



UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

BA (HONS) FINE ART

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2018/19]

This Programme Specification is designed for prospective students, current students, academic staff and potential employers. It provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the intended learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the teaching, learning and assessment methods, learning outcomes and content of each unit can be found in the Unit Descriptors.

Section A – Material Course Information

Validating Body	University for the Creative Arts ¹		
Teaching Body	OCA – OPEN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS		
Final Award Title and Type	BA (Hons)		
Course Title	Fine Art		
Course Location and Length	Campus: OCA/Open and Flexible Learning	Length: Maximum time allowed to complete the programme is 12 years	
Mode of Study	Full-time		Part-time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Period of Validation	2016/17 to 2020/21		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable		
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable		
Entry criteria and requirements ²			
<p>Level 4 courses are open access, so no prior qualifications are required. In order to progress to Level 5, students must have gained 120 credits at Level 4, through study or by Accreditation of Prior Learning.</p> <p><i>Internet access and IT skills*</i></p> <p>The primary mode of communication on OCA courses is online, therefore, it is important that all students must have readily available internet access and the basic IT skills listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ability to access, read and write emails, reply to emails and forward emails. • upload and download attachments • search for information on the internet and complete and submit web-based forms • save web pages and download files from the web • click on links on a webpage and navigate to another page • copy web content, including images, into a document and know how to print it out - use standard word processing software 			

¹ Regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England

² This should be the standard University Criteria unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board and include UCAS entry profile for undergraduate courses.

Students must also be aware of network etiquette and security considerations when using email and the internet. There is a section in OCA's Student Regulations about online etiquette (point 17). In addition there is a Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy appended to the Student Regulations. OCA takes these issues seriously. Data protection rules forms part of OCA's Conditions of Enrolment. In addition to the information located in our student documentation OCA is developing short videos to explain netiquette and online security.

An unaccredited OCA Foundation Certificate is available for students who need to develop their technical and visual awareness skills before embarking on degree study.

*This requirement may be waived, on rare occasions, by the Head of Learner Support if negotiated prior to the start of the course. Typically, exemptions are only given to students with specific disabilities or to those studying in prison.

Specific requirements

In addition to meeting the admission requirements for all courses, students should ensure they understand the nature of the challenges and requirements of the course they are enrolling on, as outlined on the OCA website.

Disabled students

Applications from students with disabilities are considered using the same criteria and principles as all other applicants. All students with a disability are encouraged to indicate this on their application form in order that advice can be offered on the facilities and services available. Prospective students with a disability are encouraged to discuss their requirements with the Head of Learner Support.

Maximum period of registration

The maximum period of registration for the course is 12 years. Students may take up to two years to complete a single unit, however, they must complete the entire course within the 12 year period.

UCAS entry profile:

n/a

Minimum English language requirements:

All students need to have an appropriate standard of English to complete their chosen course of study, which will include a substantial written element. International or EU students will need to provide evidence of their ability, which could be i) prior education in the medium of English, ii) long term residency in an English speaking country or iii) one of the following international qualifications:

<p>IELTS (International English Language Testing Service): A minimum score of 6*</p> <p>TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language): Minimum score of 550 (Paper PBT), 213 (Computer CBT), 80 (Internet IBT)</p> <p>Other equivalent exams will be considered.</p>			
Overall methods of assessment ³	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Stage 1	0%	0%	100%
Stage 2	0%	0%	100%
Stage 3	0%	0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours ⁴	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Stage 1	12.5%	87.5%	0%
Stage 2	150 hours	1050 hours	0 hours
	8.3%	91.7%	0%
Stage 3	100 hours	1100 hours	0 hours
	12.5%	87.5%	0%
	150 hours	1050 hours	0 hours
General level of staff delivering the course ⁵	<p>The OCA's current policy is to recruit tutors who have at least an MA level professional practice in a relevant discipline or field and HE level teaching experience. All tutors are encouraged to work towards professional Recognition by the Higher Education Academy. This is a requirement for Programme Leaders and Unit Leaders. All tutors are expected to be professionally active, and engaged with contemporary developments in their field.</p>		
Language of Study	English		
<p>Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: QAA Art & Design</p>			
<p>Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)</p>			

The course structure

³ As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.
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⁵ Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer

The structure of all OCA undergraduate awards awarded by the University complies with the [Academic Regulatory Framework](#). The Academic Regulatory Framework includes information about the:

- Rules for progression between the stages of a course;
- Consequences of failure for reassessment and exit awards;
- Calculation and classification of awards;

Appendix 1 – Table of Units for students registering on the BA (Hons) Fine Art from the academic year 2018/19 onwards:

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?
Year/Stage1				
DR4DRS - Drawing 1: Drawing Skills (OFAR4105)	4	40	Core	
AH4UVC - Visual Studies 1: Understanding Visual Culture (OFAR4118)	4	40	Core	
SC4SCL - Sculpture 1: Starting out in 3D (OFAR4114)	4	40	Elective	No
PT4POP - Painting 1: The Practice of Painting (OFAR4109)	4	40	Elective	Yes
PT4UPM - Painting 1: Understanding Painting Media (OFAR4133)	4	40	Elective	No
CA4CAT - Visual Studies 1: Creative Arts Today (OFAR4103)	4	40	Elective	No
DR4EDM - Drawing 1: Exploring Drawing Media (OFAR4141)	4	40	Elective	No
PM4PM - Printmaking 1: Introduction to Printmaking (OFAR4113)	4	40	Elective	No
Year/Stage 2				
DR5DRA - Drawing 2: Investigating Drawing (OFAR5103)	5	60	Elective	Yes

PT5STP - Painting 2: Studio Practice (OFAR5125)	5	60	Elective	Yes
PT5EXM - Painting 2: Exploring Media (OFAR5141)	5	60	Elective	No
PM5PMD - Printmaking 2: Developing your Style (OCAR5113)	5	60	Elective	No
SC5STP - Sculpture 2: Studio Practice (OFAR5129)	5	60	Elective	No
DR5PAD - Drawing 2: A Personal Approach to Drawing (OFAR5133)	5	60	Elective	No
Year/Stage 3				
FA6APR - Fine Art 3: Advanced Practice (OFAR6135)	6	40	Core	
FA6RES - Fine Art 3: Contextual Studies (OFAR6136)	6	40	Core	
FA6SYP - Fine Art 3: Sustaining your Practice (OFAR6137)	6	40	Core	

Appendix 2 – Table of Units for students registering on the BA (Hons) Fine Art from the academic year 2016/17 to 2017/18:

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?
Year/Stage1				
DR4DRS - Drawing 1: Drawing Skills	4	40	Core	
AH4UVC - Visual Studies 1: Understanding Visual Culture	4	40	Core	
SC4SCL - Sculpture 1: Starting out in 3D	4	40	Elective	No
PT4POP - Painting 1: The Practice of Painting	4	40	Elective	Yes
PT4UPM - Painting 1: Understanding Painting Media	4	40	Elective	No
AH4WSA - History of Art 1: Understanding Western Art	4	40	Elective	No
PT4EXM - Painting 1: Exploring Media	4	40	Elective	No
CA4CAT - Visual Studies 1:	4	40	Elective	No

Creative Arts Today				
DR4EDM - Drawing 1: Exploring Drawing Media	4	40	Elective	No
PM4PM - Printmaking 1: Introduction to Printmaking	4	40	Elective	No
Year/Stage 2				
DR5DRA - Drawing 2: Investigating Drawing	5	60	Elective	Yes
PT5STP - Painting 2: Studio Practice	5	60	Elective	Yes
PT5CIP - Painting 2: Concepts in Practice	5	60	Elective	No
PM5PMD - Printmaking 2: Developing your Style	5	60	Elective	No
SC5STP - Sculpture 2: Studio Practice	5	60	Elective	No
DR5PAD - Drawing 2: A Personal Approach to Drawing	5	60	Elective	No
Year/Stage 3				
FA6APR - Fine Art 3: Advanced Practice	6	40	Core	
FA6RES - Fine Art 3: Contextual Studies	6	40	Core	
FA6SYP - Fine Art 3: Sustaining your Practice	6	40	Core	

Section B - Course Overview

The BA (Hons) Fine Art degree offers students the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of fine art as a creative, technical and intellectual activity.

The course offers an accessible, flexible, and well-supported course of study through which students can develop their creative voice in the media of choice within a specialist understanding of the discipline. It is an academically rigorous course that integrates theory and practice and develops autonomous learning skills within a stimulating learning environment. It supports the development of a sustainable and reflective creative practice for a professional career, further study, or continued personal development.

The course philosophy is informed by OCA's charitable commitment to provide a flexible and open learning experience that supports a broad range of student expectation and needs. The OCA attracts a diverse range of students, who are at various stages of their lives and careers and motivated by professional and/or

personal aspirations. The course offers an accessible entry point to art education for this range of students through part-time and distance learning. Additional support and resources are in place to ensure students are at an appropriate level of study to succeed.

The curriculum focuses on the core media within fine arts - Painting, Drawing, Sculpture, and Printmaking. Respecting and acknowledging the historical atelier based, fine art approach, the course builds on and respects the traditional as well as exploring contemporary approaches in fine art practice. This course will appeal to those who want to study their chosen media in depth, establishing a solid, traditional skills and knowledge base from where they can explore and innovative.

Level 4 : Developing Concepts and Skills

At Level 4, a sound base of drawing skills is established alongside the study of visual culture in the two core units at this level, establishing a practical and contextual understanding. Students can choose a further unit from a wide choice, for example, art history, sculpture, painting, printmaking or drawing. Level 4 unit assignments support the student through a series of investigations to application.

Level 5: Intermediate stage

At Level 5, students progress in their chosen discipline, with each Level 5 unit taking the student on a journey towards greater autonomy and a wider awareness of the contemporary practice of fine art. These units encourage students to investigate their media beyond the studio considering what fine art practice can be in the 21st Century.

Level 6: Becoming an independent practising artist

Level 6 represents the culmination of the student's enquiry. Students are encouraged to analyse the contemporary art world and their position within it and to use this knowledge to present themselves and their work professionally and coherently. Unit 1 *Advanced Practice* is complimented and informed by Unit 2 *Contextual Studies*; the student plans and negotiates their research into their own specialist subject area; practice and writing become mutually dependent as creative work is underpinned by growing knowledge and understanding, through analysis of contextual influences and studio methodologies. At this level, students are encouraged to expand their definitions of fine art, and the possibilities for their own work, by exploring contemporary fine art practice beyond the frame and gallery.

Integration of theory and practice in the course supports critical reflection in accessible ways and widens the cultural, social and political contexts that frames students understanding of fine art and their own work. This critical and contextual reflection is evidenced through research and reflective tasks at HE Level 4, critical writing at Level 5 and a body of visual and written research for Level 6.

The course provides stimulating and high quality learning materials, tutor support and resources to help develop a sense of visual and intellectual enquiry. Learning

materials are authored by a team of educators and/or practitioners, drawing on current academic research and teaching practice in the discipline. The course team is made up of a range of appropriately qualified and experienced tutors who are all either current practitioners within the field of fine art and/or lecturing in the subject at other UK art colleges or Universities. The learning environment provides opportunities to join and contribute to a diverse learning community through forum discussions, study visits and other platforms that allows for wider interaction, networking, collaboration and reflection. The course encourages students to develop a sustainable approach to their practice by establishing studio spaces, support networks and by setting up individual or collaborative exhibitions and/or publications.

Progression

Students can complete the Foundation in Drawing course before starting BA Fine Art. This course introduces them to drawing, collage, printmaking, mixed media, painting and textiles and assists in helping students to assess where their interests lie in medium and ways of visual expression. This diagnostic course leads the student to consider their areas of strength and assists OCA tutors and student support advisors to assist them to make appropriate choices as they progress their studies.

BA Fine Art sits alongside a degree in Painting and in Drawing and shares a range of learning material, resources and tutors. Shared units at HE Level 4 provide a variety of entry points onto the degree, and allow students the option to identify, refine and consolidate an area of specialism. On completion of BA Fine Art, students wishing to continue study at a higher level can progress on to OCA's MA Fine Art course, subject to selection. The course supports collaborative working, exhibiting and other presentation of work that students can continue to develop as they establish their professional practice.

Section C - Course Aims

List course aims

- To widen access to Creative Arts Education at Undergraduate level through flexible supported open learning
- To offer high quality and stimulating study material and tutor support through which students can develop a specialist understanding of Fine Art practices
- To provide flexibility for students to meaningfully establish their own creative voice and a personal and/or professional understanding of their practice
- To develop learners capable of applying their skills, knowledge and understanding creatively within a range of contexts

- To develop students' theoretical, conceptual and contextual understanding of fine art and contemporary debate in the discipline.
- To develop autonomous learners capable of applying intellectual and practical skills in a chosen fine art medium appropriate to enjoyment, further study or life-long learning

Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

Knowledge

- LO1 Demonstrate a personal creative voice through the use of creative, analytical, visual and practical skills, techniques and media.
- LO2 Articulate a critical and contextual understanding of contemporary fine art practice and their location within it.
- LO3 Manage the learning process resourcefully and independently and make appropriate use of primary sources and scholarly reviews.
- LO4 Evaluate your own work and that of others critically and objectively

Understanding

- LO5 Generate creative and innovative ideas and solutions, adapting and translating them into outcomes that communicate effectively
- LO6 Demonstrate informed and rigorous research, enquiry and reflection.
- LO7 Understand the relationship your work has to wider contemporary and historical culture

Application

- LO8 Select and apply creative, visual, technical and analytical skills in the realisation and presentation of ambitious work to a professional standard.
- LO9 Demonstrate a breadth of inventiveness, ideas generation and techniques in the creation of creative work.
- LO10 Develop an autonomous, sustainable and reflective practice that can be applied to professional, post-graduate and/or personal development contexts

Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The course's learning and teaching strategy is framed by OCA's purpose to widen access to Creative Arts Education through flexible supported open learning.

By 'widening access' we mean:

- this course can be studied from any location and does not require students to travel to attend classes – this is of particular relevance for those with mobility constraints, who live in remote areas or are in custodial institutions;
- the needs of students with disabilities are factored into the design and delivery of the course.

By 'supported' we mean:

- this course is supported by personal tutors who advise and guide their students' learning;
- students have access to their peers through discussion forums that are animated and moderated by the OCA;
- students can request adjustments or additional help to enable them to study successfully with the College.

By 'Open and Flexible Learning' we mean:

- this course can be studied successfully at a distance;
- this course has flexible start dates and pace of study is negotiated between the Student and the tutor (within defined limits).

This approach translates into a **core offer** to students, which consists of:

- paper-based and/or digital learning materials for each unit
- one-to-one written and/or verbal formative feedback and support from a named tutor
- support materials (such as guides on aspects of study and course handbooks)
- access to dialogue with peers via the OCA student website / Google Hangout critiques
- learner support for any difficulties with the practicalities of studying via email or telephone
- digital library resources (including Oxford Art online, Bridgeman Education Art Library and scanned copies of essential and recommended essays and chapters)

In addition to these core aspects of study, students may access:

- study visits to exhibitions, workshops and other events in different parts of the country organised via the OCA Students' Association (OCASA)
- current creative arts reviews, articles and discussion via the WeAreOCA blog
- student-led initiatives such as study visits and seminars, supported by the student body, OCASA

- a range of social media resources that provide additional OCA content or signpost students to existing online material (via Flickr, Pinterest, Vimeo, YouTube)

PDP

Personal and professional development is linked to all levels of the course through the learning log which is integral to each unit and helps to plan, integrate and take responsibility for their personal, career and academic development. The log is used as a tool for self-reflection to document and reflect on creative progress, reflect on tutor feedback and to identify areas for development. In dialogue with tutors through formative feedback, students are encouraged to identify strengths and learning needs and establish learning goals that might improve perceived weaknesses and enhance strengths. The learning log is considered as part of the assessment process and contributes towards final marks.

Independent learning

The Art and Design Benchmarks say that ‘Active learning through project-based enquiry has always been a feature of the art and design curriculum in higher education. Through this approach students have been encouraged to develop both the capacity for independent learning and the ability to work with others.’ Through the OCA open learning model of project and research-based activities students learn to study independently with tutor support, and learn to work with others by interacting with them, providing and receiving support and exchanging ideas via the OCA forum.

For each unit, students receive paper-based or digital copies of course materials and access to a tutor. Course materials provide a contextual overview of the subject and a range of projects for students to engage with. Each project will contain written and visual content, a number of exercises and research tasks, leading towards a final assignment activity. Typically there are five assignments per unit, which each take between 8 to 12 weeks, depending on the rate of study and how the deadline has been negotiated between students and tutor. At the end of each part of the unit, students submit their exercises, assignment and learning log via post or digitally.

Tutors establish a working relationship with students through initial email, telephone or video contact and welcome packs. Tutors respond to student submissions by providing written and/or verbal formative feedback that reflects on the work they have produced, provides guidance on areas to develop and frames the work within the assessment criteria for the unit. Tutors and Course Advisers are available to deal with any ad hoc support needs the student may encounter.

Tutor feedback reports are typically around 1000 words and provide the main interaction between student and tutor. Students are asked to reflect on this feedback in their learning logs. Tutor reports are copied to the OCA head office and subject to periodic review to ensure standards are being maintained. These reviews are conducted on a rolling programme, with tutors reports regularly reviewed by course leaders and the Director of Teaching and Learning Quality. All new tutors have their reports monitored for the first six months and mentoring is provided. Subsequently reports are looked at during each formal assessment event, in

conjunction with student work and feedback is given to tutors, where necessary. If any cause for concern about a tutor's reports is raised, the tutor is closely monitored and mentored for a period.

Online learning and course materials

Communications between the OCA, tutors and students is predominantly by email. We are encouraging the use of Skype and Google Hangouts for tutorials, as this can enliven the interaction between tutor and student. OCA has a dedicated website for students which includes online resources, discussion forums and portfolios for individual student's work. Peer communication takes place in the student forums, or via comments on the WeareOCA blog or other student blogs, as well as study visits.

The student forums represent the main method of communication between students and their peers. Concepts are discussed and knowledge developed through debates that are informally moderated by OCA tutors. Critiques of work, both in development and completed, are sought from peers through the forum.

Support materials are available to students via the OCA website and are sent to students at the start of each unit. These provide guidance on all aspects of OCA study, including keeping sketchbooks and learning logs, developing study skills and criticality, an introduction to higher education, course specific reading lists, and course handbooks. Graphic design students are provided with copies of the quarterly Eye typography journal.

Digital library resources include:

- UCA online resources including access to Open Athens
- VADS, V&A Museum online resources for visual arts
- Bridgeman Education image library
- Scanned copies of essays and chapters from essential and recommended reading lists across all units (permitted under CLA Higher Education Licence)
- OCA study guides
- OCA videos
- Links to existing online resources, including Process Arts, TATE etc. online journal, JISC Media Hub and The Metropolitan Museum journal

Costs of additional resources/materials

As a general rule of thumb, students pay for their work to be sent to OCA, and OCA pay for it to be returned (where applicable). Costs will vary according to the size and nature of the student work, and how much can actually be done electronically. Rates for overseas students will be higher.

The approximate additional materials/resources costs for BA Fine Art are:

Level 4: From £150 - £300 depending on students choice of materials and media

Level 5: From £150 - £400 depending on students choice of materials and media

Level 6: From £350 depending on students choice of materials, media and public presentation

Students are encouraged to attend exhibitions and other public presentations of work, these costs have not been factored into the above figures.

Work-related learning

Given the flexible supported open model of OCA's learning and teaching, it is possible for students to integrate workplace engagement alongside their course work, although this is not a specific requirement of the course. This approach depends on students' individual circumstances and aspirations and is supported through learning materials associated with HE Level 5 and 6 units. In Level 6 *Sustaining Your Practice*, students research, plan and execute their own live project supported through learning materials and tutor support.

Employability

The OCA is fully aware of the importance of degrees having a relevance to the world of work. Students are encouraged to develop a sustainable model for their practice, whether this relates to their personal or professional development, through the establishment of their own studio space, local support networks (which may include fellow OCA students) and access to resources. Learning materials and project work encourages students to frame their practice within wider professional contexts, present their practice to a professional level and identify potential opportunities for further study or employment. The *Sustaining Your Practice* Unit supports the development of a portfolio of work, marketing material and an external exhibition that can provide a platform from which students could seek employment or establish their practice.

However, the context for an employability audit is different for the OCA than it is for a traditional campus based HE provider, with a very broad range of ages of students, motivations to study and varying personal circumstances. OCA's aim is to instil in its students a creative ethos and the ability to structure creative practice and the motivation to continue their practice. For many students this will mean that they continue to exhibit and publish their work; for others it will mean progression to post-graduate study in the field.

Additional learning and teaching resources

The WeAreOCA blog, provides general art and design and specialist fine art posts.

Assessment Strategy

Students are assumed to be planning to enter for summative assessment unless they declare otherwise during the unit. Tutors work with the student to advise them on presenting their work for assessment and students can access a number of OCA resources to help support their understanding of the assessment process.

There are no examinations. Assessment is through the examination of personal development planning and continual reflection in learning logs or blogs, practical projects, critical reviews and essays. The student uses OCA guidelines to prepare a body of work complete with sketchbooks, storyboards and learning logs (or blog) to send to OCA for assessment. This submission includes the summative assignments of each section of the unit.

Assessment tasks are linked to the objectives of each unit. As the student progresses through the unit the assessment increasingly encourages autonomous learning and self-evaluation. Tutors provide feedback during the unit, with constructive criticism, and assessment takes place once the student has completed

a unit in full.

Summative assessment takes place at one of three annual assessment events at OCA Head Office with a team of tutors associated with the course and course leader overseeing the assessment process. For each unit, students submit a body of physical and/or digital project work, their learning log and a portfolio selection for assessment. First and second markers view the work in relation to level assessment criteria, before discussing the work and, if necessary calling on a third marker to moderate. Summative feedback and grades are provided to students and examples of good practice and student work are disseminated via the WeAreOCA blog. Formative feedback reports are reviewed by assessors to monitor feedback quality and tutor performance.

Assessment Criteria

All of the visual arts units follow the same assessment criteria with the different level weightings shown here:

Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills (40%)

Materials, techniques, observational skills, visual awareness, design and compositional skills

Level 4: 40%

Level 5: 35%

Level 6: 20%

Quality of Outcome (20%)

Content, application of knowledge, presentation of work in a coherent manner, discernment, conceptualisation of thoughts, communication of ideas

Level 4: 20%

Level 5: 20%

Level 6: 40%

Demonstration of Creativity (20%)

Imagination, experimentation, invention, development of a personal voice

Level 4: 20%

Level 5: 25%

Level 6: 20%

Context (20%)

Reflection, research, critical thinking

Level 4: 20%

Level 5: 20%

Level 6: 20%

Section F - Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching

The course is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the

applicable national Subject Benchmarks and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

All courses are monitored on an annual basis where consideration is given to:

- External Examiner's Reports
- Key statistics including data on retention and achievement
- Results of the Student Satisfaction Surveys
- Feedback from Student Course Representatives

Enhancing staff development

OCA is committed to enhancing staff development. Subject specific tutor training workshops are held annually at the OCA HQ in Barnsley, which focus on team building, updating tutors on new developments, and training – including sessions on improving the quality of feedback and practical exercises in evaluating student work. Communications with tutors is via a monthly Tutor Newsletter and a dedicated Tutor area on the student website.

Improving the effectiveness of student learning

We are committed to developing courses, improving existing courses, introducing technologies for enhanced interaction (such as Google +) and improving the effectiveness of student learning. We also regularly monitor tutors' reports to students and offer guidance and mentoring (the Director of Teaching and Learning is responsible for this) if the reports need improvement.

In addition, OCA contracts with subject specialists to provide support within the forums in each subject area. The imbalance in contributions is reflected by the level of interest and engagement by student groups. Photography students, for instance, are significantly more likely to participate online than other groups.

OCA have been trialling online tutor-led structured discussions via Google hangouts and using other technologies at HE Level 6, and plan to mainstream this activity in the forthcoming academic year.

Learning log

As part of the coursework on OCA programmes, students are required to keep a learning log. This is an important tool in developing their creative practice, recording their growing understanding of the subject, and provides a platform for ongoing reflection. For degree, diploma, and certificate students, the log is considered as part of the assessment process and contributes towards the final mark.

The exact content of the log depends on the unit. Typically they are used to record ideas, drawings, sketches, notes, influences, discoveries, thoughts, research findings and observations prompted by the projects, assignments and broader research. Students are encouraged to reflect on tutor feedback and identify key priorities as part of their learning log.

Many students choose to keep logs as online blogs. Their public status allows opinions to be expressed by fellow students, or the general public if desired, on the work being produced. Being accessible to other students, they offer a wide range of

interpretations of unit projects to be seen, read and commented upon by others, allowing learning to take place through social activity centred around a programme of study.