

The Lowry Centre for Advanced Training

FAQs

***Please note, due to the current Coronavirus Pandemic, auditioning for The Lowry CAT programme will look a little different this year. Rest assured – we are still recruiting for Autumn 2020, however auditions will be held digitally, via a process of observation through live online CAT taster sessions. Please contact the CAT Team at CAT@thelowry.com if you require further information.**

- **Am I eligible for a grant? If so, how much?**

Grants are means-tested based on family's annual earnings per tax year, with deductions and allowances made for dependents in accordance with the Department for Education's guidelines. Families' financial circumstances are reviewed annually and support is available to families whose income falls below £67,164* per annum, with full grants being available to families of income below £30,529*. Students who are eligible and who make sufficient progress, will be entitled to receive financial assistance until they graduate or exit from the programme.

***2018/19. Bandings may be subject to alteration on an annually reviewed basis**

- **My family have been residents of the UK for 2 years. Am I eligible for a grant?**

To qualify for a MDS national grant, the applicant must have been resident in the British Islands for three years prior, be a member of the European Economic Area or Switzerland or be a child of a refugee (conditions apply) – so unfortunately, if you have only been a resident of the UK for 2 years, you would not qualify for a grant.

- **I've never been to a dance class before. Am I still able to audition for a place on the CAT programme?**

The audition process is devised in order to assess **true potential and ability** rather than technical excellence. Previous dance experience is *not* a requirement, however it's important of course that you're able to demonstrate your passion for dance, your creativity and your facility – meaning we can see your potential to be able to progress and develop with us.

- **What if I can't make the audition date?**

As far as is possible and unless there is an unavoidable extenuating circumstance, we ask all auditionees to make themselves available for the audition date – which we will give you with as much notice as possible. This is in order that we can ensure all auditionees have an equal audition experience, with a consistent panel of CAT tutors and management to assess you.

If however, you do have an unavoidable situation which means it is not possible for you to be available, please get in touch with the CAT team at CAT@thelowry.com and we will work to find a solution to ensure you are still able to be considered.

- **I will be 17 years old from September – can I still apply?**

We accept applications from young people aged from 10 – 16, with students expected to graduate from The Lowry CAT at 18 years old, or at the end of year 13.

We feel it is important to have at least two years working with our students – training and refining their skills as well as opening up as many opportunities and benefits as we can, fulfilling their place on the scheme. For this reason, we unfortunately do not accept applications from students who will be 17 years old upon entry onto the programme, as we don't feel one year is enough time to enable a valuable experience*. There are, however, many alternative options for young people hoping to pursue a career in dance and we are more than happy to advise.

***in highly exceptional circumstances, we may consider applicants of 17 years of age depending on the nature of individual situations**

- **If I don't get offered a place this year, am I able to apply again next year?**

Of course! We encourage all applicants to apply as often as you like, as auditioning is always valuable experience. We would highly recommend that you take on board the feedback offered to you during each audition and work to implement it if you decide you would like to apply again the following year.

Often, we have applicants who we feel maybe aren't quite ready – maybe they have some strength to build or maturity to develop in order to be able to enter onto this physically and mentally intensive programme of training – but they might be ready in a couple of years.

Many of our students currently on the programme have auditioned more than once – some of them were successful on their third attempt! So don't lose faith and keep your determination!

- **I've been offered a place on the CAT programme to start in September! Do I have to re-audition next year to stay on the scheme?**

No. Once you have gained your place on the programme, most students will stay until they graduate at 18 years old and re-audition is not a requirement.

Only in exceptional circumstances (i.e. if a student is not progressing, has decided to leave the programme), might a student leave the scheme – and we have a stringent and thorough process of discussion and problem-solving before we reach that point. We hope all our students will succeed and follow the path that is right for them.

- **If I get a place on the CAT programme, does this mean I have to leave my other dance school?**

No. Many of our current students still attend other dance commitments outside of their CAT training. Whilst this is, of course, not necessary, we greatly encourage them to do so, maintaining a healthy balance that complements their training and keeping in touch with their other networks. So as long as your other classes don't clash with your CAT commitments, there is no need to leave your other dance school.

- **Some of the CAT training days clash with other commitments I have, so I might not be able to attend all sessions. Can I still take up an offer of a place on the scheme?**

In order to fulfil a place on The Lowry CAT programme, students are required to achieve 90% attendance of their training. This is a stipulation set by the Department for Education's Music and Dance Scheme, in order to justify student access to means-tested grants. Unfortunately, if an applicant has other commitments which will compromise their commitment to CAT training, we cannot offer them a place on the programme over an applicant who is able to give their full commitment.

- **I don't live in the north west, but I would prefer to apply to The Lowry CAT as it is easier and more practical for me. Can I do this, or do I have to apply to a different CAT scheme?**

Yes, if you live outside of the region, but attending the Lowry CAT would be more feasible and practical for you, that is absolutely fine – whichever CAT you apply to is entirely up to you.

- **Will I have to buy extra dancewear and materials in preparation for joining the scheme, as well as pay for travel or any extra projects/activities?**

Upon entry onto the scheme, all students are provided with the basic dancewear you will require for your training: for Ballet, leotard and tights, or a unitard for boys; for Contemporary, leggings in addition to your leotard. Students are also provided with a Lowry CAT t-shirt. All students are provided with a notebook each year, in order to accompany their ITP and record feedback, reflections and goals. All training, projects and activities are included in the fees.

One of the main aims of The Lowry CAT, along with all CATs nationally, is to ensure there are no barriers in providing world-class dance training for students of all backgrounds to access. For this reason, where possible, further support is available on a case-by-case basis and on condition of funding, for any extra costs and expenses incurred through having a place on the programme – and this can be discussed further with the CAT Manager.