

national centre for circus arts

Admissions Policy 2025 entry onwards

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1. Important information about National Centre for Circus Arts

National Centre for Circus Arts (NCCA) is an independent Higher Education Provider with the Office for Students, as of June 2022.

By accepting the offer of a place on the BA (Hons) Degree Course, you accept the terms and conditions in full, which along with your offer, include:

- the School's rules, regulations, policies and procedures;
- the academic regulations of the University of Kent, as applicable.

All of the above form the contract between you and the School in relation to your studies at the School.

NCCA is a legally autonomous institution, independent training organisation, and charity (registered charity number 1001839). The undergraduate higher education courses offered by NCCA are validated by the University of Kent (the 'validating university').

Enquiries regarding admissions for a course of higher education delivered by the School should be sent to: Joanna@nationalcircus.org.uk

2. Admissions Policy Statement

2.1 Admissions Policy Statement

NCCA exists to train artists who will match the world's best and, on entering their professions, shape the future of Circus. The National Centre for Circus Arts is a registered charity and one of Europe's leading providers of circus education. Based in a magnificent Victorian power station adjacent to Hoxton Square, we involve thousands of people in the creation and performance of circus arts every year.

NCCA is a publicly funded institution, which is independently registered with the [Office for Students \(OfS\)](#). Its policies and procedures are closely aligned with the Office for Students Conditions of Registration, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) expectations for standards and quality, as set out in the revised [Quality Code](#) (March 2018), and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE or OIA) Good Practice Frameworks.

2.2 General expectations

Our School selects students with the greatest talent and aptitude for training, underpinned by a commitment to widening participation and to promoting courses to young people who are less likely to participate in higher education.

2.3 Scope of this policy

This policy relates to all undergraduate courses offered at NCCA, unless otherwise specified. It applies to all applicants who apply to NCCA for the following courses:

- BA (Hons) in Circus Arts Degree

2.4 Details of NCCA undergraduate higher education courses

Details of undergraduate courses currently on offer at the NCCA can be found on the School website in the course summary documents which can be accessed from the following link: <https://www.nationalcircus.org.uk/degrees/>

2.5 Equality and Diversity

Celebrating diversity and working to achieve the creative potential in all our students is at the heart of our School. We are committed to selecting, training and supporting students regardless of ethnicity, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, or religion. Applicants to NCCA are chosen solely on the basis of their talent and potential to develop the skills required for their chosen profession. The School does, however, judge applicants on their suitability for a course and their potential to successfully complete the training, as the work is rigorous and requires high levels of energy and commitment.

In our admissions processes, we are committed to supporting students with disabilities. Disabled students are encouraged to disclose their support requirements so that we can endeavour to meet these during the audition or interview process and subsequent training. Disability support during training is managed under the School's Support Through Studies processes.

We recognise that everyone is an individual and we will work with students to identify potential barriers to training and do what we can to remove those barriers. As part of our approach to supporting equality, diversity, and inclusivity, the School has a [Framework for Contextual Admissions](#). The Framework sets out the values and principles that the School applies during the admissions process to identify, acknowledge, and mitigate barriers and disadvantages that applicants may face not only at the time they apply to us but also subsequently, to ensure that when studying with NCCA students can have the appropriate support to reach their fullest potential. We will also make any necessary reasonable adjustments, in accordance with the Equality Act (2010), to ensure that disabled students can train with appropriate support at the School.

As part of our statutory monitoring, the School collects Equality and Diversity information from applicants. This information is considered as confidential and is used for statistical purposes only.

3 Entry Requirements

3.1 Where to find entry requirements and criteria for NCCA undergraduate courses of study

Entry requirements and criteria are available for our BA course on our website and in the course summary document which can be accessed from the following link: <https://www.nationalcircus.org.uk/degrees/ba-hons-in-circus-arts/>

3.2 Direct entry to an undergraduate course of higher education with NCCA

Each year NCCA admits a small number of applicants who satisfy the relevant entry requirements to enter directly into year 2 of the BA (Hons) in Circus Arts Degree. This is known as 'direct entry'. Direct entry applicants go through the same audition procedures as all others. If accepted directly into year 2 of the BA (Hons) Degree, the School follows the University of Kent's procedures for RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning), completing a portfolio for each student which details their experiential and certificated prior learning. This experiential and certificated prior learning is taken into consideration by the School when determining whether we can make an

offer to a direct entry applicant.

Students who are admitted as direct entry to year 2 of the BA (Hons) Degree are required to attend NCCA induction sessions along with first year students and all other students who are new to the School, as well as any additional sessions designated for the year of study.

3.3 General Requirements for admission to an undergraduate course of higher education with NCCA:

Applicants must demonstrate:

- the ability and capacity to study at a higher education level;
- the facility to receive and potential to benefit from vocational training;
- evidence of suitable preparatory training and/or experience;
- an awareness of the rigours of the training and its vocational nature;
- an understanding of the nature of the industry; and
- an understanding of the aims and objectives of the course.

In addition to the above general requirements, specific entry criteria and requirements for the course of study can be found in the [BA \(Hons\) Degree](#) course summary document.

3.4 NCCA Admissions Commitment

The School will:

- **Audition or interview all applicants that meet the basic criteria for the discipline and course as outlined in the course summary document (see 3.3 above);**
- **accept individuals based on talent and potential for training alone (i.e. not discriminating on the basis of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, economic background, or otherwise); and**
- **consider each particular applicant's suitability for the course.**

4 Recruitment

4.1 Target recruitment numbers

Target recruitment numbers are determined by the School and vary across the course years of study delivered by NCCA.

4.2 Marketing

Marketing and promotional activities are conducted by the Marketing and Communications department of NCCA and may include:

- information available on the schools' website;
- open days and guided tours;
- open evening and weekend classes (at child, youth and adult level);
- Digital courses guides;
- summer schools;
- social media, including Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr, Twitter, TikTok;
- student performances.

4.3 Participation and outreach

NCCA has a strong commitment to widening participation, underpinned by the School's Access and Participation Plan. We engage in various widening participation and outreach activities to widen access to artistic training in Circus and related fields.

5 Application and Selection

5.1 General information on application and selection

NCCA will seek to ensure that selection policies and procedures are transparent, effective, consistent, fair, and in accordance with the School's Public Sector Equality Duty. Information concerning applicants is subject to both the School's Data Protection Policy and Processes.

5.2 How applicants are selected

Selection for the undergraduate course with NCCA will normally be through consideration of the application form and candidate video submission, audition, and interview. Auditions and interviews are designed to ensure that places are offered to those candidates who have the greatest talent and potential to develop and succeed in their chosen careers regardless of previous experience, cultural or socio/economic background.

To ensure equality of opportunity the School will:

- audition or interview all applicants who meet the basic entry criteria ([see Section 3 of this Admissions Policy for where to find further information on entry requirements](#)). Applicants may be contacted to discuss their application prior to audition or interview.
- ensure that all applicants are informed of the audition and interview procedures.
- ensure that staff involved in the audition or interview process clearly understand the entry requirements and selection criteria.
- ensure that staff are suitably trained to make fair and sound judgements (having regard to the specified selection criteria).
- monitor selection procedures with particular regard to equal opportunities.
- ensure reasonable adjustments are made wherever necessary to improve accessibility and support disabled applicants.

NCCA is committed to removing unnecessary barriers and increasing accessibility. Applicants are encouraged to disclose any impairment or condition (for example dyslexia or a physical, sensory, or mental health condition) so that the School can endeavour to make any reasonable adjustments during the admissions process including at audition or interview, as well as during the course to enable participation. The School encourages disclosure in advance wherever possible, but applicants can also disclose a disability or condition at any stage of the audition or interview process.

The School also strongly encourages applicants to disclose any previous or current injuries to ensure that they can be appropriately supported during the audition or interview process and potential further training.

5.3 Application fees

As of July 2022 there are no application fees to apply for the undergraduate Higher Education course at National Centre for Circus arts.

5.4 Additional support for Care Leavers and Estranged Students

NCCA is committed to helping all students fulfil their potential whilst studying with us, regardless of background. Our School welcomes all applications and judges prospective students solely on their talent and potential to develop the skills required for their chosen profession.

If you're in care, have left recently, or are estranged from your parents, we understand that you may have some extra practical considerations to take into account when making the progression to Higher Education, and that you may have concerns about accommodation, financing your studies, and pastoral support.

5.1. *Bursary for care leavers and estranged students*

If you choose to let us know that you are a care leaver or estranged from your parents (which we encourage you to do), we will be able to offer you additional support, and **you may be eligible to receive a non-repayable bursary of £1,000 per year of study**. You will have a chance to disclose at application stage, and again on your enrolment form. You can also talk to a member of staff at your school at any point during the academic year.

5.5 Applicants with a criminal record

In line with the School's commitment to removing unnecessary barriers and increasing accessibility, the majority of applications to a course of higher education with NCCA do not require any disclosure of a criminal record. All criminal records data will be processed in accordance with the School's Student Data Protection Policy:

<https://www.nationalcircus.org.uk/app/uploads/2022/07/ncca-student-data-processing-statement.pdf>

Some NCCA courses may offer placements or other professional course-related experiences that involve 'regulated activity'¹ which require students to undergo a criminal records check ('enhanced DBS check') before they can be authorised to participate in such activities. Where a course of study involves 'regulated activity' either as a requirement, or as an optional part of a course, this will be listed in the relevant Course Summary document.

Where such activities are a **requirement** of the course, the School will require an enhanced DBS

¹ Please see UK government guidance for further details and definitions of regulated activity:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-guidance-leaflets>

check for disclosure of a criminal record at the point of receipt of an offer of a place to study before the School can confirm the offer of a place. Where such activities are an **optional** part of the course, an applicant will not be required to disclose a criminal record/undertake an enhanced DBS check at any point during the application and admissions process. Once enrolled on the course, students may elect not to undertake an enhanced DBS check and not participate in the optional activities.

5.6 Application Procedures

NCCA arranges its own application procedures (e.g. the dates of auditions both online and in-person); we are not in UCAS. Deadlines for making an application to study on a course of higher education with NCCA are published on the School website at <https://www.nationalcircus.org.uk/degrees/ba-hons-in-circus-arts/>

5.7 Late applications

Applications submitted after the application deadline will not normally be considered and will only be accepted and considered at the discretion of the School. NCCA reserves the right to extend an application deadline where it deems this to be appropriate.

5.8 Withdrawals prior to audition or interview

Applicants must inform NCCA at their earliest convenience if they decide to withdraw their application and do not intend to attend audition or interview. Any applicant who wishes to be considered for the next round of admissions must reapply the following year.

5.9 Audition/Interview and Selection procedure

A fundamental part of the application process to a NCCA course of higher education is via audition and interview. Details of audition and interview procedures, together with entry requirements, can be found on the School website at <https://www.nationalcircus.org.uk/degrees/ba-hons-in-circus-arts/>

NCCA holds undergraduate auditions in London. Applicants should check the School website for details of audition dates. NCCA also offer online auditions, subject to circumstances.

Where circumstances occur that prevent the School from holding an audition in-person where it has been previously advertised as such, the School will make alternative arrangements (which may include, but not be limited to, holding an audition online and/or interview, or other admissions process that will assist the School Admissions team in reaching a decision on an application). Applicants are advised to check the School website for further information.

5.10 Unsuccessful applications

Feedback from auditions and interviews are not usually available due to the large numbers of applicants.

5.11 Confirmation of offer

Where an applicant is made an offer of a place to study with NCCA, conclusion of the application process follows the 3-step process set out below:

5.11.1 Offer of a place to study is made by the School to applicant, including the following pre-contract information:

a. Offer letter

- b. Terms and Conditions**
- c. Fees policy**
- d. Relevant Course Summary Document**

5.11.2 Applicant must confirm acceptance of the offer in writing to the School;

5.11.3 School confirms the place in writing.

Please note that an offer of a place to study on an undergraduate course of higher education with NCCA remains provisional until the School has confirmed the offer in writing (step 3 i.e. 5.11.3, above).

5.12 Right to cancel a confirmed offer

In accordance with the Terms and Conditions issued as part of the pre-contract information, when NCCA makes a formal offer to an applicant of a place to study, applicants have the right to cancel within fourteen days of formally accepting an offer of a place (please see the relevant Terms and Conditions issued at the point of offer for more detailed information).

5.13 Deferred admissions

An offer of a place to study on an undergraduate course of higher education with NCCA will normally only be applicable for the next available course start date. Places will not normally be deferred to a subsequent course start date, however it is at the discretion of the School as to whether an offer of a place may be deferred, and the length of any such deferral.

5.14 Communications with a third party

All communications regarding an application and audition/interview outcome will normally be conducted directly with the applicant and not with a third party, including relatives.

5.15 Complaints and Appeals

For information about submitting a complaint or an appeal regarding the admissions process, please refer to the [Admissions Appeals and Complaints Policy](#). Please note that there are deadlines within which an admissions appeal or complaint can be made, as set out in the policy. For any questions regarding this policy and its procedures, please contact Joanna@nationalcircus.org.uk

5.16 False, fraudulent or misleading information provided by applicants

NCCA reserves the right to refuse admission to a course or, if already registered, terminate registration if information provided by an applicant is fraudulent, inaccurate, or incomplete.

NCCA expects that all information provided to it by applicants will be complete, true, and accurate, with no misleading omissions or inaccuracies. Any submission of fraudulent, inaccurate, or misleading information on the application, or the omission of relevant information, will result in the immediate cancellation of the application and (where applicable) the withdrawal of any offer made.

From time to time information may come to light about a successful applicant holding an offer, or a registered student, where the School would have made a decision not to offer a place had the information come to light before an offer had been made. In this instance, an applicant holding an offer may have this offer subsequently withdrawn. In the event that the matter concerns a registered student, the case will normally be referred to the Principal of the School who will determine what action may need to be taken.

Where information comes to light that an application may contain false, fraudulent or misleading information from a successful applicant who has already registered as a student on a course of study with the School, the student's registration may be immediately terminated and student status withdrawn, or the student may be subject to disciplinary action under the [Non-Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures](#).

6 Registration and Enrolment

6.1 General information

'Enrolment' is the annual process by which you formally confirm you are beginning each year of your course. Enrolment must normally be fully completed in order to receive full access to School and course facilities. Enrolment is carried out by NCCA, and takes place annually (i.e. each student must re-enrol at the start of each academic year in order to continue their studies).

'Registration' is the final part of the admissions process, where you confirm and update as necessary the personal details we hold for you which you provided in your application; confirm the School undergraduate course you are intending to study, and agree to abide by, comply and engage with our Terms and Conditions and all related regulations and policies. Registration confirms that you are a student of NCCA.

A place on a course at NCCA will be conditional upon an applicant complying with registration and enrolment conditions, including any conditions relating to fees, and enrolling at the start of the course and at the start of each subsequent academic year.

6.2 Pre-enrolment information

Prior to enrolment, applicants holding an offer of a place will be contacted by the School with pre-enrolment information. Applicants are advised to refer to the relevant course summary document for the undergraduate course to which they have applied for more detailed information. The Course Summary documents for each NCCA undergraduate course of study can be accessed from here: <https://www.nationalcircus.org.uk/student-support-and-faqs/policies-and-procedures/>

6.3 Enrolment

Applicants must enrol at the designated session at the start of their course, as informed by NCCA, unless agreed otherwise with the School. If an applicant cannot or does not enrol at the designated session, they must provide the School with a reason for the non-enrolment that is acceptable to the School in order to be permitted to enrol on another occasion, otherwise they will not be entitled to enrol for that year of study (or any future year of study unless agreed with the School) and the relationship with the School and contract shall be terminated. Please see the Terms and Conditions issued at the point of offer for further information about obligations and contracts. Terms and Conditions for the BA Hons in Circus Arts degree are also published on the School website at: <https://www.nationalcircus.org.uk/student-support-and-faqs/policies-and-procedures/>

6.4 Registration and Enrolment information

As part of the registration and enrolment processes, students will be asked to provide some or all of the following details:

- 6.4.1** A working and current email address;
- 6.4.2** A working landline and/or mobile telephone number;
- 6.4.3** A term-time address;
- 6.4.4** 'Next of Kin'/emergency contact details;
- 6.4.5** A current passport, a copy of which will be taken and retained (overseas students only);
- 6.4.6** Confirmation of loan payment from Student Finance England (or other funding body), if applicable;
- 6.4.7** A copy of the student's highest qualification on entry to the course;
- 6.4.8** Any other relevant information, if deemed necessary.

All scanned documents are kept in secure files, in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy and Data Processing Statement.

6.5 Withdrawals

Applicants who hold an offer of a place and wish to withdraw prior to the start of their course of study must inform the School Admissions team as soon as possible via email Joanna@nationalcircus.org.uk. Any applicant who wishes to be considered for the next cycle of admissions must reapply the following year. Students who withdraw after the start of the course will be subject to pay tuition fees in line with the School's Undergraduate Fees Policy.

6.6 Intermission/Interruption of Studies

Where an applicant has accepted an offer of a place and commenced as a student on the course, circumstances may occur that necessitate the student to 'intermit' (also known as 'interrupt') their studies for a period of time whilst remaining registered as a student on the course. Information about intermission/interruption of studies can be found in the relevant Student Handbook; further information can be found in the relevant Terms and Conditions which are published on the School website.

6.7 Values and commitments: our expectations of all students

All students who join NCCA sign up to our [Student Code of Conduct](#). Our School Code of Behaviour covers every member of our community, both students and staff. Our values are enshrined in this Code of Behaviour, which sets out our expectations for how we will treat each other, with kindness, understanding and empathy, and that by joining NCCA students are committing to being in ways that are inclusive and respectful, and do not engage in attitudes or behaviour that are incompatible with our values.

In the event that the School determines that a student is in breach of either the Student Code of Conduct or the School Code of Behaviour, or any other School policy that applies to the student contract (the 'terms and conditions that applicants sign when accepting their offer of a place'), this will be a breach of contract. If such a breach occurs within the contractual cooling period (or, in the event that the student begins the course late, within the first 14 days of the student's enrolment on the course) that in the reasonable view of the School makes it inappropriate for the student to remain on their course, the contract may be immediately terminated.

Examples of policy/contractual breaches that would, in the reasonable view of the School, make it inappropriate for the student to remain on their course, include, but are not limited to:

- Harmful attitudes (for example but not limited to, transphobia, misogyny, anti-

- Semitism) that are incompatible with our values and harmful to our community;
- Racist behaviour;
- Sexual Misconduct (as defined in the Policy on Sexual Misconduct, Harassment and Related Behaviours);
- Harassment;
- Violence;
- Bullying.

7 Monitoring and Review of Policies and Procedures

7.1 General information

This policy is subject to periodic review by the NCCA Academic Board as required. Via its governing committees, the School also monitors the following, all of which are relevant to admissions:

- recruitment, marketing and the prospectus/information on the Schools' website
- processes and methods for determining admission to the School
- data related to admissions and the methods used to collect that data
- support for students and applicants with disabilities
- external requirements of the School and the validating university (the University of Kent).

In certain exceptional cases and where reasonable we reserve the right to vary these procedures. When we do so, the circumstances will be monitored and recorded through quality assurance measures.