

CiRCOMEDIA

PROSPECTUS 2026/27



BTEC
FOUNDATION DEGREE
BACHELOR'S DEGREE
DIPLOMA
SHORT COURSES



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 and BA (Hons) courses, we also offer Circomedia accredited Diploma courses ranging from 3 to 36 months for those who seek flexible, practical training without pursuing a formal university accredited qualification.

Most 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 former Cirque du Soleil artists.

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

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

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 reflective practice. 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

Circomedial Circus Diploma

Our bespoke Diploma courses are for both beginners and experienced professionals. Train with our expert teachers from three months to three years and build a programme to suit your goals, ambitions, and budget.

See pages 8 - 9





BTEC (LEVEL 3) PERFORMING ARTS PRACTICE (CIRCUS)

Circomedia offers students aged 16-18 the chance to study on our two-year Extended Diploma BTEC in Performing Arts Practice.

A BTEC is a Level 3 qualification that follows on from GCSEs. The course features the same academic rigour as A-Levels whilst also focusing on more practical learning.

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 YEAR)

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.

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

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 £9,535 per year.

* Check your eligibility for a student loan at:
www.gov.uk/student-finance/who-qualifies

*prices correct as of 2025, but may rise in accordance with Government regulations.

**"100% OF SURVEYED FDA/BA (HONS) STUDENTS
ARE SATISFIED WITH THE TEACHING THEY RECEIVE
AT CIRCOMEDIA" - NSS SURVEY 2025**



CIRCOMEDIA CIRCUS DIPLOMA



Study in a professional circus environment

From 2025/26, we have enhanced our former vocational course offer and launched a new Circomedia-accredited Circus Diploma. This is a fantastic opportunity to engage with our training, performing and artistic development expertise, without undertaking a university accredited degree.

Diploma students can train with us in bespoke three-month terms, which can be extended to a full year. We can offer training in specific disciplines, performance techniques, and circus making, and will work with you to build a programme that suits your ambitions.

Whether you are a beginner looking to join group classes in a specific circus discipline or an experienced professional looking to elevate your practice, our Diploma offering can support your goals.

To express your interest, please reach out to admissions@circomedia.com and talk to our Diploma team.



How to apply

To express an interest and talk to our Diploma team, please contact: admissions@circomedia.com.

Fees vary depending on how many training blocks you undertake per term.

For more details please visit page 18.

JOIN OUR SHORT COURSES

As part of our Diploma offering, we have expanded access to our expertise for those wishing to engage with us on a more bespoke short-term basis. Our new Short Courses come in a variety of forms, from two days to several weeks.

Short courses include:

- Skills and performance techniques courses i.e. juggling, clowning, Chinese pole.
- Symposiums and workshops around specific artistic questions.
- Summer Schools where you get a chance to be taught by industry professionals in high-level technique and creative devising. Just the thing to springboard your individual or company practice to the next level.
- Audition Bootcamps for our rigorous FdA/BA audition process.

Visit www.circomedia.com/short-courses/ for details on upcoming events.

Due to popular request these courses are also open to international students who can study with us on a short stay visa for up to 30 days.



“Circomedia is the best place to accelerate your skill as a circus artist... it’s like a circus incubation space where people can grow.”

- Ciaran Innes
Circomedia Graduate 2025

“I would recommend Circomedia to anyone who likes to move their body and who knows they have something to share with the world but maybe doesn’t yet know how. The work is fascinating and the connections you make could help shape the rest of your life.”

- Ru Lestrage
Circomedia Graduate 2023



Circus as Drawing Symposium

For detailed discussions on any of these offers, please get in touch with admissions@circomedia.com.



GRADUATE STORY

EMILY SADLER - BA (HONS) 2024

"My background before my circus training started in dance at the age of three and then also progressed into gymnastics towards the end of primary school. Throughout secondary school I also gained an interest in theatre, however once I finished college I decided my passion really resided in movement and chose to pursue circus instead.

I discovered Circomedia during my search for circus classes and set my sights on joining their degree course. When I joined the academy, my expectations were exceeded. Circomedia is one of a kind in the best possible way. The course provided me with endless opportunities to discover the areas of circus and performance I was most passionate about and nurture those throughout my training to make me into a well-rounded artist.

The tutors [at Circomedia] are all experienced industry professionals and hold so much knowledge whilst also providing a positive and fun teaching environment. Throughout my training they have encouraged me to go beyond what I thought I was capable of, take care of myself so I have longevity in my career, and grow as a person to become not only a performer who can connect with an audience but also be a happy and healthy human being.

Training at Circomedia offered me more than just physical preparation, the course included tutoring

in the soft skills that are vital when working in the circus and performing arts industry. I was also offered opportunities to perform and work within the industry which gave me a taster of the real working world.

Post graduation I have gone on to perform in a huge variety of sectors within the circus industry. I have worked for festivals, corporate companies, cabarets, contemporary and traditional circus companies and ensemble shows performed in shopping centres.

Circomedia designs their course in a way that exposes you to all the possibilities available to circus artists in the circus industry. The tutors are great at mentoring you and give valuable feedback. These lessons have followed me into my professional career. An exciting job I'm doing at the moment is touring a show that I have designed and created myself as a support act for a band and the skills I gained during my Final Major Project module gave me all of the confidence and skills required to take on this opportunity.

I would recommend Circomedia to anybody wanting to become a professional circus artist. I don't think you will find a more supportive, welcoming and well-rounded course anywhere."

If you'd like to read Emily's full story, please visit [circomedia.com/graduate-stories](https://www.circomedia.com/graduate-stories)



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.

GRADUATE STORY

EMBA WIMBUSH – BTEC 2022 AND BA (HONS) 2025

Emba Wimbush joined our BTEC in 2020 and graduated from our BA in 2025. Having trained with us for a full five years, we spoke with her about her Circomedia experience and what she's up to now:

What did you hope to achieve when you started at Circomedia?

At first, I just wanted to chase that feeling of passion, joy, and inspiration. So, I joined the BTEC to explore further. I fell even more in love [with circus] and auditioned for the degree with the purpose of making circus my life. What surprised me most was this shift from being a very technical performer, who made exciting work but without much narrative or message, into a circus theatre artist whose work revolves around those three aspects.

Over the five years, my dream shifted. At first, I wanted to be the best hoop artist, to be famous for my skill, to live in the spotlight. But now my focus has more depth - to reflect both joy and pain. I feel it is my purpose to make work that reflects the human condition and how we can deal with it. I want to create work that inspires emotional intelligence, compassion, empathy, and presence.

What was your favourite thing about training here?

The community. The creativity. The freedom and encouragement to explore and push boundaries with others who are just as passionate. A day at Circomedia, when I was in my element, felt like being connected - to my body, my people, my heart, and my aspirations.

Circomedia became an invaluable, inspiring, and supportive environment... for me it was a space where I could grow not only as a performer but as a person.

How has your training shaped your current professional journey?

Technically, my biggest takeaway has been the importance of warming up, cooling down, and conditioning properly, with a focus on solid



foundations. Artistically, the most important lesson has been play - giving myself time to explore, set games and challenges, and let unique sequences emerge.

Many opportunities came through Circomedia - performing at Bristol Zoo Project, Harbourside Festival, Bristol Museum After Dark, and in MA projects, as well as learning from companies like Revel Pucks and Joli Vyann. Training also taught me perseverance, adaptability, consistency, and drive, and, just as importantly, the value of rest and energy management. Above all, circus has become a way for me to process and transform life experiences into creative expression.

What have you been up to since graduating 6 months ago?

I've been teaching aerial hoop to ages 4+ in Pembrokeshire, performing at a charity event in Wales, and teaching and performing at a variety of festivals over the summer, doing everything from character work to full acts. I auditioned for a Netflix show, and I filmed with ITV for a Christmas special coming out soon!

If you'd like to read Emba's full story, please visit circomedia.com/graduate-stories



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 diploma students spend most of their time at Kingswood, where many of our teaching, academic and office staff are also based.

Outside our academy students' 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.



Image from Mother Deer by Acrobatic Adventures, Credit Ryan Murphey

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.

"The manager on my last job said, 'you're not only outstandingly professional and adaptable... you're also really nice to get along with in a cast and crew'. I definitely needed the Circomedia experience to become like that."

- Circomedia Graduate 2025

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.

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. Our links to the industry are second to none.

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.

Company work

Our students go on to work for many of the major UK and international companies from *Cirque Du Soleil* to *No Fit State* and *The Revel Puck Circus*. Many of our alumni are founders and leaders of acclaimed companies including *Ockham's Razor*, *Acrojou*, *PanGottic*, *The Flying Comets*, *Decadent Rabbit Cabaret* and *Can't Sit Still*.

Independent work

Freelance opportunities in circus and performance exist all year round, in festivals, cabaret, cruise ships, 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.

GRADUATE STORY

CIARAN INNES – BA (HONS) 2025

Ciaran graduated from our BA in 2025. We spoke to him about his experience and how his time at Circomedia has impacted his professional career.

When did you first discover circus?

I got taken to a trad circus when I was a little kid, and I remember seeing a guy in the German wheel and my mum said, "Isn't that cool?" And I went, "Yeah, I could do that!" And she went "Go on then!"

And then I saw a street performer not long after that who did Diablo, which I was really into, and he rode a giraffe unicycle and juggled a machete, a flaming torch, and a sickle. He was really punk and made everyone laugh loads. I remember being quite moved by that.

I was about 12 when I started spinning fire. I think I was like 10 when I started learning with the props, so at least I'd practised a bit! Then [before joining Circomedia] I trained at Instituto Nacional de Artes do Circo circus school in Portugal for a year, which was challenging but rewarding.

What was your favourite thing about training at Circomedia?

The opportunities you get at Circomedia are the kind of things you just can't replicate through trying to discover your own path in circus. Yes, you can be very successful and get to a very high level, but being at Circomedia gives you such a range of skills and experiences that are so invaluable.

What would you say is your core discipline?

I have a few! The first one's probably Rolla Bolla and then I think juggling and fire spinning skills are joint second.

When you first started at Circomedia, what were you hoping to achieve?

I wanted to make a range of acts. I wanted to learn to use my skills and create performance art with them, and Circomedia has been great for that.



Did Circomedia help you achieve this goal?

Definitely. And I got such a good job because of it! I got booked by a great company to do my Rolla Bolla act. They wanted another ground act but weren't sure what, and I said, "that's cool because I can do a few different ones." I felt very successful!

What have you been up to since graduating six months ago?

I performed at a range of festivals that I really wanted to go to. I got flown to Switzerland to be an Acrobat in a medieval show - I had such amazing food there and got to see some beautiful things. And then I did six weeks of shows in Blackpool, which was a bit of an honour because Blackpool used to be a very prestigious circus place in the UK.

What would you say to someone thinking about taking Circomedia's courses?

DO IT! What are you waiting for?!

If you'd like to read Ciaran's full story, please visit [circomedia.com/graduate-stories](https://www.circomedia.com/graduate-stories)



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 £9,535 per year.*

Students may apply for loans to cover fees and maintenance. Applications for loans can be accessed via www.gov.uk/student-finance

Diploma Courses

Applications for our Diploma courses can be made through the Circomedia website at www.circomedia.com/how-to-apply/.

We recommend talking through your ambitions with our team first by emailing admissions@circomedia.com.

Join us for a full year of training for £9,450, or work with us to build your own training programme from individual blocks starting at £1,300 each, per term.

Please visit our website for the full fee breakdown.

*prices correct as of 2025, but may rise in accordance with Government regulations.

With thanks to the Leverhulme Trust for providing bursary support to two of our FdA students in 2025/26.





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.



CiRCOMEDIA

 www.circomedia.com

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ENGLAND**

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TRUST** _____