

Course Specification: Undergraduate Taught Courses of Study

| Required Information | Data |
|--|---|
| 1. Awarding Institution/Body | University of Kent |
| 2. Teaching Institution | National Centre for Circus Arts |
| 3. School/Division responsible for management of the course | Division of Arts and Humanities |
| 4. Teaching Site | National Centre for Circus Arts |
| 5. Mode of Delivery | Full-time |
| 6. KentVision Academic Model | <i>To be completed in due course, once approved by the University</i> |
| 7. Course accredited by | n/a |
| 8. a) Final Award | Foundation Degree in Circus Arts |
| 8. b) Alternative Exit Awards | Certificate in Higher Education in Circus Arts (on completion of year 1) |
| 9. Course | Circus Arts |
| 10. UCAS Code (or other code) | N/A |
| 11. Credits/ECTS Value | 240 credits, 120 ECTS equivalent (120 credits, 60 ECTS equivalent for Certificate in Higher Education) |
| 12. Study Level | Undergraduate |
| 13. Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s) | Dance, Drama and Performance (December 2019) |
| 14. Date of creation/revision (<i>note that dates are necessary for version control</i>) | May 2016/revised Jan 2023 |
| 15. Intended Start Date of Delivery of this Course | From September 2023 |

16. Educational Aims of the Course

The course aims to:

1. Develop and consolidate professional competency by providing the opportunity for students to explore their circus practice and the skills needed to develop as independent circus artists, including developing professional etiquette and safe practice in line with the current expectations of the profession.

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2. Introduce, develop and advance the students' analytical, reflective and critical skills, by developing their ability to research and draw upon a wider cultural context and prompt creative solutions to a diverse range of challenges
3. Develop a student's physical knowledge in circus discipline and associated supplementary areas, instilling in them the confidence to interrogate, create, experiment, and perform.
4. Provide opportunities for students to articulate ideas, concepts and information in a number of environments, utilising numerous modalities.
5. Provide an environment in which learning becomes a life-long activity through independent learning and exploration of their own individual potential, developing strategies which will enable students to further their professional circus practice beyond the end of the course
6. Promote a student's knowledge and understanding of circus and its contemporary context within the performing arts, including the aesthetic, artistic and cultural values, informing the ways in which circus is devised, performed and interpreted
7. Expanding a student's capacity to explore the wider landscape of circus and its evolution, with a focus on inclusion and advocacy.

17. Course Outcomes

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

The course outcomes have references to the subject benchmarking statement for Dance, Drama and Performance (December 2019)

A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

1. circus performance: having a comprehensive and systematic understanding consistent with entry into the profession (SB4.2)

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2. the established models of practice, protocols, routines and procedures deployed within a range of professional situations, and how to apply these appropriately within their own practice (SB4.2)
3. an artist's responsibility and their professional role in relation to the responsibilities of other roles within the context of productions and performances (SB4.3)
4. the processes of creativity and how to implement, and critique them. (SB4.2, SB4.3)
5. the management of an individual artist's own physical, technical and pedagogical development. (SB5.6) (SB5.7)

Skills and Other Attributes

B. Intellectual Skills:

1. The ability to engage critically with material leading to informed judgements and conclusions, and to effectively communicate information, arguments and analyses in a variety of forms, to both circus and non-circus related audiences (SB5.3)
2. The application of reflective and independent thinking to personal practice and the practice of others, communicating conclusions verbally and in writing (SB5.7)
3. Skills that allow the student to undertake further training, develop existing skills, and acquire new areas of competence as well as enabling them to assume personal responsibility as developing artists (SB5.6)

C. Subject-specific Skills:

1. A foundation level of competence in the creative and technical execution of a specific circus discipline, giving the student the confidence to practise, experiment and perform safely and creatively within their own limits (SB5.2)
2. An ability to identify problems and propose creative solutions in relation to their chosen circus discipline and in a broader production and performance context (SB5.2, SB5.3)

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3. To demonstrate a range of performance skills and integrate them into their circus practice (SB5.2)
4. The ability to manage themselves as artists in line with professional expectations (SB5.6)
5. The capacity to engage imaginatively with creative practice and to promote artistic and personal growth (SB5.2)
6. An ability to identify Health and Safety issues and to undertake Risk Assessment when required (SB5.6)

D. Transferable Skills:

1. The ability to evaluate their own performance or personal development as well as the ability to recognise the limits of their current knowledge, through a process of reflection and self-appraisal (SB5.7)
2. Practice of effective time management and organisational skills consistent with professional expectations (SB5.6)
3. The ability to work autonomously outside of scheduled classes, recognising that the need to develop a lifelong approach to learning is essential to continued development (SB5.6)
4. The ability to communicate effectively in a variety of contexts, using an appropriate range of materials and media (SB5.2)
5. The ability to undertake independent investigation and to retrieve and manage information (SB5.3)
6. The ability to use information technology appropriately as part of the skill-set of a modern performing professional (SB5.2)
7. The ability to be proactive in collaboration with others to achieve common goals (SB5.2)

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Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable the course learning outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated

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

- Practical teacher led sessions
- Scheduled group and independent learning sessions, either self-directed or task-led
- Devising work for performance, rehearsals and both internal and public performances
- Lectures
- Tutor and student led seminars
- Prescribed reading, viewing of performance and independent research
- Intensive workshops
- Collaborations with professional companies/directors/choreographers

Formative and summative assessment tasks include:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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18. Course Structures and Requirements, Levels, Modules, Credits and Awards

This course is studied over two years full-time.

The course is divided into two stages, each stage comprising modules to a total of 120 credits. Students must successfully complete each module in order to be awarded the specified number of credits for that module. One credit corresponds to approximately ten hours of 'learning time' (including all classes and all private study and research). Thus obtaining 120 credits in an academic year requires 1,200 hours of overall learning time.

For further information on modules and credits refer to the Credit Framework at [Credit Framework - Regulatory Framework - University of Kent](#)

Each module is designed to be at a specific level. For the descriptors of each of these levels, refer to Annex 2 of the [Credit Framework - Regulatory Framework - University of Kent](#)

To be eligible for the award of a foundation degree students must obtain 240 credits, at least 90 of which must be at Level 5 or above.

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

For further information refer to Annex 5: Alternative Exit Awards of the Credit Framework at [Credit Framework - Regulatory Framework - University of Kent](#)

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

Where a student fails a module(s) due to illness or other mitigating circumstances, such failure may be condoned, subject to the requirements of the Credit Framework and provided that the student has achieved the programme learning outcomes. For further information refer to Annex 9 of the Credit Framework at [Credit Framework - Regulatory Framework - University of Kent](#).

Where a student fails a module(s), but has marks for such modules within 10 percentage points of the pass mark, the Board of Examiners may nevertheless award the credits for the module(s), subject to the requirements of the Credit Framework and provided that the student has achieved the programme learning outcomes. For further information refer to Annex 6 of the Credit Framework.

- Failure will not be condoned or compensated for module NCA101 (60 credits) and CA211 Circus Discipline 1 (35 credits) as the modules are each worth more than 25% of the stage.

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| KV Code | SDS Code | Title | Level | Credits | Term(s) |
|---------------------------|----------|--|-------|---------|---------|
| Stage 1 | | | | | |
| Compulsory Modules | | | | | |
| NCA101 | | Circus Discipline | 4 | 60 | 1,2,3 |
| NCA102 | | Circus Ensemble 1 | 4 | 15 | 2 |
| NCA103 | | Movement 1 | 4 | 15 | 1,2,3 |
| NCA104 | | Theatre 1 | 4 | 15 | 1,2,3 |
| NCA105 | | Circus Through the Performative Lens | 4 | 10 | 2 |
| NCA106 | | Circus from the Technical Perspective | 4 | 5 | 1 |
| Stage 2 | | | | | |
| Compulsory Modules | | | | | |
| CA211 | | Circus Discipline Level 1 | 5 | 35 | 1,2,3 |
| CA210 | | Action, Reaction and Creation | 5 | 15 | 1,2 |
| CA212 | | Movement and Composition 1 | 5 | 15 | 1,2 |
| CA207 | | Performance Review and Analysis | 5 | 10 | 1 |
| CA204 | | Circus Producing and Production Management | 5 | 10 | 2,3 |
| CA209 | | The Student Devised Piece | 5 | 20 | 2,3 |
| CA201 | | The Ensemble | 5 | 15 | 3 |

20 Support for Students and their Learning

- Induction course introducing students to all of the elements listed below
- Student Handbook and Appendices
- Module Specifications
- Academic Writing Guide
- One-on-one and small group intensive teaching
- English Language Support
- Careers and Employability Advice from the Circus Development department
- Counselling Services provided by external organisations
- Information Services (computing and library services, including e-resources and VLE via MS TEAMS)

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- Student representation at relevant committees (Student and Staff Learning & Teaching, Academic Board, The Student Voice)
- One to one feedback
- Personal progress interviews and performance profiling
- Individual and group tutorials
- Termly Student Progress Meeting, overseeing the progression of each individual student and identifying specific individual support needs
- Full time Student Support Manager a range of learning, emotional, physical and financial support systems and available for individual support on welfare and well-being issues
- Support for students with a disability / specific learning difficulty including a specialist academic support tutor
- Injury treatment and rehabilitation including individual injury management support and physical therapy
- Strand Managers who oversee the pastoral progression of all students on the programme
- Academic Support from the Student Support Manager

For further information please visit the National Centre for Circus Arts website at:

[Student Support - National Centre for Circus Arts | National Centre for Circus Arts \(nationalcircus.org.uk\)](https://nationalcircus.org.uk)

21. Entry Profile

The minimum age to study a degree course at the National Centre for Circus Arts is normally at least 18 years old by 1st September in the year the course begins. There is no upper age limit.

21.1 Entry Route

For current information, please refer to the National Centre for Circus Arts prospectus

- Applicants must be 18 or over on entry.
- Applicants will be able to demonstrate their intent to pursue professional employment in circus arts.
- Applicants will be required to demonstrate a proficiency in both written and verbal English language. For the Foundation Degree in Circus Arts this 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.
- Applicants must fulfil parts 1 and 2 of the admissions process. If the applicant is from outside the UK or they are unable to attend an audition day they may request to submit a full video audition (instead of attending part 2).

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21.2 What does this course have to offer?

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

21.3 Personal Profile

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

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

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

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- Student module evaluations
- Annual programme and module monitoring reports and Periodic Course Review (see Annex B and E of Codes of Practice for Taught Courses - [Codes of Practice for Taught Courses of Study - Regulatory Framework - University of Kent](#))
- External Examiners system (See Annex K: External Examiners and External Advisors for Taught Courses - [Codes of Practice for Taught Courses of Study - Regulatory Framework - University of Kent](#))
- Annual staff appraisal
- Peer observation
- Quality Assurance Framework
- QAA Higher Education Review
- The National Centre for Circus Arts Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy
- Review and analysis of statistical information
- Policy reviews
- Moderation of marking
- The committee structures of the National Centre for Circus Arts
- Student Feedback mechanisms as outlined in 22.3

22.2 Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

- Student Voice Forum
- NCCA Student Staff Learning and Teaching Committee
- NCCA Academic Board
- Board of Examiners

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

- Student module evaluations
- Student Voice Forum
- Student rep system
- Annual NSS
- Student termly group feedback sessions led by student representatives
- Exit feedback sessions
- The continuous day-to-day conversations between staff and students that is possible in a small institution

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22.4 Staff Development priorities include:

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

23. Indicators of Quality and Standards

- Results of periodic programme review (February 2017)
- QAA Institutional Audit (2022)
- Annual External Examiner reports
- Annual course and module monitoring reports
- NSS and Graduate Outcomes data
- University of Kent QAA Higher Education Review (2015)

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

- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education
- QAA Benchmarking statement/s for Dance, Drama and Performance December 2019
- Staff research activities
- Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (2009, QAA)
- Foundation Degree Qualification Benchmark Statement (February 2020)
- NCCA Learning and Teaching Strategy 2021-23

24 Inclusive Course Design

The Collaborative Partner recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the course is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans

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(ILPs)/declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services. For more information see the Inclusivity and Quality section of our website at: [Policies and Procedures - National Centre for Circus Arts | National Centre for Circus Arts \(nationalcircus.org.uk\)](https://www.nationalcircus.org.uk/policies-and-procedures)

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Module Mapping: *Foundation Degree in Circus Arts*

| | Stage 1 | | | | | | | Stage 2 | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------|-----------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------|--|
| | Circus Discipline | Circus Ensemble 1 | Movement 1 | Theatre 1 | Circus Through the Performative Lens | Circus from the Technical Perspective | | Circus Discipline Level 1 | Action Reaction and Creation | Movement and Composition 1 | Performance Review and Analysis | Circus Producing and Production Management | The Student Devised Piece | The Ensemble | |
| Knowledge and Understanding | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A1 | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| A2 | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | | | x | x | x | x | |
| A3 | x | x | | | x | x | | x | x | x | | x | x | x | |
| A4 | x | x | x | x | x | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| A5 | x | | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Intellectual Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B1 | x | x | | | x | | | x | | | x | x | x | x | |
| B2 | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| B3 | x | x | x | x | x | x | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| Subject-Specific Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| C1 | x | x | | | | x | | x | x | | | x | x | x | |
| C2 | x | x | | | x | | | x | x | x | x | | x | x | |
| C3 | x | x | | | x | | | x | x | x | x | | x | x | |

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|----------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| C4 | x | x | | | | x | | | x | x | | | x | x | x | |
| C5 | | x | x | x | | | | | x | x | x | | | x | x | |
| C6 | x | x | | | | x | | | x | | | | x | x | x | |
| Transferable Skills | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D1 | x | x | | x | | | | | x | x | x | x | | x | x | |
| D2 | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| D3 | x | x | | | x | | | | x | x | | | x | x | x | |
| D4 | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| D5 | x | x | | | x | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | x | |
| D6 | | x | | | x | x | | | | | | x | x | x | | |
| D7 | | x | x | x | x | | | | x | x | x | | | x | x | |