

National Centre for Circus Arts

Summary of 2022-23 to 2025-26 access and participation plan

What is an access and participation plan?

Access and participation plans set out how higher education providers will improve equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups to access, succeed in and progress from higher education.

You can see the [full access and participation plan for The National Centre for Circus Arts](#) on our website.

Key points

See pages 1 to 9 of full plan

The National Centre has made steady progress in recruiting a diverse group of students. We have increased participation by People of Global Majority, as well as mature entrants and have maintained good access for entrants with declared disabilities. However, analysis also shows a lack of progress in increasing access from areas of the country with lowest participation, and those from areas of highest deprivation.

We focus on access, continuation, attainment and progression for each of these under-represented groups:

- students from low participation neighbourhoods
- students from deprived socio-economic backgrounds
- student members of People of Global Majority
- mature students
- students with a disability or learning difference
- care-leavers

Despite the encouraging trend over time for the proportion of People of Global Majority to increase, there is clearly still work to be done to enable a greater proportion of People of Global Majority to study at the National Centre.

Fees we charge

See pages 19 and 20 of full plan

At the National Centre for Circus Arts the maximum fee charged will be £9,000 for full-time UK students.

Financial help available

See page 21 of full plan

Bursaries of up to **£1000** per year of study will be allocated to applicants with a household income of £25,000 or less. In addition, we have set aside funding to support **care leavers** and **estranged students**, set at £1000 per year of study.

Hardship grants ensure students can continue to study. This fund will be available to students through application supported by evidence of hardship. Each year students are able to apply for up to **£1500**. They can make three applications each year totalling no more than the maximum amount.

Information for students

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events such as our open days and audition days, by email communications and via our website. We regularly update our information for **care leavers** on the NCCA website. **Current students** receive

information about fees and the financial support available through TEAMS (Virtual Learning Environment).

For the most up-to-date information, see our website: <https://www.nationalcircus.org.uk/student-support-and-faqs/fees-and-funding/>

What we are aiming to achieve

See pages 2 to 9 of the full plan

Access to Higher Education

There is substantial work planned to enable a greater proportion of people from low participation areas to study at the National Centre. We will have a particular focus on:

- Students from low participation neighbourhoods.
- Students from deprived neighbourhoods
- People of Global Majority

NCCA has seen a trend of a slight increase gap when looking at percentage of participation (pp) from areas of low-level participation with high-level deprivation, versus high-level participation with low-level deprivation. Reducing the gap between these two areas will be a key focus of our work starting in 2023-24.

- We aim to improve the number of people entering higher education from the areas known to have **low participation**. Currently, between the areas of highest participation and lowest participation there is a gap of 35pp. We will aim to reduce this to 22pp by 2026-27.
- We aim to improve the number of people entering higher education from the areas known to be of **high deprivation**. Currently, between the areas of highest and lowest deprivation there is a gap of 16pp. We will aim to reduce the to 11.3pp by 2026-27.
- We aim to have 29% of our degree entrants being from the **global majority community** by 2026-27

Success and Continuation

- We aim to see more students of Global Majority achieving high degrees (2:1 and above).
- NCCA data shows no significant gaps in continuation, success or for students moving into employment. We will continue to work hard to ensure no gaps emerge for mature students, disabled students or students with learning differences or for care givers.
- We will improve data collection to **investigate the intersection of disadvantage**.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

See pages 10 to 17 of full plan

We have devised a **strong strategy** and have aims to improve our **data collection**. This, along with **consultation with students** will drive decision making and progress towards our aims and to ensure our plan is evolving and improving.

We have created an **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee**. It is made up of staff, students, graduates and professionals and is co-chaired by the Chair of our Board of Trustees to ensure connection to all levels of the organisation.

We provide **early access to circus** through developing **relationships and partnerships** with community leaders within low participation areas. In particular, we work with primary and secondary schools. This will ensure young people have both the **skills and confidence** to enter higher education.

We point enthusiastic young people towards our development programmes, in particular the **London Youth Circus** and **CAT** (Centre for Advanced Training) where we can offer support with **administration and techniques for auditions**.

Through **inclusive teaching** practice as well as ensuring we deliver a **diverse** and **relevant curriculum** we support retention and allow graduates to enter the profession with the most up-to-date industry knowledge and skills.

Our goal is to generate **employable graduates**. This is achieved through fostering a culture of research and the development of **best practice** learning and teaching in a performing arts context.

The National Centre knows the importance of **Communities of Learning** and supports partnerships and collaborative working with industry professionals both within NCCA and beyond in the wider circus sector.

We offer **financial support** that is clearly promoted and made available in a timely fashion to support student retention and their progression and success through the course.

We have an **Access and Participation team** managed by the **Head of Learning and Access** which have the delivery and development of our plan at the heart of their work.

How students can get involved

The advantage of being a small institution is the direct contact we have with the entire student body and we regularly utilise this luxury to solicit student feedback and input both formally and informally. We have student representation on the EDI Committee as well as on the Student and Staff Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board. Our graduates are also employed as teachers on our youth, recreational and outreach programmes.

Evaluation – how we will measure what we have achieved

See pages 17 to 19

We plan to invest in our data collection and analysis capacity during 2022/23 and subsequent years to ensure that we are able to collect and analyse consistent data across all stages of the student lifecycle.

We use our evaluations to develop our programmes and regularly review and improve our approach to evaluation, as well as improving our systems and structures:

- in 23/24 we will consider the effectiveness of our programme of activity as part of the annual monitoring cycle undertaken by our EDI group.
- in 24/25 we will review which data sources have been most effective in directing our widening access activities and take decisions to enhance our data collection, analysis and evaluation capability.
- over the period of this plan, we will continue to work with other partners e.g. AccessHE and our validating university, the University of Kent.

We will review progress against the delivery of our plan via the National Centre's cycle of Annual Course Monitoring and Reporting (ACMR).

We generate an action plan in relation to the ACMR which is reviewed at Academic Board and by the Senior Leadership Team. The annual reporting is reviewed by NCCA's Board of Trustees (the governing body). We will regularly review our access and participation work at our Student Staff Learning and Teaching Committee and Academic Board and at Board of Trustee meetings.

Contact details for further information

You can contact info@nationalcircus.org.uk for further information.