

Open College of the Arts - Mental Health Action Plan

Student Mental Health forms a key element of the Open College of the Arts strategy on student engagement over the next three years. This is in part due to the prominence that mental health has on the Higher Education agenda, but also because as an organisation we recognise that our model, whilst attracting students put off by a conventional university setting, can potentially exacerbate problems.

It is because of this that OCA is looking to revamp and innovate our mental health provision to best support our diverse and widely spread student body.

Over the period of this strategy 2018-21, OCA will endeavour to undertake the following to enhance provision in the field of mental health support:

- Ensure that all staff have been trained in Mental Health First Aid, and formalise this as part of induction for all new starters
- Model and understand how to identify at-risk students
- Develop and identify a clear and easy process through which students can access the support they need
- Review all elements of OCA learning model to consider their effects on mental health, and develop a risk register with appropriate actions to mitigate identified risks
- Develop and publish learning materials designed to help deal with specific elements of mental health
- Focus on prevention of mental health issues through development of student resilience and strategies for coping
- Reach out to organisations who support people going through mental health problems and consider opportunities to work together
- Work with other institutions across the sector to identify best practice in supporting mental health initiatives
- Provide OCAs voice in national discussions to ensure that part-time and distance learning students have a voice

We will review this every six months and publish regular updates to our ongoing strategy to develop mental health support provision, as well as adapting this strategy to take account of shared best practises and research.

Craig Dewis
Head of Student Services
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