

Chief Executive
Recruitment Pack

Spring 2024



**national centre
for circus arts**

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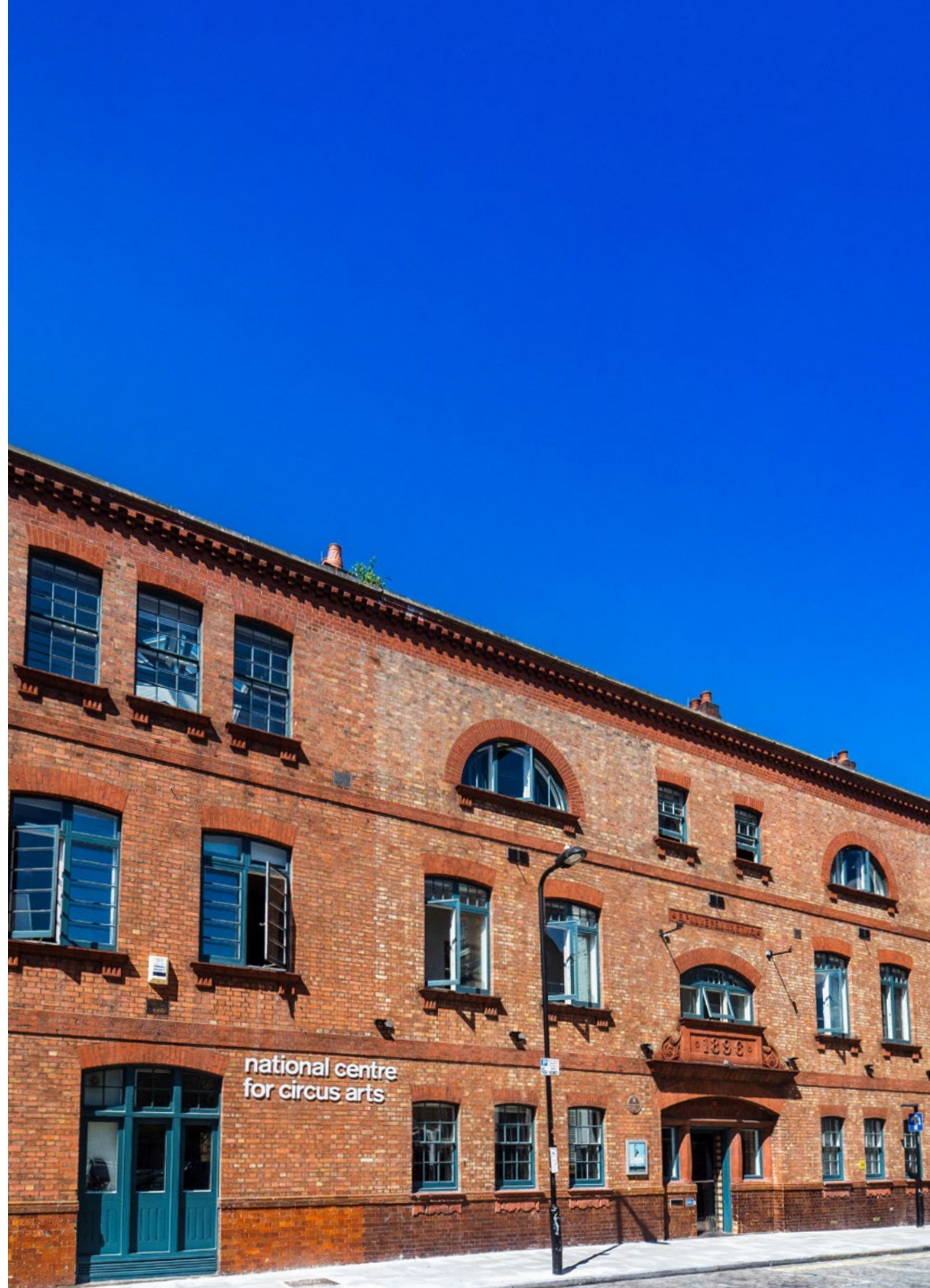
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ABOUT THE NATIONAL CENTRE

The National Centre for Circus Arts has been enabling the creation of excellent and innovative circus for almost thirty years.

Every year we involve thousands of people in the physical challenges and artistic pleasures of Circus Arts. Our diverse range of work includes our BA degree, which is supported by a structured training programme for under-18s and professional development opportunities for aspiring and established performers. Adults and young people can enjoy recreational classes and people of all ages can attend performances. We also run highly regarded workshops, away-days and team building events for the corporate community.

We are engaged in activity that significantly contributes to the cultural life of the UK by: producing exceptional artists who shape the future of the Circus Arts; developing potential and creativity through world-class higher education vocational training; finding and nurturing young artists; supporting the cultural infrastructure; fuelling development in the creative industries; and providing national and international leadership in Circus Arts.



A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Alison King
Chair of the Board



Thank you for your interest in the National Centre for Circus Arts as we embark on an exciting recruitment process for a new Chief Executive Officer. We are a passionate and ambitious institution, with our higher education programme at the very heart of what we do. Either side of that we train hundreds of people every year as they discover the creative delights and physical challenges of circus in both recreational and progressive programmes, whilst providing support and advice to circus professionals around the UK.

This will be an exciting time to join the organisation as in addition to the day-to-day delivery of what makes us so unique, you will lead us following a period of significant change.

We are now in our second year as an independently registered Higher Education Provider and find ourselves settling into all that is required of us as a small specialist institution. This has brought about a new way of working with the Office for Students and the responsibilities this brings, but we are enormously proud to have achieved this status and look forward to further supporting our students, just as we have done for the last 20 years. The impact of our loss of Arts Council funding through the National Portfolio in April of last year led to a significant restructure of the organisation. Completed in September 2023, the new structure is now in place and an ambitious new team with refreshed focus and ideas, is hard at work.

Although the last few years have been challenging, as Chair, I am enormously proud of what our talented team has been able to deliver, often under uncertain circumstances. They do so with pride and determination and I am confident that we are now ready to move forward, stabilising and creating resilience as we continue to develop and support our extraordinary art form in the years ahead.

If you feel you have the energy, wit and wisdom to add to this team and lead the UK's foremost circus arts organisation, we look forward to hearing from you.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The National Centre's higher education programme is at the heart of our activity, and comprises a two-year foundation degree and a one-year BA top up in Circus Arts, validated by the University of Kent. Our aims for the next three years will see us increase our total student numbers to a cohort of 90.

Through our programme, we ask students to challenge perceptions of what circus is and explore multiple ways of approaching creative work. As well as building on what they know, they also develop a curiosity to bring to all areas of their practice and we support them to develop the broad range of skills required as a professional circus artist. Training is intensive in order to sustain physical progression and there is a strong focus on artistic creativity and collaboration, as well as the development of reflective and analytical skills.

Students then participate in a specialisation process to enable them to find the circus discipline best suited to them. Alongside circus discipline training, students study other areas that contribute to them graduating as rounded circus artists.



National Centre graduates have gone on to join companies such as Giffords, Cirque du Soleil, Ockham's Razor, Cirque Eloize, Seven Fingers, Circa and GOM, or set up their own circus production companies such as Barely Methodical Troupe, Brainfools and Revel Puck.



YOUTH PROGRAMMES

The National Centre is home to the London Youth Circus and also the only circus strand of the Centre for Advanced Training (CAT) scheme. We also run 12 specific recreational circus classes each week for ages 3–18.

These programmes run throughout the year alongside our outreach, access and participation activities. They include: delivering the National Youth Circus event which brings circus schools from across the UK to London for a weekend of masterclasses and teacher training seminars; Sensory Circus, a programme aimed at children with autism and other additional needs; and CircuSpire, a programme designed to increase participation for individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds and those from a Global Majority background.

We encourage all youth participants to try a range of creative and technical classes with the aim that they will develop their skill base so when they finish their time with us, they can access a wide range of performing arts activities with confidence.





SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CIRCUS ARTISTS

As part of supporting the creation of great circus and supporting professional members, we run workshops, seminars and courses to develop artists' employability and support them to manage sustainable careers.

As part of their membership with us, in excess of 400 professional members have access to our extraordinary specialist training facilities alongside the opportunity to attend free seminars and workshops. These have included seminars focusing on how to research and write effective funding applications and how to create specialist risk assessments for circus performance.

We also offer vital space for research and development whether during our Open Training sessions that run daily, seven days a week or through use of the Creation Studio, a purpose built space for circus development. In the last year we have provided space and time for over 40 circus artists or companies, offering over a hundred days' worth of studio time in total.



“

This degree has allowed me to look deeper into what circus meant to me and it also allowed me to understand the historical concept and the roots of where some things come from.

The degree also equips me with self-care and understanding of my own body which helps to prolong my career in this industry.

”



Jonathan Goh
FD2 Student

PURPOSE OF THE ROLE

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible to the Board of Trustees for the overall leadership of the organisation. They are the Accountable Officer for the Higher Education programme and hold overall responsibility for the relationship with the Office for Students and compliance with their terms and conditions of registration.

They will lead the strategic direction of the organisation which they will develop, implement and monitor in collaboration with the senior management team. The CEO will work with the Board of Trustees to ensure accountability and informed decision making for the management and governance of the organisation.

The CEO will be an outstanding leader promoting collaboration throughout the organisation and will set standards and demonstrate a commitment to diversity, access, education, training and skills development for staff and students alike.

They will lead on raising the profile of the organisation, championing the art form in the wider cultural sector, and will manage relationships with stakeholders, supporters and donors.



MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

- To be the Accountable Officer and to report to the Board of Trustees on all matters.
- To lead on the development of the National Centre's vision, strategy and business carrying it through to ensure implementation and delivery of objectives.
- Ensure all National Centre programmes of activity are delivered to the required standards and are regularly reviewed.
- Ensure the Higher Education Programme maintains the highest possible academic standards exceeding basic compliance requirements.
- To ensure all students and participants on all programmes are provided with an exceptional learning experience in a welcoming professional environment and are active participants in a creative community.
- To lead and develop the overall organisational culture, supporting and mentoring all direct reports and encouraging a collaborative approach to working that contributes to clear and effective communication throughout the organisation.
- Ensure that effective partnerships are built with other organisations to expand the reach of our work.
- To keep abreast of education developments, best practice, and policy changes in order to identify and introduce appropriate innovation.
- To seek out opportunities to develop work that will support the wider circus sector.

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE

- Experience of working as a senior leader in an arts organisation, charity or in Higher Education.
- An understanding of the importance of education, outreach and skills training.
- A keen interest in and broad knowledge of the arts and education.
- Experience of writing, presenting and successfully implementing policy and strategy and setting appropriate future action.
- Experience of effective partnership working and developing and maintaining good relationships with stakeholders.
- Experience of effective resource management, including successful fundraising in the public and private sectors.
- Evidence of collaborative and inspirational leadership skills.
- Experience of working with a Board of Trustees in a charity or educational setting.
- Experience of working in partnership with others in the wider performing arts sector
- A commitment to the development of inclusive practices.

DESIRABLE

- An understanding of current policy and regulatory processes in Higher Education and charities.
- Knowledge and experience of UK arts policy and funding.
- Working in a leadership role in an educational environment driving successful student outcomes through a focus on learning and teaching.
- Understanding of the international circus arts sector.



ABOUT THE ROLE

Reports to:

Chair of Trustees

Hours:

Full Time

Direct reports:

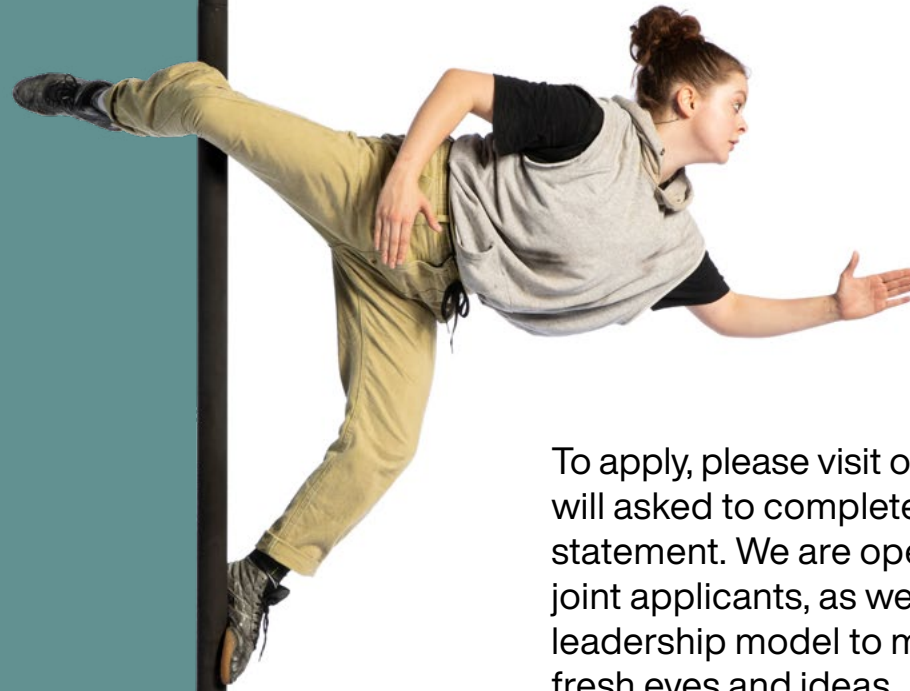
Director of Professional Development,
Commercial Director, Chief Operating
Officer

Salary:

£75,000-£85,000

Holiday Entitlement:

22 days paid holiday each year and eight Bank Holidays, increasing by 1 day for each year of service from 1st September up to a maximum of 35 days per annum (pro rata).



To apply, please visit our [jobs and opportunities page](#). You will be asked to complete an application form and personal statement. We are open to applications from individuals or joint applicants, as we are happy to challenge our existing leadership model to make sure we can move forwards with fresh eyes and ideas.

Selection will take place through an appointment panel, chaired by our Remuneration and Nominations Committee and they will be involved in both the assessment of candidates against the requirements for the role and in identifying the widest possible field of qualified candidates.

At the National Centre we are committed to creating an environment free from discrimination, and promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff, students, professionals, and participants are recognised and valued.

This is especially important in our recruitment process and we aim to recruit, train and support students and staff regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or religion. For an informal chat please contact our Chair, Ali King, on chair@nationalcircus.org.uk

**national centre
for circus arts**

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IMAGE CREDITS

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