasons of practicality, the pre-approval level for the Board ought to be higher, perhaps with an additional level involving the CEO and the Chair for gifts over £25,000, with the full Board being subsequently informed of all material gifts in the quarterly meetings.

ACTION - *Kate to check the Financial Regulations so that the approval levels can be reviewed and adjusted where possible. Any adjustments to be fed back to the committee at the next meeting on 29th March.

10. Any other business:

- 10.1 There have been no incidents of Whistle Blowing since the last meeting of the committee.

11. Date of next meeting

11. The next meeting of the Audit Committee will take place on 29th March 2022

AUDIT MEETING ACTION LOG (As of January '22)

<u>Description</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Date raised</u>	<u>Date due</u>	<u>Status</u>
Gift Aid - There remains a risk that the subsidiaries may not have the funds to make full payment before the HMRC deadline in the future. William will discuss with Tony outside of this meeting. The risk will be managed and monitored.	Report back to committee on any required changes to mitigate the risk of not being able to transfer Gift Aid from CSR and CSP to NCCA	William/Tony	13.10.20	For follow up at next Audit Committee meeting 29.03.22	William and Tony to discuss and report back to the Audit Committee.
Fundraising Policy Thomas has considered the existing Fundraising Policy and sent through an amended draft version to Kate and Froniga.	Kate to share this with Dan in order that the policy can be updated.	Kate/Dan	20.04.21	For follow up at the next Audit Committee meeting 18.01.22	COMPLETE The final draft of the policy was discussed (see item 9)
Internal audit post CDD. Our internal audit (with KCG) is currently organised (and paid for) by CDD. Once we are independent we will need our own internal audit arrangement. Some of the CDD schools have initiated conversations with KCG to see whether they/we could retain their services post-CDD, the arguments being continuity of service, without having to go through a full tender process. KCG have proposed that it is possible within good governance for us all to retain KCG without going through a full tender exercise by use of the Teckal exemption.	William to speak with KCG to clarify whether we need to go through a full tender process and/or whether the Teckal exemption applies.	Froniga to introduce by email	15.06.21	For follow up at the next Audit Committee meeting 18.01.22	COMPLETE (see item 5)
Risk Register	The language used when identifying and dealing with risks will be reviewed so as to be consistent across all of our documentation and reporting processes, including financial statements. Audit Committee to present the Risk Register formally to the Board on an annual basis and any key changes in the risk profile to be highlighted.		19.10.21 18.01.22	For follow up at next meeting 18.01.22 N/A	COMPLETE (see item 7) Ongoing
NetSuite system upgrade	A brief progress report to be given at the next Audit Committee meeting in January 2022.	Froniga/Tony	19.10.21	18.01.22	COMPLETE (see item 8)
Financial Statements	James to amend in final set of figures where necessary, or to provide explanation.	James (MKS)	19.10.21	Immediately	COMPLETE (see item 4)

External Audit tender	Kate to review the timetable with Tony and arrange a different date for the committee to meet (other than 6 th May).	Kate/Tony	18.01.22	When Tony is back from annual leave – end of January	For follow up
Transition from SAGE to NetSuite In particular the level of support NetSuite has provided in reconciling the balances between the old system (Sage) and the new system (NetSuite).	Tony to provide a detailed update on the transition from SAGE to NetSuite on 29 th March.	Froniga/Tony	18.01.22	29.03.22	For follow up
Fundraising Policy Gift Acceptance Process	Kate to check the Financial Regulations so that approval levels can be reviewed and adjusted where possible.	Kate	18.01.22	Any adjustments to be fed back to the committee at the next meeting 29.03.22	For follow up

Audit Tender Recommendation

Author: Tony Bonnar

Purpose: Proposal to SMT, Audit Committee & FSC

1. Background

Moore, Kingston Smith (“MKS”) tendered for their first NCCA audit in December 2009 for the year ended 31st March 2010 and have therefore been our auditors for 12 financial years. During this period there was one an aborted tender process.

In 2020-21 MKS’s annual audit related fees totalled £25.4k: -

- Audit £20.2k
- Preparation of Published Financial Statements £2.4k
- Corporation Tax Returns £2.8k

Whilst MKS had no issues from their 2020-21 audit work, from our perspective the deployment of their resources was disjointed it seemed as a result of competing demands and the allocation of a part time Audit Manager. I didn’t feel last year’s audit was as thorough or of the quality of MKS’s work in 2019-20; it was particularly notable that MKS did no work to validate the migration of circa 10 months of data from SAGE to NetSuite, theoretically an obvious source of mis-statement and error.

2. Proposal

From a financial governance perspective, a market tender is obviously well overdue and a change of “eyes” should be regarded as healthy from a governance perspective although the audit tender process could of course result in the reappointment of MKS.

In addition, from my charity experience and considering the degree of “complication” of NCCA’s financial transactions, my feeling has been the audit fee in particular is £5k+ too high although the following comparison with other schools suggests it is more than that: -

School	Year	Fee Income (£’ms)	Audit Fee (£’000s)	Auditors
Rambert*	2020-21	2.7	13.5 (0.50%)	Buzzacott
The Place	2019-20	7.4	35.5 (0.48%)	HaysMacintyre
Central School of Ballet*	2019-20	4.0	14.0 (0.35%)	Mazars
British Old Vic Theatre School	2019-20	2.9	11.5 (0.41%)	Corrigans
Northern School*	2020-21	3.7	13.0 (0.35%)	Saffery Champness
<i>National Centre for Circus Arts</i>	<i>2020-21</i>	<i>2.8</i>	<i>20.2 (0.72%)</i>	<i>MKS</i>
			<i>11.8 (0.42%)</i>	<i>Schools Average</i>

NB NCCA’s three entity structure adds additional audit costs

**School recommends Auditors*

I recommend we commence a tender process for 2021-22 Audit around the following broad timetable:

Stage	Task	By	Who
1	Audit Committee approves the recommendation of this paper	18 th January	AC
2	Long-list Nominations received and circulated	11 th February	Tony
3	Desktop short-list circulated for agreement Briefing Documentation circulated for agreement	18 th February	Tony/All
4	Outline Invitations to Tender sent to short-list for expression of interest	25 th February	Tony
5	Invitation to Tender closed and detailed Briefing Documentation sent to interested short-list (max 8)	11 th March	Tony
6	Presentations received from interested short-list	25 th March	Tony/All
7	Presentations assessed and final short-list agreed	1 st April	Tony/All
8	Meetings with final selection (max 4)	April	All
9	Recommendation to Audit Committee	29 th April	All
10	Special Audit Committee Meeting	6 th May	AC
11	Board Meeting to approve appointment of Auditors	10 th May	Board

I suggest small team (aka "All") is formed of Thomas, Darshak (or an Audit Committee Trustee), Froniga (or another SMT member) and myself to progress this to stage 9.

I have plenty of material from tenders in previous lives which should help fast track our documentation preparation.

Risk description	Category	Risk causes	Owner	Without mitigation			Mitigation	Post mitigation		
				Likelihood	Impact	Total risk		Likelihood	Impact	Total risk
1 Budget is unable to keep pace with activities	Finance, Reputation	Failure to recruit quality students to Degree programme	Marketing, Degree	2	2	4	As part of the HE programme review, assess the application and audition process. Prioritise the development of a robust recruitment strategy from younger age - realignment of pre-vocational training to sit within same directorate as HE. Utilise our partners (notably the CAT network) to increase recruitment. Review marketing of degree courses. Focus on home students post Brexit.	1	2	2
	Finance, Reputation, Delivery	Students drop out in-year, leading to loss of student fees in-year	Degree	2	2	4	Appointment of full time Student Support Manager. Allocation of bursary support and hardship funds. HE programme review potentially reduces pressure on students from course structure.	1	2	2
	Finance	Loss of Higher Education funding eg HEIF, ISTA and possible reduction in student fees (Augar Report)	SMT, Degree	3	4	12	Review the HE structure to look at different methods for delivery that could reduce costs. Review organisational budgets, spending & structure. Explore new and enhanced commercial income streams.	2	2	4
	Finance	Loss of or reduction in Arts Council NPO funding	SMT	2	4	8	Review organisational budgets and spending, reduce non-HE activity accordingly. Explore new and enhanced commercial income streams.	2	2	4
	Finance, Delivery	Failure to meet earned income targets	Commercial, Marketing	3	4	12	All revenue-generating activities are grouped within Commercial Directorate, allowing for overview of revenue and synergy of activities. Income tracker reviewed monthly will flag any areas of concern and allow for early intervention. Strong marketing strategy around revenue-generating activities. Regular reviews of recreational programme sales figures and course pricing. Specific marketing strategies for corporate workshops and hires. Reduce non-core activity and associated costs. Reduce operating costs.	2	2	4
	Finance	Failure to meet fundraising targets, including loss of existing funding and lack of fundable activities	Fundraising, SMT	3	4	12	Review of Trusts fundraising strategy with new pipeline created in Jan 22. Commercial Director in place to ensure regular funding conditions are met and to identify new fundable projects. Recruitment of Fundraising Manager to manage and approach new pipeline. Exploration of new fundraising income streams through Individual and Corporate support.	2	2	4
2 Wind-down of CDD	Governance	COVID restrictions means we are unable to run revenue-generating activity but there is no Government support	SMT, Head of Finance	2	4	8	Reduce operating costs (via redundancies if necessary). CBILS loan provides buffer.	1	3	3
		Loss of key CDD staff during the wind-down leading to insufficient handover and gaps in knowledge CDD running costs increase unexpectedly as a result of wind-down	SMT	2	3	6	Knowledge handover from CDD staff is taking place and there is a CDD operating manual that covers most processes Variation to Members' Agreement including wind-down budget signed by all Schools	2	2	4
3 Registration as an independent HEI	Governance, Reputation, Finance	No decision on our self-registration application by OFS by April 2022 – lack of clarity for students on who they are registering with and for how long, extends the life of CDD and increases the risks in 15 above around staff loss etc Self-registration is unsuccessful	SMT	1	3	3	Ensure comms with students are both timely and accurate, and that information on the website is kept up-to-date and relevant	1	2	2
			SMT	1	4	4	Re-submit asap ready for 2023, negotiate with Kent about how students would be protected via a teach-out or a subcontract arrangement until self-registration is successful or HE course is closed	1	2	2
4 Failure to meet legal and statutory duties, particularly as an independent HEI (incl CMA and UKVI)	Governance	Operational failure due to staff capacity	SMT, COO	3	4	12	COO to take on 'academic registrar' role with oversight of all compliance issues. SMT to ensure staff with legal and/or statutory duties prioritise these activities when necessary. Investigating resource-sharing arrangement with other CDD schools re: OFS data returns	1	4	4
		Operational failure due to staff diligence	SMT, Line Managers	3	4	12	Line managers to be aware of staff duties in these areas and ensure performance is reviewed as part of regular performance management. Ensure adequate training for staff as required	1	4	4
		Operational failure due to staff awareness	SMT, COO	3	4	12	COO to take on 'academic registrar' role with oversight of all compliance issues. Line managers to ensure staff with duties in these areas are aware of their obligations, schedules etc	1	4	4

RISK REGISTER

Risk description	Category	Risk causes	Owner	Likelihood	Impact	Total risk	Mitigation	Likelihood	Impact	Total risk
5 IT systems not fit-for-purpose	Systems	Loss of data due to inadequate cyber security & back-ups	COO	3	4	12	Move of data to Synology private cloud as of Nov 19 gives more robust data storage system that is automatically backed up to remote system. IT security audit undertaken Sept 19, assessed that we have adequate IT security provision for the data which we handle.	1	2	2
		Lack of investment in applications means we are using out-of-date or very basic versions of eg CELCAT, EasyJob, Sage. This causes inefficiency in processes.	COO	3	3	9	IT strategy outlining priorities for investment and timescales, options currently being costed. Sage replaced by NetSuite summer 21.	2	2	4
		Staff are not aware of cyber security issues or their obligations, possibility of data breaches	COO	2	4	8	On-line training available to all staff, highlighted to all staff as part of induction process. COO monitors learning management system and reminds staff if they have not undertaken training	1	2	2
6 Inability to recruit & retain high calibre staff	People, Reputation	Unable to recruit and/or retain high quality staff, in particular into specialist roles	SMT	3	2	6	Review job descriptions language to broaden applicant pool. Identify & support training where possible for key staff. Review salaries. Remote & hybrid working encouraged where role allows. Use temps/ freelancers/ consultants to cover short-term vacancies if recruitment unsuccessful.	2	2	4
	People, Health & Safety	Lack of attention to staff wellbeing	All	3	2	6	Remote & hybrid working encouraged where role allows. Mental Health First Aiders support staff as well as students. Small wellbeing library established. Wellbeing Hub (online) created as repository for resources. Line management education (ie Mental Health for Managers training). Access to Together All (online mental health support). Ensure line managers are scheduling 1-2-1s and team time.	2	2	4
7 Inability to recruit suitable/enough trustees	Governance	Lack of profile to attract high-level trustees	RAN	3	3	9	Ensure current trustees are advocates for organisation. Tap into current trustees' networks. Regular trustee open recruitment informed by the trustee skills audit. Fixed terms for committee membership and as chair of any committee.	2	3	6
		Unable to attract a diverse range of trustees	RAN	3	3	9	Advertise for trustee posts widely, ensure advert highlights which areas of under-representation we seek to address. Consider trustees from non-traditional backgrounds.	2	3	6
8 Programmes do not attract the best students	Delivery/performance, Reputation	Programmes fail to be recognised as upholding consistently world-leadingly high standards in quality and student experience, risking loss of reputation with key stakeholders or loss of demand from potential new students	Degree, Professional Development	3	3	9	Full programme review taking place in 2021/22. Minor modifications are made regularly to improve quality and benchmarked against CDD and FEDEC schools.	1	3	3
	Delivery/performance, Reputation	Programme is not aligned with the needs of the circus industry, with the risk that graduates are not top choices for industry jobs when they leave their studies.	Professional Development	3	3	9		1	3	3
9 Serious accident or incident	Health & Safety	Inadequate provision & maintenance of equipment, lack of appropriate training for users	Operations	3	4	12	Robust health and safety systems in place covering all aspects of our work, including regular inspections, inductions, risk assessments and training as necessary. H&S policy reviewed annually.	1	4	4
		Outbreak of Coronavirus cases amongst staff, students or users	SMT, COO	3	4	12	Stringent protocols in place across all aspects of building use aim to (a) limit opportunities for anyone with symptoms to come to building; and (b) limit spread amongst users. Good reporting and comms mechanisms in place to alert SMT as necessary if there are any positive cases, and take steps to restrict access to those who may have been in contact.	1	4	4
10 Inadequate protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults	Health & Safety, People, Governance	Insufficient training for key staff, pre-appointment checks not carried out on new staff	Safeguarding Leads	2	4	8	Safeguarding policy updated and signed off by Board October 2020, DBS checks conducted where necessary, delivery of broader organisational training around safeguarding.	1	4	4
11 Coronet Street building damaged or rendered inaccessible	Delivery/performance	Fire, flood, building damage to building itself or to neighbouring properties	Operations	1	4	4	Disaster Recovery Plan lists temporary control centre locations. We have agreements in place with other CDD schools to relocate some teaching where possible.	1	2	2
	Delivery/performance	Poor building maintenance	Operations	2	3	6	Regular maintenance checks take place	1	2	2
12 Negative story in press	Reputation	Student/user dissatisfaction, including increased venue hire impacting on primary activities	Professional Development, Marketing, SMT	3	3	9	Communications strategy with students, managing student expectations including inductions, open days, prospectus' etc. and QAA systems.	2	2	4
	Reputation, People	Staff dissatisfaction	COO, SMT	3	3	9	Internal communications strategy to allay anxiety around staff changes (Comms Hub, regular weekly all staff check-ins, sharing of SMT minutes with HoDs). Ensure staff are aware of processes for reporting instances of bullying & discrimination, and that all allegations are treated seriously.	1	2	2

Risk description	Category	Risk causes	Owner	Likelihood	Impact	Total risk	Mitigation	Likelihood	Impact	Total risk
	Reputation, People, Health & Safety	Serious incident or accident, including allegations of discrimination, bullying, safeguarding etc	CEO, COO, SMT	2	3	6	Adequate H&S safeguards in place, training for all staff in equality & diversity, safeguarding etc. Develop comprehensive press strategy to detail roles and responsibilities in the event of a negative press story	1	2	2
13 New relationship with Office for Students and registration as HEI	Governance	Relationship is as yet undefined, challenges around registration criteria	SMT, Professional Development	3	4	12	Direct relationship established with OFS	2	3	6
14 We do not fulfill our role as a National Centre	Reputation, Delivery/performance	Limited resources mean we are not able to give our position as National Centre as much investment (both financial and time) as we would like.	SMT	3	2	6	Share good practice, advocate and lobby for the benefit of all. Provide advice and support to other circus companies and artists across the UK by providing newsletters and discussion forums for topics that are raised by the sector.	2	1	2
15 Coronavirus	Safety, Reputation, Delivery/performance, Finance, People	Positive case(s) identified amongst NCCA users	SMT	3	3	9	Protocols to mitigate spread of Coronavirus constantly evolving in response to Government and other guidance. Clear guidance for all users and staff as to steps to take if there is a positive case identified, in order to limit transmission.	3	2	6
		Further Government-mandated lockdown(s), Coronet Street closed	SMT	3	4	12	Admin staff are now generally able to work from home. Success of online delivery of classes in some areas could be replicated if necessary.	3	3	9
		HE student dissatisfaction with learning provision	Degree	2	3	6	HE team demonstrate flexibility in moving teaching online and ensure courses fulfill criteria of modules. Regular comms to students. Possibility to offer access to training facilities in term breaks and/or after graduation.	1	3	3

Risks are assigned likelihood ratings of High, Medium or low as outlined in the table below.

RATING	DESCRIPTION	
VERY HIGH – 4	"Very likely"	The risk has a greater than 60% chance of being realised at least once during the period of
HIGH – 3	"Likely"	The risk has a 30-60% chance of being realised at least once during the period of the activity.
MEDIUM – 2	"Possible"	The risk has a 5-30% chance of being realised at least once over the period of the activity.
LOW – 1	"Unlikely"	There is a less than 5% chance that the risk will materialise over the period of the activity.

IMPACT SEVERITY RATING	FINANCIAL IMPACT SEVERITY (cost or loss)	REPUTATIONAL IMPACT SEVERITY (damage/reparability)
VERY HIGH – 4	£200,000 or more	National negative press. Long term loss of standing and damage to the brand. Possibly
HIGH – 3	Between £75k and £199k	National negative press Medium term loss of standing and damage to brand name. Reparable in the medium term.
MEDIUM – 2	Between £10k and £74k	Local negative press. Limited loss of standing and damage to brand but reparable.
LOW – 1	£10k or less	Very short term negative press. Transient with no lasting damage.

**National Centre for Circus Arts
NCCA, Coronet Street, London N1 6HD
MINUTES – FINANCE COMMITTEE
6.30pm Tuesday 25th January 2022
(The meeting took place by zoom)**

Chaired by: Darshak Shah
Attendees: Rob West
Kate White (CEO)
Froniga Lambert (COO)
Sharon Harble (EA to the CEO) Minutes

1. Apologies

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Tony, Rachael and Cameron.
The meeting was not quorate therefore no formal decisions could be made (see item 7.1).

2. Minutes of the last meeting

- 2.1 The minutes of the meetings on 2nd and 8th November 2021 were approved.

3. Action log update

- 3.1 Flagstone – We are now considering other options for diversifying out financial risk.
ACTION - *Tony to update the committee at the next Finance Committee meeting on 26th April.
- 3.2 General Reserves – the advice from our auditors was that, rather than looking at a fixed figure we should be looking at a more fluid range of figures, within certain parameters, based on activity levels and therefore more reflective of an organisation such as ours. We also need to remember that setting a high reserves level would make fundraising very difficult.
ACTION - *Tony to check the auditor's recommendation and report back at the next Finance Committee meeting on 26th April.

4. Q1 Management Accounts & Forecast

- 4.1 The Q1 2021-22 Finance Report (Management Accounts & Forecast) showing the results for the quarter August to October 2021 were circulated prior to the meeting. It was agreed that Tony's commentary that accompanied the report was both detailed and helpful.
- 4.2 The Summary Results show an actual deficit of £97k v the forecast £113k and this positive position feeds through into the full year forecast.
- 4.3 Unexpectedly, sales of recreational classes are much stronger for this term. Adult classes are up to 85% occupancy and sales of youth classes have also exceeded their original target. Our corporate venue hire expectations for this term are quite low but we are currently talking to 2 companies in the street food industry about potentially hiring the Courtyard space for 3 to 4 weeks over the summer for a street food market. Depending on timing, the income from this could tip over into next financial year, however this is still quite encouraging.
- 4.4 In answer to Rob's question about whether the time was right to start basing the price of recreational classes based on demand, Kate explained that although we are still fairly

hesitant to increase our prices, we have increased the number of places available by reintroducing more classes and will be reviewing the pricing structure for the next academic year. With our new commercial directorate now in place, this is the first year that our recreational programme will be split between activity that is truly recreational and therefore commercial and that which falls within widening participation and is therefore access based. This should allow us to look at our pricing very differently and make our prices more competitive.

- 4.5 Dan's commercial team is continuing to take shape. The team now includes a Business Development Manager, Emma Barrow, a Recreational Services Manager, Jade Leatham (recruited internally) and a Commercial Support Officer (Recreational Services), Lucy Fawthrop. Emma is working with Dan and Glen on the creation of our new and improved corporate workshops and a more proactive business model for our casting and consultancy work. We failed to recruit a Fundraising Manager twice in 2021 so brought in a consultant for a limited period. We have now adjusted the job description and are recruiting again, this time for a Trusts and Foundations Manager. If we are unable to fill this position the short-term solution will be to bring in a bid writer while continuing to recruit for the fundraising role.
- 4.6 ACE have recently made contact, informing us that the Guidance for Applicants to become a National Portfolio Organisation is now available to read. The SMT will be attending a briefing session on 15th February which will talk through the Guidance for Applicants in more detail and answer any questions. More information will follow from ACE throughout February and March. The application deadline is the 22nd April.
- 4.7 Darshak pointed out that there appeared to be a small error within the Overview Summary (page 1, under Total Direct Costs, Corporate Services) and suggested that perhaps the red traffic light against the variance of £34,000 ought to be green.
ACTION - *Tony to double check that the formula for that particular line in the document is correct.
- 4.8 Tony is now meeting more regularly with the individual budget holders and the process is now far more robust than it has been previously. The roll-out of NetSuite has allowed the budget holders to look at their individual budgets more easily and has allowed the finance team to take control of the budget process more effectively.
- 4.9 Darshak thanked the team for circulating such a clear and thorough set of papers but suggested that parts of the Management Accounts probably need not go into quite so much detail in future (e.g. the lists of debtors and creditors).

5. Commercial Income Tracker

- 5.1 Froniga referred to the Income Tracker and Commercial Update document. Adult classes have presented an income of £62,500 in Term 2. Income for youth classes also sits higher than the original budget.
- 5.2 In answer to Rachael's question, Kate confirmed that the Adult Summer School is a new concept that we are still considering and has therefore not yet been included in the budget.
- 5.3 Most of the venue hire enquiries we're receiving currently have very short lead times. People still seem fairly cautious about booking events too far in advance. However we have 3 visits from potential hirers arranged for this week alone and are relatively optimistic that a fair level of interest does exist.
- 5.4 Kate confirmed that preparation for the Gala is continuing with just 4 weeks to go. We have received pledges for 195 seats so far and are continuing to gather auction prizes.

6. Headcount summary

6.1 Darshak felt it would be useful for the committee to see the document on a quarterly basis. An updated org chart and approved headcount will be shared with the Board in due course.

7. Inter-company loan agreement

7.1 The terms of the agreement were noted but could not be approved by the Finance Committee due to lack of quorum (see item 1.1).

NEXT STEP: For formal approval by the Board on 8th February, pending William's review.

8. External auditors' tender timeline

8.1 The tender proposal and timeline were approved in principle by the Audit Committee on 18th January (pending one small adjustment – the date of the meeting currently penciled for 6th May is to be rearranged), who recommended that the proposal be approved by the Board on 8th February.

8.2 The Finance Committee supported the recommendation.

9. Risk Register

9.1 The Risk Register was seen by the RAN Committee on 11th January and by the Audit Committee on 18th January. The document is seen by the RAN and Finance Committees annually for comment and by the Audit Committee twice a year. Paul and Thomas had both suggested that some risks may no longer be relevant and should therefore be removed from the document. Darshak suggested that if we were reluctant to remove any risks completely, we could simply choose to accept these as residual risks once they had been mitigated to an acceptable level and move them to a separate part of the document.

10. Gala position

10.1 (See item 5.4).

11. Any other business

11.1 There was no other business.

12. Date of next meeting

Next quarterly meeting of the Finance Committee – Tuesday 26th April '22

Action Log as of January 2022

<u>Description</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Date raised</u>	<u>Date due</u>	<u>Status</u>
<p>Flagstone</p> <p>Original action (14.01.20) Further evidence confirming NCCA's actual or beneficial ownership of funds is required to the satisfaction of the Finance Sub-Committee and also Alison King if necessary.</p> <p>Tony to complete the documentation, pending receipt of further information (including financial statements) from Flagstone.</p> <p>Darshak and Kate/Alison to give final approval.</p>	<p>Original action no longer relevant.</p> <p>Tony to update the finance Committee at the next meeting on 26.04.22.</p>	Tony	25.01.22	For follow up at the next Finance Committee meeting 26.04.22	In the absence of financial statements for Flagstone, we are considering other options for diversifying out financial risk.
<p>General reserves target</p> <p>Determine the most effective way to calculate a realistic target.</p>	Tony to check the auditor's recommendation.	Tony	25.01.22	For follow up at the next Finance Committee meeting 26.04.22	In process.
<p>Suspected error in the traffic light formula - in the 2021-22 Finance report, within the Overview Summary (page 1, under Total Direct Costs, Corporate Services) - the red traffic light against the variance of £34,000 ought to be green.</p>	Tony to double check that the formula for that particular line in the document is correct.	Tony	25.01.22	Immediately	In process.

**NCCA Q1 2021-22 Finance Report
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NCCA Financial Overview: Summary Results for the year ended 31st October 2021 (£'000s)

		Q1 Actual v Budget				Q1 Forecast v Budget for the Year							
		Q1 Actual	Q1 Budget	Variance	Status	Q1 Forecast	Budget	Variance	Status				
I&E	Income	Professional Development	Higher Education	208	204	4	●	2%	1,108	1,127	(19)	●	-2%
			Access, Outreach, WP & Artist Development	120	143	(24)	●	-17%	618	632	(14)	●	-2%
			Professional Development General	0	0	0	●	0%	0	0	0	●	0%
		Sub-total		328	347	(19)	●	-6%	1,726	1,759	(33)	●	-2%
		Commercial Activities	Corporate Services	99	74	24	●	0%	442	340	102	●	30%
			Recreational Services	47	63	(16)	●	0%	269	342	(73)	●	-21%
			Fundraising (Unrestricted)	5	5	(0)	●	-1%	190	230	(40)	●	-17%
		Sub-total		150	143	8	●	5%	901	912	(11)	●	-1%
		Total Income		478	490	(12)	●	-2%	2,627	2,671	(44)	●	-2%
		Direct Costs	Professional Development	Higher Education	(123)	(122)	(1)	●	-1%	(712)	(712)	0	●
Access, Outreach, WP & Artist Development	(47)			(58)	10	●	18%	(298)	(311)	13	●	4%	
Professional Development General	(9)			(9)	0	●	4%	(36)	(36)	0	●	0%	
Sub-total			(179)	(188)	9	●	5%	(1,046)	(1,059)	13	●	1%	
Commercial Activities	Corporate Services		(25)	(35)	10	●	29%	(139)	(161)	22	●	14%	
	Recreational Services		(37)	(43)	6	●	15%	(201)	(209)	8	●	4%	
	Fundraising (Unrestricted)		(2)	(8)	5	●	68%	(94)	(105)	11	●	10%	
Sub-total			(64)	(86)	22	●	25%	(434)	(475)	41	●	9%	
Total Direct Costs			(243)	(274)	31	●	11%	(1,480)	(1,534)	54	●	4%	
Contribution	Professional Development		Higher Education	85	82	3	●	4%	396	415	(19)	●	-5%
		Access, Outreach, WP & Artist Development	72	86	(13)	●	-16%	320	321	(1)	●	0%	
		Professional Development General	(9)	(9)	0	●	4%	(36)	(36)	0	●	0%	
	Sub-total		149	159	(10)	●	-6%	680	700	(20)	●	-3%	
	Commercial Activities	Corporate Services	74	39	34	●	88%	303	179	124	●	69%	
		Recreational Services	10	20	(10)	●	-50%	68	133	(65)	●	-49%	
		Fundraising (Unrestricted)	3	(3)	5	●	200%	96	125	(29)	●	-23%	
	Sub-total		86	57	29	●	52%	467	437	30	●	7%	
	Total Contribution		235	216	19	●	9%	1,147	1,137	10	●	1%	
	Overhead (net)		(341)	(328)	(13)	●	-4%	(1,269)	(1,289)	20	●	2%	
Surplus/(Deficit) pre Exceptional Items		(106)	(113)	7	●	6%	(122)	(152)	30	●	20%		
Exceptional Items		ACE C-19 & CJRS Grants (Net of Funded Costs)		9	0	9	●	0%	8	0	8	●	0%
Surplus/(Deficit)		Total		(97)	(113)	16	●	14%	(114)	(152)	38	●	25%
Balance Sheet	Reserves		558	587	(29)	●	-5%	541	548	(7)	●	-1%	
	Cash At Bank		747	592	155	●	26%	570	532	38	●	7%	

NCCA Financial Overview: Summary Results for the year ended 31st October 2021 (£'000s)

Commentary on the Results for Q4 comparison to the Q3 Forecast			
1	General		The Income Overview is as heralded in the Trackers, i.e. the exchange of lower Recreational Course activity much higher Corporate Events/Venue Hire Income together with a delayed start in certain projects; this was partially reciprocated by lower direct costs. However Teacher Wages were generally higher than budgeted and sometimes unbudgeted. Both this and delays in budgeted recruitment and salary increases are more examples of a continued absence of communication; I would promote yet again the inclusive sharing of information to avoid research and analysis during the management accounting process being left to highlight variances and their impact.
2	Income	Higher Education	Hardship Income accrued (£7k) to match expenditure not budgeted in Q1 less reduced Student Fee income (-£3k)
3		Access, Outreach, WP & Artist Development	Sensory Circus, CAT and LYC activity below Q1 Budget but not expected to materially impact annual income
4		Corporate Services	Venue Hire significantly over Budget (£35k) partially offset by shortfalls against Budget for Corporate Workshops, Consultancy & Merchandise Sales
5		Recreational Services	Shortfall in Adult Circus Income (-£19k) partially offset by additional activity in LYC (£3k)
6		Fundraising	No material variances
7	Direct Costs	Higher Education	Unbudgeted expenditure on Teachers W&S (-£4k) offset by underspending on other costs categories. Budgeted salary increases delayed until September
8		Access, Outreach, WP & Artist Development	CAT Other Costs expenditure/Activity exceeded Budget whilst W&S in Sensory Circus, APP and LYC all below Budget.
9		Professional Development General	No material variances
10		Corporate Services	Corporate Events Administrator and Commercial Services Manager role not filled as budgeted for whole Q1.
11		Recreational Services	No Recreational Services Manager as budgeted for Q1. Teacher Wages in line with Budget despite lower income
12		Fundraising	Development Manager not in post September & October
13	Overheads	Facilities, Property and H&S	Budgeted CDD CAPEX Grant not awarded as budgeted plus unplanned Rent Voids for Electricity Centre/Rent Review below budget/Cleaning over Budget and Overtime unbudgeted/Unbudgeted increases in Duty Managers salaries
		Finance & Accounting	Provision for MKS VAT Audit Support/Continued support from Krystle not budgeted
		General Management & Governance	Oxford Cultural Leaders Residential Course not budgeted offset by delayed recruitment of Commercial Director (£4k)
		HR & Recruitment	No material variances
		IT & Communications	Telephony costs to be analysed
		Marketing & PR	Photography & Video costs to be analysed
		Reception & Customer Services	No Budget for Overtime
		Technical Services	No Budget for Overtime.
14	Covid Grants		ACE CRF1 Grant not reduced for lower Deficit

NCCA 2021-22 Budget: Cashflow (£'000s)

	Year	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22
INCOME													
TOTAL INCOME	2,951	69.2	404.6	257.5	96.4	299.1	222.8	324.1	198.9	256.4	423.0	200.0	199.6
EXPENDITURE													
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	(3,092)	(258.7)	(291.1)	(262.9)	(269.2)	(215.1)	(247.4)	(267.6)	(230.5)	(347.4)	(240.0)	(237.0)	(225.3)
NET MOVEMENT	(141)	(189)	114	(5)	(173)	84	(25)	56	(32)	(91)	183	(37)	(26)
OPENING BALANCE	673	673	484	597	592	419	503	478	535	503	412	595	558
CLOSING BALANCE	532	484	597	592	419	503	478	535	503	412	595	558	532
<i>CBILS Loan (held in segregated account)</i>	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200	200
AVAILABLE FUNDS	732	684	797	792	619	703	678	735	703	612	795	758	732
										Lowest	Highest		

NCCA
General Reserves at 31st October 2021 (£'000s)

	<u>£000s</u>
General Reserves At 31st July 2021	655
Actual Q1 Deficit	(97)
At 31st October 2021	<u>558</u>
Reserves Target (see Calculation below)	
	519
Excess over Reserves Target	
	39
	8%
Calculation Reserves equal to 3 months of Semi-Fixed and Fixed Costs to maintain the "Core":-	
Core Team Salaries*: Programmes	664
Core Team Salaries*: Operations	808
	<u>1,472</u>
Other Costs*: Operations Overheads (Gross)	603
Total	<u>2,075</u>
	<u>519</u>
Three Months	<u>519</u>

* based on 2021-22 Budget

NCCA Q1 2021-22 Forecast: Variations to Budget

Budget	Original Deficit		£'000s (152)	Notes & Assumptions	
Income Trackers	Corporate Activities	Venue & Space Hire	147		Very Strong start to the year Core Team not in place (see below) Core Team not in place (see below) Capacity limitation Core Team not in place (see below) Reflects improved Term 1 demand Slightly lower Gala expectation/profit Core Team not in place (see below)
		Corporate Workshops	(25)		
		Consultancy & Merchandise Sales	(21)		
		Adult Circus	(76)		
		Experience Days	(10)		
		Youth Circus	13		
		Single Fundraising Event	(10)		
		Trusts & Foundations	<u>(30)</u>	(12)	
	Professional Development	Higher Education	(18)		Actual student numbers 2 below Budget Delay in marketing and promotion Improvement on Budget Reduced Activity Expenditure matched to Income
		Artist Membership & Training	(6)		
		London Youth Circus	4		
		National Youth Circus	(13)		
		National Youth Circus	<u>13</u>	(20)	
	Operations	Rent Income	(13)		Two Voids for full year ACE CRF1 Grant not reduced for lower Deficit
		ACE CRF1 Grant	<u>8</u>	(5)	
Operations Overheads	Rent Review: Overprovision	24		Increase following Oct 21 Budget CDD Grant reduced to £5k from £20k	
	Theatre Tax Relief	21			
	CAPEX Grant	<u>(15)</u>	30		
Tracker Forecast	Revised Deficit		<u>(159)</u>		
Core Team Salaries	Corporate Services	Corporate Events Administrator	8		Not in post August to December as budgeted Not in post August to December as budgeted Not in post August to October as budgeted Not in post September to December as budgeted
		Commercial Services Manager	14		
	Recreational	Recreational Services Manager	8		
	Fundraising	Development Manager	11		
	General Management	Commercial Director	<u>4</u>	45	
Q1 Forecast	Revised Deficit		<u><u>(114)</u></u>		

Dated

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR CIRCUS ARTS

(as Lender)

and

CIRCUS SPACE PROPERTY COMPANY LIMITED

(as Borrower)

INTRA-GROUP LOAN AGREEMENT

Slaughter and May
One Bunhill Row
London
EC1Y 8YY

(RWB/MVG/NYE)

INTRA-GROUP LOAN AGREEMENT

THIS INTRA-GROUP LOAN AGREEMENT is made on

2021

BETWEEN:

- (1) **NATIONAL CENTRE FOR CIRCUS ARTS** (formerly known as The Circus Space) incorporated in England and Wales with company number 02553293 whose registered office is at Coronet Street, London, N1 6HD as lender (the **"Lender"**); and
- (2) **CIRCUS SPACE PROPERTY COMPANY LIMITED** incorporated in England and Wales with company number 02803347 whose registered office is at Coronet Street, London, N1 6HD (the **"Borrower"**),

(each a **"Party"**, together the **"Parties"**).

BACKGROUND:

- (A) The Parties entered into a memorandum of agreement dated 6 April 1998 (the **"Memorandum"**) pursuant to which the Lender agreed to lend certain amounts to the Borrower.
- (B) A total amount of £3,140,092 has been advanced to the Borrower.
- (C) With effect from 1 August 2021 (the **"Effective Date"**) the Parties have agreed to replace the Memorandum with a loan facility on terms set out in this Agreement. The Parties are accordingly entering into this Agreement to record the terms on which such loan facility will be, and will since the Effective Date be deemed to have been, made available by the Lender to the Borrower.

IT IS AGREED AS FOLLOWS:

1. Interpretation

1.1 Definitions

"Advance"	means the sum of £3,140,092;
"Business Day"	means a day (other than a Saturday or a Sunday) on which banks are open for general business in London;
"Effective Date"	has the meaning given to it in Recital (C) ;
"Facility"	means the term loan facility provided by this Agreement;
"Interest Period"	means each period described in Clause 3.1;

“Leasehold Premises” means the premises at Coronet Street, London, N1 6HD over which the Borrower holds three separate long leases; and

“Loan” means the aggregate principal amount borrowed together with accrued interest and not repaid under the Facility.

2. Facility

2.1 The Advance

The Lender agrees to make the Advance available to the Borrower in the amount currently outstanding.

2.2 Purpose

The Advance shall be used for the purpose of developing and improving the Leasehold Premises.

3. Interest

3.1 Interest Periods

Interest periods will be twelve months or such periods as the Borrower and Lender may from time to time agree.

3.2 Rate of interest

The rate of interest on the Loan for each Interest Period shall be 2.5% or such rate as may be agreed between the Borrower and the Lender from time to time. Interest will be calculated on the basis of the actual number of days elapsed and a year of 365 days.

3.3 Payment of interest

Interest will be payable on the last day of each Interest Period or can be accrued and added to the existing Loan as may be agreed between the Borrower and the Lender from time to time.

4. Repayment

The Borrower will repay the Loan, together with accrued interest and all other amounts outstanding under this Agreement, on the sale of the Leasehold Premises or such other date as the Lender and the Borrower may agree.

5. Prepayment

The Borrower may prepay the Loan in whole or part at any time without the prior agreement of the Lender. No amount prepaid may be re-borrowed.

6. Acceleration

The Lender may require repayment of the whole or any part of the Loan, together with accrued interest and all other amounts outstanding under this Agreement, immediately upon notice given by the Lender to the Borrower if:

- (A) the Borrower fails to perform any of its obligations under this Agreement; or
- (B) the Borrower ceases to be a wholly owned subsidiary of the Lender; or
- (C) the Borrower is insolvent or unable to pay its debts as they fall due, or the value of its assets is less than the amount of its liabilities (taking into account contingent and prospective liabilities); or
- (D) any step is taken by the Borrower with a view to a composition with creditors, or a moratorium or suspension of payments in relation to any of its debts; or
- (E) any step is taken with a view to the winding-up or reorganisation of, or the appointment of an administrator, receiver or administrative receiver in relation to, the Borrower or any of its assets, or the holder of any security over any asset of the Borrower takes any step to enforce that security; or
- (F) it becomes unlawful for the Lender to perform any of its obligations or to fund amounts outstanding under this Agreement.

7. Default interest

Interest will accrue on any amount unpaid under this Agreement, from the due date up to the date of actual payment, both before and after judgment. This interest will be computed by reference to successive periods selected by the Lender. The rate of interest applicable during each of these periods will be a rate per annum equal to 3 % above the interest rate that would be applicable pursuant to Clause 3.2 if the unpaid amount constituted all or part of the Loan. This interest shall be paid in arrears on the last day of each of these periods and on the date of payment of the unpaid amount. Unpaid default interest will be compounded.

8. Withholding

All sums payable by the Borrower shall be paid without any withholding or deduction whatsoever unless required by law.

9. Payments

All payments to be made by the Borrower under this Agreement shall be made in pounds sterling in immediately available funds on the due date for payment to such account as the Lender may designate. If any sum falls due on a non-Business Day, it shall be paid on the next Business Day.

10. Notices

Any communication to be made under this Agreement will only be effective if it is in writing.

11. Assignment

Neither party may assign or transfer any of its rights and/or obligations under this Agreement.

12. Governing law

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with English law.

.....
Name: []

Title: []

for and on behalf of
NATIONAL CENTRE FOR CIRCUS ARTS

.....
Name: []

Title: []

for and on behalf of
CIRCUS SPACE PROPERTY COMPANY LIMITED

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COMMITTEE

Thursday 27 January 2022, 4-6pm

Via Zoom

In attendance: Ali King (Co-Chair)
Kaveh Rahnama (Co-Chair)
Dan Cowdrill (Commercial Director)
Sanjay Dasani (non-teaching staff)
Sithy Ismail (non-teaching staff)
Alice Jackson (non-teaching staff)
Froniga Lambert (non-teaching staff, HR rep, minutes)
Niki Lavithis (non-teaching staff)
Philip Nichols (Head of Marketing & Communications)
Raffia Rahman (non-teaching staff)
Jo Young (non-teaching staff)

1. Welcome & apologies

Apologies were received from Nikita. Raffia was welcomed to the group.

2. Minutes from the previous meeting

Minutes from the meeting on 11 November 2021 were approved.

3. Verbal reports on actions since the last meeting

a. Results of recent survey (Jo)

We received 59 responses to the recent survey. Most responses were from professional members. While in general responses were positive there were a number of comments around there not being clear and transparent ways in which people can make complaints and raise concerns, and that when concerns are raised, nothing is done about them.

ACTIONS: Froniga to work with programme leads to agree what the appropriate procedures should be for each user group to be able to make complaints or flag concerns, with clear escalation procedures. Think about how these are best communicated.

Dan mentioned the idea of 'EDI First Aiders', equivalent to Mental Health First Aiders, who could be advertised around the building as people to go to if the formal avenues were not appropriate.

ACTIONS: Dan/Froniga to find out which organisation already does this and have a conversation with them about how they have implemented it, especially around ensuring the First Aiders have appropriate levels of training/knowledge.

b. Respond to world-wide events (Sanjay/Raffia)

Some ideas that Sanjay and Raffia have been discussing around this include decorating Reception, creating signage to explain relevance of days, and encouraging those for whom the day is especially relevant to share their stories and create case studies.

ACTIONS: Sanjay/Raffia to be part of Marketing working group to ensure the key days are included on the Campaign Calendar and can therefore be included in social media etc.

c. Audit of local organisations (Alice & others)

Main aims of plan are to:

- a) research and build a network of community focused organisations, with a focus on those serving underrepresented or minority groups. How can we work with them to support them as well as engaging them in NCCA's work.
- b) Research techniques to engage with community organisations and go to them, don't wait for them to come to us.
- c) Organise events and strategies to improve engagement with the building and organisation. These included but were not limited to: changing the language used as people enter the building (don't do this, don't do that etc) to make it more welcoming; changing elements of the aesthetic of the front of the building; holding open days and events which community groups and local businesses would be part of.

ACTIONS:

- i. Find out if there is already an existing community network involving (or not involving) NCCA – Niki
- ii. If there isn't, can we initiate the building of one? (a wider topic to be discussed after we know the answer to i.)
- iii. Talk to other organisations who do work involving the community to find out if they have particular engagement strategies and can they share them?
 - a. Kaveh to talk to Silvia and Lena from Mimbire
 - b. Jo to talk to Martha Harrison
 - c. Phillip to approach Hackney Opportunity Hub on Bowling Green Walk
- iv. Re-start conversations with Hackney Council about engagement work with schools, underrepresented/ minority groups in the local area – Niki
- v. Begin to initiate audit to look at how the building is viewed from the outside the organisation. This includes the physical appearance of the building as well as discussing wanting to organise events in courtyard/ front of building/ open house that are open to the public which we can then invite the community groups we're targeting to attend. One idea (which may already be in motion) is hosting a day in the courtyard where local businesses can talk about what they do as well as providing services, and NCCA use it as a chance to give tasters and talk about what they do. What exact shape this takes is up for negotiation but the main feeling was that it should be an open, community focused event. This needs to begin by initiating a meeting between HOD including Buildings – Phillip
- vi. Kaveh will join a second meeting of HOD's to discuss how this approach fits in with EDI committee's aims and objectives.

d. Decolonise curriculum (Nikita)

No update.

e. Marketing actions various (Dan, Philip)

A Marketing working group will meet quarterly, a bit before the EDI Committee dates, to take forward the various actions around imagery, brand, content etc. Marketing will also be undertaking a content audit to get a really good idea on what content we have, what should be retired, what is still of use and what new content is required. This is likely to take a few months.

ACTIONS: Dan to put out general call for people to join sub-Committee. Jo to share with Dan which user groups commented about Marketing in survey, so marketing activities can be tailored.

f. CDD protocols (Froniga)

Froniga, Nikita, Alice and Jo are each looking at one of the CDD inclusivity protocols in detail to decide what of them we want to 'adopt' post-CDD.

g. NCCA as a 'safe space' (Ali)

Ali had a good meeting with Ness to talk about how the Mental Health First Aiders work, and also Antigone to talk about student support.

Kaveh pointed out the importance of being prepared to say, as an organisation, what language or behaviour is unacceptable. We do already have a [Code of Conduct](#) which generally references the expectations around everyone being considerate and respectful of their fellow users, but it was felt we could do more – posters?

4. Industry updates

FEDEC statement on abusive conduct in professional circus schools was shared with the group for info.

5. Any other business

Alice highlighted the need to think about access and disability when we are discussing EDI. Possibly re-engage with Graeae to get their help getting an access audit of the building.

ACTION: who has a contact with Graeae?

Ali mentioned that we are recruiting for trustees at the moment and have had so far 15 applicants. We have advertised very widely to try to ensure a diverse pool of candidate. Ali thanked Philip for preparing the recruitment pack which has received compliments from applicants.

Next meeting: 28 April 2022

ACTION TRACKER

Action	Update 27.01.22	Owner
Recent EDI survey	Froniga to work with programme leads to agree what the appropriate procedures should be for each user group to be able to make complaints or flag concerns, with clear escalation procedures.	Froniga
	Froniga/Dan to look into EDI First Aiders – find out which organisation already has this and get more info about how it works	Froniga/Dan
Celebrating national/international events	Sanjay/Raffia to join Marketing sub-Committee to ensure key dates are included on Campaign Calendar	Sanjay/Raffia
Engaging with local organisations	Find out whether there is an existing community network that NCCA is part of. Talk to other organisations who work with the local community. Engage with Hackney Council. Look at physical appearance of building including signage used. Hold Open Day event. Kaveh to join Heads of Department meeting.	Alice, Sanjay, Kaveh, Philip, Niki and Jo
Nikita to connect Adrian & Kaveh to progress discussions around decolonising the curriculum.	Carried forward to next meeting	Nikita

Action	Update 27.01.22	Owner
Establish Marketing working group.	Dan to put out call for working group members, ideally including a student and a teacher	Dan
	Make contact with Graeae re: an accessibility audit	??

DRAFT

Operations & Admin board report, January 2022

Froniga Lambert, Chief Operating Officer

Building and Facilities

- Broadband provision has recently been upgraded with super-fast dedicated 200mbps fibre lease-line. As well as improving our day-to-day connectivity, this will also enable us to offer venue hirers dedicated bandwidth for events.
- Alongside this we have also upgraded our WiFi provision across site.
- Main infrastructure upgrade to our core electrical distribution will take place in Spring 2022 bringing us up-to-date with regulations and health and safety as part of a phased upgrade.
- Slight restructure to the Reception team following the departure of Grace (Customer Services Manager), including a few new faces (Tania, Tabatha and Niamh).
- Sanjay is re-establishing our staff Environmental Sustainability working group. An initial project is around obtaining Energy Performance Certificates for the whole Coronet Street site.
- Our Expression of Interest to the Arts Council Capital Investment Fund was not successful.
- Two of the Energy Centre units remain unoccupied following CDD's departure.

Sanjay Dasani, Head of Buildings & Facilities

Technical

- The Autumn term was punctuated by several venue hire events, all of which required an amount of additional work and disrupted schedules, but which went well. We were able to provide performer rigging services for two parties.
- Matt Burch (Rigging Manager) has return from a period of unpaid leave. How the team managed in his absence will be used to inform a review of future workings and the structure of the department.
- The Technical team is working on the production process for both the BA Ensemble show and the Gala. Towards the end of December we did rigging and costume test for some of the Gala ideas.

Tom Albu, Technical Manager

Administration

Staffing

Appraisal meetings have been taking place over the autumn term and approx. 80% of staff who are eligible for meetings have now had their appraisal meeting. The remainder are taking place in the first few weeks of the Spring term.

Dan has been busy recruiting to the new roles in the Commercial Directorate, and all but one of the positions are now filled and staff have started.

At the start of the autumn term we encouraged staff to return to working in the office, albeit in large part on a hybrid model, but since mid-December we have again followed Government guidance to ask staff who can work from home to work from home.

Health & Safety

Health & Safety Committee meeting took place on 6 January and there were no major issues flagged.

Following updated Government guidance re: the wearing of face-coverings, we are encouraging users to wear face-coverings inside the studio spaces other than when doing so impacts safety or the learning experience.

A draft Staff Mental Health & Wellbeing Policy was presented to the Health & Safety Committee for review.

Misc

In November Kate and Froniga attended the 2-day virtual Governance Now conference, organised by the Clore Foundation, where there were some interesting sessions on environmental sustainability and diversifying boards.

In January Froniga is attending a conference organised by the AUA on becoming an academic registrar. This is in preparation for Froniga taking on more responsibility for Higher Education compliance issues when we are an independent HEI.

Froniga Lambert

Professional Development Board report January 2022

This report is a combination of reports by:

Beth King Head of Professional Development

Adrian Porter Head of Higher Education Delivery.

Stevie Taylor Head of Academic Administration and Student Support

Glen Stewart Director of Professional Development

Higher Education

Admissions and Registry

- Application numbers are lower than this point last year although this could be due to the application including a stage 1 video audition that candidates may be compiling which might slow submissions down a little. The application deadline is in March and we have requested a push on advertising from marketing. So far, we have received applications from students in the US and 2 applications from Ethiopia, this is an area we have not previously recruited from.

Delivery

- We are moving closer to 'normal' building use with regards to mixing year groups. We anticipate a full return to pre-pandemic use in the summer term. This will include OT and HE students mixing through the day and evening sessions.
- The BA ensemble is underway with Jacky Crosher as director.
- We have several students isolating due to COVID. The student response to this is widely positive.
- Mask wearing protocols are being adhered to positively.
- We have a high level of student support for various reasons, with a few complex cases. Antigone and Martha are instrumental in managing this. The students remain happy to be back in the building

Teaching

- Access to teaching staff seems to have stabilised for now.
- As part of the course re-write we will be reviewing the teaching structure looking at creating full time teaching roles for HE which will feed into other areas of the organisation, in particular the youth programs.
- Teacher understanding of the HE requirements remains a challenge especially around assessment. It is thought that creating full time teachers will mitigate this.

FEDEC

- The equality and diversity committee continues to unpick the relationship between schools and students/graduates that have suffered harassment, assault etc. and are in conversation with 'Balance ton Cirque'

- The RIGGERS project has been approved by the European Commission and has its launch meeting as part of the January Board schedule of activities. (26th-30th January)
- Cirque de Demain festival has been cancelled due to COVID
- Adrian will not be travelling to Paris and will be attending the board meetings and the RIGGERS launch by zoom. Tom Albu and Matt Burch (tech team) will be in attendance.

Healthy Conservatoires Network

- We are reviewing the objectives and projects for the coming year. There will be a main focus on Cultural Competence/curriculum decolonisation as it is felt that these projects need more attention.

HE team Staffing

- Appraisals of the year managers are almost complete. A main theme that is emerging is the workload of the three as well as communication within delivery but also across to admin staff.
- The strain on the HE delivery team continues

Self-registration/programme re-write

- We have begun this in earnest though have fallen behind on our timetable due to the workload of the team. We have had several discussions and submitted frameworks. The next step would be the first consultation.

AOB

- We have had a serious issue of assault between two students in the xmas holiday. The assault took place off the premises but it was severe enough to warrant a formal investigation. The student in question was suspended immediately pending the investigation and outcome but during this process the student withdrew from the course. The investigation and panel will go ahead and the outcome will be added to the next report.
- Jo ran an open day on Thursday 13th January which was attended by 23 potential candidates and their parents/guardians. The day ran well and the candidates took part in some practical sessions which they thoroughly enjoyed, Jo has sent out an evaluation survey for the open day and we will review the results of these when we have them.
- We completed the QSR process which ran smoothly, all teaching and admin staff responded well to questions, and we were able to provide the team with all the evidence they requested on the day. Huge thanks to Jo for her support in compiling the evidence required before the visit which really helped the week run smoothly.
- Work on the re-write is continual and there will be more of a focus on this work now that the QSR has passed.

London Youth Circus and CAT (Centre for Advanced Training)

- We did a late audition for LYC and got 5 new starters who began in January
- We received £5k from Jack Petchy towards Sensory Circus
- We recruited five new teachers to work across Recreational and LYC/CAT
- Covid has had an impact on our teaching team, both due to isolation/sickness but we've had many who have changed careers and moved out of London. This has impacted across all programmes as we've gone from a team of 35 teachers prior to pandemic to around 20 to cover all LYC/CAT and Adult classes.

Open Training

- Since reopening in September, we have been able to run Open Training sessions consistently for our professional members, so members don't need to book in advance to attend a training session and we re-introduce the full price of £12 for training sessions.
- Due to the Covid restrictions and the decision to keep separate the degree students and the professional members, the access for the Open training members for training has reduced during the weekdays to just the afternoon and evening. For this reason, we have experienced a reduced number of professionals coming for training and this would explain the fact that we are not on track with income targets for 2021-2022 as it has been shown with Q1 management accounts.
- Even if there is understanding of the situation, professional members are very keen to know when we will return in a full open day training session as it was pre-COVID.
- The National Centre is supporting the Trio Vertex (two of the trio are NCCA graduates) with training space that were supposed to be performing at the Festival du Cirque du Demain in Paris in January 2022. Unfortunately the festival has been cancelled.

Consultancy

- On the 6th of November we hosted a private event through the commercial events team. We provided some circus consultancy and supplied circus acts for the event which was an additional fee on top of the building hire.
- We had other enquiries for circus consultancy that haven't been finalised but we are working with the Commercial department to expand our Circus Consultancy branch.

Teacher Education

- As mentioned above, this term has highlighted ongoing issues around the teaching resource for our programmes. Our two Teacher Education Managers are working hard with all teams to look at both short and long-term strategies and training opportunities to combat this. Having the recreational programme sitting under the commercial team has helped us to see the clear connection between class delivery and income. This is becoming a useful driver to push teacher development and training.
- Last term we ran a six-week programme at Christchurch Primary School in Brick Lane. This was an extension of the work we started with them pre-pandemic and was a great opportunity to design and deliver a series of classes. We will use what we have learnt to development circus teaching video resources that we hope this school will be able to use. The goal is to have their teachers deliver circus enhanced PE sessions.
- Alice and James will be working with Emma from the Commercial team to run a pilot corporate workshop in late January.

Professional Development General

- We have completed the annual HEIF (Higher Education Innovation Fund) spending review. It has been submitted to CDD and should unlock the final payment of last years fund. We will be soon submitting this years action plan which is for a slightly enhanced pot of around £93,000
- Glen is am very proud of the HE team for the work around the QSR visit. The general feeling is that we did pretty well and we are all fingers crossed to hear the reviewer's

comments in a few weeks' time. A particular thank you to Stevie Taylor and Froniga for the huge amount of work leading up to the visit.

- We held a full Professional Development Team meeting in November. This was a pre-meet to a full away day that was planned but unfortunately postponed due to Covid. The initial meeting was a real success and the beginning of what I hope is a transformation for the department. I am determined to build a much stronger sense of team and erase some of the barriers between what were previously very separate working groups. A big thank you to Cameron (from the Board) who gave Glen a few hours of his time to do some preparation for the meeting. It helped a lot. We hope we will be able to go ahead with a full away day in the next few weeks.
- The structure change, the QSR and ongoing conversations have shown us where we can be making some very positive improvements in all programmes within the Professional Development Department. It feels like the team are seeing the same opportunities and we are looking forward to working together on these of the next 12 months.
- Beth King, our Head of Professional Development has resigned to take a job at Artichoke Arts. This is a very positive move for her. She will be missed by the organization and in particular her team. She was a great manager and programme Head. We hope to build on where she left the LYC and CAT programme. We currently have the Head of Learning and Access role open for recruitment and we hope to be holding interviews immediately after the gala. There is a big change for the Prof Devel department but will also provide opportunities that will surely be beneficial to us.

Glen Stewart

Commercial Department Quarter Two Board Report: November 2021 – January 2022

Adult and Youth Recreational Programme

The second term is now underway and a healthy increase in sales has been observed. With many of the adult programmes selling out, this has created a more positive outlook for increasing the number of classes on offer for Term 3. Occupancy for adult classes is now at 82%.

Jade Leatham (Recreational Services Manager) commissioned a marketing campaign with Hazel Harvey (Marketing & Communications Officer) over the Christmas period which helped boost sales for beginner level classes.

More aerial and acrobatic assessments have also taken place to help boost the number of participants at higher levels.

The youth programme remains stable with a similar number of participants on the programme and an impressive occupancy of 94%.

Teachers

Due to Covid-19 related sickness there have been a number of class cancellations which is hard to manage when coupled with a reduced pool of teachers. Jade is working with the Teacher Education Managers to train current teachers and recruit new teachers to avoid this in the future. This will also help increase the number of classes that are offered without the fear of further cancellations.

	Capacity	Total Income
Adult	274	£63,300
Youth	205	£26,200
Total	79	£89,500

Experience Days

Having done two test sessions last term, there is clearly an appetite and audience for experience days. More sessions are planned from 12th February through to the end of term for both youth and adult experience days.

New Team Member

Lucy Fawthrop has joined the Recreational Services team as the new Commercial Support Officer and will help support Jade with the programming and delivery of the adult and youth programme.

Venue Hire

Following on from a successful first quarter, further venue hires and Creation Studio hires took place in November and December meaning that the original hire target of £200,000 for the current financial year was achieved. Actual venue hire income now stands at £226,000

Venue hires:

- Bar Mitzvah: 1.5 days, part hire, 220 guests £19,250.00
- Business Meeting: 2 days, full building hire, 130 attendees £52,900.00

The Bar Mitzvah took place on a weekend and did not impact on the other programme areas. The business meeting happened during the week so P&O classes had to be cancelled and external training spaces booked for the degree students.

Since New Year, enquiries are lower, although this is expected for January. So far, several each day are being received, however, suggesting that the current Covid-19 situation is not having an impact.

The Creation Studio hire income for this quarter is £5,290 – just under the £5,400 quarterly target. This has been deemed a positive outcome as the Creation Studio is not available for hire for most of January due to the Degree Ensemble rehearsals.

Circus Skills Workshops

Five corporate workshops (four team building sessions and a social gathering) and one children's birthday party were delivered in November and December which secured an income of £6,860

Corporate Workshops and Consultancy

With Emma Barrow, Business Development Manager, having started in early January, the Corporate Workshops have a renewed focus. Having missed the opportunity to undertake any pilot workshops due to Covid-19 restrictions, a date has been set for late-February for the first to go ahead. The aim is to bring a number of different corporates together for the session, to maximise attendance and in anticipation of a larger scope of feedback. This pilot will be offered at the price of £250pp in order to cover costs but give participants a greatly reduced rate in return for valuable feedback and the use of their testimonials and brand names for marketing purposes.

Competitor analysis across similar workshops and a range of business size is being undertaken, with, so far, a wide variety of prices, number of facilitators and strength of offer being found. A full report will be submitted in the next quarter.

Fundraising – Trusts and Foundations

This quarter saw success with a small grant from the Jack Petchy Foundation of £5,000 towards the Sensory Circus project. Sadly, an application to the Old Street Fund for £10,000 was not successful.

Alongside this work, Claire Fairbrother, a Trusts and Foundations Consultant was commissioned for a three-day piece of work to deliver a health check of the fundable projects and create a targeted pipeline of foundations to approach based on the projects being run. This has provided invaluable information and will form an excellent basis for the new Trusts and Foundations Manager to work from as they start their role. Recruitment for this will take place in February.

Gala

At the time of writing, it has been confirmed that 'Plan-B' restrictions will be removed from the end of January and ensures that the Gala can proceed as planned. With assistance from Act IV, table sales are progressing well and the search for auction prizes continues. Pledged guest numbers now sit at 173 (previous target 150). The current picture of table sales is as below:

- 121 seats have now been paid for resulting in a cash position of £42,350
- 45 seats remain unpurchased but pledged.
- 7 seats were purchased in 2020 and carried over.

Production meetings with Ockham's Razor regarding the creative content for the evening continue and as the Gala approaches, these will take place weekly.

Marketing

As highlighted in the recreational section, during the last rebooking period for Term 2, spend on social media advertising was committed, targeting courses that had undersold and those aimed at beginners.

There was a definite spike in bookings for the targeted courses and a reach of over 20,000 across Facebook and Instagram. There were then 700 click throughs to the NCCA site (presumably those who had not previously engaged) and ultimately during the period of the ads being live, 75 places were booked. Although not all bookings can be directly linked to the ads, overall our recreational course uptake has increased significantly to 82% occupancy when compared to 69% occupancy for Term 1.

Efforts will continue with paid social media advertising for Term 3 with further targeted approaches. Better understanding through analytics and evaluation of the data over a longer period of time will be possible but so far the results are encouraging.

Campaigns

In addition to regular activity, content including photography, videography, design and collateral are being delivered for:

- BA Ensemble production at Jacksons Lane.
- The annual review, working with a freelance designer.
- The Gala.

Website Figures

- Unique visitors to the website to date: 13,636 (last quarter: 9,800)
- Page views to date: 83,277 (last quarter: 49,000)

CDD and HE

Progress towards self-registration remains steady and last week (w/c 10th January) we hosted our visit from the QAA for our Quality and Standards Review. We were very pleased that our review team decided to make an in person visit for the three days as other school visits were moved online at very short notice. The team were exceptional in delivering both the organisation of the event and in sharing their knowledge and expertise with the team in the meeting sessions. Special mention must go to Froniga for organising and liaising with the team both before the visit and throughout, supplying them with in excess of 200 pieces of written evidence for scrutiny; and to Stevie Taylor and Adrian Porter for preparing and leading the degree delivery and administration teams for what is a nerve-wracking process. The draft report will be delivered to us in late February when we have the chance to check it for factual accuracy before it is delivered to the Office for Students in early March.

With this review timetable we are still hoping for an outcome decision in late March or early April 2022.

During December I attended a meeting with the Chief Executive of Guild HE which is a support and advocacy organisation that has a membership encompassing many small specialist organisations. It is likely that we will take up membership once CDD no longer has one on our behalf.

National Centre

Arts Council England have recently launched a new round of capital funding and we lodged an expression of interest. Unfortunately we were unsuccessful and were not invited to submit a full application.

Our plan for the ACE extension of funding year (2022/23) was approved and so we remain funded for this year. The application process and timeline has now been announced by ACE for the next round of NPO funding and guidelines and preparation sessions have been announced this week. We have already started to speak with the wider staff team about the importance of developing our plans for the next five years are at this time.

In December we responded to the latest government guidance and went back to a 'work from home if possible' model with all staff moving back to working from home for as much time as possible. This week this has reverted once again so the team will go back to our pre-December working models. During December and then into the new year we have seen an increase in Covid cases both among the staff team and students. We continue to monitor and report into the Department for Education as required.

Work towards the Gala continues apace and we are excited with the progress we are making. We are still seeking auction ideas and prizes so please share if you have any thoughts. In mid-December Dan and I attended a tasting for the event with the catering company which was delicious and beautifully presented too. All adding to our anticipation for a great event.

Members of the staff and students were invited along to Cirque Du Soleil's show at the Albert Hall which was a great start to the circus year for many. Although the initial dress rehearsal performance that was planned was cancelled at very short notice, Cirque then came back with around 150 tickets for a couple of performances last week which we were able to distribute.

Kate White CEO

Office for Students review of world-leading specialist funding for higher education providers

The Office for Students (OfS), the funder and regulator for higher education in England, is undertaking a review of its specialist funding for world-leading providers, including performing arts conservatoires. The OfS has outlined its intentions for this review [in a consultation](#) and the final criteria are expected to be published in the next month. The review outcomes will determine whether conservatoires continue to receive a crucial funding stream over the next five years.

At present sixteen institutions are in receipt of specialist funding, including the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD). As members of CDD, six conservatoires – Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, Central School of Ballet, London Contemporary Dance School, National Centre of Circus Arts, Northern School of Contemporary Dance, and Rambert School – are all recipients. Specialist funding enables the schools to meet the considerable additional costs of providing an immersive, industry-facing, studio-based professional training within higher education, ultimately supporting the pipeline of talented young artists entering the performing arts and shaping its future. Without it, the schools risk having to reduce the intensity of their teaching programmes and may no longer be able to deliver conservatoire-level training.

In order to be eligible for specialist funding for the next five years, providers will be asked to prove that they offer world-leading teaching. Applicants will be invited to make a written, evidence-based submission and will be able to nominate two referees who are experts in their subject. Submissions will be considered by a panel chosen by OfS; this panel may also seek the views of external industry experts in making their decisions. The support of the sector in this capacity will be crucial in helping providers present their case and secure funding for the next five years.

The timing of this review is especially important in the context of upcoming changes to the CDD schools' position in the higher education ecology.

CDD and its schools are currently in the process of transitioning to new arrangements. Each of the schools is pursuing an independent pathway, either as an independent provider registered with the OfS or through a partnership arrangement with another higher education provider.

The schools are working towards a target transition date of July 2022 with their new arrangements in place from 1 August 2022. Central School of Ballet, London Contemporary Dance School, National Centre for Circus Arts, Northern School of Contemporary Dance, and Rambert School are applying for independent registration with the OfS; Bristol Old Vic Theatre School is entering a partnership arrangement with the University of the West of England (UWE). Specialist funding will be allocated from August 2022 and as such would provide vital security and stability as the schools move into their independent futures.

It is expected that each of the schools will be making individual applications for world-leading status and specialist funding. Professional artists, leaders and advocates for the performing arts can support these applications by providing testimonials or acting as referees; and crucially through offering their expert opinion if contacted by the OfS during the review process.

National Centre for Circus Arts Academic Board

Thursday 2nd December 2021
The Library and Microsoft Teams

Unconfirmed Minutes

In Attendance

Chair: Kate White (KW) – Chief Executive & Principal

Minutes: Joanna Young (JY) – Admissions and Registry Manager

Stevie Taylor (ST) - Head of Academic Administration and Student Support

Adrian Porter (AP) – Head of Degree Delivery

Glen Stewart (GS) – Director of Professional Development

Antigone Exton-White (AEW) – Student Support Manager

Nikita Shergill (NS) – HE Records Officer

Froniga Lambert (FL) – Chief Operating Officer

Lucy Gilroy (LG) – BA Student Rep

Benderson West (BW) – FD2 Student Rep

Travis Rabarijaona (TR) – FD1 Student Rep

1. Welcome and Apologies

Apologies were received from Adam Havsky, Ebony Gumbs and Michaela O'Connor.

2. Minutes from the last meeting, 30th June 2021

LG spotted an error in initials but otherwise the minutes were approved and no further amendments required.

3. Matters Arising – Carried over as 'in progress' from previous actions:

AP1: Keep working with students and marketing on improving students' social media coverage and support. (Moved over to EDI Committee)

KW informed the meeting that this action is being looked at through the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) committee now and hopefully we will be starting to see some progress soon.

All other actions were noted as complete.

4. Updates and Reports

4.1. Report from Director of Professional Development

GS and ST will be reviewing the reporting requirements within this meeting and the Professional Development report may not be the right one for Academic Board in the future, however, further discussions will be had about that.

GS provided the below verbal report:

The organisation acknowledges the success of Term 1 and congratulates everyone who got us through. The EDI committee has been set up now which reflects the priorities the organisation is taking around increasing our diversity and inclusivity. The senior management team is on a 12-

month course helping us to think hard and work on our approaches to diversity. This is very much part of our Arts Council obligation and our OfS Access and Participation Plan. Therefore, from many different doorways we have priority around diversity and inclusivity and so we are very much looking forward to seeing the impact of these over the next few years.

We are going for our independent registration and that process is ticking along. We have had various levels of submission and documentation that has gone through so far. Stevie has done a great job of extracting files and evidence required from the team. It has been a big piece of work and will result in us having a quality standard review meeting in January next year, so we will all be needing to do some preparation for that meeting. GS informed attendees that there will be observations happening and the reviewers will be meeting with various people from the senior management team, through to degree teachers, admin staff and students. They will be looking to see that all the documentation that we presented matches up with what goes on in the organisation. It is important for us to get through this as this will be what allows us to gain independent registration. More will be coming out about this as the term finishes.

From outside the degree team, the rest of the organisation is working really hard on our financial resilience, ensuring that we are bringing in the income we need to be able to support all the activities we wish to do as a charity; the degree programme is a central focus to that. In the last year or so we have been looking at developing a circus focused corporate education programme. We have had consultancy helping us to create a product that we are hoping to pilot in the new year, which will be part of our self-generated income. Additionally, there have been a lot of hires going on, which although they can cause disruption and inconvenience, they are really important for the longevity of the organisation. We have had a positive term of hires which means we are looking good financially going into term 2. Thanks, were given to everyone's flexibility and tolerance.

NCCA is doing a fundraising gala which is happening in February next year, in which we are trying to create relationships with philanthropists, corporates and individuals that can contribute to our charitable courses and recreational programmes. Our new Director of Commercial Activity is now in post which means that we can drive our commercial activity and income targets more aggressively than we have done in the past.

KW invited questions and none were raised.

4.2. Report from SSLT (Student Staff Learning and Teaching)

ST informed everyone that SSLT was a well-attended meeting and the first one this year. Students and staff reviewed the external examiners report, the AMPR and the revised QSR submission and gave some feedback. The CDD inclusivity protocols were also looked at and students gave some good feedback which was helpful for CDD. The students felt active bystander training would be useful and Adrian is looking into scheduling this for the new year. The students also suggested an outdoor event for bonfire night and it was checked with the buildings team but unable to be achieved at short notice; we will be looking at future opportunities for events, depending on covid guidance. The idea about mixed conditioning classes was raised which the delivery team are looking into scheduling. Antigone is also looking into Mental Health First Aid training for students and more news will come out about that once it has been arranged. Updates were given on the course re-write and the LTAS.

KW questioned what mixed conditioning was and AP clarified that it was mixed level conditioning. The students are grouped and streamlined and the degree team are looking at mixing that up so students can share their learning appropriately.

No further questions were raised.

5. CDD Updates

5.1. Verbal update from Head of Academic Administration and Student Support (HAASS)

ST reported that the final update of the CDD Inclusivity Protocols and Policies have been published on the CDD website under the student-related policies area. They cover Allyship and Active Bystander Intervention, as well Disability and Religious Belief and Religious Observance. Students were encouraged to look through these.

It was noted that there will also be a working group of the EDI committee looking at these protocols to decide what we think is relevant to take forward for when we are not a part of CDD.

KW informed the meeting that all of the CDD schools are now in the same place in regards to their processes for independent registration. One school is moving towards a partnership model with another university. The OfS are very much keeping everybody on the same timeline. Plans are still in place so that if everything goes according to plan, all schools will receive a decision around March/April time next year, which means we will be registering our own students next academic year. At that point, CDD would be triggered to cease operation in July and will then go through an administrative process to finalise all of its data requirements. There is a plan for if any school doesn't achieve independent registration, in which CDD would continue to operate as the Higher Education provider for another 12months. KW advised that CDD are being incredibly supportive of all the schools by providing lots of training in the meantime so that schools are well prepared to take on the work that CDD currently does for them.

No questions were raised.

6. Quality Assurance & Monitoring

6.1. Annual Programme Monitoring Report (Inc. LTAS and external examiner report(s) & response(s) (NCCA Course Monitoring Form 2021 and NCCA response to the External Examiner)

ST informed the meeting that the APMR and External Examiner reports have been sent to the University of Kent after our review of them. There has been no news about the Kent student survey which was stopped last year because of the pandemic. Student reps were made aware that usually they would be contacted directly about this from Kent.

ST advised that the National Student Survey will open on 6th January for the 2nd year students and they will be contacted directly about that. FD2 reps were asked to encourage their peers to fill this in and NS will be sending instructions and reminders about this survey in the new year.

Action (AP1): FD2 reps to encourage their year group to fill in the NSS.

KW expressed how excellent the external examiners report was and that we had thanked Michelle in our response for all of her work and support.

7. Annual Student Cycle

7.1. Admissions

JY provided the below update on Admissions:

Student numbers for Academic Year 2021/22

- 25 new FD1 students

- 24 continuing FD2 students plus 1 new direct entry
- 15 continuing BA students plus 1 new direct entry
- Giving a cohort total of 66

Registration:

Registration was completed online through CDD again this year which ran much smoother than last year; however, we will be looking at how we can streamline this process in a more useful way for NCCA if we gain independent status through the OfS next year.

Applications for September 2022 entry

Applications have now opened for 2022 entry and will close on 14th March 2022. So far application numbers are lower than this time last year, however, we have changed our admissions process to include a part 1 video which applicants need to submit within their application. This may be one of the reasons why applicants may wish to submit later.

This year we are trialing a hybrid way of auditioning, which we hope will combine the positive aspects of online auditioning, as well as enabling applicants to audition in person in our building as well. All applicants are being asked to submit a part 1 video, which covers the more technical aspects of the audition criteria, and then they are invited to a part 2 audition where they will take part in workshops with us and perform their own presentations. Both parts of the audition will inform their final outcome.

Open Days

We have two open days scheduled this academic year for prospective applicants.

The first one is on the 13th January and will be in our building (covid allowing). Student reps will be contacted very soon to ask for some help on this day. Every year the participant feedback always mentions how helpful it is to speak to current students and ask them questions. So far, we have planned:

- A presentation focusing on preparing for the admissions process
- Building Tours, whilst watching classes as they happen
- A specialisation taster workshop
- A discussion-based class led by Adrian on the circus landscape

The 2nd open day is going to be online on 10th February and will be a Q&A style talk ran by JY and the degree team. We hope this will be helpful for those unable to travel and again all student reps will be invited to attend and be on hand for questions.

JY welcomed questions or feedback.

FL pointed out that the January open day has been scheduled on the same week as the QSR visit. ST advised that a schedule hasn't gone out yet to the QSR observers but that it shouldn't be a problem for them to attend that day. AP added that the open day tends to enhance the classes that are going on that day. It was felt that the buzzy energy of the day would be a good thing.

7.2. Progression and Completion

NS provided the below progression and completion updates for the 2020/21 academic year:

- 24 FD1 students. 23 students have now passed. 1 student is trailing 25 credits into their 2nd year.

- 22 FD2 students. 21 students have now passed. 1 student has achieved 75 credits out of the total 120 credits required to pass.
- 17 BA students. 16 students have now passed. Out of the 16 students, 2 students received a 2:2, 11 students received a 2:1, and 3 students received a 1st. 1 student has achieved 110 credits out of the 120 credits required to pass.

7.3. Prospectus Review

JY provided the below updates on the prospectus:

The prospectus was updated in September and a new version is available to download from our website now.

The main updates in text were around our changing admissions process and also around transparency of pre-course information, ensuring prospective applicants are aware of our plans to become independent.

Some of the images and design elements have been changed, though the marketing team notified us and are well aware that there is a lack of new, good quality photos. This is something they are planning on improving and as they are now part of our EDI committee, there are actions that are being implemented which strive to improve the inclusion of underrepresented groups within our marketing materials.

We will send the student reps the new prospectus link and invite feedback again by the next Academic Board meeting, so that we can continue to make annual improvements and updates.

KW added that having the prospectus online was a positive move as it allows us to make these updates much more easily.

Action (AP2): JY to share new prospectus link to student reps and feedback to be sent back by the next Academic Board meeting.

8. Curriculum

8.1. Module Amendments and Curriculum Review

ST reported that the team are still working on the course re-write documents and these are coming on strong. The hope was to have a meeting about this before Christmas but that doesn't look possible, however, there may be some documents shared over teams for students to look at over the Christmas break.

AP agreed and advised that he had been looking at the different strands of what is being re-written and that the framework seems to be in place now. The biggest challenge so far has been the contextual studies and theory elements which have changed quite radically in a lot of ways. It was noted that for the other areas of performance technique etc. the content is already there, they just need to be streamlined and updated. Overall, we are in a good place for ST to look at the re-write from a QA perspective.

BW raised that they had some feedback from FD2 on their current lessons and it was advised to send this to AP and/or a Year Manager before the end of term.

Action (AP3): BW to arrange with AP some time to discuss FD2 feedback on current lessons.

AP updated everyone to say that he has started sharing the work done so far on the course re-write with external people to get feedback from them.

9. Policy Review

9.1. B10 Working with Others (038 National Centre)

The paper was shared prior to the meeting. ST informed attendees that although this policy may not be relevant for us at this current time, it may be something that we need to employ with the course changes we are planning to make, such as for work placement opportunities.

9.2. The Absence Policy (AB21 The Attendance Policy)

Changes to the absence policy were highlighted in yellow within the paper and shared prior to the meeting. ST requested feedback from the students.

LG commented that it was sensible and that it was good to have stipulation around authorised absences.

ST advised that the process for authorised absence requests was changing by introducing a new form, which puts responsibility on students to seek out what learning outcomes they will be missing for each module and evidence how they plan to still achieve them. It is therefore really important that students know where to find the learning outcomes, which are in all of the module specifications on Teams. It was explained that this is mostly relevant for FD2 and BA students, as FD1 students wouldn't usually be granted absence for work opportunities. However, all students will be granted absence for funerals or medical reasons etc.

The new authorised absence request form was shared on the screen to show students how this should be filled in. The module mapping section of the form puts ownership on the student to understand the module outcomes, what they are going to be missing and to find ways to ensure they can meet those outcomes. ST advised that any student who requests authorised absence should firstly check with their teachers to find out if there are any assessment points during that time and to then discuss how they can continue learning while they are away, or in the environment that they will be in. It was noted that the obligation should be on the student to do this, not staff. Students will also need to upload evidence to the form such as an employment contract or email.

The length of time of authorised absence requests was discussed. It was noted that generally 1 week is likely to be manageable but longer requests will require a member of the HE team to observe and check that learning outcomes are being met. When it comes to the Kent exam board evidence will be needed to prove that these learning outcomes have been met, in order for the relevant modules to have been passed.

ST asked student reps if they could help explain to their cohorts how this new process works and point them in the right direction.

TR asked what the consequences would be of not doing this.

ST explained that it would mean students wouldn't be granted authorised absence and therefore, consequently their grades would be marked down.

KW expressed the importance of submitting requests as early as possible before students agree to work experience. It was noted that we do recognise that sometimes opportunities come up last minute and we will try to make allowances where we can, but ultimately students need to be on top of this.

ST commented on the value in students gaining skills from this process, as something that can be transferred when they go out in the professional world.

KW added that this is not a way of us trying to stop students from taking up opportunities; it is a way for us to support them to succeed.

AP raised challenges to do with the length of absence request. Long periods of time do have resourcing implications and will need extra consideration, and therefore as much organisation from the students as possible.

LG agreed that this was a good process to put in place.

NS suggested integrating this new form within the original absence form so there aren't too many forms for students.

ST commented to say that it would be easier to manage separately, as the information needed for this type of request is different.

KW suggested we try it how it has been set up for a year and then review it to see if an alternative was needed.

It was agreed to sign off on the new authorised absence form process.

10. AOB

BW asked if there were any other plans for Christmas, now that the party has had to be cancelled.

AP responded to say it was suggested to possibly bubble the year groups separately for separate parties, however, the general feedback has been that students would like to be together as one cohort. Therefore, it has been decided to postpone it until next term, possibly around Easter time.

TR asked about the curriculum re-write and if Psychology was going to be in it and where.

AP advised that they are still looking at aspects of that within the first year but also in the 2nd year in regards to psychology of performance.

TR asked to be able to review this. It was explained that students will be given the opportunity to feedback on the curriculum re-write and give their ideas.

LG commented on the challenges of this term and gave her thanks to everyone, including the Year Managers for their support.

Teams Communications

ST raised that he had been receiving very few responses from student reps to messages on Teams. Part of student rep duties are to help bridge the communication between staff and students, which is currently difficult if we don't know if messages are being received, understood or read. It was noted that a simple thumbs up to a message in most cases is enough.

BW raised difficulties with navigating teams, saying that often messages get lost or mixed up in the channels and it is a struggle to find things. LG advised that when teams updates, you have to re-turn on all notifications, which may be the issue.

KW suggested an additional session with Reps about using Teams and by simply checking everyone has their notifications functioning right.

ST asked student reps to have a look at what other VLE's would be useful, advising that we have tried Moodle and Blackboard in the past and have so far found the most success with Teams, though recognised that Teams is not working for everyone.

LG suggested that blanket guidance on how Teams should be used could be helpful, including for teachers as sometimes teachers are not using it. BW added that teachers have sometimes asked students to contact them differently through social media. It was noted that it is not appropriate for teachers to ask students to contact them through social media and students should refuse that; teachers should be using teams.

AEW added that Teams can be bad for people with neurodiversity, as you cannot alter the backgrounds etc. AEW has already emailed Microsoft about this issue.

NS checked that students are being scheduled into these meetings so they can see them in their timetables; it was clarified that they are.

It was acknowledged that as ST has created the set-up of Teams, it may therefore seem much more straight forward for him to use. ST recognised this, as well as the fact that Teams can look different on different devices which makes putting together guidance difficult.

LG suggested making use of SharePoint as a way of separating out information.

Students were notified that they do have access to Microsoft Office's suite of applications, including SharePoint, and that as soon as a document is uploaded to teams it does automatically go to SharePoint. The use of Office 365 is explained in student's registration packs prior to entry to the course.

KW suggested that further work was needed outside of this meeting on the communication and functioning of Teams and Office 365.

Action (AP4): Further work to be done by HE admin team around the communication and functioning of Teams and Office 365.

QSR Student Submission

ST spoke about the fact that we have been asked to submit a student submission to the OfS and that there are no requirements in what format this can be done. It was suggested that an easy and more creative way to do this could be to submit video responses to a set a of questions about NCCA, similar to short Instagram style clips students already do in their own time. Student reps were asked if this could be achievable and something they would be happy to coordinate before the Christmas break.

BW expressed difficulties in incentivising their year group. It was clarified that only a few students would be needed to volunteer, with a total of approx. 10 students across all 3-year groups needed.

LG felt it was a good idea and something they could give a go. LG suggested staff set the questions and then reps can assign the questions to specific students they think would be appropriate to respond to them.

ST advised that he would come up with 5 or 6 questions and send them in the student rep team, with a deadline for the video responses and guidance of where to submit. It was questioned how students currently submit their videos for the Instagram takeovers that happen in collaboration with Hazel and Marketing.

LG advised that students download their draft videos from Instagram and send the files in Teams to Jo and Hazel. JY added that she can send this guidance.

Action (AP5): ST to send list of questions for QSR student submission to student reps via Teams by Friday 3rd December, with details of how and when to submit their responses by.

Action (AP6): Student reps to try and coordinate the QSR video responses to these questions by the end of term.

TR raised an issue about how students with poor mental health often struggle to come into school, and when they do, they end up having to leave. Would there be a way for them to go home but not miss out too much on the course, such as by having something else going on?

A discussion was had around this vicious cycle whereby students then can't come in at all, as they feel too behind, which then gets worse the more they feel unable to come in. Added to this is the complication of students who have to work, who are then too tired to come in.

AEW recognised that this is definitely a problem, but commented on difficulties in being able to find ways around it due to the nature of the course and intensive training. Over the past CDD have tried to find solutions for this, but ultimately as the courses are so physical, it is difficult for students not to miss out when they cannot come in.

AP asked TR whether he was thinking there should be a way for students to duplicate (as much as possible) the training they are missing from home, or whether this could be a more alternative, creative solution. TR agreed that it would need to be an alternative way of working.

AP spoke about the creative filming tasks which were developed in response to the first lockdown as being an initial thought and possibility. It was noted that further thought would be needed around resourcing implications and ensuring students were meeting the required number of hours to pass the course. Likewise, they would need to evidence they are meeting the learning outcomes.

Concerns were raised over parity and being able to tailor the course for differing circumstances of mental health. AEW welcomed suggestions from students but also expressed challenges in managing this for students who have longer spells of mental health problems. In these circumstances, it may be best for students to intermit, which can be a good option for them; not a failure. ST reminded students about the concession procedure, which is in place to enable students to apply for mitigating circumstances when appropriate.

It was agreed further thought and discussion would need to take place outside of this meeting around strategies to break the cycle of students feeling unable to come in, due to poor mental health. In the short-term students were encouraged to always talk to the HE team in the first instance.

Action (AP7): HE Team to consider alternative strategies for how to support students who feel unable to come into school due to poor mental health.

The student reps were thanked for their time and invited to leave the meeting.

11. Date of next meeting

Thursday 17th March 2022.

Action Plan Summary

Action (AP1): FD2 reps to encourage their year group to fill in the NSS.

Action (AP2): JY to share new prospectus link to student reps and feedback to be sent back by the next Academic Board meeting.

Action (AP3): BW to arrange with AP some time to discuss FD2 feedback on current lessons.

Action (AP4): Further work to be done by HE admin team around the communication and functioning of Teams and Office 365.

Action (AP5): ST to send list of questions for QSR student submission to student reps via Teams by Friday 3rd December, with details of how and when to submit their responses by.

Action (AP6): Student reps to try and coordinate the QSR video responses to these questions by the end of term.

Action (AP7): HE Team to consider alternative strategies for how to support students who feel unable to come into school due to poor mental health.

Closed Business (Student Representatives not present) (20 Mins)

12. Matters Arising:

None.

13. Disciplinary Issues

It was noted that there was one disciplinary issue this term with a pre-registering first year student that has now been closed off. The student was paid a small amount of compensation from NCCA to cover some travel and accommodation fees. There has been no come back since and the deadline has now passed for him to be able to raise a dispute.

14. Appeals and Complaints

None.

15. Scholarship Allocations

15.1. To Discuss Leverhulme Trust Allocations

KW advised that this would be moved to the next meeting for discussion, as there is some information coming from CDD and also further clarification required from Leverhulm around the eligibility of EU students.

16. AOB

AP raised serious concerns over the attendance of a FD2 student and it was agreed that AEW, ST and AP would discuss straight after the meeting.

No other business was raised.