

SWINDON DANCE



CENTRE FOR
ADVANCED TRAINING

**INFORMATION
PACK**

SWINDON DANCE CENTRE FOR ADVANCED TRAINING



"Helps identify and assist 11-19 year olds with exceptional potential, regardless of their personal circumstances, to benefit from world-class specialist training. As part of a broad and balanced education. This will enable them, if they choose to proceed towards self-sustaining careers in dance."

The Swindon Dance Centre for Advanced Training (CAT) started in September 2005 and currently runs five programmes:

- Exeter Contemporary Programme based in **Exeter**
- Exeter Street Dance Programme based in **Exeter**
- Swindon Ballet Programme based at **Swindon Dance**
- Swindon Contemporary Programme based at **Swindon Dance**
- Swindon Street Dance Programme based at **Swindon Dance**

Training is in styles appropriate to the professional dance world today and more importantly, the future industry demands.

The Centres for Advanced Training (CATs) are a partnership of national dance organisations. This highly specialised scheme represents the "top of the pyramid" for performing arts education and training and has a huge impact on the performing arts world.

www.nationaldancecats.co.uk

A WORD FROM **KATIE**



“

Over the time I have been lucky enough to be the Head of CAT Programme at Swindon Dance, I have seen first hand the impact the Programmes have had on our students. In many cases how amazing the opportunities have been for them working with renowned artists and teachers and how it has opened so many doors for some of them to go on to further their training and thus lead such successful careers. Without the CAT Programme and the stepping stones it provides young people that might not necessarily have been able to access such high quality teachers without the CAT, it is a constant reminder to me, why the CAT is so unique and special to many students, past and present, which makes me incredibly excited for the prospective students.

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JOINING THE CAT



ATTEND OPEN DAY &/OR EXPERIENCE DAY

- Find out more about the CAT training;
- See a demonstration by current students;
- Meet the CAT team;
- Take part in a practical session;
- Parents/guardians are welcome to attend.



COMPLETE AN APPLICATION FORM ONLINE HERE:

[HTTPS://FORMS.OFFICE.COM/E/DBWTZJVFR6](https://forms.office.com/E/DBWTZJVFR6)



ATTEND AUDITION

- Take part in a practical session plus a creative task;
- Perform a 1 minute solo in the style of your own choice;
- Have an informal interview.



RESULTS

- You will be contacted with your results 2 weeks after your audition,
- This will either be an offer of a place, a recall, a place on the reserve list, or if you have been unsuccessful on this occasion.

THE TRAINING

EXETER CONTEMPORARY PROGRAMME (ECP)

The CAT Exeter Contemporary Programme runs fortnightly on Sundays from 11:00am to 5:00pm at Exeter University and DanSci Dance Studio. Training sessions will be supplemented with intensive courses during the academic breaks. Students study; ballet, contemporary and jazz dance techniques, improvisation, choreography and performance skills, healthier dancer and dance contextual studies.

SWINDON BALLET PROGRAMME (SBP)

The CAT Swindon Ballet Programme is based at Swindon Dance and runs on Sunday afternoons between 10.30 to 4:00pm. It follows a 6 term format each of 5 weeks, with intensive courses during the academic breaks. Students will study; ballet technique, strength and conditioning/pilates, an introduction to pointework, male virtuosity (if applicable), creative and music appreciation as well as workshops in healthy dancer such as safe practice, injury prevention & nutrition, choreography and drama.

SWINDON CONTEMPORARY PROGRAMME (SCP)

The CAT Swindon Contemporary Programme is based at Swindon Dance and runs on Saturday afternoons between 12:00 to 5:30pm and follows a 6 term format each of 5 weeks, with intensive courses during the academic breaks. Students study; ballet, contemporary and jazz dance techniques, improvisation, choreography and performance skills, healthy dancer and dance contextual studies.

SWINDON STREET DANCE PROGRAMME (SSDP)

The CAT Swindon Street Dance Programme is based at Swindon Dance and runs on Sundays from 11:00am to 4:30pm and follows a 6 term format each of 5 weeks, with intensive courses during the academic breaks. Students study; popping, breaking, house, hip hop, choreography, performance skills and contextual studies.

EXETER STREET DANCE PROGRAMME (ESDP)

The CAT Exeter Street Dance Programme runs fortnightly on Sundays from 11:00am to 5:00pm at various venues in Exeter including Exeter University and DanSci Dance Studio. Training sessions will be supplemented with intensive courses during the academic breaks. Students study the foundations of street dance, focusing on Breaking, Krumping, Hip Hop, Popping and House. We will start every training day with a technique class in one of the core subjects, followed by cypher training or choreography.



SPECIAL EVENTS

As opportunities arise during the year students will be invited to participate as appropriate. For example; workshops and curtain raiser performances with visiting professional dance companies.

COMMITMENT

The CAT is a national coaching programme supported by National Government and requires 90% attendance. Term dates for entry in September 2025 tbc.

THE TEACHERS

Dancers on the CAT are taught by staff who are actively involved in the whole development of the individual, rather than simply teaching a dance discipline. The teaching staff is made up of an experienced core team as well as visiting professionals and role models who are industry leaders. Past teachers have included Steady (Flawless), Clara Bajado (InDaHouse), Bawren Tavaziva, Joss Arnott, Richard Chappell and Vanessa Vince-Pang.

PHILOSOPHY & EDUCATIONAL AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

AIMS

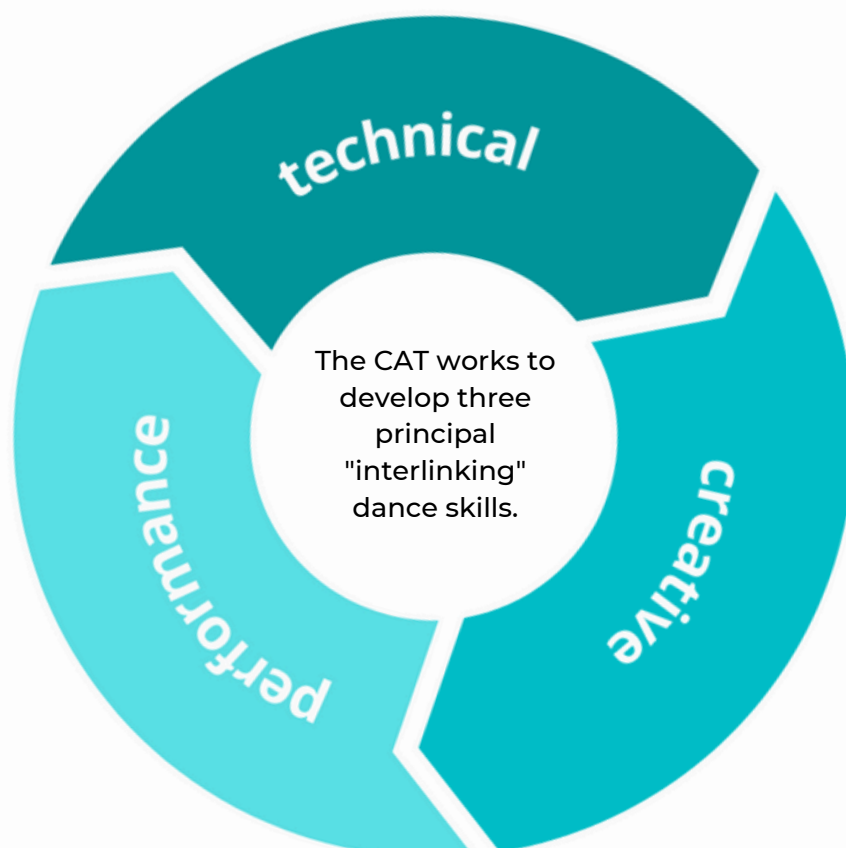
- To develop tomorrow's outstanding professional and unique dance artists;
- To seek out, nurture and develop exceptional talent for dance;
- To provide access, supporting participants both geographically and financially through the DfE grant scheme.

OUTCOMES

- The development of autonomous learners;
- The development of artistically and physically dynamic dancers.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND ETHOS

- A holistic approach to the training and development of young dancers;
- Fostering of artistry and creativity in the developmental process;
- Creating a safe environment where dancers can grow and take risks;
- Programmes of study tailored to individual needs;
- Working on dancers cooperating rather than competing with peers;
- Encouraging dancers to appreciate each other's work and to recognise the benefit of working with peers who are also talented and dedicated;
- Potential will be fully developed and not limited by preconceived expectations;
- Dancers will be aware of the opportunities available to enable them to achieve excellence.



SUPPORTING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

The following guidance will be provided to ensure that individuals need are met:

- Each dancer will have an Individual Training Plan (ITP), which will be drawn up and agreed by the student, parents/carers and the CAT team. The ITP will set out the programme of training, study, work and related activities that each participant will undertake. These will be reviewed and evaluated in order to help the dancers achieve their best. The ITP will provide a detailed record of achievement;
- **Each dancer will be supported and guided through the application and auditioning process of entry into a vocational college/conservatoire /university, if they so choose to follow this career path. Auditions for these establishments occur each year from September to April/May. Due to the timescale required to FULLY prepare a dancer for these auditions anyone joining the CAT will usually be required to complete at least 1 year of training before auditioning i.e. a dancer joining the CAT in September 2025 will not be able to audition for a dance conservatoire/vocational college until autumn 2026;**
- Each dancer will be assessed on their class work and development throughout the year. These assessments form the dancers “benchmarks of progression“ with which to measure their skills-based progression throughout the year;
- **Each dancer is expected to attend other classes outside of the CAT to further enhance the work of the weekend training programme. The CAT will support them financially in these classes;**
- Each dancer is encouraged to attend performances by professional companies and take part in workshops as recommended by the CAT. The CAT will support them financially in these endeavours;
- Each dancer will have a physiotherapy screening with one of the CAT physiotherapists, who have extensive knowledge of the industry and understand pressures and demands of a professional dance career on the body.

FEES & DfE GRANTS

Q1

What grants are available?

Individual grants range from £369 to £4,193 for Centre for Advanced Training (CAT). These are means tested by the Department for Education (DfE)

Q2

Will the grant cover the fees entirely?

Parents won't need to contribute to fees if the family's income is £34,037 or less (after deducting £2,355 for dependent children, including the grant applicant) in the tax year ending April 5, 2025

see figure 1

Q3

What is the cost per year?

The current cost per year is £4,193 and means tested grants are available. This fee will be either a combined DfE grant and parental contribution, full DfE grant with no parental contribution OR full parental contribution with no DfE grant

Q4

How do I qualify for a grant?

In order to qualify for a DfE grant, students should:

- Be successful at CAT audition;
- Be between 11 & 15 years during the year of entry onto the CAT;
- Be in full-time education/home educated;
- Have been a resident in the British Isle for a minimum of 3 consecutive years

Q5

What is "relevant income"?

Relevant income determines a student's grant eligibility. It includes both parents' and dependent children's income with necessary adjustments. Deductions consist of an allowance of £2,355 for each financially dependent child in the household and any covenant paid by a parent to a dependent child before March 15, 1988

Q6

What income is considered?

Income declarations pertain to the financial year preceding CAT entry, like April 6, 2024, to April 5, 2025, for September 2025 entry. The definitions of income align with HM Inspector of Taxes, requiring parents to declare gross income before tax from all sources. Non-taxable social security benefits are excluded. If your income is expected to notably change from the previous year, contact us to explore alternative grant eligibility assessment

FEES & DFE GRANTS

Q7

Are maintenance payments included in the income?

Only if parents are making or receiving maintenance payments in compliance with a Court Order, a separation agreement or under arrangements made by the Child Maintenance Service. Voluntary payments will not be included.

figure 1

RELEVANT INCOME	AMOUNT OF GRANT	PARENTAL FEE CONTRIBUTION
Up to £34,037.12	£4,193	NIL
£34,037.13 to £38,576.72	£3,807	£386
£38,576.73 to £43,115.28	£3,423	£770
£43,115.29 to £47,712.08	£3,014	£1,179
£47,712.09 to £52,192.40	£2,640	£1,553
£52,192.41 to £56,729.92	£2,262	£1,931
£56,729.93 to £61,761.44	£1,890	£2,303
£61,761.45 to £65,809.12	£1,505	£2,688
£65,809.13 to £70,347.68	£1,122	£3,071
£70,347.69 to £72,003.00	£738	£3,455
£72,003.01 to £74,883.12	£369	£3,824
£74,883.13 or more	NIL	£4,193

The provided details are based on last year's grant information. While we anticipate no changes for dancers joining the CAT in September 2025, please consider these notes as a general reference. For grant-related inquiries, please email cat@swindondance.org.uk

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

For the audition process there will be a panel, made up of local and international dance artists, plus staff of Swindon Dance. All experience levels will be considered based on the following:

PHYSICALITY

Physical commitment to movement material and confidence moving through space

EXPRESSIVENESS

Sense of style, intention, quality of expression and projecting with confidence

CREATIVITY

Ability to apply imagination and creative ideas to movement material, showing individual response to the choreographic task

APPROACH

Commitment, focus to the dance work and physical determination. Response to the teachers guidance

MUSICALITY

Physical response to music; interpreting rhythm, mood, phrasing and dynamic versatility

PRESENCE

Engaged, in the moment and demonstrating awareness and ownership of the space

N.B. Auditions for entry into a Dance Conservatoire/Vocational College occur each year from September to April/May. Due to the timescale required to FULLY prepare a dancer for these auditions any new students joining the CAT will usually be required to complete at least 1 year of training before auditioning. For example a dancer joining the CAT in September 2025 will not be able to audition for a dance conservatoire/vocational college until autumn 2026.



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

SHAROL MACKENZIE

How did you discover the CAT?

Through my secondary school. The CAT came to give a workshop and recommended that some of the students should audition.

What has the CAT taught you?

It taught me of the different possibilities there are in dance. The CAT gave me a taste of what dance schools would be like and through working with such a variety of different people gave me a glimpse of how broad contemporary dance is. I think the variety made me a more well rounded dancer. It gave me tools for creating and gave opportunity to develop my own artistic voice. Whether that be within a choreographers process or choreographing a piece. It taught me to be disciplined and dedicated.

Where has the CAT led you so far?

Whilst still doing the CAT they informed me of National Youth Dance Company (NYDC), which I auditioned for successfully in 2012. This opportunity, as well as working with many in the industry from the CAT, has given me a large network of people I know and the connections that have been made years ago are still there now. In 2014 I began training at Rambert School of Ballet and Contemporary Dance and graduated in 2017. Upon graduating I worked on short projects with Richard Chappell Dance, Mark Bruce and Arielle Smith Dance. I then joined Verve (the post-graduate performance company at Northern School of Contemporary Dance) in September 2017. After graduating from Verve in August 2018, I began my career as a freelance dancer. I worked with Mark Bruce Company on some research and development. I then joined Richard Chappell Dance for a UK tour of "At the End We Begin" and I assisted Richard in creating and new piece for the Exeter Contemporary Programme of the CAT. After that I joined Matthew Bourne's New Adventures "Romeo and Juliet".

What advice would you give to a young person who is interested in auditioning?

Just go for it even if you're not sure dancing is for you. It might help you decide, it's better to have the option. Be open minded and willing to give everything a try, you can learn something from everything that you do. For auditions be warm, welcoming and kind to the people you meet. Show that you are willing, interested and curious. They are looking for potential not a finished product.



STUDENT EXPERIENCE

BERTIE JEFFREY

How did you discover the CAT?

I was recommended to audition by my breaking teacher Banxy. He put me forward for the audition process and gave me so much support and encouragement during my training.

What had been your experience of dance before the CAT?

I hadn't really experienced much advanced dance training, nor was I involved in wider dance scene, that's why I wanted to audition for the CAT and elevate my training.

What has the CAT taught you?

To keep pushing myself to work harder and find every opportunity to perform. The opportunities I've gained since my training with the CAT has brought my dancing to places I wouldn't have discovered otherwise.

Where has the scheme led you so far?

I joined Zonation youth company in 2021 and performed my first shows in the royal opera house and the peacock theatre. I also started my BA degree in contemporary dance at Trinity Laban conservatoire, at the same time, I am additionally training with the Boy Blue adult company while in London.

What are any of your future aspirations?

To perform professionally as both a hip hop and contemporary dancer and work with established companies such as Boy Blue, Zonation and Far From The Norm. I also aspire to elevate my choreography, work with other acclaimed artists and potentially direct a professional show.

What advice would you give to a young person who is interested in auditioning?

Don't hesitate to audition, this can be the first step in elevating your training to professional level. The training you get at the CAT was invaluable to me, especially when making the decision to begin my advanced dance training.

PARENT EXPERIENCE



Past students have progressed into full-time training at Europe's top vocational schools and conservatoires and are now working professionally in the dance industry.



“Over four years a *family* of patient, dedicated and professional teachers and support staff have changed our son from an energetic boy into a professional dancer. In addition to the requisite dancing skills, they have showed him how to protect those skills, with guidance on health, fitness and training; they have rescued him from injuries and taught him to understand his limits. They have put him in the hands of first class guest choreographers, giving him permission to think creatively and transforming his confidence and they have encouraged him to push his boundaries and seize opportunities. They have given him a preview of the professional world he is entering”



“As a lone parent I could never have afforded the level of training that my daughter receives at the CAT. It has been wonderful to see her dancing talent blossom. Not only have the staff looked after her dance training but have also given great consideration to her whole well-being; devising an Individual Training Plan, arranging an appointment with a physiotherapist and teaching her about health”



KEY DATES FOR 2024-25

OPEN DAYS

Exeter Contemporary Programme

Date: Sunday 24th November 2024,
11.45-1.45pm

Venue: DanSci Studios, Exeter

Exeter Street Dance Programme

Date: Sunday 24th November 2024,
11.45-1.45pm

Venue: DanSci Studios, Exeter

Swindon Ballet Programme

Date: Sunday 2nd February 2025, 11-
1pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

Swindon Contemporary Programme

Date: Saturday 1st February 2025, 1.15-
3.30pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

Swindon Street Dance Programme

Date: Sunday 2nd March 2025, 10.15-
2.45pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

EXPERIENCE DAYS

Exeter Contemporary Programme

Date: Sunday 9th February 2025,
12.15-1.45pm

Venue: DanSci Studios, Exeter

Exeter Street Dance Programme

Date: Sunday 9th February 2025,
12.15-1.45pm

Venue: DanSci Studios, Exeter

Swindon Ballet Programme

Date: Saturday 5th April 2025, 10.30-
2.30pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

Swindon Contemporary Programme

Date: Saturday 5th April 2025, 11-3pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

Swindon Street Dance Programme

Dates: Saturday 5th April 2025, 11.30-
3.30pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

KEY DATES FOR 2025

AUDITIONS

Exeter Contemporary Programme

Date: Sunday 23rd March, 11-4pm

Venue: DanSci Studios, Exeter

Date: Sunday 15th June, 11-5pm

Venue: DanSci Studios, Exeter

Exeter Street Dance Programme

Date: Sunday 23rd March, 11-4pm

Venue: DanSci Studios, Exeter

Date: Sunday 15th June, 11-5pm

Venue: DanSci Studios, Exeter

Swindon Ballet Programme

Date: Tuesday 27th May, 2-5.30pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

Date: Saturday 12th July, 9-12.45pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

Swindon Contemporary Programme

Date: Tuesday 27th May, 10-2pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

Saturday 12th July, 12.30-4.15pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

Swindon Street Dance Programme

Date: Tuesday 27th May, 10.30-2pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

Date: Sunday 13th July, 10.-2pm

Venue: Swindon Dance

The CAT will endeavour to see all dancers wishing to join the programme. If you are unable to attend an open day/experience day/audition date please contact the CAT Administrator.

Swindon Dance

Regent Circus, Swindon, SN1 1QF

Register your place:

swindondance.org.uk/how-to-apply-cat/



@swindondancecat

swindondance.org.uk/cat