

national centre for circus arts

Attendance Policy and Absence Penalty Procedure

This document has been written to give you clear guidance on our Attendance Policy and our Absence Penalty Procedure. If you have any questions about this policy or procedure, then please contact the Academic Administration Manager or Admissions and Registry Manager.

Attendance Policy and Absence Penalty Procedure Rationale

Training to become a professional circus artist requires regular and intense training over an extended period of time. This training is not limited to your individual discipline; it includes your theatre and movement training, your contextual and theoretical development, and your physical preparation such as strength and stamina training. In response to the commitment and time required to meet the levels we are expecting, the National Centre for Circus Arts runs a strict attendance policy.

Regular attendance to all of your classes is a priority while you are training. This is particularly important where **Continuous Assessment** is a component of the assignment and over-all grading. Unauthorised, and therefore unsupported, absences can lead to:

- Important information being missed.
- Foundational knowledge being missed, resulting in later knowledge being lost.
- Assessment details not being received.
- A gap in your continuous development, creating a barrier in your overall training arc.

Alongside this, a lot of the work you will be doing at the National Centre will be within groups and ensembles. Missing devising and development sessions without authorisation can create major barriers for others in your group, affecting everyone's learning experience.

The BA(Hons) in Circus Arts at the National Centre is designed to prepare you for professional work by introducing you to real-world, professional experiences in a controlled and educational setting.

Consistent and reliable attendance is imperative within the circus industry, whether you are working during performances or rehearsals, solo or in a group. Tight budgets, space limitations and high industry standards mean that arriving late, or not arriving at all, can have major consequences on a production and could affect your future employment.

As a result, we have developed this policy to prepare students for the realities of working within the circus arts industry.

1. Authorised Absence

- The National Centre expects students to attend **100%** of their classes, including scheduled self-led sessions. This Policy recognises that 100% attendance is not always possible, and that absences are likely to occur.
- As a result, students who are going to be absent for **periods of 2 days or more** should complete an **Authorised Absence Form** at least one week before the absence in question which will inform the HE Team of the future absence and the reasoning behind it. The HE Team will then decide if the reasoning is an appropriate case for authorisation. If so, an authorised absence will be recorded for the student within the register system.
- If a student is sick or recently injured, then they should apply for an authorised absence, via the Authorised Absence Form as soon as possible.
- If a student is involved in an emergency, then they can apply for an Authorised absence retrospectively. However, this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- If a student has a request which they do not wish to disclose to the whole HE Team, they can instead inform the Student Support Manager who will inform the rest of the team of any authorised absence while keeping details and reasoning confidential.
- If an authorised absence form is not completed, then the student's absence will be marked within the register system as an **unauthorised absence**.
- The decision to grant an Authorised Absence will also consider your attendance and engagement throughout your time on the course. Students with poor attendance, lack of engagement, or those at risk of not meeting course requirements may not be eligible for Authorised Absences, even if the reason fits the criteria outlined above.
- *First year BA1 students are not eligible for authorised absences for work/performance related opportunities. Your first year is focused on building foundation skills, so attendance in all course activities is required.*

Reasons for Authorised Absences

Authorised absences will only be considered under specific circumstances. Below are examples of acceptable and unacceptable reasons for requesting leave:

- Circus related teaching, training or performance opportunities that directly support your development as a circus artist.
- Personal emergencies, including:
 - Funerals of close family members or friends
 - Medical emergencies
 - Significant personal crisis (on a case-by-case basis)

Authorised Absences will not be granted for:

- Weddings, similar celebrations or personal holidays
- Non-urgent personal or family events
- Periods of absence under 2 days.
- Travel days before or after weekend projects

Academic Responsibilities

If requesting an absence for a circus-related opportunity, it's essential to show how this experience aligns with the learning outcomes of the modules you will miss. Your application must include:

- A clear explanation of how the opportunity (e.g. Performance, Workshop) supports the skills or knowledge covered in the modules you are missing.
- Evidence of the event and how it contributes to your learning and development. (based on the learning outcomes of the modules missed) including performance dates and locations for assessment purposes where necessary.
- Where appropriate contact details of event organisers and a point of contact.

This ensures you are still meeting the course's educational goals during your absence.

How to Apply for Authorised Absence

- Submit your Authorised Absence Request Form 10 working days in advance, explaining the reasons for your absence.
- Provide evidence showing how the learning outcomes will be met for the modules that you will be missing
- Submit documentation where necessary
- Your attendance and engagement records will be reviewed as part of the decision process.
- The Academic Administration Manager will contact you with the outcome of your request.

Important Note:

Failure to follow this procedure or maintain the required level of attendance and engagement could affect your course progression and your ability to apply for authorised absences in the future.

We aim to support your growth as a circus artist, but it's essential to balance your external commitments with the demands of the course. Each request will be reviewed individually, and decisions will be made in line with this policy.

2. Unauthorised Absence

An unauthorised absence is an absence which does not have a recognised reason for it occurring.

This could be due to a failed request via the Authorised Absence Form, or an absence which has occurred without an application via the Authorised Absence Form.

In the event of an unauthorised absence occurring, the student in question will be contacted by a member of the HE Team. If the student offers an appropriate reason for authorising the absence in this correspondence, then authorisation will be awarded. If the student does not respond or respond with a reason which is not appropriate for authorisation, then the absence will continue to be recorded as unauthorised.

Multiple unauthorised absence may lead to you being penalised in the grading of a module (See 4. Grade Penalties)

3. Attendance and Engagement Procedure

The National Centre tracks attendance to ensure each student is meeting the required level of engagement with the course and its training, and to ensure that any wellbeing concerns are supported effectively. To ensure this the HE Team follow the Attendance and Engagement Procedure:

- **Two Weeks:** Every two weeks student attendance is reviewed across the modules. If a student has low-attendance (**Below 59%**) this is flagged and a message is sent out to the student informing them of the procedure.
- **Three Weeks:** If a student's attendance has not improved (above 50%) after three weeks, an informal meeting is organised with the Student Support Manager and the Head of Higher Education. Depending on the outcome of this meeting, a student may be referred to the Support Through Studies procedure.
- **Five Weeks:** If a student fails to attend a previous meeting or a student's attendance has not improved (above 59%) over five weeks, a formal meeting is organised with the Student Support Manager and the Head of Higher Education. Within this meeting, the student will be referred to the Support Through Studies Procedure as an *Ongoing or Significant Concern*.
- **Seven-Weeks:** If a student fails to attend a second meeting or a student's attendance has not improved (above 59%) over seven weeks, another formal meeting will be organised with the Student Support Manager and the Head of Higher Education. Within this meeting, the student will be referred to the Support Through Studies Procedure as a *Very Serious Concern*.
- **Ten-Weeks:** If a student fails to attend a third session or their attendance has not improved (above 59%) after ten weeks, a final formal meeting will be organised with the student Support Manager and The Head of Higher Education. Within this meeting, the student will be referred to the Support Through Studies Procedure as a *Critical Concern*. Potential outcomes of this meeting include Suspension, Intermission, or Exclusion as outlined in the Support Through Studies Policy.

4. Grade Penalties

Within the framework of the penalty procedure, each module will be taken into account separately. If a student misses **59%** of the module due to unauthorised absences, they will receive a module grade of **0**.

This penalty can be contested if the student has an unexpected absence for which they have not yet submitted a request for authorisation in retrospect (see 1.5 & 2.3).

5. Assessments and Productions

Within periods of assessment, or on days of assessment, absences will only be authorised in *exceptional circumstances* as deemed appropriate by the HE Team.

This ruling extends to the entirety of **ensemble productions**, which require a **100% attendance**. Any unauthorised absences which occur within these modules will be flagged, and a meeting will be organised to determine if the absence should be authorised. If the absence is deemed to be unauthorised then the student will incur a **10-Mark Penalty**. This process will be repeated for any unauthorised absences following the first.

In the event of a **continuous assessment**, a student who misses up to **59%** due to authorised absences will be automatically awarded a **concession** and will be given an alternative assessment task in its place.

A student who incurs multiple unauthorised absences during a **continuous assessment** period will be subject to the same penalty as outlined in section three of this policy.