

BA (Hons) Acting CDT 2021

Welcome to the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, one of the oldest established actor training conservatoires in the country which now embraces innovative and exciting ways of creating work. Congratulations on being selected from many thousands of applicants to pursue this training.

The **Acting CDT** course is one of three acting courses within the BA (Hons) Acting programme at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. The course aims and objectives are set out in the course specification which you will receive when you arrive.

This course seeks to train actors to work professionally in a range of performance contexts, including classical and contemporary theatre, television and other recorded media. It also develops your own creative voice as a theatre maker in a variety of devising and writing contexts.

A typical trainee actor starting this course will have a firm commitment to the notion of acting as a live art form. While many of the skills taught will be transferable to recorded media (with additional tuition in those media given in the second half of the course) the training is rooted in live theatre.

Acting is both a creative and a professional discipline. It is also usually a group activity, which means that, unlike painters and sculptors, actors can only work alone to a point before they need to integrate their skills with many other kinds of professionals—directors, designers, playwrights—toward a common goal. Actors have to learn to work in a supportive and disciplined way - often with strict time constraints – as part of a group or company, ensuring that their own practices are generous and constructive. They have to become excellent timekeepers, to work methodically and with precision, to be flexible and open to others, and to accept criticism and authority. Within all of this they have to maintain a sense of themselves as artists and independent creators. An actor whose creativity is random or undisciplined is not likely to be employed, but neither is an actor who is wholly dependent on the director and can't make creative choices. This course seeks to teach trainees to maintain both their own creativity and an ongoing dialogue with the company, the director and the production.

The Craft of Acting

Much of what will eventually make you an actor is already with you when you arrive at drama school. There are certain natural qualities which we look for in our applicants, which we cannot teach you, and without which you could not hope to succeed in this art-form. These qualities include imagination, emotional intelligence, responsiveness, confidence and the desire to act.

You are entering a tradition of acting training that takes into account both past and contemporary culture, which together define how and what the actor communicates. Through your training we hope to broaden your horizons, reflect the world we live in and work on many ways to increase your creative expression.

Professional Discipline

Actors may be open, creative and tolerant; they may loathe bureaucracy, pointless rules and closed thinking, but the acting profession is one of the most rigorous and disciplined environments you could ever imagine. Actors accept rigor without question, because they understand that it is a necessary part of their craft and essential for ensemble processes.

Similarly, actors understand that the voice, body and brain won't train themselves. Much of actor training is body learning, and that takes time, as anyone who has ever trained for a marathon will know. Stamina, gradually become aware of physical patterns, developing embodied skills and mental/physical co-ordination, are all time-consuming processes, involving a lot of repetition and practice. If you've ever had piano lessons then you'll know how much scale practice it takes, and how much willpower you need to stick at it. Acting is just the same.

LINK TO COURSE INFORMATION INCLUDING PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION

<https://www.cssd.ac.uk/ba-acting-cdt>

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE COURSE

The shape of the Acting CDT course is very simple. In the first year you work to discover the potential and nature of self and ensemble, while laying the foundations of your craft. Your course units are as follows:

1. **Dramatic Technique and Expression 1** develops the fundamental skills required in movement and voice as part of a psychophysical actor training, allows you to explore aspects of movement and voice in creative and imaginative contexts and to apply voice and movement to text and speech work (Approx. 18 hours per week)
2. **Acting Fundamentals** helps you explore the actor's craft and put in place the basic elements of your 'actor's process'. You will explore a range of text analysis techniques and actor processes. (Approx. 8 hours per week)
3. **Collaborative and Devised Theatre** takes you through an intense exploration of Lecoq / Complicite based training methods and gradually introduces you to improvisational and devising strategies. (Approx. 4 - 8 hours per week)
4. **Theatrical Interpretation 1** involves rehearsal and presentation of scripted plays. Here you learn both the disciplines of the rehearsal room and the relationship between the actor and the director, and have a chance to put into practice all the skills you are developing in the other units. (Approx. 8-12 hours per week)

INDICATIVE CORE TIMETABLE

Timetable. Term 1 (2021) Weeks 3-9. BA (Hons) Acting CDT

	9-11	11-1	1-2	2 - 6	
Monday	Unit 1 Voice	Unit 1 Dance		Unit 2 Acting Fundamentals	
Tuesday	Unit 3 CDT			Unit 1 Voice	Unit 1 Movement
Wednesday	Independent Study	Unit 1 Voice		Unit 1 Sung Voice	Unit 2 Acting Fundamentals
	Voice and Pastoral Tutorials			Unit 2 Acting Fundamentals	Unit 1 Sung Voice
Thursday	Unit 2 Performance Laboratory	Unit 1 Movement		Unit 2 Acting Fundamentals	
Friday	Unit 1 Biomechanics	Unit 1 Voice		Unit 3 Autobiographical Devising	

INDICATIVE INDUCTION TIMETABLE

Monday

9 – 1 Induction and Tour of Technical and Production including workshop and costume
2 – 6 CDT intensive

Tuesday

9 – 10 Induction to media.
11 – 5 Group Project
5 – 6 Showings
6 - 8 Meet 2nd and 3rd year Acting CDT students

Wednesday

9 – 1 Boundaries and Consent workshop
2 – 6 Acting Fundamentals Introduction

Thursday

9 – 11 Free Time to register with doctor / set up bank account etc.
11 – 1 Induction mop up (course specification, policies etc.)
2 – 6 Movement Intensive

Friday

9 – 1 Voice Intensive
2 – 6 Autobiographical Devising Intensive

ASSESSMENT

All 1st year units are PASS/FAIL. Most of the time you will be continuously assessed, occasionally you will be summatively assessed, but in the first term much of your assessment will be **diagnostic** – in other words, no judgement will be made, but you will be offered help and advice to develop further. After the first term it is possible to fail an assignment, but you will always be offered a chance to retrieve. For many, the fail-retrieve system is the best learning experience of all.

Students who do not apply themselves, who have a poor work ethic and lack the personal rigour and discipline required, will almost inevitably fail, and be asked to leave the course. Very occasionally a student must confront the fact that they lack some essential quality which they need as an actor, and therefore need to reconsider their future, but for the vast majority the choice is in your hands. Do you want this enough to do the work and succeed?

KEY STAFF TEACHING ON THE COURSE

You will be taught by a mixture of full or part time permanent lecturers and freelance tutors. These vary from year to year, but the following is a list of the staff you may encounter. On this course we consider every lesson to be an

acting lesson whatever the specific focus of the tutor. There are no easy divisions to be made: every element of your training is of equal importance.

Key Teaching Staff

Permanent Staff

Catherine Alexander	Course Leader Acting CDT
Daron Oram	Senior Lecturer in Voice and Text (CDT)
Sinead Rushe	Senior Lecturer in Acting / Movement (CDT)
Lucinka Eisler	Lecturer in Movement (CDT)

Regular Visiting Lecturers / Directors

Ally Cologna -	Lecoq specialist
John Wright -	Mask/Clown and Play
Anthea Lewis – Dance	
Matthew Gordon Martin - Performance Lab	

CONTACTING STAFF

The best way of contacting a member of staff is via email. All permanent staff and student emails are constructed in the same way
firstname.surname@cssd.ac.uk - and emails can be accessed from home using web access. Visiting lecturers and directors will brief you on how to contact them. All students need to activate and check their emails **daily** throughout their time at Central because important information/ instructions are often issued via email.

SECOND AND THIRD YEARS

In the second year, students continue with the core training at a more advanced level, while undertaking increasingly challenging production projects, starting with the **American Devised Project** in the Autumn Term, moving on to **Classic Comedy** in the Spring Term, and finally **Renaissance Tragedy** in the Summer Term. The core classes support the production work by developing the skills you need to meet the demands of the chosen text.

Alongside these units you will also explore contemporary American scenes and plays, half mask, physical comedy and clown and learn a variety of accents for the stage, character voices and sung voice forms. You may also have the optional opportunity to study stage combat and an introduction to recorded voice.

Currently all second year units are PASS/FAIL except the main production unit **Theatrical Interpretation 2** which is graded and contributes a total of 25% towards the degree. This may change during the year but you will be briefed appropriately for each project.

The third year consists mainly of Public Productions, although some time is spent on Industry Skills including acting for camera, radio and the preparation and delivery of an industry showcase. There are only two units in the third year, **Public Production** and **Industries of Performance**, both of which contribute towards the degree.

The final degree award is made up as follows:

Theatrical Interpretation (Level 2)	25%
Public Production	50%
Industries of Performance	25%

Directors of final year productions are industry professionals, either in-house or freelance.

STUDIO

All Acting CDT students are encouraged to participate in 'Studio' which is a student led opportunity to test original work in front of an audience. This is a unique chance to develop your own writing, devising and collaborative skills with other year groups and BA Theatre Practice students. Each year ends with the off site 'Studio Festival' at professional venues. Work from this context often leads to first shows at Fringe festivals and the formation of companies. Be bold and present work from the start of the course and you will get the most out of this forum. There are at least two Studio nights per term.

GENERIC READING LIST

This is a list of books which may be particularly useful to you in relationship to the Acting CDT training.

This course does not prescribe a particular approach to acting and you are encouraged to explore as many ideas and approaches as possible. The unit descriptors in your main course handbook and specific briefing papers will suggest many further books. These are available in the library or to borrow from local borough libraries.

The books with asterisks next to them are key texts that you will need to read in full during your training, however you are not specifically required to read these before the training commences. Please do **not** read Michael Chekhov's *To The Actor On The Technique of Acting* before the training begins, and until you are asked to do so by your tutor.

Barba, E and Savarese, N (1991) A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology - The Secret Art of the Performer, Routledge

Barton, J (1984) Playing Shakespeare, London, Methuen

Berry, Cicely (1987) The Actor and the Text. New York: Applause Books.

Boal, A (2002) Games for Actors and Non-Actors, Second Edition, Routledge

Braun, Edward (trans./ed.) (1969) Meyerhold on Theatre Methuen and New York: Hill and Wang.

* Chekhov, M, (2002) To the Actor on the Technique of Acting, Routledge

Donnellan, D (2002) The Actor and the Target, London, Nick Hern Books

*Feldenkrais, M (1990) Awareness Through Movement; Health Exercises for Personal Growth, London, Harper and Row

Hammond, Will and Steward, Dan (ed) (2008) Verbatim, Verbatim. London: Oberon Books.

Houseman, Barbara (2008) Tackling Text (and subtext): A step-by-step guide for actors Nick Hern Books

Kerrigan, Sheila (2001) The Performer's Guide to the Collaborative Process. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann.

*Lecoq, J (2000) The Moving Body, Methuen.

*Linklater, Kristin (2006) Freeing the Natural Voice: Imagery and art in the practice of voice and language. (Revised and Expanded) London: Nick Hern Books

*Linklater, Kristin (2010) Freeing Shakespeare's Voice Nick Hern Books

Merlin, Bella. The Complete Stanislavsky Toolkit Nick Hern

Merlin, Bella. (2001) Beyond Stanislavski, London, Nick Hern Books

Murray, S (2003) Jacques Lecoq, Routledge Performance Practitioners

Oddey, Alison (1994) Devising Theatre: A practical and theoretical handbook,
Routledge

*Pitches, Jonathan (2003) Vsevolod Meyerhold Routledge Performance
Practitioners

Rodenburg, Patsy. The Actor Speaks. New York: St. Martin Press, 2000.

Spolin, V (1999) Improvisation for the Theater, Third Edition, Northwestern
University Press

*Stanislavski, K with translation by Benedetti, J. (2008). An Actor's Work.
London: Routledge

Suzuki, Tadashi (1986) The Way of Acting. New York: Theatre
Communications Group

Tufnell, M and Crickmay, C (2003) Body, Space, Image Dance Books

Zarilli, P, McConachie, B, Williams, G and Fisher Sorgenfrei, C (2006)
Theatre Histories – an Introduction Routledge

THINGS YOU SHOULD DO BEFORE THE START OF THE COURSE

Go and see as much live theatre and dance as possible. Seek out small scale work as well as established companies, dance and immersive work.

Take advantage of all theatre and dance events taking place where you are in the summer. Find out about free tickets schemes / low cost / pay what you can nights at London venues that you can visit when you start the course

See cinema (both classics and new releases) and quality TV drama. Watch nature documentaries, arts documentaries and the news.

Go and visit art galleries.

Listen to the radio, music from all corners of the world, international news (BBC World Service programmes), BBC drama and comedy, digital channels, arts podcasts etc.

Read novels, newspapers, engage with current affairs and debates.

Observe the world around you in as much detail as you can - the natural world and people from all walks of life — get a story and/or listen to accents.

DRESS CODE

(see details on the list of things to buy at the end of this handbook)

- You are expected to dress sensibly and appropriately for all sessions.
- Unless otherwise instructed by individual teachers, you should for all classes wear movement clothing, preferably of stretchy material. All students should own black tracksuit trousers or leggings, an additional warm top (without a hood), more than one fitted T-shirt or leotard, and several pairs of black socks. The trousers should be black and your T Shirts / warm tops / leotards of any single block colour (no logos or patterns)
- Jeans or combats should not be worn
- Clothing should not display any logos, images or captions
- Simple black trainers / plimsolls are the basic footwear, but you may at different times be expected to wear character shoes or go barefoot. These must be shoes that you only wear inside as part of your training. *(you will need the trainers in term 1 but you won't need character shoes until term 2)*
- No makeup or jewellery should be worn at any time, including rings and watches
- Long hair/fringes should be tied/clipped back at all times so your face is completely visible.
- Clothing which sits too low on the hips, low cut tops or tops which expose the midriff, should be avoided
- No headgear should be worn at any time (unless for religious reasons in which case this should allow for free movement)
- If you wear glasses you are encouraged to investigate getting contact lenses.
- Much of the work is high energy and may involve physical contact. Attention should always be paid to personal hygiene and general cleanliness.
- Staff have the right to exclude from activities or classes any student who breaches the dress code.
- Male students should also own a dance belt, white collared shirt, black formal trousers and formal black shoes (see kit list at end of booklet)

- Female students should also have a sports bra, black full-length rehearsal skirt and black character shoes (see kit list at the end of the booklet)
- Repeated breaches of the dress code will result in disciplinary process

ADDITIONAL COSTS

https://www.cssd.ac.uk/sites/default/files/BA_Acting_%28CDT%29_Additional_Costs_19-20.pdf

THE WORKING DAY

For first year students formal classes normally begin at 9 am and continue until 6 pm with an hour for lunch. There are short breaks at strategic points in the day. Students are expected to be in the building by 8.15am warming up and preparing for the day ahead. Spaces are booked for you to warm up in each day from 8 – 9am.

Any student arriving late for the first session of the day is automatically **red-lighted**, that is, excluded from all classes and rehearsals for that day, although such students may still use the library and other on-site facilities.

To avoid 'red-lighting', students should aim to arrive each day well before the start of classes. You are also advised to explore alternative travel routes, including cycling, in case your normal route is disrupted.

The **only** exceptions to this rule are pre-arranged medical or other urgent appointments for which leave of absence has been granted in advance using the correct form (available on My Central). Please note that such leave is always at the discretion of the course team.

However, in very extreme circumstances, such as freak weather conditions, where large numbers of students have been affected, the 'red-light' rule may exceptionally be waived at the discretion of the Course Leader or staff team.

Students who are late for a class or rehearsal during the working day will be excluded from that session. Even if a student is admitted to preserve the smooth running of a rehearsal process or assessment, the lateness will be reported to the course leader.

Where a student is unable to attend on a particular day due to illness or other very urgent personal circumstances which could not reasonably have been foreseen, they should email / call the Acting Course Support Officer and email the course team no later than 8.30am on the morning of each day of absence / or 30 minutes before the start of the first timetabled activity (tutorial / class etc).

Students who are late, or absent without explanation, or absent without sufficient cause, will be subject to the disciplinary processes set out on My Central. In extreme cases these can lead to a student being required to withdraw from the course.

ROOM ETIQUETTE

Five minutes before start of 9am and 2pm sessions:

- Bags must be packed away neatly
- Curtains should be shut hiding the mirror

- Water bottles, yoga mats, journals, pen, voice recorder or any other required equipment should be out of bags and ready to use at side of room
- Telephones must be off (not on vibrate).
- You should be wearing correct clothes (as course rules dictate)
- You must have done an appropriate individual vocal and physical warm-up
- You should be doing either: directed work, a group focusing exercise or game or quietly preparing individually
- When the tutor / director enters please be immediately silent and prepared to begin
- If you don't have the required equipment or you haven't done the necessary preparation for the session you will be asked to leave the class.

PERSONAL TUTOR

If you have a genuine problem to do with physical, mental or emotional health, or other circumstances within your personal life, it is essential that you discuss these as early as possible with your Personal Tutor. This will normally be a member of staff other than your Course Leader, to whom you can talk about issues relating to your personal wellbeing. There is a profound understanding among staff of the genuine problems which students can and do encounter and the school has many support systems to help you negotiate problems. If you communicate and ask for help, you will not be admitting weakness, but actively supporting your learning.

WRITTEN WORK

Students are required to submit a small amount of written work as part of their learning. The deadlines for this are published well in advance on the assessment calendar and will normally include a specific 'handing-in' time, which must be observed.

All written work must be handed in to the Student Advice Service or submitted digitally on Brightspace (you will be advised which for each assignment) within the specified time slot. Work should never be left in pigeonholes or slid under doors. Written work must be typed and must conform to the guidelines. Your name and course, and the date, should be clearly visible on each page.

Work submitted late without a pre-negotiated extension will be subject to an automatic fail mark.

LIFESTYLE AND PERSONAL HEALTH

You need to keep reminding yourself that this is a rigorous programme of training, for which you will need to maintain maximum fitness. While none of us can avoid getting colds or viruses there are steps we can all take to minimise the level of illness we suffer, including:

- maintaining a healthy diet, with plenty of fruit and veg, and not too many takeaways or junk food
- regularly washing hands and using hand sanitiser
- not smoking
- restricting alcoholic intake to recommended levels, preferably at weekends only, and avoiding all illegal drugs
- getting plenty of sleep
- maintaining sexual health by taking all reasonable precautions
- engaging in activities such as Yoga or Feldenkrais which help to maintain balance and harmony in the body and mind
- Understanding the support mechanisms at Central and via your GP when you need additional help
- Being aware of your mental health needs and finding ways to integrate counselling, if needed, into your routine.
- warming up the body effectively before all strenuous activities to avoid injury
- minimising stress by having order and structure within your working day

And finally, you are here to develop as a creative artist. There is hard work ahead, but also joy, liberation and growth. Stay in touch with yourself and with your own personal sense of artistry.

Catherine Alexander
BA (Hons) Acting CDT
Course Leader
December 2020

LIST OF THINGS TO BUY

-Yoga mat from yogamatters or similar (medium thickness, sticky yoga mat):
Yoga Matters is located 32 Clarendon Road, London N8 0DJ, nearest tube:
Turnpike Lane.

-Journals (at least A5 size), pencils, pencil sharpeners, pens, erasers,
highlighters etc

-You must be prepared to buy play texts, pens, paper, photocopy funds

- 2 good quality tennis balls

-You will be expected to source costumes and props that will be briefed along
the way

Acting CDT Clothing:

- White blouse / shirt and black trousers or skirt for ushering duties

- Knee pads (black)

- Black movement trousers (tracksuit bottoms / leggings)

- Fitted T-shirt, not low cut (at least 2 to wash and wear) or leotard of a single
block colour. It is important that your top is close fitting and does not expose
your midriff.

- Simple black trainers or plimsolls (for indoor use only) are the basic
footwear, but you may at different times be expected to wear character shoes
or go barefoot

- Warm single colour sweater/sweatshirt, fitted and with no hood (something
you are happy to roll on the ground in)

-Support underwear for dance classes as appropriate (jock strap/dance
belt/sports bra)

For later in the course: * *Do not buy these before the start of the course.*

- Character shoes, no higher than 2 inches or black dress shoes (Oxford),
hard heel. *(for term 2 onwards)*

- Black Practice skirt, ankle length. *(for term 2 onwards)*

If you are unsure about any of the above items please DO NOT BUY. We will
be able to guide you at induction.

OTHER EXPENSES DURING YOUR STUDIES

You will be expected to buy a copy of the key play text you are working
intensively on during each term of study (Estimated £10). Other texts are all
available from the library.

You will be expected to go see live theatre and film to support your training
and to improve your understanding and knowledge of the sector. This is not
compulsory but we advise you to budget for this appropriately. (From £75 -
£200 per term)

There will be some evening and weekend sessions and rehearsals during
your training. These will be communicated to you in good time. This may
affect your ability to work.

You may need to travel to rehearsal and performance venues off site (in London) and need to budget for travelcards for certain periods. (See Transport for London website)

In the third year you will be required to pay for professional headshots as well as the costs associated with marketing yourself and corresponding with agents etc. (From £150 - £400)

We are acutely conscious of the safety and wellbeing of students on the programme, as well as the quality of learning opportunities that we can offer in light of current restrictions relating to the Coronavirus pandemic. We intend to deliver teaching in-person and on-site when the programme commences next autumn, but we will continue to monitor the situation in line with our own risk assessments – which will be dependent on government guidelines and restrictions at the time of delivery. We are closely following the government restrictions, and will be in touch should there be any further change. You can follow the government guidance here: <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>