



National Institute of Circus Arts

## 2027 Audition Skills Guide

NICA ED - AUDITION PACK

BACHELOR OF CIRCUS ARTS  
CERTIFICATE IV IN CIRCUS ARTS



## THE AUDITION GUIDE

### How to present your skills

During the audition process, NICA will want to see as many of the skills listed below as you are able to complete. Please do not attempt skills you are not trained in.

**We offer a mix of skill levels in an order of preference, and we encourage you to show your abilities to the most comfortable level.** We do not expect that every applicant will be able to demonstrate every advanced skill. As a guide, applicants should demonstrate a general level of competency in three skill categories, and a high level of competency in at least one category. The Additional Skills section has been introduced to allow you to choose extra abilities that you want to showcase.

**Applicants must wear close-fitting training clothes and bare feet while demonstrating skills.**

We recommend bike shorts and a crop top, singlet top or leotard. This requirement assists us in making a musculo-skeletal assessment.

#### In-person auditions

If you attend the audition in person, you will complete all the skills in the list to your level of ability. Some categories will be assessed within a skills workshop setting: Handstands, Tumbling, and Trampoline.

#### Video audition

If you are completing the audition by video, you will need to work through all the skills in the list below and demonstrate all the skills to your level of ability. Please film each Individual Skill in order and according to the instruction in the Requirements column.



#### Introduction

Relax, be yourself, and keep it simple. Please keep this to under 2 minutes.

#### While facing the camera, please give an introduction summarising the following:

- Your name
- Where you are from
- What your speciality act is and why
- What Major and Minor Specialties you would like to study
- What Ensemble Specialty would you like to study
- Where do you see yourself after Graduating from NICA

Live auditionees will need to include a link to their introduction video within their Audition Pack.

Video auditionees can include it at the beginning of their audition video.

## Skills Category

## Individual Skill

## Requirements



### Flexibility

Three Way Splits:  
Left, Right, Centre

Left leg forward, keep hips square, hold for 5 seconds. Then right leg forward, keep hips square, hold for 5 seconds.

If you can over-split with a block on either leg, please show this.

Side-on to the camera.

Centre splits, hold for 5 seconds. If you can over-split with a block, please show this.

Facing to the camera.

Sit and Reach  
(Pike Stretch)

Fold forward, extending hands towards or beyond flexed feet. Hold for 5 seconds.

Side-on to the camera.

Pancake Stretch

Legs straddle at 90 degrees and fold forward, extending hands in front. Hold for 5 seconds.

Side-on to the camera.

Back Bend  
(Back Bridge)

Go into back bridge from standing.

Alternatively, lie on your back and push up into back bridge.

Final position should have feet flat on the ground (with heels down), straight legs, and open shoulders. Hold for 5 seconds.

If you can walk your hands in and hold your ankles, please show this as well. Hold for 5 seconds.

Side-on to the camera.

# NICA ED - AUDITION PACK

## Skills Category

## Individual Skill

## Requirements



### Strength and Conditioning

#### Leg Lifts

From hanging position, lift straight legs to touch the bar. Repeat 10 times.

Alternatively, if unable to touch the bar, continue to lift as high as possible for the remaining reps, or complete 10 lifts to the tuck position, knees to chest. In that order of preference.

Use a trapeze if available, alternatively a fixed bar is suitable (wall bars or high bars).

Side-on to the camera.

#### Pistol Squats

One leg squat from standing, other leg held out straight. Without holding onto anything, squat down as low as possible and stand back up. Try to leave the standing leg heel on floor. Repeat 5 times each leg.

Alternatively, a rolling start to your pistol squat can be demonstrated.

Side-on to the camera.

#### Chin-Ups

Hands in overhand grip (palms facing away from face), not reverse or underhand grip. Attempt 10 controlled chin-ups. Take your time, bring your chin above the bar, and come down to fully straight arms.

Alternatively hold a chin up position with chin above the bar for 20 seconds.

Use a trapeze if available, alternatively a fixed bar is suitable (wall bars or high bars).

Facing the camera. Show full body shot.

#### Push Ups

Keep elbows in and knees off floor. Maintain good form. Demonstrate 20 push ups.

Side-on to the camera.



## Skills Category

## Individual Skill

## Requirements



### HAND-BALANCING

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Tuck Jump to Handstand

Tuck jump to handstand, hold for 2 seconds, then lower. Repeat 5 times, leaving hands on the floor throughout movement.

Side-on to the camera.

Straddle Jump to Handstand

Straddle jump to handstand, hold for 2 seconds, then lower. Repeat 5 times, leaving hands on the floor throughout movement.

Side-on to the camera.

Shape Changes

Starting with a straight handstand, change to 3 different shapes, holding each for 5 seconds, then returning to a straight handstand.

Alternatively, you can show 2 shape changes, or 1 shape change from a straight handstand and back, or start and finish in a shape hold handstand. In that order of preference.

Side-on to the camera.

Free Handstand Hold

Straight body handstand, hold for 60 seconds.

Alternatively, if unable to hold for a minimum of 15 seconds you can use a wall for balance, holding for 60 seconds.

Side-on to the camera.

Press Handstand from Support

Starting in L or Straddle support on the floor or handstand equipment. Press to handstand, hold for 2 seconds, and then slowly lower back to support.

Alternatively, a press from feet on the floor, a jump through straddle or lunge handstand can be shown. In that order of preference.

Side-on to camera for press from support, or camera facing your back for press and jump to handstand.

## Skills Category

## Individual Skill

## Requirements



### HAND-BALANCING

L-Hold on the floor or handstand equipment

Arms straight, legs straight, heels above hips.  
Hold for 30 seconds.

Alternatively, you can show a tuck support.

Side-on to the camera.

#### Additional Handstand Skills

Demonstrate any aspect of handstands that you have been unable to.

This could include one arms, pirouettes, contortion handstands, break dancing, sequences, strength movements, etc.

Wide camera. Full body shot.

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## Skills Category

## Individual Skill

## Requirements



### Tumbling

Continued on Next Page

Handstand  
Forward Roll  
sequence

Kick to handstand forward roll, tuck to handstand forward roll, straddle to handstand forward roll, pike to handstand forward roll.

Camera facing side-on to the mat.

Cartwheel Exits

3 × cartwheels demonstrating the following finishing positions:

- Side: legs apart with arms above head
- ¼ in: legs in a lunge facing the direction that you came from with arms above head
- ¼ out: legs together facing the direction that you are going with arms above head

Camera facing side-on to the mat.

Head Spring

Standing or rolling entry, straight legs in the push, finishing with arm above head in an open standing position.

Camera facing side-on to the mat.

Standing Back  
Sault

Standing start on hard or sprung floor.

Additionally, you can demonstrate a standing pike sault or a standing full twist.

Side-on to the camera.

Flow Tumble

Flow movement or sequence. This can be in any style, dance, acro, martial arts.

Camera facing side-on to the mat.

# NICA ED - AUDITION PACK

## Skills Category

## Individual Skill

## Requirements



### Tumbling

#### Aerial or Side Sault

Front, back, or side aerial from a standing or running entry.

Side sault with single foot or two feet take off from a standing or running entry.

Alternatively, you can show a butterfly, leaping cartwheel or one arm cartwheel. In that order of preference.

Camera facing side-on to the mat.

#### Round off Back Tuck Sault

Round off from standing or running with a Back Tuck Sault and controlled landing.

Alternatively, if you cannot Sault, show a Round off with rebound.

Camera facing side-on to the mat.

#### Handspring, Cartwheel, Back Handspring connection

Demonstrate a connected Handspring, Cartwheel, Back Handspring.

Alternatively, if you cannot connect all three skills you can Cartwheel Back Handspring, Handspring Step Out, or Walk over. In that order of preference.

Camera facing side-on to the mat.

#### Additional Tumbling Skills

Demonstrate any aspect of tumbling that you have been unable to present.

This could include tricking, martial arts, flow, break dancing, etc.

Camera facing side-on to the mat.

# NICA ED - AUDITION PACK

## Skills Category

## Individual Skill

## Requirements



### Trampoline

#### Straight Jumps

5 × jumps with:

- Arms above head
- Arm swings

Finishing the jump with a controlled landing absorbing the power of the trampoline.

Camera facing side-on to the trampoline.

#### Front and Back Bounce

Jumping from feet to your front and returning to your feet. The same to your back.

Camera facing side-on to the trampoline.

#### Shape Jumps

5 × jumps with:

- Tuck
- Straddle
- Pike

Finishing the jump with a controlled landing absorbing the power of the trampoline.

Camera facing side-on to the trampoline.

#### Backwards Layout

Demonstration of a Backwards Layout.

Alternatively, demonstrate a Back Salto with kick out, back bounce with backwards rotation to feet, or back bounce and roll to feet. In that order of preference.

If unable to rotate backwards the same can be presented with a forward rotation.

Camera facing side-on to the trampoline.

#### Salto with 1 twist or more

Demonstration of a Salto with 1 twist or more, either forwards or backwards.

Alternatively, demonstrate a Salto with 1/2 twist, back bounce back-to-back with 1 twist, or jump 1 twist. In that order of preference.

Camera facing side-on to the trampoline.

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## Skills Category

## Individual Skill

## Requirements



### Trampoline

3 or more different Salto skills connected

Demonstration 3 different Salto skills connected in a sequence.

Alternatively, demonstrate 2 different Salto skills connected, 2 of the same Salto skill connected, 2-3 Salto skills connected with a jump between each skill, or connection of 3 skills with no Salto. In that order of preference.

Camera facing side-on to the trampoline.

### Additional Trampoline Skills

Demonstrate any aspect of trampoline that you have been unable to present.

This could include front and back entries to skills, wall trampoline, double Saltos, mini trampoline, etc.

Camera facing side-on to the trampoline.

NICA ED - AUDITION PACK



### Circus Specialty Performance

#### In-person auditions

Live auditionees will present Circus Specialty performance in front of the audition panel and other auditionees.

#### Video audition

Submissions should include footage of a Circus Specialty performance.

Create and present a short physical performance.  
Please keep this under 3 minutes.

Incorporate any performance and/or acrobatic skills you would like to showcase to the panel. This can include dance, martial arts, drama, live music, puppetry, clowning, and circus skills. Please showcase the specialty skill you intend to pursue at NICA.

It is an expectation that, if NICA deem appropriate, the specialty act you audition with will be one of the specialties you will continue to refine during your time at NICA. Therefore, it is important that you take the time to research all aspects of the chosen specialty, equipment, safety, tour ability, costs, and space requirements before preparing your audition act.

Wide camera. Full body shot.

#### Additional Circus Specialty

**Live auditionees** will participate in a workshop to present their other specialties. This will include solo and ensemble specialisations.

For example, if you are auditioning with an aerial act but would also like to juggle, this is your chance to showcase your juggling. Only present the specialties that you have existing experience in and are currently training.

Make sure you bring any required personal training equipment, props, or clothing to train your specialty within the workshop environment.

**Video audition submission** includes performing or training footage of these specialties.

Please keep this under 2 minutes.

Wide camera. Full body shot.

## Skills Category

## Task Requirements



### Party Tricks

#### In-person auditions

Live auditionees need to bring the required equipment, props, or clothing to present your party tricks.

These should be new skills not already shown in your audition application video.

#### Video audition

Submissions should only include new skills not already shown in your audition application video.

Examples of other unique skills or party tricks could include playing a musical instrument, singing, magic tricks, unusual talents etc.

Please keep this under 1 minute.

Wide camera. Full body shot.



### Ensemble

#### In-person auditions

Live auditionees will participate in a workshop that includes the creation of a work focused around group acrobatics.

#### Video audition

Submissions should include footage of an ensemble performance or training footage. Ideally footage of group acrobatics, although any ensemble is suitable.

Alternatively, you can follow the guide below if you do not have prior experience in group ensemble.

Please keep this under 3 minutes.

In a group of 3 to 5 people, travel 2 metres from point A to Point B.

During that travel you must incorporate a person (or persons):

- Being lifted
- Doing one twist
- Doing one rotation
- Having a moment of synchronised movement with another person

Ensure that you clearly articulate which member of the ensemble you are so that the panel can assess you. Clear descriptions and timestamps of skills and your position (basing, flying, etc.) will be helpful.

Wide camera. Full body shot.





### Movement Performance

#### In-person auditions

Live auditionees will participate in a movement workshop including the following tasks which will be presented during the audition.

**Video audition submissions should submit the same task via video.**

#### Ballet

Link to Ballet exercises: [demo](#)

Link to Ballet exercises: [teaching](#)

[Link to music](#)  
by Nate Fifiield

Record yourself performing the 4 set ballet exercises from the links provided.

Demonstrate clear body alignment, whole body coordination, memory of the sequences, balance and control, and the ability to travel and turn through space fluidly with rhythm and musicality.

Demonstrate the sequences as clearly as you can within your individual movement capacity and experience, whether you are a proficient ballet dancer or a complete beginner.

Wide camera. Full body shot.

#### Choreography

Link to set choreography: [demo](#)

Link to set choreography: [teaching](#)

[Link to music](#)  
by Universefield

Record yourself performing the set choreography from the links provided.

Demonstrate fluid movement through the spine, balance and control at different levels, clear transitions, and the ability to adapt the choreography to your strengths.

At the point of the choreography where you are asked to add your own section, demonstrate movement styles and skills that you enjoy, and that you can work into the choreography.

Wide camera. Full body shot.

#### Improvisation

[Music Option #1](#)  
[Music Option #2](#)  
[Music Option #3](#)

Select from one of the 3 music choices and perform the same choreography that you have learned from the Choreography section to the music that you have chosen.

Adapt, improvise, or change the choreography to demonstrate the different ... (see next page)

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## Skills Category

## Task Requirements



### Movement Performance

Improvisation  
(continued)

movement qualities, dynamics, emotions, rhythms, and spatial directions that the new music inspires and prompts in your performance.

You do not need to use the entire length of the new music.

Wide camera. Full body shot.



### Drama Performance

#### In-person auditions

Live auditionees will participate in a performance workshop similar to the following task which will be presented during the audition.

**Video audition submissions should submit the same task via video.**

Create a sequence that includes five actions.

These can be any skills, ordinary actions, or movements that you like.

With you, you will have a prop: it can be something that you hold, wear, or sit on. The key is that you can interact with it during your performance.

Then, while facing the camera, relax and be as genuine as possible and present this sequence in four different ways using the prompts listed below.

Please keep each variation no longer than 20 seconds each.

Wide camera. Full body shot.

#### Sequence

This could be simple movements:

- Stand
- Sit
- Wave
- Smile
- Walk

Or use circus skills:

- Handstand
- Roll
- Jump
- Cartwheel
- Splits

Or a combination of the above!

Wide camera. Full body shot.

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## Skills Category

## Task Requirements



### Drama Performance

#### Prompt #1

When performing the first time, perform in a neutral way.

Don't add any emotion, character, or energy beyond what is required to complete the movements.

#### Prompt #2

When performing the sequence a second time, add an emotional arc that begins with one emotion and ends with the opposite emotion

For example:

- Happy to sad
- Nervous to confident
- Angry to calm

#### Prompt #3

When performing the sequence for a third time, place yourself in a situation.

For example:

- Meeting a friend or family at the airport that you have not seen for a long time
- Walking down a dark alley feeling like you are being followed
- Walking the catwalk at Paris fashion week

Tell us the situation before doing sequence.  
Give yourself a situation that inspires a feeling or energy.

#### Prompt #4

When performing the sequence for a fourth time, using the same situation, pick one action to be repeated 2 or 3 times before moving to next action and another action to be done in slow motion.

Choose the action that makes the most sense to be repeated or slowed down, given the situation.

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PREVIEW ONLY



BACHELOR OF CIRCUS ARTS  
CERTIFICATE IV IN CIRCUS ARTS

NICA  EDUCATION PACK

National Institute of Circus Arts

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