

Introduction

Central’s Framework for Contextual Admissions is designed to create a fairer student recruitment process that takes into consideration any barriers that an applicant may face. In principle, contextual admissions allow us to recognise the potential of an applicant to do well on the course and future dance career.

We believe that a Contextual Admissions Framework is important way to foster an inclusive culture within the School by reducing exclusionary barriers and widening access and participation. All of the students we offer a place to at Central are accepted because we believe they have talent and potential to succeed in the dance profession.

The aim is to for the Framework to create and facilitate mechanisms for us to review and strengthen existing admissions structures and practices in a strategic way.

The values that underpin the Framework

<i>UNDERSTANDING:</i>	We create a partnership of understanding between the School and our applicants from the outset of the recruitment process
<i>FAIRNESS:</i>	We have a holistic multi-faceted approach to entry requirements that place student potential at the heart of decision-making
<i>BELONGING:</i>	We aim to be a community where everyone feels welcome and part of the School
<i>EQUITY:</i>	We are committed to identifying and working to mitigate barriers to entry and success
<i>INDUSTRY-INFORMED:</i>	We ensure positive developments within the ballet industry inform the our courses, from recruitment through to graduation
<i>INDIVIDUALITY:</i>	Our admissions selections are based on both the suitability of an applicant for the School AND the suitability of the School for the applicant

At Central, we are looking for dancers from diverse backgrounds with talent and passion. To find these dancers our approach to student recruitment includes:

- building a partnership of understanding
- equitable requirements, selection and recruitment
- creating futures in dance

We employ various strategies including, among other things: an assisted application scheme, prioritising applicants from underrepresented populations, and recognition of talent demonstrated in an audition by considering the social background of an applicant. Because our courses are practical and vocationally oriented, it can be appropriate to reduce academic entry requirements for those with appropriately high levels of dance skill/potential. Other bespoke ways in which we can support an applicant with talent and potential could also include access to training in advance of the final audition.

Our Contextual Admissions Framework is designed to provide a more holistic approach to student recruitment that helps us ensure not only if a candidate is right for the School, but importantly, whether the School is right for the candidate. Accordingly, Central's definition of 'contextual' not only takes account of an applicant's background, lived experience and social context, but also acknowledges where there may be gaps in understanding about the course delivery, the School ethos and the learning experience.

Building a 'partnership of understanding'

Through our admissions processes we aim to build a partnership of understanding between applicants and the School. We want to support applicants to make informed choices about their training and education. Towards this we work to ascertain during the application process, what the applicant understands about the course and ethos of the School. This is crucial for them in making the right choices and determining if being a student at Central is right for both parties.

The following are ways in which we are achieving this:

- Understanding the way in which an applicant has come to apply to the School and considering their application process within that context;
- The assisted application scheme
- Potential bespoke support to optimise the applicant 'readiness' in advance of the course starting.
- Ensuring staff making admissions decisions are fully conversant with the values and principles of the contextual admissions framework;
- Regular review of published information for applicants and other stakeholders in consultation with students and other stakeholders, to ensure maximum accessibility;
- Hosting open days, taster days, orientation days and other events that aim to provide insight of the learning experience.
- Work with partner organisations such as AYD100 to reach diverse populations of talented young dancers

Equitable requirements, selection and recruitment

Our equitable approach to admissions is multifaceted, cohesive, holistic, demystifying and 'non-traditional'. The ways in which we are achieving this are:

- Designing entry requirements that deliberately remove barriers and encourage applicants from all backgrounds
- Providing additional support and/or concessionary measures to enable access during the admissions processes such as the assisted application scheme
- Taking into account 'contextual factors' of an individual applicant to understand their individual potential as a learner on the course for example, the chair of auditions being notified in advance of contextual considerations
- Complementing our audition by a variety of additional methods of information-gathering about applicants to help reach an admissions decision, such as:
 - Online application option
 - interviews with known questions and criteria
 - personal statements that are asked to respond to 'targeted questions'
- Publishing guidance for applicants issued in advance on understanding the format and purpose of:
 - the audition
 - the interview
 - the personal statement
- Reviewing course entry requirements regularly to identify and remove potential barriers
- Evaluating our admissions process to ensure we are being effective in realising the aims of our contextual admissions framework.

Creating futures in dance

Central is both Industry-informed and industry-leading in our approach to recruitment. In order to balance industry needs and the development of dance as an art form, Central will keep up to date with industry trends, norms and developments to maximise employability. We also shape the dance industry by modeling inclusive ballet practices thereby developing the art form and ensuring that Central graduates remain relevant in skills, knowledge and ethos. Contextual admissions look to industry as the starting point, not the end game.

In the same way, admissions decisions take into account an applicant's holistic potential to contribute to the industry sector and wider society. Our courses prepare graduates to make positive contributions to society through and beyond their artistic discipline.

Key to our approach is that the values and principles applied during the recruitment process should also be embedded in course design and delivery, to establish a holistic thread running through the full life cycle of a student's learning journey with a view to maximising student potential achievement and success.