The Degree Programme – Circus Space

Based on Annex C: Programme Specifications Template

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she passes the programme. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in the relevant year Module Handbook. The accuracy of the information contained in this specification is reviewed by the University and may be checked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Foundation Degree in Circus Arts

1. Awarding Institution/Body | University of Kent
2. Teaching Institution | Circus Space
3. Teaching Site | Circus Space, Coronet Street, London, N1 6HD
4. Programme accredited by |
5. Final Award | Foundation Degree in Circus Arts
6. Programme |
7. UCAS Code (or other code) | N/A
8. Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s) | Dance, Drama and Performance
9. Date of production/revision | Revision: August 2010
10. Applicable cohort(s) | 2010/2012

11. Educational Aims of the Programme
The programme aims to:

1. **Develop professional competence** – by instructing the student in the technical skills and critical understanding needed to perform and create as a professional circus performer. This instruction will encompass the professional conduct, behaviour and protocols that pertain to circus performers in general, but will also focus on developing a technical and creative vocabulary in a specific circus discipline chosen by the student, instilling in them the confidence to practice, experiment and perform.

2. **Develop capacities for analysis and evaluation** – by establishing forums for the critical appreciation of a broad range of production and performance contexts, in circus as well as in other performance arts. The course also aims to encourage the ability to use reasoned analysis and evaluation effectively to identify problems and propose creative solutions in a variety of situations.

3. **Develop interpersonal skills** – by providing opportunities for the student to work collaboratively with a wide range of disciplines, both production and performance related. Common performance or production objectives will require that the student participates effectively as a member of a group, while personal performances or production objectives will require the student to establish healthy working relationships.

4. **Develop communication skills** – by nurturing the student’s ability to clearly
communicate ideas, concepts and information in the context of production and performance as well as in a variety of forms and media.

5. **Instil a desire for personal development** – by encouraging an approach to learning as a life-long activity and supporting students in the evaluation of their personal development through a process of reflection and self-appraisal that will enable them to continue to further their professional practice.

### 12. Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, qualities, skills and other attributes in the following areas. The programme outcomes have references to the subject benchmarking statement for Dance, Drama and Performance as well as the Quality Assurance Agency’s Foundation Degree Benchmark Statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge and Understanding</th>
<th>Teaching/learning and assessment methods and strategies used to enable outcomes to be achieved and demonstrated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Principles, concepts and methods that a student needs to know and understand as a professional circus performer)</td>
<td>(How students will be taught and how they will be assessed)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### A. Knowledge and Understanding of:

1. The well-established principles that make up a specific circus discipline and the way in which those principles have developed.

2. The underlying performance concepts and principles of a specific circus discipline, and the ability to apply those principles in a variety of performance contexts.

3. The main methods of enquiry (both artistic and academic) in circus, and ability to critically evaluate the appropriateness of different approaches to solving problems arising in circus.

4. The limits of personal abilities and knowledge, and how this influences analyses and interpretations based on that knowledge in circus practice.

#### B. Intellectual Skills:

1. Skills used to initiate and undertake critical analysis of information in order to propose solutions to problems arising from that analysis in circus.

2. Skills to effectively communicate information, arguments and analysis in a variety of forms, to both circus and non-circus audiences.

Different teaching methods are employed for different learning outcomes and contexts, but none of the listed areas of knowledge are acquired exclusively by one method.

The following methods are used on the course (approximately in order of frequency):

- Practical teacher-led sessions
- Group learning and individual learning in intensive workshop situations
- Production and performance situations (teacher or student-led)
- Collaborations with professional companies, either in-house or off-site
- Production and creative driven workshops
- Seminars
- Academic and Library based learning
- Theoretical lectures

Methods and strategies of summative (quantified) assessment used will be drawn from the following:

- Continuous assessment of practical
### The Degree Programme – Circus Space

3. Skills which will allow the student to undertake further training, develop existing skills, and acquire new areas of competence as well as enabling them to assume responsibility within organisations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. Subject-specific Skills (Circus and Performance Skills):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Skills that represent competence in the practical and technical skills of specific circus discipline giving the student the confidence to practice, experiment and perform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. An understanding and appreciation of the processes and protocols associated with a specific circus discipline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An understanding and appreciation of the broader processes associated with production and performance in a variety of professional contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. An ability to identify problems and propose creative solutions in relation to their chosen circus discipline in the broader production and performance context.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. An understanding of and the ability to practice and perform a range of circus-related skills at a basic level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. An understanding of and the technical ability to practice a specialist circus discipline at a level which allows the student to practice, and experiment, safely and creatively.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These Subject Specific Skills and the Transferable Skills are interwoven through the whole of the course and are taught and assessed as above with particular emphasis on teaching and learning through practical workshops. Rehearsal/creative sessions in dedicated performance spaces and work undertaken in group (or individual) supervision and tutorials could also be used.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>D. Transferable Skills (skills that are useful in a variety of contexts):</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The ability to evaluate their own performance or personal development through a process of reflection and self-appraisal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Clear and obvious practice of effective time management and organisational skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An ability to identify Health and Safety issues and to undertake Risk Assessment when required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Understanding that developing lifelong approach to learning in order to maintain and develop their professional practice, and personal autonomy, is essential.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Coursework (group or individual):
- Written coursework (e.g. essays, portfolios)
- Seminars, model presentations
- Examination of practical (internal (restricted) and/or open public performances)
## The Degree Programme – Circus Space

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.</th>
<th>The ability to communicate effectively in a variety of professional contexts, using an appropriate range or materials and media.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>The ability to undertake independent investigation and to retrieve and manage information. This also includes the appropriate use and application of communication tools (computers, Internet, libraries etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>An understanding of the benefits of the use of information technology (such as Internet, email and word-processing) in the development of a modern performing professional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The ability to be proactive in collaboration with others to achieve common goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HIGHLY IMPORTANT**

Modules may address certain learning outcomes more obviously than others (the devising of an ensemble performance obviously addresses “the ability to be proactive in collaborations with others to achieve common goals”) but all learning experiences on the course address all learning outcomes in some proportion. Progress towards the achievement of the learning outcomes will be assessed regularly and feedback will be provided.
13. Programme Structures and Requirements, Levels, Modules, Credits and Awards

The Foundation Degree in Circus Arts is a two-year, full-time course. Each year of the course is divided into a number of study modules where the accumulated credit value total is equal to 120 credits. Modules, depending on their structure, vary in length and may overlap during any given year. All modules delivered in the first year of the course are required in order to progress to the second year and all modules are required in the second year of the course in order to obtain the final degree qualification.

Modules delivered on the first year of the course are designated at Certificate Level (4), while modules on the second year of the course are designated at Intermediate Level (5).

Given the nature of the activity, and professional expectations of graduates, the course is intensely physical, while at the same time maintaining a level of academic standard. Students will be required to attain certain physical and technical objectives during their time on the course, but will also be stimulated so they do not neglect their intellectual development.

The first year will concern itself with the creation of a physical and technical foundation allowing the selection of a specialist circus discipline. Integrated into that work will be movement and performance tuition, which will complement their general circus development.

The second year will see students increasing their proficiency in a circus discipline while also gaining experience in a range of performance contexts. They will also gain increasing knowledge in the business of being a performer and the variety of possibilities open to contemporary circus artists.

It is essential to note that the development of the Foundation Degree in Circus Arts, and the subsequent BA (Hons) in Circus Arts, is the result of initiatives taken by professionals with extensive circus experience. Those involved in the development, delivery and continual evolution of the course come from a varied background of circus philosophy and remain active in the profession. Those responsible for the course recognise that the range of circus expression is large, and encompasses contemporary approaches as well as the more traditional ones such as cabaret, street or the touring tent. But those involved with the course stress that regardless of the type of circus practiced by future graduates, the fundamental basics of technical ability and artistic integrity remain a constant. The Foundation Degree in Circus Arts supports all forms of circus expression.

The acquisition of a Foundation Degree in Circus Arts would be invaluable for those wishing to progress on to a BA (Hons) in Circus Arts.

Students exiting with 120 level 4 credits will be eligible for the award of Certificate of Higher Education in Circus Arts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Term(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA102</td>
<td>Working with the Body</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA105</td>
<td>The Moment of Performance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA107</td>
<td>Developing Movement Competency</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA108</td>
<td>Theatre, Play &amp; Performance</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Code</td>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>Hours</td>
<td>Semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA109</td>
<td>Understanding Circus</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Spring Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA110</td>
<td>Specialisation Assessments</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Year 2**

**Required Modules**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CA201</td>
<td>Production/ Performance Assignment – The Ensemble</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Spring Or Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA204</td>
<td>Business of Being a Performer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Autumn Spring Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA207</td>
<td>Performance Review &amp; Analysis</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Autumn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA208</td>
<td>Circus Arts &amp; Performance Level 1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Autumn Spring Summer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA209</td>
<td>Production/ Performance Assignment – The Student Devised Piece</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Spring Or Summer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

14. Support for Students and their Learning

- The course is administered by the **Degree Administration Team**, comprised of: the Higher Education Courses Director, The Head of Acrobatics, The Head of Aerial, the Head of Juggling, the Head of Performance, the Head of Studies, the Registrar and the Course Administrator.
- The **Degree Administration Team** is responsible for overseeing student progress and will identify and contact any student experiencing difficulty or needing particular help or attention, offering them support and/ or referring them on to other sources of support.
- The **Higher Education Courses Director** briefs students on course content and assessment procedures. The HE Courses Director is also available to offer advice to students on their grades and counsels them in academic matters. The HE Course Director also deals with extensions on deadlines for coursework and considers cases of students unable to submit work due to unforeseen circumstances. The HE Course Director is also ultimately responsible for overseeing all aspects of course programming.
- The **Heads of Discipline** (Aerial, Acrobatics, Juggling and Performance) assist and guide the students through their progression in their specific circus discipline and in their creative development. They are also responsible for certain aspects of class programming.
- The **Head of Studies** is responsible for taking a practical overview of the implementation and administration of all aspects of the academic programmes, and advises staff and students where appropriate.
- The **Registrar** is responsible for student support (pastoral, financial and administrative)
- The **Course Administrator** assists students in all administrative matters.
- Students are encouraged to seek advice from any member of staff concerning any matters of academic or non-academic concern.
- **Student Support Services** are available for students requiring specific assistance during the course and is managed by the Registrar.
A Student/ Staff Liaison Meeting is held monthly during term-time with representatives of each intake in order to deal with housekeeping or academic issues and specific matters related to day-to-day activities on the course.

Physiotherapy facilities are provided to support students and their circus related injuries.

A Library containing course related information in the form of reading material and a video archive of circus performances (as well as computer work stations with Internet access) is available for student use. Inductions to the facilities are offered by a variety of members of staff.

A Student Handbook and Year Specific Module Handbooks are edited (and updated annually) in order to provide clear advice on who to see for particular problems as well as specific information on; staff and facilities, programme structure, module delivery, essay writing guide, assessment (including criteria for assessment, student support and guidance). It also contains general regulations concerning activities at Circus Space and the course.

A series of Inductions to the Health and Safety practices specific to circus arts training as well as inductions specific to material and spaces used during the course are held at the beginning of the academic year.

Entry Route
For fuller information, please refer to the Circus Space prospectus

- Admission is by audition and interview
- The minimum age to study a degree programme at Circus Space is normally at least 18 years old by 20 September in the year the course begins. There is no upper age limit.
- Indicative requirements would be a BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts, Circus, Dance or equivalent, or 5 GCSE’s at C or above, including English, or 3 GCSE’s and 2 A-Level passes or equivalent.
- Candidates who are able to demonstrate their potential successfully to complete a Degree programme at Foundation level will also be considered on the basis of previous experience.
- Circus Space welcomes applications from disabled people and offers places solely on the basis of potential and suitability for a career in circus.
- Applicants will also have to show clearly their vocational intent and potential for professional employment in the field of contemporary circus performance.
- A satisfactory medical fitness report signed by a doctor is required.
- Applicants will be required to demonstrate a proficiency in both written and verbal English Language. This would normally be GCSE English or equivalent International English Language Testing System (IELTS) at 6.0 pass level or higher.
- All candidates that meet these requirements and who have completed and submitted an application form will be offered a place at a scheduled audition by a member of the Degree Administration staff.

What does this programme have to offer?

- 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 11m) which are fully riggable for aerial activities and equipped for acrobatics activities. One of these spaces has a sprung floor suitable for movement activities.
  - Three additional studios for more intimate work
  - A studio specifically rigged for static trapeze work (11m x 5.5m x 7.5m)
  - Production facilities (lighting, sound equipment, blacks etc) for performance use
The Degree Programme – Circus Space

- Experienced teaching and administrative staff, knowledgeable of the circus arts and the business of circus
- Permanent contact with professional practitioners, agents and creators
- Global contacts with other circus training institutions through affiliation to the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools (FEDEC).
- Staff philosophy dedicated to the art of circus as a means of expression and not simply a demonstration of physical ability.
- Access to major circus and performance related events facilitated by being centrally located in London.

Personal Profile

- A demonstrable commitment to the practice 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
- The desire to engage in the creation of circus both in theory and in practice

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

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

- An annual review of the programme and course modules, their delivery and their assessment attended by designated members of staff and student representatives. This takes place through:
  - Academic Board, three per year, and
  - Learning & Teaching Committee, three per year
  - Participation in the examining process by External Examiners with External Examiner’s reports and our responses to those reports
  - A weekly, minuted, Degree Administration Meeting (DAM)
  - Termly Student Progress meetings attended by Heads of Disciplines and all assessing teachers, the school Physiotherapist, the HE Courses Director and the Head of Studies.
  - A process of double marking on at least 80% of modules.
  - Appropriate teaching qualifications of staff, if applicable.
  - Staff appraisals
  - Mentoring and support of new staff
  - Many projects are seen by the general public
  - Course review carried out in collaboration with representatives of the circus profession possessing a varied experience in a range of circus expression contexts
  - External reviews of the provision by recognised organisations
  - Regular student programme evaluation questionnaires
  - A clearly articulated assessment process with consistent and fair marking procedures allied to specific criteria of assessment.
  - University periodic programme review
  - QAA Institutional Audit

Although formalised through a number of processes of reporting and response, issues of
The Degree Programme – Circus Space

### Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

- Monthly Student/ Staff Liaison meetings, attended by Heads of Discipline, the HE Courses Director, the Course Administrator and Student Representatives from each year group
- Circus Space Degree Programmes Learning & Teaching Committee
- Circus Space Degree Programmes Academic Board
- The Conservatoire for Dance and Drama Learning & Teaching Committee
- The Conservatoire for Dance and Drama Academic Board
- The Programme Approval Sub Committee at the University of Kent
- The Learning and Teaching Committee of the School of Arts (UoK)
- The Learning and Teaching Committee of the Faculty of Humanities (UoK)
- The University of Kent Learning and Teaching Board

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

- Monthly meetings with student representatives
- Periodic course evaluation questionnaires, one per term
- End of programme evaluation forms
- Student Representation on Academic Board and Learning & Teaching Committee
- All staff are available for informal discussions
- Via formal procedures for complaint listed in University Regulations and the Student Handbook

### Staff Development priorities include:

- Development of individual teacher’s approaches to, and skills in, Teaching, Learning and Assessment
- Support in extending knowledge of circus through facilitating staff presence at circus related events, festivals or conferences
- PGCertHE qualifications implemented gradually
- Support in extending knowledge of HE procedures and methods, as well as threshold academic and teaching qualifications
- Health and Safety for all teachers of circus disciplines
- Mentoring of new staff members
- Identification of individual staff needs through an annual staff appraisal process
- Development of Teaching Staff specific appraisal system
- Widening participation

### 16. Indicators of Quality and Standards

- Circus Space is a founding member, and currently on the Board of Administration of the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools (FEDEC)
- The Degree course as run by Circus Space is considered by the profession to be of a standard equal to European state-run BA Degrees. These being: Le Centre National des Arts du Cirque in France and l'Ecole Superieure des Arts du Cirque in Brussels.
- 76% of the 2009 graduates are working in the circus sector
- In 1999 Circus Space was selected to train 160 performers over a period of a year for
The Degree Programme – Circus Space

The new Millennium Dome

The following reference points were used in creating these specifications:

- The Circus Space Mission Statement
- Subject Benchmark Statements published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education for Dance, Drama and Performance
- Foundation Degree Benchmark Statements published by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
- The BA (Hons) Theatre Practice – Circus validation document (2003) created in collaboration with The Central School of Speech and Drama
- The BA (Hons) Drama and Theatre Studies – University of Kent

Programme Specification Template
Last update approved by LTB 1 February 2006
Minor amendments approved by Chair of the School of Arts Learning and Teaching Committee, UoK, Sept 2011