

CiRCOMEDIA

PROSPECTUS 2025/26



**BTEC
FOUNDATION DEGREE
BACHELOR'S DEGREE
MASTERS
VOCATIONAL**



Image by Poppy Niahm Photography.

ABOUT CIRCOMEDIA

Circomedia's Academy offers a comprehensive range of courses tailored to students of all ages, providing a unique and enriching educational experience. With a history deeply rooted in the circus and physical theatre arts since 1994, we are committed to fostering creativity, innovation, and skill development.

At Circomedia, our approach emphasises the fusion of traditional circus skills with contemporary performing arts, allowing students to explore their artistic potential fully. Our courses are designed to nurture both technical skills and creative minds, ensuring that students are well-prepared for diverse careers in the arts.

What sets Circomedia apart is our unwavering dedication to creativity and the holistic development of our students. We provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment that nourishes artistic expression. In addition to our BTEC, FdA, BA (Hons), and MA courses, we also offer vocational programmes ranging from 3 to 36 months for those who seek practical training without pursuing a formal qualification.

Many of our teachers perform professionally throughout the year, bringing current, real-world experience to their lessons. Our team is made up of artists from across the industry,

including jugglers from the renowned Gandini Juggling Company and a former Cirque du Soleil artist.

Choose Circomedia, where tradition and innovation meet, and where your artistry can flourish. Join us in embracing the extraordinary and let your creativity soar!

Our BTEC is delivered in partnership with City of Bristol College and accredited by Pearson.

Our Higher Education programmes are quality assured by Bath Spa University (BSU) and you will receive a BSU award upon successful completion.



BATH SPA
UNIVERSITY



Circomedia is also a charity, events venue and National Portfolio Organisation, benefitting from funding from the Arts Council England.

Academy for Contemporary Circus and Physical Theatre, trading as Circomedia. Company Number 2928738. Registered Charity Number 1056852.

COURSES OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Level 3 BTEC Diploma and Extended Diploma in Performing Arts Practice (Circus)

This two-year programme for ages 16 - 18 integrates practical skills alongside reflective practice. This qualification is the equivalent of three A-levels.

See pages 4 - 5

Foundation Degree Contemporary Circus and Physical Theatre (FdA)

A two-year programme which includes circus discipline training and development, context, physical theatre, devising, stylistic forms, street theatre and context. Success in this programme provides the opportunity to apply to stay with us for a further year to achieve a full bachelor's degree with honours.

See pages 6 - 7

BA (Hons) Contemporary Circus and Physical Theatre

This is a one-year top-up programme for students who have successfully completed the FdA and achieved a suitable standard for progression. The year includes act creation, creative research and development and professional touring experience.

See page 7

MA Directing Circus

This one-year (or two-year part-time) master's programme is for those with a background in circus or other creative arts, who wish to develop their career into directing circus, or those who wish to deepen their performance practice.

See pages 8 - 9





BTEC (LEVEL 3) PERFORMING ARTS PRACTICE (CIRCUS)

What you will study:

The BTEC course gives students the opportunity to develop a range of circus skills in multiple disciplines while gaining regular performance experience. Skills include aerial, object manipulation, acrobatics, and balance alongside physical theatre, movement and devising.

Underpinning this practical skills development is rigorous academic study in which students investigate theatre practitioners, research circus styles, and explore the many employment opportunities available within the arts industry.

What you will get:

The first year leads to a Foundation Diploma which equates to one and a half A-Levels. Students who successfully achieve this can apply to progress into the second year and study for the full Extended Diploma, which equates to three A-Levels.

Where it could take you:

On completion of the BTEC Extended Diploma, students have a variety of progression pathway opportunities including higher education, other training schools in the UK or abroad, performance work or other careers.

This course is in partnership with City of Bristol College.



Entry requirements

GCSE English and Maths at grade 4 or above. It does not matter if you have never done any circus before as long as you have a willingness to learn and a moderate level of fitness.

Before you apply

We advise potential students to attend one of our Open Days so you can meet some of our team and participate in practical, discipline-based workshops.

How to apply

To apply, please complete the application form on our website. You will need to submit an audition video, alongside a research task and take part in an online interview. You can find out more about the BTEC course and our application requirements at www.circomedia.com/the-btec-course/. Please email admissions@circomedia.com with any questions.

Full UK funding is available for 16 - 18 year olds.



DEGREE PROGRAMME IN CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS AND PHYSICAL THEATRE

THE FOUNDATION DEGREE

Our Foundation Degree (FdA) programme is your first step towards a rewarding and dynamic career in the performing arts. This two-year course is designed to provide you with a solid foundation in circus discipline training, physical theatre, and performance experience, opening the doors to a world of creativity and innovation.

Why choose the FdA at Circomedia?

- **Expert faculty:** Our experienced and passionate instructors are dedicated to helping you develop your circus and theatre skills to your fullest potential.
- **Diverse curriculum:** The FdA curriculum covers a wide range of knowledge and skills, including acrobatics, juggling, physical theatre, aerial, and more. You will gain a deep understanding of the world of circus and its place in contemporary performance.
- **Access to well-equipped facilities:** Train in well-resourced facilities and performance spaces, providing you with an immersive learning experience.
- **Real-world experience:** Throughout your FdA journey, you will have opportunities to perform and collaborate with your peers, building a professional network and joining our outstanding pathways into the industry.

At the start of the programme all students will learn acrobatics, juggling and aerial and after five weeks tuition, will make choices to specialise in two of these disciplines. These specialisations will be taught alongside a variety of classes that support the development of physical skills and strength, including fitness and conditioning, handstands, tumbling, contemporary dance, acrodance, and physical theatre.

Over the two years students will also study the history and context of circus in contemporary society, will perform to live audiences multiple times, and will develop critical thinking and analytical thinking skills that can be transferred into the wider world of employment.

In addition to circus skills and disciplines students will learn about how to set up in business and the basics of teaching and learning so that they can fully engage with all career possibilities.



Circomedia students performing at Bestival with Cirque Bijou. Credit Chaya Nathan.



BA HONS DEGREE TOP UP

On successful completion of your FdA, you may apply to study at Circomedia for a third year, topping up your qualification to a full BA (Hons) Degree.

We offer a seamless and dynamic pathway from the FdA to the BA (Hons) top-up. Our programmes empower you to turn your passion into a profession.

On the BA (Hons), you will further enhance your circus discipline and physical skills, craft a repertoire of 'sellable' acts for a range of performance settings and delve into independent artistic research in your chosen circus discipline.

In the second half of the year, you will work independently to develop and produce a Final Major Project. This is a self-devised solo or small group performance that gives you the opportunity to showcase everything you have learnt during your time at Circomedia.

The year culminates with the whole year group coming together to form a company, who will create, produce and then tour a show to a number of UK venues.

FdA entry requirements

- 3 A levels with grades CDD or better, or
- BTEC extended diploma at MMP or over, or
- 80 UCAS points from qualifications at level 3.
- **Or** be at least 21 years old with 3 years of experience in a relevant sector.
- All applicants must complete a successful audition and interview (audition fee of £60 per person).
- All applicants must demonstrate a satisfactory level of fitness and an understanding of theatre, circus and performance.

Applications for the FdA and BA (Hons) courses should be submitted via UCAS. You can find out more about this process at www.circomedia.com/how-to-apply/

The FdA and BA (Hons) programmes are quality assured by Bath Spa University (BSU) and you will receive a BSU award upon successful completion.

Tuition fees for the FdA and the BA (Hons) degrees cost £9250 per year.* Check your eligibility for a student loan at: www.gov.uk/student-finance/who-qualifies

*prices correct as of 2024





Workshops & Residencies

Over 2025/26 we will be running a series of workshops and residencies for creative professionals with an interest in contemporary circus. Sign up to our email newsletter at www.circomedia.com/newsletter and follow us on social media to find out more when full details are announced!



MASTER'S DEGREE (MA) DIRECTING CIRCUS

Our master's degree in Directing Circus is the first and only one of its kind in the world. It has been developed to address a recognised need across the global circus community to create and support a new kind of performance director - one who is aware of the huge potential and creative challenges of circus's own artistic context, and of the importance of audience experience and how this dynamic form can be voiced to the waiting public.

An interest in making performance is essential for our MA students. Perhaps you have already trained or worked in directing or performance-based disciplines like theatre or dance, and we also welcome applications from those from non-performance disciplines like stage management, film-making, and the visual arts.

This course offers students the chance to study a range of research methodologies, as well as the roles, strategies, and practical skills of directing circus. It encourages students to explore the need for directors to simultaneously be authors, originators, and facilitators.

As an MA student, you will engage in both group and independent learning to create your work. You will have the chance to work with world leading professionals from the circus sector and debate the most recent developments in circus as it encounters other artistic disciplines. We will support you to make circus happen for the public, and will be engaged with you in workshops, lectures, and seminars, all of which are open to your individual creative voice.

Is the MA for you?

This course is for those who wish to be makers of circus. Applicants might have some practical experience of circus performance creation, or directing in the arts, but you don't need to be an expert in either.

If you want to develop your directing abilities and are interested in investigating the public presentation of circus techniques across a wide spectrum of artistic expression, you will thrive here.

You can choose to be a director who does not set foot on stage, but you will also be very welcome to bring any of your own performance practices or expertise into your work as well as invite any existing professional contacts you may have to be present in your performance projects. You can work with your existing ensemble or invite Circomedia students and alumni to create work with you.

This programme is quality assured by Bath Spa University (BSU) and you will receive a BSU award upon successful completion.

How to apply

Applications can be made via the Bath Spa University website at www.bathspa.ac.uk/courses/pg-directing-circus/. You can find out more about the course and the application process at www.circomedia.com/ma-degree

Tuition fees for the MA cost £9095 per year.* Check your eligibility for a student loan here: www.gov.uk/student-finance/who-qualifies

*prices correct as of 2024



VOCATIONAL COURSES

Circomedia's vocational courses offer a stand-alone pathway into circus and physical theatre performance. Delivered in three-month blocks, these courses focus on developing practical skills, discipline techniques, and creative movement essential for performers. With the flexibility to extend your training up to a full year or longer, you can decide how long you wish to train with us.

This is a purely practical training programme, designed to help you grow as a performer. The course sits outside our academy and is not externally validated. Open to anyone aged 18 and over, if you are fit and determined we would welcome your application. Admission is subject to a satisfactory fitness test and audition.

Our vocational courses provide a supportive and focused environment, where you'll receive personalised training to refine your craft. Whether you're exploring circus disciplines for the first time or looking to deepen your existing skills, this programme equips you with the tools to thrive as a skilled and confident performer. Join Circomedia's supportive and creative community to develop your craft, focus on your technique, and build the foundations for your future in circus and physical theatre.

Applicants must be able to self-fund this programme and fees can be paid in manageable three month instalments allowing you to tailor your commitment. If you're ready to take control of your professional development, this programme is designed to help you achieve your goals.

You will leave with a Circomedia Certificate of Achievement.



Entry requirements

Students must be able to demonstrate a motivation to succeed on this programme, as well as physical skills or potential, creativity, enthusiasm, and a willingness to learn.

How to apply

To apply to join our Vocational Course, please complete the application form at www.circomedia.com/how-to-apply. Entry to the course will be determined by audition.

Fees

Tuition fees for the one-year course are £9,000.

Tuition fees for the three-month course are £3,000.

The vocational courses are not eligible for Student Finance.



Image from alumni Jen & LK

WHY STUDY CIRCUS?

Contemporary circus is an exciting new area of performing arts; having emerged just over forty years ago, there is still so much to discover, develop and reveal to audiences and artists alike.

Circus can open doors to employment in these new and evolving areas of performance as well as adding valuable additional skills and creativity to more traditional art forms. It can also improve physical and mental wellbeing, nurture imagination and contribute to developing communities.

Circus is an extremely physical art form existing on a dynamic intersection of athletic excellence and artistic creativity and expression. It demands continuous attention to develop skills, strength, stamina, and resilience. Those who study or work in circus must have the ability to bounce back from setbacks and the passion to push forward, whether physically or in terms of their business.

Circus is inclusive and has a well-earned reputation of being an incredibly accepting and supportive industry for those who consider themselves outside of the mainstream or societal 'norm'. In 21st Century Britain, there

is a concerted effort taking place to increase the diversity of participants and performers in contemporary circus, and Circomedia is committed to facilitating this in any way we can.

This art form is also sustainable, with site-specific and street-art style performances having a low environmental impact and shows in more traditional touring settings being creatively devised to suit all technical possibilities.

As a rapidly growing industry, employment opportunities in circus - as performers, technicians, teachers, and other creatives - continue to increase.

Circomedia alumni work across the world, whether running and performing with a company in Belfast, managing the programme in Montreal's leading circus venue or touring internationally with *Gandini Juggling*, *Performers Without Borders*, *Ockham's Razor*, *Mimbre* or *NoFitState*. We support our graduates throughout their circus journey and are continuing to grow and celebrate our alumni network as they work in, influence, and build the contemporary circus world.



Image from Natalie Reckert & Mark Morreau's show, Natalie Inside Out

WORKING ALONGSIDE A PROFESSIONAL THEATRE

An integral part of the Circomedia philosophy is to develop both minds and bodies. Nowhere is this seen more than in the relationships we create between our academy and our live events venue. We programme and present a multitude of professional shows at our unique, circus-rigged city centre venue, St. Paul's Church, each year.

This venue is a high-tech, highly atmospheric space where we also present our own student performances to audiences in a fully professional context. All of this creativity is shaped around our academic offering to enable you to see great work, and have the opportunity to learn and speak with the directors and performers that we showcase.

Experience world-class performances

As part of the programme, you will be expected to attend a selection of shows at Circomedia, chosen by your tutors for their relevance to your studies. You will also benefit from subsidised tickets and free entry to every student performance over the course of the year.

Learning the ropes

Our programmes incorporate the essential health and safety, rigging, stage management and technical elements of putting on a show alongside teaching circus disciplines and academic study.

Some of our students have gone on to complete technical internships with Circomedia, further diversifying their skills and broadening their employment opportunities in technical circus and theatre production.



WHERE CAN A DEGREE IN CIRCUS AND PERFORMING TAKE YOU?

Training at Circomedia opens up a range of future opportunities including further study, project-based employment with established companies, forming your own company, and independent or freelance work.

Independent work

Freelance opportunities in circus and performance exist all year round, in festivals, cabaret, street performance, corporate entertainment and in the world of video and advertising, as well as in teaching, engagement and outreach work.

With Bristol being such a hive of creativity, our students are ideally placed to engage in the professional performance world. Circomedia has excellent relationships with local companies and agencies, such as *Cirque Bijou*, *The Invisible Circus* and *Circus City*, and they work with our students on a regular basis.

Forming a company

Among the many companies started by our past students are *Ockham's Razor*, *Decadent Rabbit Cabaret*, *Acrojou*, *PanGottic* and *Tumble Circus*.

Further study

Circomedia graduates from our BTEC and Degree courses have taken the unique skills they've acquired here to other institutions around the world including Codarts, DOCH, École Nationale de Cirque (Montreal), Fontys, CNAC and the National Centre for Circus Arts.



St. Paul's Church



St. Paul's Church



St. Paul's Church

TRAINING SPACES

Circomedia is lucky to have two sites in which to train. Our Kingswood office and studios are set in a character-filled Victorian school building surrounded by leafy grounds on the outskirts of Bristol.

Our city centre site at St. Paul's Church is a restored 18th century church owned by the Churches Conservation Trust. This space is set in Portland Square, where beautiful Georgian buildings surround a green, just a stone's throw away from a bustling shopping centre in the city centre.



Kingswood Gym



Kingswood South Wing Studio

Our BTEC students are based in the city centre, and spend one day a week at Kingswood. Our higher education and master's degree students spend most of their time at Kingswood, where many of our teaching, academic and office staff are also based.

Outside our academy student's training hours, both sites are also home to our popular Youth Circus which teaches over 500 young people aged 4 - 18 circus skills lessons each term; our adult classes programme, including acrobatics, aerial arts, handstands, and flying trapeze; and our professional membership scheme.





GETTING TO KNOW BRISTOL

Bristol is a thriving, vibrant, creative city in South West England. The city centre is set around an attractive and bustling harbour front with plenty of green spaces and a wealth of creative organisations and opportunities. The city is small enough to get to know quickly, but large enough to guarantee that there is always plenty to see, do, and experience.

This vibrant location is home to a lively and diverse population and is particularly popular with students, who make up 9% of the population across the various colleges, universities, and training academies located here. Many of those who study in Bristol love it so much that they choose to stay after they have graduated.

Bristol is renowned for its creativity and the Arts, Entertainment and Recreation industry ranks 9th in Bristol's Top 20 Industries (sparklines.co.uk).

As well as a buoyant circus scene, Bristol's creative industries include filmmaking, design, television, theatre, arts and music. Bristol is home to many acclaimed performance venues and touring companies and residents enjoy regular, city-wide events, activities, and festivals throughout the year.

As well as catering to an exciting urban lifestyle, Bristol is also ideally located to reach some of the UK's finest countryside, coastlines, and beaches. It is also less than two hours from London by train.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Want to find out more?

Before you apply, we encourage potential students to attend one of our Open Days so that you can meet our team and some current students. Our Open Days include the opportunity to participate in activities and to try out some of the disciplines that we teach.

BTEC

Applications for the BTEC course can be made through the Circomedia website at www.circomedia.com/btec-how-to-apply/

This course is open to students who meet the government funding criteria for students aged 16 -18.

FdA and BA (Hons)

Applications for the FdA are via the UCAS website at www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-to-university (there is a fee of £25 to register with UCAS).

Applicants for places on this programme must meet the entry requirements (page 7) and must also attend an audition and interview at our centre.

Tuition fees for FdA and BA (Hons) are £9250 per year.*

Students may apply for loans to cover fees and maintenance if this is their first degree or course at level 4. Applications for loans can be accessed via www.gov.uk/student-finance

Master's Degree

To apply for a place on the Master's degree please complete the application form on Bath Spa University's website: www.bathspa.ac.uk/courses/pg-directing-circus/

Fees for the Master's degree are £9095 per year. You may be able to apply for a loan to cover fees but there are no loans for maintenance at this level.*

*prices correct as of 2024





Image of students at Bestival with Cirque Bijou.
Credit Chaya Nathan



ACCOMMODATION

Circomedia cannot provide you with accommodation, however we can signpost you to some options to help you make your choice.

For over 18s: Circomedia provides a housing group on Facebook where you can network with other Circomedia students seeking accommodation. Creative Youth Network (CYN) have a small number of rooms available onsite in Kingswood. Students must apply directly to CYN for this accommodation.

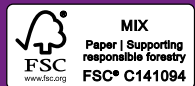
For under 18s: we recommend finding homes with local families through the Homestay website.



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 www.circomedia.com

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