

BA (Hons) in Circus Arts – Course Information

This one-year course consolidates the technical level of a specific circus discipline and its integration with a personal artistic approach.

The training is intensive, weeks are 35 hours long with a mix of taught sessions and scheduled independent learning. The year is up to 35 weeks in length in order to sustain physical progression. Class sizes vary depending on the subject being taught. As well as physical skill development there is a strong focus on artistic exploration and creativity, contextual studies and business planning.

The course is divided into modules for assessment purposes, details of which can be found by clicking on the course content links below. The course will focus on continuous assessment of each student's individual progress, as well as performance-related assessment both as an individual and as part of an ensemble. Students' analytical and critical skills are also assessed through research projects and presentations. There are no formal written examinations.

The degree is delivered at the National Centre for Circus Arts (except for the Ensemble Performance Task module – see below) and is awarded by the University of Kent. Students must complete and pass all modules in order to obtain the qualification.

Course Review and Independent Registration

As part of our Quality Assurance Processes, this course undergoes a periodic review. The next review is scheduled during the 23/24 Academic Year and any developments or changes to the course will be implemented in the 24/25 Academic year. We will inform all applicants about changes to the course when applicable.

Course Fees

Whether an applicant is classed as having 'Home fee' or 'Overseas fee' status will be governed by the UK Government's rules on residence.

Students classed as 'Home Fee' status: £9250*

Students classed as 'Overseas' Fee status: £18,000*

*Subject to further increase in subsequent years in line with Government policy.

Additional Costs

In addition to your tuition fees you will be expected to incur the following costs while studying on the Foundation Degree:

- You will be expected to bear the cost of attending at least one circus performance during your period at the National Centre. Tickets can range from £5-£20 for London shows. Also, whilst not mandatory, you will be strongly advised to see as many other performances as possible because this is a circus arts programme with a strong focus on performance
- Tuition fees do not include some personal materials, such as practice clothes/kit and books

Equipment

The specialist equipment used in some circus specialisms can be expensive, but it is normally possible for the National Centre to supply you with access to the equipment you will need for your course. There are some exceptions, notably any apparatus which has to be custom made or made to fit the student's size. One example of this would be a Cyr wheel. Most students opt to purchase their

own equipment, and the National Centre has a loan scheme to assist you in the purchase of circus equipment, provided this is essential for your circus discipline.

Locations

The National Centre is an organisation that is situated in Old Street in Central London. As well as delivering our Higher Education Courses, the building is used at various times by professionals who are members of 'Open Training', as well as children and adults who attend our many classes and courses. The building is also a popular events venue and available to hire. Some income that is generated from venue hire supports the delivery of our Higher Education courses. Whilst the majority of modules are delivered onsite in the NCCA building, there may be a need to relocate some modules to external venues during event hires and sometimes Higher Education production periods. These will always be London based venues and we will always endeavour to make them as close to the NCCA building as possible. You will be informed as soon as possible by the Higher Education Team about where your classes will take place if not at the NCCA and be supported in traveling to those venues.

Entry Requirements

- Applicants should hold a Foundation Degree from the National Centre for Circus Arts or another school which is a recognised [Full member of FEDEC](#). Any candidate applying for direct entry to the BA (Hons) course from any of these institutions must provide evidence that they have successfully completed two years of training on a relevant course, equivalent to a Foundation Degree, along with details of their previous study (for example a student handbook or module guide).
- If you do not hold a Foundation Degree from a recognised FEDEC school but believe you have enough prior experience in Circus Arts, we may be able to consider you for RPL ([Recognition of Prior Learning](#)). Please contact joanna@nationalcircus.org.uk for more information.
- Direct entry applicants will be interviewed at audition, and will be expected to provide a reference and their transcript to date. This is to ensure that they are being assessed for entry on the same basis as internal applicants from the National Centre Foundation Degree.
- Applicants will be required to demonstrate a proficiency in both written and verbal English language which would normally be GCSE English or equivalent International English Language Testing System. Overseas students may be required to take a Secure English Language Test (SELT) prior to entry in order to meet VISA requirements.
- We define BA level in this context as someone who can formulate and communicate his or her technical and artistic needs at a level consistent with a view to entering the profession as a young practitioner. We also expect candidates to be capable of working at a level of autonomy not necessarily present, or acquired at, Foundation Degree level.

BA (Hons) in Circus Arts – Programme Content

Overview

The emphasis of this year long 'top-up' course is to consolidate the technical level of each student's specific circus discipline, continue to develop their personal artistic approach, advance their analytical and reflective skills and build upon their experience of performance contexts. A typical week includes classes in and to support their specific circus discipline, sessions in direction and movement, contextual studies, time for research and academic study, and a higher expected level of autonomy and independent practice than the Foundation Degree.

The BA (Hons) Degree programme is comprised of 7 core modules:

[Circus Discipline Level 2](#)

In this module students will build on their skill acquisition in their circus discipline with the aim to progress their physical, technical and artistic development as a circus artist in line with industry expectations. The module will be delivered as a combination of tutor led discipline focused sessions/workshops and task driven independent learning. Scheduled independent and peer led learning sessions are a central element of this module.

Alongside progression with technical skills in their discipline, students will be expected to demonstrate a level of professionalism in their practice in line with industry expectations of circus artists. Students will be assessed on both of these elements, and will also complete a risk assessment to demonstrate a professional level of understanding regarding health and safety protocols related to their discipline

Circus in the 21st Century

This module allows students to analyse and contextualise developments in contemporary circus. Students will be assessed on student-led theoretical presentations on specific practitioners and will also produce an original piece of research in the form of a practitioner interview and reflective essay.

Directing

This module draws together learning from academic and performance classes to introduce students to the practice of directing. Students will each have the opportunity to direct a short piece, and to perform in one another's work and will be assessed on presentations at different stages of development.

Movement and Composition 2

This module advances students' ability to apply principles of choreography and composition to the creation of new work. Students will devise and perform original movement pieces, and will be assessed on both their process of creation and their performance.

The Business Plan

Students work individually or in a group to prepare a business plan for the development of a professional project for possible implementation after graduation. Students will be partnered with a mentor from the industry to help them realise their projects.

Ensemble Performance Task

This module comprises an ensemble production devised in collaboration with an external director or choreographer. This work takes place over an intensive period of a number of weeks and culminates in the creation of a professional standard production for public viewing. This module usually takes place externally, and occasionally may take place outside of London or the UK.

Negotiated Performance Task

This module gives students the opportunity to use all of the skills and techniques they have learnt so far to create a devised performance. The piece will allow them to show their personal approach to circus creation and to highlight the technical level that they have achieved. The piece can be created as an individual performer or as part of a group with other students and students will be assessed on both the process of creation and the final performance. The performance is open to the general public.