

Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL) guidance notes

What is RPCL?

Recognition of Prior Certified Learning (RPCL), is the process which allows you to transfer Higher Education credit points you have previously gained elsewhere to OCA - providing it is at the correct academic level and in the correct academic field for the OCA degree programme that you wish to study.

A traditional university undergraduate degree programme takes 3 years to complete at a full time rate. Each year equates to a specific level/stage. This is reflected in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). A copy of the QCF is enclosed at the back of this guide.

To obtain a HE qualification, credits must be obtained from the study and successful assessment of units which are accredited at Level/Stage 1 (HE4), Level/Stage 2 (HE5) and Level/Stage 3 (HE6) on the QCF. For an RPCL exemption, your prior learning must be at these same levels to be recognised.

Your previous study will already have been assessed and certified as either a full or partly completed Higher Education qualification.

The maximum amount of RPCL that can be awarded as credit on our undergraduate programmes is as follows:

- Up to 120 credits at Level/Stage 1
- Up to 120 credits at Level/Stage 2

Please note that:

- OCA units are named by progression order rather than academic level on the QCF i.e. OCA Level/Stage 1 units (e.g. Painting 1, Writing 1) are actually accredited at HE4, Level/Stage 2 courses at HE5 and Level/Stage 3 at HE6.
- Exemption at Level/Stage 2 is dependent upon gaining full exemption (120 credits) from Level/Stage 1 study.
- You cannot gain exemption from any Level/Stage 3 study.
- You would be enrolled onto a BA (Hons) degree, and cannot be selectively enrolled onto a CertHe, DipHe or Ordinary degree.
- Only study at Higher Education Level/Stage 1 or above is transferable. We cannot transfer non-art related subjects, so a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Science for example would not be eligible.

- All previous certified learning must have been awarded within the last five years from the date on your transcript/certificate.
- Your previous study must be mapped/matched across to the equivalent OCA unit(s). Only credits, and not grades, from previous studies can be transferred.
- You must enrol onto your chosen degree programme within 3 months of the date of the offer letter.
- If your credits have been achieved outside of the UK, you will need to obtain a Statement of Comparability report from [UK Enic](#).

Depending on the degree programme you wish to study and gain exemption from, you may need to apply for exemption from core units and select relevant elective units, or apply for exemption from a specific set of units. Please check the Programme Specification for your intended degree programme to find out which units you need to research in order to inform your application. Once you are clear on which units you are seeking exemption from, you can contact the Registry Team - registry@oca.ac.uk - to obtain the learning outcomes for the units to inform your application.

There are four factors which may affect the level of credit you are awarded:

Factor One: Course Mapping

Your prior learning must map/match to equivalent OCA unit(s). If it is not clear from the evidence provided what was involved in your prior study, then we may contact you for additional information.

Factor Two: Future study path

Your intended future study path is the other deciding factor which could affect the amount of credit awarded. For example, someone with a HND in Fine Art could look to gain the maximum 240 credit exemption if they intended to complete a degree in Painting as there may be similarities in the subject areas. However, if they wished to pursue study in Photography, then they may only receive the minimum credit transfer or may not be eligible at all, as the units may not be mappable to the units offered on the new degree programme.

Factor three: Selection of creative work

RPCL candidates for all subjects must upload a sample of their creative work for review, alongside their certificates (to a digital folder which will be shared with them post-application). This should be accompanied by a short statement explaining the context of each of the selected works. If this work is not of sufficient higher education standard for the level sought, even if supporting transcripts/certificates are at the required level, exemption from OCA unit(s) may not be granted.

Factor four: Average level mark of previous study

Applicants must provide a transcript of the marks obtained from previous study. If the average level mark is below 50% then we may require additional evidence from you to support your application. This ensures OCA can provide any further support such as communications with the Programme Leader to ensure applicants understand the next stage requirements.

How do I apply for RPCL?

To apply for RPCL you will need to complete an RPL application form on the OCA website which will initiate the process to seek exemption from one of our degree programmes by evidencing prior certified learning.

See the *Credit Exemptions* page of the OCA website here:

<https://www.oa.ac.uk/credit-exemptions/>

What are the charges for RPCL applications?

There is a standard £250 fee for application. This fee is charged regardless of whether your application is successful or not.

When can I submit my RPCL application?

You can submit an application at any time during the year.

How do I submit my application for RPCL?

After you have applied for RPCL, we will make arrangements to collect the relevant payment for the process (details of which are outlined in the application form). Upon receipt of payment, we will then provide you with a digital folder into which you can upload your required documentation.

What happens after I have applied?

Once you have submitted a full RPCL application, we will acknowledge receipt and then process your application. Your application will be presented to a member of OCA's Academic Staff, who will review your application and make a recommendation of what exemption you should be awarded.

Following approval, the application will be passed to our Principal and Head of Quality and Academic Support for their sign-off. We will then send you a detailed breakdown letter, advising you which unit(s) you have been given exemption from and which unit(s) you must then study to obtain your chosen degree. The credit exemption you are awarded will be registered with our accrediting university.

How long will it take to receive the outcome of my application?

We aim to get an answer to you within a maximum of 12 weeks of receiving your application and will contact you via email.

What if I do not agree with the outcome of my RPCL application?

Please note that you cannot appeal the outcome of your RPCL application if it questions the academic judgement of the member of OCA Academic Staff.

Please also note by submitting an RPCL application, OCA reserves the right to use any or all of your application as an example for future potential applicants.