

Version number:	Effective from:	Approved by:	Policy owner:	Date for review:
2	1st August 2023	CQC	Director of Learning & Teaching	August 2024, Learning & Teaching Committee

# OCA Tuition Policy

## Purpose

This policy sets out what you can expect from tuition or academic support, and the active role you can play in contributing to Open College of the Arts (OCA) learning community.

## Values / principles

### Open learning attributes

The Open Learning Attributes translates OCA's strategic vision and organisational values into underlying principles that informs the design and delivery of learning and teaching.

These are:

- **Openness** - being accessible, inclusive, adaptable, and flexible.
- **Engaging** - creating active, enjoyable, and meaningful educational experiences.
- **Empowering** - widening access to arts education, building trust, sharing experiences, and being student-led.
- **Social** - building learning communities, developing networks, and sharing our experiences.
- **Sustainable** - building resilience and integrating environmentally sound and sustainable creative practice.
- **Evolving** - being relevant and responsive, and creating a positive social impact.

## Scope

The Tuition policy applies to all OCA students across all provisions, including short courses, foundations, undergraduate, postgraduate, and personal development learners. Different tuition methods may apply to different courses.

## Changes

This is a new policy, introduced in August 2022.

## Policies superseded by this document

This policy superseded the Tutor Allocation Policy.

## Related policies and legislation

This policy refers to the guiding principles of the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#), and the following OCA policies:

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- [Academic Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Accessibility Policy](#)
- [Active Study Policy](#)
- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Enterprise and Creative Practices Policy](#)
- [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#)
- [Freedom of Speech Policy](#)
- [Intellectual Property Policy](#)
- [Learners in Secure Environments Policy](#)
- [Quality Assurance Handbook](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Student Accessibility Policy](#)
- [Student Charter](#)
- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Student Complaints and Appeals Policy](#)

## Policy

### Glossary

- **Academic staff** refers to Programme Leaders, Programme Tutors, and Tutors.
- **Stage One** refers to undergraduate Level 1 (HE4)
- **Stage Two** refers to undergraduate Level 2 (HE5)
- **Stage Three** refers to undergraduate Level 3 (HE6)

### Introduction

OCA aims to provide high quality and effective learning and teaching, to enable you to achieve your intended qualifications, awards, or other outcomes. OCA provides student-led creative arts education through learning materials, enhanced through online learning environments, and supported by academic staff, and through peer dialogue.

Learning, can be seen as the process through which you acquire new knowledge, skills and practices, or build on or reformulate existing ones. Teaching is any activity that facilitates this learning.

For OCA, effective learning and teaching is delivered through a dynamic combination of discipline specific knowledge, understanding, and application. These are aligned with appropriate creative arts pedagogies suitable for online learning environments. Support is provided by qualified academic staff who are active practitioners. This relationship can be seen as an interplay of course content, activities, and support, enabled through an online learning environment.

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OCA encourages students to play an active role in their studies, and to make constructive contributions to the OCA learning community. OCA aims to work with students in mutually beneficial and collaborative ways. The responsibility of students are set out in the [Active Study Policy](#), [Student Charter](#), and [Student Code of Conduct](#).

OCA provides an open and inclusive learning environment that aims to enable all students to succeed. The flexibility of OCA's approach to learning and teaching, allows you to engage in ways that are meaningful to you, and to build self-sustainable ways of developing a creative practice. Balancing your existing commitments with your studies, working alongside fellow students, and establishing studio spaces or resources as you progress, helps you to build self-reliance, resilience, and support networks, all of which are valuable for your future endeavours.

## 1. Learning environments

1.1. **Learning environments** are predominately online spaces or virtual learning environments (VLE) that enable learning and teaching to take. These include [OCA Learn](#), [OCA Spaces](#), [OCA Discuss forums](#), and [WeAreOCA](#).

1.2. [OCA Learn](#), provides an accessible platform for you to access your current unit of study, related Department Space, online library resources, and other OCA wide support and guidance.

[OCA Learn](#) will be used as the primary means of delivering course content, activities, and academic support. Exceptions are set out in the [Student Accessibility Policy](#) and the [Learners in Secure Environments Policy](#), where distance learning methods may, where applicable, replace online tuition, and physical learning materials replace equivalent online resources.

1.3. Each degree discipline has a dedicated online department space within [OCA Learn](#) to help facilitate academic dialogue across the discipline related learning community. Department spaces offer additional opportunities that sit outside the offer of specific units. Department spaces are places where students and academic staff can interact, and where students can make requests for the kinds of course content and support that can supplement what is currently offered within units. Department spaces are open to all foundation, undergraduate, or postgraduate students. Your Department spaces will provide:

- Introductions to programme aims, outcomes, and course philosophies.
- Regular themed group activities that bring together students from across courses, units, and/or stages of study.

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- Opportunities to engage with peers, across the learning community, by contributing to forums and/or other learning platforms.
  - Spaces to ask questions of academic staff, and receive appropriate support and/or signposting to additional support if required, including questions relating to ethical research.
  - Additional resources provided by academic staff, and/or archives of other related learning material.
  - Access to your Programme Leader, through email, forum access, and/or scheduled group activities.
  - Opportunities to shape the Department space.
- 1.4. The [Enterprise and Creative Practices Policy](#) sets out OCA's commitment to sustaining your creative practice, development of creative arts careers, gaining employment in creative industries, and/or undertaking enterprise related activities associated with your studies. The Enterprise Hub, within [OCA Learn](#), provides guidance and support to further enhance these activities.
- 1.5. Online library access, reading lists, and/or additional library resources are accessible through [OCA Learn](#). Only students studying at undergraduate or postgraduate levels have full access to reading lists and the online library. All students can expect access to additional resources, guidance, and support from a librarian via Ask the Librarian discussions.
- 1.6. [The Student Handbook](#), on OCA Learn, provides guidance and information, to all students, covering study skills, time management, academic skills, and wellbeing. There is signposting to additional pastoral and learner support.
- 1.7. [OCA Spaces](#) provides you with a secure online journal service, to be used during your studies and for any assessment. OCA Spaces can be accessed by anyone with an OCA email account. Guidance and support on using OCA Spaces will be provided.
- 1.8. OCA requires oversight of learning journals to help maintain a safe learning environment free from harm, exploitation, abuse, neglect, harassment, violence, and sexual misconduct, as set out in the [Safeguarding Policy](#). You must use OCA Spaces as your primary journaling platform. Existing students, who are currently using other journaling platforms, should transition to using OCA Spaces at their next unit enrolment point. Guidance and support will not be available to students who choose not to use OCA Spaces as their primary learning journal.

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- 1.9. [WeAreOCA](#) provides a dynamic and collaborative space across OCA learning communities to test, discuss, showcase, journal, and support experiences of learning, teaching, and/or practices within the creative arts. WeAreOCA acts as a bridge between students, academic staff, alumni, and external voices to foster cross curricular activities, student and/or tutor-led initiatives, and sharing of information, reflections, and practices to encourage dialogue and debate. WeAreOCA is independent of specific disciplines and is open to everyone within the OCA community to access and/or contribute. WeAreOCA is managed by OCA, supported by a steering group of student, staff, and other representatives, which reports to the Curriculum & Quality Committee.
- 1.10. Guidance will be given, during course introductions and welcomes, to help signpost you to available resources and academic support, and use of OCA's learning environments. Ongoing guidance is embedded within [OCA Learn](#).

## 2. Course Content

- 2.1. Content refers to learning materials delivered through our learning environments. Course content is provided through a range of formats, including online learning materials, lectures, case studies, reading lists, library and other online resources. All learning materials will be accessible.
- 2.2. OCA will endeavour to use safe course content wherever possible. In some instances, course content may be considered potentially disturbing, culturally sensitive, or upsetting, due to their theme, images, or descriptions. In these circumstances, trigger warnings will highlight potentially disturbing material and provide alternatives for those who do not wish to engage with this content. The warning will be signposted within the course description, prior to the student's enrolment, and within the course materials at relevant and timely junctions. If you encounter potentially disturbing, culturally sensitive, or upsetting content that does not have a trigger warning, they should contact the TEL Team via [tel@oca.ac.uk](mailto:tel@oca.ac.uk) to review the content. Support is also available via the Learner Support team, accessed through the Student Handbook.
- 2.3. Course content may reference online resources outside of OCA learning platforms. Where OCA is not the author of these materials, OCA is not responsible for their maintenance. Online resources will be checked and updated through annual quality checks. You may alert the TEL Team [tel@oca.ac.uk](mailto:tel@oca.ac.uk) to any broken or missing online resources.

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### 3. Course Activities

- 3.1. Course activities, such as exercises, research tasks, assignments, and/or project work, will provide effective learning opportunities that are accessible, relevant and engaging to all students. Course activities act as a prompt for you to undertake self-directed learning to achieve stated learning and course outcomes. Course activities are designed to:
- Connect to intended aims and learning outcomes.
  - Be set at an appropriate level of challenge.
  - Use clear language that can support a range of neurodiversity.
  - Be achievable for different learning styles and motivations.
  - Encourage you to adapt activities to be personally meaningful.
  - Allow you to use your available resources.
  - Encourage you to be critical and challenge perceived wisdom.
  - Ask you to be reflective on your outcomes and learning.
- 3.2. Critical reviews, dissertations, or other academic reports can be delivered through written or presentation formats. Written formats are essays or annotated digital documents. Presentations are recorded audio/visual digital presentations with audio, video, and/or slides. You can choose a preferred option. Word lengths should be followed. Presentation times are based on average speaking times, and therefore should be seen as a guide, depending on the speed of delivery and whether information is also presented on screen. Critical reviews and dissertations are subject to plagiarism checks, in line with the [Academic Misconduct Policy](#).
- 3.3. Work-related activities allow you to define, establish and sustain your creative practices at a variety of scales and ambitions, and to think about freelance, employment, social enterprises, entrepreneurship, or other meaningful external outcomes. Where appropriate, you can adapt existing course activities to take on additional elements of work-related activity. See the [Sustaining Creative Practices, Careers, Employability and Enterprise Policy](#) for more details.
- 3.4. The self-directed study time required to undertake course activities will differ from student to student, therefore, any suggested length of duration for a course activity is only an indication.

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#### 4. Academic support

- 4.1. Academic support is offered by academic staff to provide formative feedback through different types of tuition, and includes:
- **Feedback reports** as a choice of written or written/tutorial formats.
  - **Tutorials** offered as online 1-2-1 sessions.
  - **Synchronous group activities** as live events with forum elements.
  - **Asynchronous group activities** within forums or other platforms.
- 4.2. All forms of tuition offer formative feedback through constructive and well-grounded comments and/or dialogue that aims to stretch and challenge learners at staged points within the unit, prior to any summative assessment.
- 1.1. Scheduled teaching represents the amount of time offered to you through engaging with course content, activities, and academic support. You should expect 6 hours of tuition per 40 credit unit, or equivalent non-accredited unit.
- 1.2. Developing a plan of scheduled deadlines, for when you need to submit for formative feedback, can help you keep organised and motivated. You can negotiate a plan with academic staff at the start of a unit. This plan can be adjusted during the unit providing you continue to fall within your overall course end date. For deferrals, extensions, or interruptions to study see the [Extenuating Circumstances Policy](#).
- 1.3. OCA recognises that at times formative feedback can be challenging for you to take onboard. It should be recognised that feedback is there to encourage you to consider different perspectives and help grow as a creative practitioner. There are different techniques for engaging with feedback which are available through the [OCAWellbeing app](#). Challenging feedback, or feedback you do not agree with, is not a valid grounds to request a different member of academic staff for support. You have a right to ask questions to help clarify your formative feedback from academic staff. It is a shared responsibility between you and your tutor to make the academic relationship work effectively.
- 4.3. You are encouraged to reference and reflect on formative feedback as part of your learning log or other journaling activities. You should not reference the name of your tutor directly. Academic Staff can be referred to as 'my tutor'.

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4.4. **Feedback reports** provide a space for academic staff to document formative feedback at staged points within a unit, as defined by teaching schedules. You should expect your Feedback report to provide concise:

- Overall feedback that summarises key learning and progress to date.
- Feedback based on any learning outcomes.
- Action points or feedforward for you to consider.

You can choose whether to receive a Feedback report in writing or as a tutorial with an accompanying notes. Other annotated documents may also be included. You will need to communicate your choice on submission of your work for formative feedback, including dates and times of availability for any tutorials. It may not always be possible to provide a tutorial report due to availability of academic staff. If a tutorial is not possible, then a wholly written Feedback report will be provided. Feedback reports represent an hour of tuition time.

Feedback reports should be delivered 10 working days after the submission of your work. Academic staff will alert you in advance of any planned leave periods, that may effect delivery times.

4.5. **Tutorials** provide one-to-one contact with a named member of academic staff, who provides support and formative feedback at staged points in your studies. Tutorials take place online, and are generally 30 minutes in length. Tutorials can be a dialogue between you and academic staff. As such, conversations can flow, and both parties should actively contribute, ask questions, and share information to support learning.

Where face-to-face online tutorials are unable to take place, due to agreed reasonable adjustments, or temporary unforeseen circumstances, tutorials can take place over the telephone, or as a real time written dialogue using GoogleDocs online word processing software.

4.6. **Group activities** offer academic support to discuss and shape ideas, receive formative feedback, and share and support approaches to learning alongside other students. Group activities encompass both synchronous events, such as live face-to-face sessions at a specific time, or asynchronous activities such as forum activities, that take place over a period of time. Group activities will be supported through OCA learning environments.

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- 4.7. **Synchronous group activities** describe a range of learning activities including seminars, reading or listening groups, critiques, study events, visiting lectures, review or check in sessions.

Synchronous group activities will be made as accessible as possible by offering materials and/or activities prior to the live event, making available recordings, notes, or other outcomes of live group activities, and by providing opportunities for post-activity discussion through asynchronous means.

OCA recognises that not all students will be able to make timed live events, due to working or care patterns, being resident in a different time zone, or have health conditions that limit their attendance. OCA will endeavour to offer synchronous group activities across a range of time slots and/or days, including evenings and weekends, and to rotate these timings over the academic year.

OCA also recognises that not all students may wish, or be able to, participate with synchronous group activities. You may want to observe events, without the use of your camera or audio, and asynchronous activities provide an alternative to live events.

OCA is committed to providing safe and supportive spaces for academic discussions to take place. Consequently, group activities are subject to OCA's [Code of Conduct](#) and other student and staff policies related to behaviour. If issues do arise, OCA's [Student Complaints and Appeals Policy](#) provides avenues for highlighting and/or escalating concerns.

- 4.8. Student-led group activities are encouraged. OCA will make available the technology and models for students to plan, organise and run group activities. Any student-led group activity is subject to the same values, guidance, and practical steps as outlined in this policy.

## 5. Recording group activities or tutorials

- 5.1. There are occasions when students need to record group activities or tutorials, as an agreed reasonable adjustment, or wish to do so, to support their learning. OCA recognises the educational benefit of such recordings, but also seeks to protect the intellectual and privacy rights of both staff and students in line with the [Intellectual Property Policy](#). Students who need or wish to record academic support must:

- Inform the tutor leading the session prior to the recording, and all students should be told at the start of the session by the tutor.

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- The recording should only be used for the purposes of personal study, and will be destroyed by the student once the purpose has been fulfilled or when they conclude their studies.
- Other students have the right not to be recorded. They may wish to not appear on screen by turning their camera off, or request to stop the recording during their contribution to the group activity.
- Academic staff may request that the recording is stopped in order to protect confidentiality where sensitive or personal information is being discussed.

## **6. Allocation of academic staff**

- 6.1. Academic staff will be appropriately qualified, skilled, and experienced Tutors, Programme Tutors, and/or Programme Leaders, who are capable of delivering high-quality creative arts academic teaching.
- 6.2. You will be allocated at least one named member of academic staff for the duration of your course.

When undertaking a series of course units, as part of a programme, OCA will aim to allocate different tutors for each respective course unit, to ensure a variety of academic voices. Exceptions may include those with accessibility issues, in secure environments, and/or others who require specialist support. In these cases, allocations will be referred to the Learner Support team to identify appropriate academic support.

At Undergraduate Stage Three, tutor allocation can be agreed in conjunction with the Programme Leader, following the outcome of a progression discussion. Students may request a specific tutor, but OCA is under no obligation to agree to the request.

- 6.3. If you are granted extensions, deferrals, or have other interruptions to your studies, OCA may not be able to maintain the original tutor allocation.
- 6.4. OCA will ensure there are sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled teaching staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience. In the event that insufficient staff are available, due to circumstances beyond OCA's control, you may be reallocated to a different tutor, or teaching reorganised to maximise staff availability, while recruitment or other measures are put in place to increase teaching capacity.

Where staff absences impact on synchronous tutor-led group activities, OCA will endeavour to find replacement academic staff in the first instance, and if

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this is not possible, rearrange live sessions to another date. Communication of any cancellations will take place through OCA e-mail addresses and/or OCA Learn announcements and forum posts.

- 6.5. Students aged under 18 will be supported by academic staff with enhanced [Home Office Disclosure and Barring Service](#) (DBS) checks and/or academic staff accompanied by members of the Learner Support Team. Teaching schedules can be adjusted to support students under 18, to minimise safeguarding issues, in line with the [Under 18s Admission Policy](#).

## 7. Ensuring quality

- 7.1. Effective learning and teaching is evaluated regularly, and monitored through an Annual Academic Monitoring Process, that considers student feedback, data, and other evaluation of learning and teaching, as outlined in the [Quality Assurance Handbook](#).
- 7.2. OCA collects feedback from you through formal and informal means in order to support programme and service development. OCA runs two internal surveys, the Unit Evaluation Survey which gathers feedback and opinions on individual unit experiences, and the Stage Analysis Survey which looks at perspectives across a whole stage of study. Each survey has certain criteria to be met for inclusion in the survey. Both of these surveys contribute to OCA's Annual Academic Monitoring Process.
- 7.3. All formative feedback is subject to quality assurance to help maintain academic standards, help support academic staff, and to ensure consistency of experience. These include the review of Feedback reports at assessment, monitoring of Feedback reports and asynchronous feedback through ongoing administrative processes and reviews, and the use of Peer Supported Reviews to evaluate teaching practice across all forms of tuition.
- 7.4. Anonymised formative feedback may be used for training and/or research purposes across OCA. If research outcomes lead to the external publication of data relating to formative feedback, permission will be sought from individual students, in line with OCA's Ethics Policy.

## 8. Complaints

- 8.1. You should seek to remedy any issues with any aspect of tuition with a member of academic staff, such as your tutor or Programme Leader in the first instance. If issues cannot be resolved satisfactorily through informal

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channels, the [Student Complaints and Appeals Policy](#) should be followed to escalate issues formally.

## **Implementing the policy**

This policy will be applied by students and academic staff through all aspects of learning and teaching delivery.

## **Support for the policy**

Support for learning and teaching will be offered to all students through course content, activities, and support, including dialogue with academic staff, and opportunities to provide feedback. Support for individual learners is available through the Student Services Department.