



Open  
College  
of the Arts



**UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS**

**PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:**

**BA (HONS) PHOTOGRAPHY**

**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 <sup>1</sup>		
Teaching Body	OCA – OPEN COLLEGE OF THE ARTS		
Final Award Title and Type	BA (Hons)		
Course Title	Photography		
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	2015/16 to 2019/20		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable		
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable		
<p>Entry criteria and requirements<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Level 4 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>Maximum period of registration</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Internet access and IT skills*</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"> <li>- the ability to access, read and write emails, reply to emails and forward emails,</li> </ul>			

<sup>1</sup> Regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England

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

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

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.

Students will be required, as part of this programme of study, to develop further IT skills in specific applications, such as Photoshop.

\*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.

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 :

IELTS (International English Language Testing Service): A minimum score of 6\*

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language): Minimum score of 550 (Paper PBT), 213 (Computer CBT), 80 (Internet IBT)

Other equivalent exams will be considered.

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 will be encouraged to discuss their requirements with the Head of Learner Support.

UCAS entry profile  
n/a

Maximum period of registration

The maximum period of registration for the course is 12 years. Students may take up to 2 years to complete a single unit. However, they must complete the entire course within the 12-year period.

Overall methods of assessment <sup>3</sup>	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Stage 1	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Stage 2	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Stage 3	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours <sup>4</sup>	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Stage 1	5.0%	95.0%	0.0%
Stage 2	60 hours	1140 hours	0 hours
	8.3%	91.7%	0.0%
Stage 3	100 hours	1100 hours	0 hours
	5.0%	95.0%	0.0%
	60 hours	1140 hours	0 hours
General level of staff delivering the course <sup>5</sup>	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.		
Language of Study	English		

<sup>3</sup> As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

<sup>4</sup> As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

<sup>5</sup> Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer

Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement Art & Design (2008)
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)

### The course structure

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) Photography 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?
<b>Year/Stage 1</b>				
PH4EYV - Photography 1: Expressing Your Vision (OPHO4111)	4	40	Core	
PH4CAN - Photography 1: Context and Narrative (OPHO4101)	4	40	Core	
PH4IDP – Photography 1: Identity and Place (OPHO4135)	4	40	Elective	Yes
MI4STS: Moving Image 1: Setting the Scene (OPHO4142)	4	40	Elective	No
MI4FCT – Moving Image 1: An Introduction to Film Culture (OPHO4134)	4	40	Elective	No
AH4UVC - Visual Studies 1: Understanding Visual Culture (OPHO4118)	4	40	Elective	No
VC4CBD - Book Design 1: Creative Book Design (OPHO4123)	4	40	Elective	No
CA4CAT - Visual Studies 1:	4	40	Elective	No

Creative Arts Today (OPHO4103)				
CW4WGS - Writing 1: Writing Skills (OPHO4121)	4	40	Elective	No
VC4GDC - Graphic Design 1: Core Concepts (OPHO4130)	4	40	Elective	No
VC4VSD - Visual Skills 1: Visual Dynamics (OPHO4126)	4	40	Elective	No
PM4PMI - Printmaking 1: Introduction to Printmaking (OPHO4113)	4	40	Elective	No
<b>Year/Stage 2</b>				
PH5LDS - Photography 2: Landscape (OPHO5111)	5	60	Elective	Yes
PH5DOC - Photography 2: Documentary (OPHO5109)	5	60	Elective	Yes
PH5STO - Photography 2: Self and the Other (OPHO5128)	5	60	Elective	No
PH5DIC - Photography 2: Digital Image and Culture (OPHO5126)	5	60	Elective	No
PH5MIM - Photography 2: Moving Image Methodologies (OPHO5127)	5	60	Elective	No
<b>Year/Stage 3</b>				
PH6BOW – Photography 3: Body of Work (OPHO6117)	6	40	Core	
PH6CTS - Photography 3: Contextual Studies (OPHO6115)	6	40	Core	
PH6SYP - Photography 3: Sustaining your Practice (OPHO6116)	6	40	Core	

**Appendix 1 – Table of Units for students registering on the BA (Hons) Photography from the academic year 2017/18 onwards:**

<b>Unit codes and titles</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Credit value</b>	<b>Elective/ Core</b>	<b>Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?</b>
<b>Year/Stage 1</b>				
PH4EYV - Photography 1: Expressing Your Vision	4	40	Core	

PH4CAN - Photography 1: Context and Narrative	4	40	Core	
PH4IDP – Photography 1: Identity and Place	4	40	Elective	Yes
AH4WSA - History of Art 1: Understanding Western Art	4	40	Elective	No
MI4STS: Moving Image 1: Setting the Scene	4	40	Elective	No
MIFCT – Moving Image 1: An Introduction to Film Culture	4	40	Elective	No
AH4UVC - Visual Studies 1: Understanding Visual Culture	4	40	Elective	No
VC4CBD - Book Design 1: Creative Book Design	4	40	Elective	No
CA4CAT - Visual Studies 1: Creative Arts Today	4	40	Elective	No
CW4WGS - Writing 1: Writing Skills	4	40	Elective	No
VC4GDC - Graphic Design 1: Core Concepts	4	40	Elective	No
VC4VSD - Visual skills 1: Visual Dynamics	4	40	Elective	No
PM4PMI - Printmaking 1: Introduction to Printmaking	4	40	Elective	No
<b>Year/Stage 2</b>				
PH5LDS - Photography 2: Landscape	5	60	Elective	Yes
PH5DOC - Photography 2: Documentary	5	60	Elective	Yes
PH5STO - Photography 2: Self and the Other	5	60	Elective	No
PH5DIC - Photography 2: Digital Image and Culture	5	60	Elective	No
PH5MIM - Photography 2: Moving Image Methodologies	5	60	Elective	No
<b>Year/Stage 3</b>				
PH6BOW – Photography 3: Body of Work	6	40	Core	
PH6CTS - Photography 3: Contextual Studies	6	40	Core	
PH6SYP - Photography 3: Sustaining your Practice	6	40	Core	

## Section B - Course Overview

The course is unique in that it assumes no prior knowledge beyond the basic operations of a camera. It is modular in concept and delivery and the student is free to choose from the available units at each level to suit their own interests and aspirations. Thus it is possible that, with tutorial guidance, each individual student can tailor their course to their apparent and developing talents, their creative and intellectual inclinations.

Level 4 develops technical, creative and analytical skills through a highly structured programme of study which is made sensitive to the needs of the student through the one to one relationship with the tutor. Whilst not diagnostic in the traditional sense there is a diagnostic element from which a programme can be mapped out for the higher levels. There is a preferred but not mandatory order in which the modules are to be tackled at this level intended to allow and encourage students to explore the possibilities of the differing ways in which the medium can be approached and used. On the completion of requisite modules at this level students will be on a par with conventional students completing their first year of undergraduate study, regardless of their starting point. Elective options at this level allows students to develop their technical and creative skills in complementary disciplines, or broaden their awareness of visual culture and advance their written and analytical skills if they wish.

From this foundation, students should begin to develop their personal voice at Level 5 through an exploration of genre. Several of the available modules expand on the concepts within specific Level 4 modules, however, it is equally possible for a student to develop in a direction not specifically studied at Level 4. At this level there is an increased emphasis on theoretical and critical studies in parallel with the practical work.

Level 6 consists primarily of a negotiated programme.. The three modules can be intimately linked and the wide range of tutor specialisms provides the possibility of supporting student work which is both fresh and challenging and shows a maturity of outlook across the spectrum of photographic practice.

The distance learning ethos demands a level of self-reliance and a strong commitment to self-analysis which, taken with the close relationship between the tutors and students at every level, should produce photographers capable of offering prospective employers and/or clients capable, committed and self-reliant graduates.

## Section C - Course Aims

- 1 To widen access to education in photography at undergraduate level through Open and Flexible Learning.



- 2 To provide an intellectually stimulating programme based on high quality study material and tutor support.
- 3 To develop students' creative capacities and their ability in the interpretation and application of imagery.
- 4 To develop students' critical understanding of the theoretical and conceptual issues central to the practice of photography and the social, historical and cultural context in which it is practiced.
- 5 To provide an environment in which the student has the possibility of changing their view of the world and their interaction with it both visually and intellectually.
- 6 To foster high-level ethical and professional standards and an awareness of the possibilities offered by existing and new developments in photography to expand their application areas.
- 7 To develop autonomous learners capable of applying intellectual and practical skills in a chosen area of photography appropriate to employment, further study or life-long learning.

#### **Section D - Course Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

##### **Knowledge and Understanding**

- 1 Demonstrate proficiency in a comprehensive range of photographic practices and techniques and have detailed knowledge of visual and conceptual strategies in digital photography.
- 2 Demonstrate an awareness of the wider social and cultural contexts in which the digital image operates, gained comprehensive knowledge of own area of specialisation and be able to situate own work within a large context of practice in chosen field.
- 3 Demonstrate by means of written work and oral presentations a critical understanding of the principles of photography and knowledge of emerging aspects of the discipline and those at the forefront of the debate.
- 4 Critically and objectively evaluate own work (and the work of others).

##### **Application**

- 1 Demonstrate a breadth of inventiveness, ideas generation and techniques in the creation of photographic images, exploring and realising a range of different creative starting points.
- 2 Produce convincing visual products that communicate your intention, demonstrating a high level of visual and technical accomplishment.
- 3 Transform abstract concepts and ideas into rich narratives integrating them into images.
- 4 Articulate own personal voice as a lens-based practitioner
- 5 Engage in appropriate professional practices such as marketing, self-presentation and negotiation skills.
- 6 Operate in professional contexts that are relevant to your practice, requiring

the application of specific interpersonal, professional and business skills within an ethical framework

## Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

### Learning and Teaching Strategy

#### Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategies

The Open College of the Arts offers all students the same quality of core learning experience, and supports a broad range of student expectations and needs through its open and flexible learning environment. The OCA provides high quality and stimulating learning materials and resources to meet the needs of students learning at a distance, and adopts learning strategies that help students develop the skills necessary for autonomous learning.

The **core offer** consists of

- learning materials
- one to one feedback and support from a named tutor
- support materials (such as guides on aspects of study)
- access to dialogue with peers via the OCA student website
- learner support for any difficulties with the practicalities of studying
- library resources (such as Oxford Art online and Bridgeman Education Art Library)

In addition to **the core aspects** of study, students may access the following on an ad hoc basis:

- study visits (e.g. to exhibitions) in different parts of the country organised via the OCA Student Association (OCASA)
- current creative arts reviews and discussion via the OCA blog
- student led initiatives such as study visits and seminars, supported by the student body, OCASA

#### **PDP**

Personal and professional development has been linked to all levels of the course through the learning log to help support students 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 progress, and to reflect on tutor feedback. 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.

Individual units at Level 6 all have outcomes that specifically relate to skills transferable to the workplace, through engagement with client led or self-initiated projects located in external contexts. The learning at levels 4 and 5 support this engagement through a process of identifying opportunities relevant to students' needs, goals, and ambitions.

### **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 model of open learning units, providing projects and research activities, students learn to study independently, while backed up by tutor support, and learn to work with others by interacting with them, providing and receiving support and exchanging ideas on the OCA forum.

### **Communications**

Communication between OCA, tutors and students is predominantly via email. In a small minority of cases, where students do not have internet access, communication is by post and telephone. We are encouraging the use of Skype and Google Hangout for tutorials, as this can enliven the interaction between tutor and student. Peer communication takes place in the student forums, or via comments on the WeareOCA blog or other student blogs, as well as study visits.

### **Delivery**

**Open tuition:** Students work from the course materials and send regular assignments to their tutor, normally by email. Tutors then review each assignment and provide written feedback. There are typically 5 assignments for each course, supplemented by projects. Students agree the length of time they will take over each section of the course with their tutor, and agree an approximate time when they will submit their assignment. This varies from student to student, but typically the timing of delivery of assignments is between 8 and 12 weeks. Students are also able to contact tutors informally between assignments (subject to reasonable limits). In addition to the formative feedback received from the tutor, students can submit their work for formal (summative) assessment at OCA at one of three assessment events that take place each year, and are required to complete their course within two years.

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 tutor reports reviewed by course leaders and The Director of Teaching and Learning Quality. All new tutors have their reports monitored by both staff 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.

**Course materials:** The written course materials have been specifically produced for open learning delivery and are designed for individual self-study. They consist of subject-specific learning content and a series of learning projects each culminating

in an assignment, the results of which are discussed with the tutor. The course materials contain a balance of practical exercises and large scale projects and research points.

**Study Skills Guides:** There are guides on keeping sketchbooks, writing learning logs, study skills, and keeping blogs, among others. All of these are sent to the students at the beginning of the programme and are also available as downloads from the OCA website.

**Reading Lists:** The BA Photography programme has a comprehensive study list composed of key texts, journals and websites for each unit. In addition to this, items are added to the study list as new recommendations are received and items published. At higher levels, when students undertake their own projects, reading lists are negotiated with tutors.

**Costs of additional materials/resources**

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.

Approximate additional materials/resources costs for Photography are £250 for Level 1, £500 for Level 2 and £400 for Level 3.

**Web forums:** OCA has a dedicated website for students with the following features: online resources, discussion forums and portfolios for individual student's work.

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. The student portfolios support the forums by providing an area for work to be uploaded to, and linked to, from the forums and their blogs.

**Online learning:** Each unit has a number of web-based resources designed to broaden student's appreciation of the range of practice and contemporary debate on the discipline. OCA students have access to the V & A image collection and use of the Creative Commons on Flickr as well as access to the Bridgeman Education image library, from which they may download images for comment, or to include in learning logs. Students are encouraged to keep learning blogs if they have access to the internet, so that they can share their reflections and learning online with other students, and discuss these with others on the OCA forum. OCA is piloting the use of Google hangouts for students to collaborate and critique each other's work. If popular their use will be extended in the future.

**Formative and diagnostic feedback:** Ongoing guidance and formative feedback on assignments is given by the student's tutor and offers clear guidance with regard to future development. A copy of each tutor feedback report given to the student is logged with OCA in order that OCA can monitor tutor quality and performance.

## **Employability**

The OCA is fully aware of the importance of degrees having a relevance to the world of work. 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 instill 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

## **Assessment Strategy**

**Assessment methods:** 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. 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. Students are assumed to be planning to enter for assessment unless it is identified at the beginning of the unit that the student does not have this aspiration. The personal tutor works with the student to advise them on the assessment process. The student uses OCA guidelines to prepare a portfolio complete with sketchbooks and learning logs (or blog) to send to OCA for assessment. This submission includes the summative assignments of each section of the unit. Assessment takes place three times per year.

## **Assessment criteria**

The Photography degree has adopted overarching assessment criteria, these trace the development of the work as outlined in the units.

<b>Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills</b>	Level 4: 40%
Materials, techniques, observational skills, visual awareness, design and compositional skills	Level 5: 35%
	Level 6: 20%
<b>Quality of Outcome</b>	Level 4: 20%
Content, application of knowledge, presentation of work in a coherent manner, discernment, <b>conceptualisation of thoughts, communication of ideas</b>	Level 5: 20%
	Level 6: 40%
<b>Demonstration of Creativity</b>	Level 4: 20%
Imagination, experimentation, invention, <b>development of a personal voice</b>	Level 5: 25%
	Level 6: 20%
<b>Context</b>	Level 4: 20%

Reflection, research, **critical thinking** (learning logs and, at levels 5 and 6, critical reviews and essays) 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 Representative