

Frequently Asked Questions about the OCA transfer to The Open University

On 01 August 2023 The Open College of the Arts (OCA) became part of The Open University. The Open University is now the awarding institution for OCA undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, transferring from the University for the Creative Arts (UCA). The Autumn 2023 Assessment event is the last event run by and awarded through UCA; after this, The Open University will take over the running and awarding of assessment.

Through this document we aim to answer any questions you might have, and if you would like to speak to us directly, please contact change@oca.ac.uk.

As of the 1st August 2023, all enrolments at OCA (for new and continuing students) are signing up to our [Terms and Conditions](#) with The Open University as the awarding body, and the [Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University](#).

Any student who registered on their first unit with OCA prior to 01 August 2022 has two options available to them:

- Remain with OCA, meaning that any award given to you will be awarded by The Open University (for example your degree qualification) after August 2023. When you enrol to a unit from 01 August 2023 and confirm acceptance of the OCA/OU [Terms and Conditions](#), you'll be agreeing to The Open University becoming your awarding body. This includes signing up to the [Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University](#). All credit that you've achieved with OCA will be transferred with you to The Open University.
- Choose not to transfer with OCA, meaning that you will withdraw from your course and receive credit for any units completed and assessed. If you wish to explore this option, please contact studentadvice@oca.ac.uk to speak with an adviser.
 - This option means no longer studying with OCA.
 - You may wish to apply to transfer to an on-campus course directly with UCA using credits you have achieved to date. To do this, you would be required to apply for an appropriate UCA course; if eligible. To discuss this option contact ocatransfer@uca.ac.uk. Please note that UCA does not offer distance learning courses.

If you wish to stay with OCA and transfer to The Open University you need to enrol to a new unit or use our [transfer consent form](#) to give your consent to transfer.

If you are hoping to gain a qualification awarded by UCA, either your full degree or an exit qualification (Certificate or Diploma of Higher Education), then your last opportunity to achieve this whilst being an OCA student is at the Autumn 2023 assessment event. To be



included for assessment at this event you must have completed your unit by the 9th October 2023. After this point, all assessment events will be run and awarded by The Open University.

If you are a new student, or enrolled to your first unit with OCA on or after 01 August 2022 you have signed up to OCA with The Open University as your awarding body.

If you would like to have a further discussion regarding any of the above options please contact studentadvice@oca.ac.uk and we'll arrange this. (Please be patient whilst OCA work through email enquiries, multiple contact will reset your place in the queue of enquiries, causing a delay in response.)

Questions

Q. I can't access The Open University Library, despite signing up to the Terms and Conditions with The OU as the awarding body, am I doing something wrong?

- A. You'll gain access to The Open University Library at one of two points during the transition period;
- When you enrol to a new unit after 1st August 2023, or
 - On 1st February 2024 if you are mid-unit or in-between units AND opt to transfer to The Open University with OCA

In the meantime, you'll still have access to the UCA Library and should continue to use that. UCA Library access is intended to end on 31st January 2024. When you are given access to The Open University library, The OU will email you a username and password to use.

Q. Will I receive a certificate and transcript from UCA if I move to The Open University with OCA?

- A. No. UCA will be issuing certificates and transcripts for any student who is leaving OCA before the end of January 2024, or who has completed their qualification before January 2024.

Q. Who will be awarding my degree?

- A. Up to January 2024 all OCA degrees and exit qualifications will be awarded by UCA, with the following exceptions:
- You have enrolled to an OCA degree for the first time after August 2022, in which case you would be awarded by The Open University.

- As a continuing OCA student you have indicated that you wish to transfer to The Open University when enrolling to your current unit, in which case you would be awarded by The Open University after January 2024.
- You indicate you intend to complete your studies with OCA and achieve a UCA-qualification by January 2024 but run out of time, fail an assessment event or need to take a break from your studies. In such cases we will support you to continue and complete your award through The Open University.

Q. Do all students have to do the new induction programme, including continuing students?

- A. Yes, the new induction programme has been designed for all students, new to OCA and continuing. This is for two reasons; firstly to provide a structured introduction to studies at OCA, with important information easily accessible right at the start.

Secondly, in response to student feedback in OCA internal surveys and the National Student Survey. Students have told us that they'd like to have more opportunities to meet and engage with students across OCA. The induction space is designed to do that, with engaging and interactive activities intended to bring people together.

Q. Can I progress to my next unit before I've finished my current unit, or whilst I'm waiting for my assessment results?

- A. You can progress to your next unit once you've completed your current unit, submitting all your assignments/projects, and received formative feedback from your tutor for all assignments (unless you are on your first unit of an OCA degree). OCA units are designed to be studied one after another, so you need to have first completed your current unit before moving to the next one.

You don't need to have been assessed when you sign up to your next unit. If you are waiting to submit for assessment, or have been assessed and are awaiting results, you can sign up to your next unit.

If you have not yet submitted for assessment when you enrol to the next unit, you must have done so at the [first available assessment event](#) after your completion date (the date you receive feedback on your final assignment).

Q. When is the last assessment event I need to attend in order for my award to be confirmed by the University for the Creative Arts?

- A. To be assessed and confirmed for an award by UCA, you must have been assessed by the Autumn 2023 assessment event at the latest, and successfully pass this assessment.

After this point all awards will be issued by The Open University as OCA's awarding institution.

The dates for the Autumn 2023 assessment event are as follows; you can also find these in the [Assessment Guidance](#) section of OCA Learn:

Unit completion by: 9th October 2023

Assessment submission deadline: 27th October 2023

Results confirmed by: 26th January 2024

If you complete your unit after the 9th October 2023, you will be assessed at the Spring 2024 assessment event, under The Open University.

If you are offered a resit or retake opportunity due to a fail at the Autumn 2023 assessment event, this resit or retake will be with The Open University as the awarding body.

If you do not complete your studies by the Autumn 2023 assessment event and you wish to continue studying for a UCA award, you will need to withdraw from OCA and apply to study with UCA directly.

Please note UCA does not offer distance learning qualifications. To discuss this option contact ocatransfer@uca.ac.uk.

Q. How will my degree be classified if I move to The Open University?

- A. The Open University uses a different system of classification to UCA, with Stage 2 (HE5) results counting towards overall degree classifications as well as Stage 3 (HE6) results. This is at a 1:2 ratio, so in other words, results at Stage 3 are worth twice as much towards your overall mark as Stage 2 results.

This is a change for some students, and the organisations have worked together to ensure that the impact is minimised. The calculation which is used to determine your qualification is dependent upon where you are in your studies:

- If you enrolled to OCA for the first time on an undergraduate degree after 01 August 2022, your qualification will be determined using The Open University classifications set out in the [Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University](#).
- If your next unit on an undergraduate degree that you enrol[led] to after 01 August 2022, is a Stage 1 (HE4) unit your qualification will be determined using The Open University classifications set out in the [Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University](#).
- If your next unit on an undergraduate degree that you enrol[led] to after 01 August 2022, is at Stage 2 (HE5) or Stage 3 (HE6) then your final results will be calculated using both the current OCA algorithm and The Open University algorithm, and awarded whichever is higher.

- If you are enrolled on a Postgraduate qualification after 01 August 2022, your qualification will be determined using The Open University classifications set out in the [Academic Regulations for Subsidiary Institutions of The Open University](#).
- If you enrolled on a Postgraduate qualification before 01 August 2022, then your final results will be calculated using both the current UCA algorithm and The Open University algorithm, and awarded whichever is higher.

Q. What happens if I haven't indicated which awarding body I want, UCA or The Open University, by January 2024?

- A. You need to tell us what you wish to do by the 22nd December 2023. This is the deadline for transfer of information to The Open University for students remaining with OCA.

The choices available to you are outlined at the top of this document.

If you wish to stay with OCA and transfer to The Open University you need to enrol to a new unit or use our [transfer consent form](#) to give your consent to transfer.

Q. Will OCA undergraduate courses be eligible for Student Awards Agency Scotland funding once OCA joins with The Open University?

- A. Yes. When the transfer of the Open College of Arts to The Open University takes place on 1st August, OCA students living in Scotland will have the opportunity to apply for a Part-time Fee Grant from the Student Awards Agency Scotland (SAAS) subject to certain eligibility criteria. If you're studying at least 30 credits in an academic year and your personal income is £25,000 or less, you could qualify for a grant to help towards your course fees.

For a 40 credit unit you can receive £607 in funding from SAAS. You will pay the difference between the Part-time Fee Grant and your course fee directly to the Open College of Arts.

Please note that if you do not receive SAAS funding you will be liable for the full cost of the unit you have enrolled to. Students applying for SAAS funding are encouraged to review OCA's [Learner Support Scheme](#) for further funding information.

You can apply for a Part-Time Fee Grant once per academic year. You should submit your grant application to SAAS and complete your registration with us on or before the final enrolment date of your course.

It can take up to 28 days for SAAS to process your application. So, to secure your funding, we strongly recommend that you submit your application immediately after enrolling to your unit.

To find out more about the Part-time Fee Grant, visit the [SAAS website](#).

Q. Will OCA be increasing fees to match The Open University?

- A. Our [Student Fees Policy](#) sets out how and when we can change our fees. Our fees will remain broadly the same until at least 2025 which is when the UK Government is planning to introduce Lifelong Loan Entitlements in England, which is likely to impact Higher Education Student Fees in England and beyond.

Q. Will my studies be disrupted? Is my course going to change?

- A. No. We are ensuring that study is not affected by the transfer of the organisation to The Open University as the awarding body. You will continue to have access to the same learning environments, support, assessment events, study support, student association, tutor support, course content and services that we currently provide. Some services, e.g. Library services, will be slightly different but all will be equivalent or an enhancement on those you currently enjoy.

Extensions and deferrals will be available to you if you need additional time to complete your unit during this period and we will be supportive of requests. If these requests would result in you studying beyond January 2024, you will be required to confirm your agreement to transfer with OCA to The Open University before the extension or deferral is agreed.

If anything about your programme was due to change when you next signed up to study a unit, this will still happen as planned. If you have any further questions surrounding your study programme please contact studentadvice@oca.ac.uk.

Q. UCA is a specialist arts university, how will The OU meet the same academic quality in awarding my course?

- A. The Open University is a world-leading institution in the field of distance learning. The OU has a well-established Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (which OCA will feed into) and expertise in many areas of the arts curriculum. The OCA will provide options for practical applications of the arts to enhance the existing portfolio of arts courses with the OU. Together, OCA and The OU expand the curriculum offering for distance learning students across arts and humanities, combining the strengths of both organisations, including The OU's research and teaching and the OCA understanding and development of professional practice.