

CIRCUS ARTS

SEMESTER 1 - Associate Degree & Bachelor Units

THE HISTORY AND APPLICATION OF CIRCUS ARTS (NICHAC1)

This unit introduces students to a diverse variety of circus specialties and apparatus used in the contemporary circus industry. They will explore a range of skills to support specialty selection including acrobatic, aerial, manipulation, and partner work. Students will need to examine their long-term career aspirations and select specialisation options based on their individual physical capability, suitability, and capacity. Students will work with a range of specialists before selecting 2 specialisation areas. They also examine aspects of circus history, styles and traditions from around the world and compare to current industry standards and trends.

FOUNDATION STUDIES IN CIRCUS ARTS (NICFCA1)

In this unit students are introduced to the principles of foundational circus training and how this supports their circus specialisation goals. Students are introduced to elements of biomechanics and apply this knowledge to training apparatus and acrobatic technique including handstands, flexibility, tumbling, and groupwork. Students also develop the skills required to work within and contribute to a circus ensemble. Throughout this unit, students are also introduced to sustainable training practices and circus safety procedures used in the circus environment and how to safely utilise equipment in their development.

PERFORMANCE AND MOVEMENT STUDIES 1 (NICMSA1)

This unit introduces the fundamental principles of performance and movement in contemporary circus arts. Students establish a foundation of professional practice through the exploration of improvisational techniques, character development, movement genres, musicality, authenticity, ensemble, dramaturgy, and communication for performance. Students explore a variety of approaches to devising work employing performance and movement techniques to effectively manipulate time, space, tension and contrast.

INTRODUCTION TO ANATOMY AND BIOMECHANICS (NICIAB1)

In this unit students are introduced to the fundamental principles of anatomy, physiology, and biomechanics. They are also introduced to principles of sports psychology, nutrition, and injury management. Particular attention is paid to the study of the human skeleton including the type, structure, and function of major joints in the body; the major muscle groups and their role in movement; the types of contractions and biomechanical factors involved in human movement. Throughout this unit students develop an understanding of the mental and physical characteristics of operating at an elite level and how to formulate a training program.

SEMESTER 2 - Associate Degree & Bachelor Units

INTRODUCTION TO THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF CIRCUS PRODUCTION (NICITA2)

This unit provides students with an introduction to the technical, safety and production aspects of circus arts. Students gain skills in and knowledge of basic rigging, circus equipment, WH&S legislation, hazard and risk management and the technical production requirements in a circus arts context. Students will examine and work with a range of personnel in the various roles of circus arts production and gain the communication skills and knowledge required to work with licensed riggers and professionally trained production personnel.

ENSEMBLE AND FOUNDATION STUDIES IN CIRCUS ARTS (NICEFS2)

In this unit students focus on fundamental principles of elite training and developing a framework to optimise their circus skills. Students will advance their understanding of biomechanics and specific foundation skills in relation to their ensemble specialisation. Students will work under the supervision and direction of their ensemble trainer to develop and create an ensemble specialisation routine. Students study appropriate safety procedures as well as selection, use and maintenance of equipment needed for their ensemble specialisation and foundational training. Students will undertake body preparation and technical training to begin the journey in developing high level circus ensemble specialisation skills.

SEMESTER 2 - Associate Degree & Bachelor Units (cont.)

PERFORMANCE AND MOVEMENT STUDIES 2

(NICMSB2)

This unit introduces students to aspects of performing as part of an ensemble in a contemporary circus performance. This includes the application of principles of relevant movement and performance forms, techniques, and elements. Students are also introduced to performance analysis methods and will begin to develop the scholarly techniques to effectively critique and reflect on performance elements in a range of contexts. This unit also aims to develop the skills and knowledge required to examine and interpret materials in relation to the history of circus, and to analyse the evolution of contemporary circus performance.

CIRCUS ARTS SPECIALISATION AND PHYSIOLOGY

(NICSP2)

In this unit students focus on fundamental principles and practices of their chosen circus specialisations. They will advance their understanding of biomechanics and specific foundation skills in relation to their specialisation and apply this knowledge to their physical training. Students study appropriate safety procedures as well as selection, use and maintenance of equipment needed for their specialisation. They will also research aspects of the current global market for their chosen specialisations and tailor their training requirements to suit. Students will also explore creative activities as part of their specialty skill development and model professional behaviours within a training environment.

SEMESTER 3 - Associate Degree & Bachelor Units

THE CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS INDUSTRY (NICCCI3)

Students examine the contemporary circus industry in Australia and overseas. They study the requirements of the sole trader and small business management within the contemporary circus industry incorporating financial management, sources of funding, contracts and marketing. Particular attention is paid to appropriate entrepreneurial marketing strategies aimed at ensuring a sustainable career in the arts.

ENSEMBLE AND INTERMEDIATE STUDIES IN CIRCUS

ARTS 1 (NICENA3)

In this unit students will focus on developing their foundational and ensemble technical skills. Students will also advance their understanding and application of biomechanics, anatomy, and physiology. Students deepen their

understanding of injury management for elite level circus performers. They also practice appropriate safety procedures and maintain equipment required for their training. Students will be expected to review and critique a range of professional ensemble performances to inform their training practice and ensemble routine development.

PERFORMANCE AND MOVEMENT STUDIES 3

(NICMSC3)

In this unit students study principles and methodologies of act development in a variety of genres. With a focus on contemporary dance techniques, and its relation to devising for contemporary circus, students investigate a diverse range of movement styles and their application to circus performance. Through the exploration of the various methodologies studied, students create an original act.

CIRCUS ARTS SPECIALISATION INTERMEDIATE 1

(NICIA3)

In this unit students explore the physical techniques, forms, processes, and artistic practice of circus arts. They extend their skills within their chosen specialties while establishing a progressive program of development. Students monitor and evaluate their own technical progress and develop and maintain a conditioning regimen for their selected specialty. They refine and alter their program to suit their needs, applying safe practice in the exploration and execution of creative specialised techniques. Students will continue to develop their professional behaviours and model industry performance standards for their specialty acts.

SEMESTER 4 - Associate Degree & Bachelor Units

CIRCUS HISTORY AND CULTURE – CULTURAL THEORY AND REPRESENTATION (NICHCT4)

In this unit students examine the political and social influences and impacts upon the field of circus arts over time and into the future. Students will explore the history and culture of circus through its representations, rules, norms, transgressions, language, political and social moments and movements. Throughout the unit students also investigate the idea of circus, exploring representations through other media (including film, literature and art). This study provides students with further grounding in scholarly investigation practices and develops skills in performance analysis.

SEMESTER 4 - Associate Degree & Bachelor Units (cont.)

ENSEMBLE AND INTERMEDIATE STUDIES IN CIRCUS ARTS 2 (NICENB4)

Students are expected to reflect on recent performances of their ensemble before an audience. They are required to work collaboratively to develop new sequences and routines that demonstrate flexibility, progression, and an ability to solve problems. Students work toward a balance of technical proficiency and new ideas in their work. Students will reflect on the creative process and their contributions to the development of the ensemble skills in both technical training and the creative process.

PERFORMANCE AND MOVEMENT STUDIES 4 (NICMSD4)

In this unit students investigate and apply diverse movement and performance skills and concepts towards the creation and presentation of a preprofessional contemporary circus production. The creative process/es employed within this unit explores the multidisciplinary relationship between circus arts and other art forms, in both historical and contemporary contexts. This unit contributes to developing an awareness of the broader circus arts environment and assists students to determine how they may successfully function within the industry in relation to their circus arts practice. Students will practice professional behaviours, communication skills and protocols in a simulated circus performance environment.

CIRCUS ARTS SPECIALISATION INTERMEDIATE 2 (NICSIB4)

In this unit students aim to reach a preprofessional standard within their specialisations. This involves the application of both physical techniques and artistic practices. They begin to solidify and creatively expand their skills within their chosen specialties and collaborate and explore work in a variety of modes. They devise individual conditioning and training sequences to demonstrably enhance specialisations. They further refine and alter their program while applying safe practice in the exploration and execution of specialised techniques.

SEMESTER 5 - Bachelor Units

CIRCUS STUDIES INDUSTRY PROJECT (NICIPR5)

This unit aims to support students to integrate and adapt circus disciplines within a real-life circus and performing arts context. This unit allows students to challenge their

understanding of training and performance methodologies and move from an educational environment into a professional industry context.

Students are required to negotiate real performance objectives, reflect on and integrate industry feedback to further prepare them to meet the professional standards expected when entering the industry. Students will need to develop a network of professional contacts and model professional behaviors in order to enhance future work prospects within the industry.

ENSEMBLE AND ADVANCED CIRCUS ARTS (NICACA5)

This unit is the last in a sequence that focus on the circus ensemble. Students are required to work collaboratively with the other ensemble members to develop and create and ensemble routine to perform before an audience. They are expected to demonstrate teamwork, flexibility, and adaptability to be able to problem solve and perform in a variety of contexts. They also study and apply appropriate training methodologies and injury management skills to support and develop independent training practice. Students will also evaluate the creative development process to inform future practice.

CAPSTONE ENSEMBLE SHOW (NICESH5)

This unit aims to simulate the industry experience of an innovative circus ensemble. Students will work with a professional director on the development of an ensemble show for public performance, demonstrating professional behaviours, independence, and collaborative skills throughout the creative and performance process. Students will contribute to the creative process, offering solutions to problems that adhere to safe and sustainable training practices. Students will evaluate the creative process, and the professional skills they have developed and how these will influence their future work prospects moving into the professional industry.

CIRCUS ARTS SPECIALISATION ADVANCED (NICSAD5)

In this unit students study their specialty acts at the advanced level, and work towards the professional presentation of their specialty acts. Students will learn to collaborate and communicate with a range of creatives to enhance their specialty routines. They further refine and creatively alter their program paying particular attention to the application of music and choreography. Students also apply advanced specialised techniques and forms in their process, as well as critically analyse circus arts specialisation and their place in the global market.

SEMESTER 6 - Bachelor Units

ARTS MANAGEMENT – THE BUSINESS OF CIRCUS (NICBCI6)

This unit provides students with skills and knowledge required to work in the circus industry. They examine professional industry employment scenarios including operating as a small business, proprietary limited, sole trader, employee, or freelance artist. Students study business and operational planning as well as marketing in relation to their specialised careers within the circus industry. They also further study the legal, financial, and operational requirements of the creative industries.

PERFORMANCE PROJECT (NICPPR6)

The Performance Project focuses on student led performance creation and presentations. Students experience the full creative and technical process from inception to completion. They are required to liaise with the lighting, sound, set and costume designers as well as collaborate effectively with directors, choreographers, and other professional staff. In this unit students will critically reflect on their own practice, creative process, and artistic choices.

CIRCUS SPECIALISATION SHOWCASE (NICSSH6)

In this unit students develop and present two specialty acts under the guidance of industry practitioners and specialists for presentation before an audience. The presentation is the culmination of high level physical and creative skills and application of the knowledge developed throughout their 3-year training period. Students analyse and critique their technical and creative practice in an exegesis.



National Institute of Circus Arts

