

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 at [insert link].

See pages 1 to 6 of full plan

Key points

The National Centre has made steady progress in recruiting a diverse group of students. The Centre has increased participation by People of Global Majority, as well as mature entrants and has maintained good access for entrants with declared disabilities. Whilst the National Centre is proud of the improvement made over the last 5 years in those areas, the analysis also shows a lack of progress in increasing participation to entrants from the areas with lowest participation and entrants with the highest level of deprivation.

We focus on access, continuation, attainment and progression for each of the 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

The National Centre will continue to offer **bursaries** and **hardship** grants to its students, building on our current offer under the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama.

From September 2025, all **'Home Fee'** students who meet the eligibility criteria of 'household residual income of up to **£25,000**' will be offered **£750** per year of study, for the duration of their time enrolled at NCCA.

Existing students (Intakes from 2022, 2023, 2024) who qualify for scholarship funding, will continue to receive **£1000** for the remainder of their time on the course.

This will be cash transfer towards living cost expenditure and will be paid by bank transfer in May of each year, once all tuition fees for that year have been settled.

Students who meet the definition of a **care leaver or estranged** student will be offered **£750** per year of study, for the duration of their time enrolled at the National Centre.

Existing students (Intakes from 2022, 2023, 2024) who meet the definition of a care leaver or estranged student will be offered **£1000** per year of study, for the duration of their time enrolled at NCCA.

NCCA offers a **Hardship Fund** which is available to students upon application. Each year students able to apply for up to **£500**. They can make three applications each year totalling to no more than the maximum amount. Applications will be approved by the HE team on the basis of supplied evidence of hardship

Information for students

Prospective students receive information on fees and financial support at in-person events, such as our open days and audition days, and by email communications.

- 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.
- Deprived neighbourhoods
- People of global majority

NCCA has seen a trend of a slight increase gap when looking at percentage of participation 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 will 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 35. We will aim to reduce the to 22pp by 2026-27.
- We will 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 16. We will aim to reduce the to 11.3pp by 2026-27.
- We will 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 and progressing on to employment.

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 be working to improve data collection to **investigate the intersection of disadvantage**.

What we are doing to achieve our aims

See pages 11 to 19 of full plan

At the organisational level 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 APP is evolving and improving.

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

We will 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 broadly **relevant curriculum** we will 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 will be 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 will support partnerships and collaborative working with industry professionals both within NCCA and beyond into the wider circus sector.

We will be offering **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 will have the delivery and development of the APP 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 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.

Progress against the delivery of the APP will be reviewed by the National Centre's cycle of Annual Course Monitoring and Reporting (ACMR).

We generate an action plan in relation to the AMCR 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 joanna@nationalcircus.org.uk for further information.