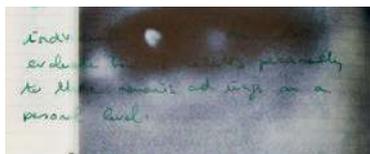


Foundation  
Undergraduate  
Postgraduate

Getting the most out  
of your course

OCA Student  
Handbook  
2018-19



Open College of the Arts  
Michael Young Arts Centre  
Redbrook Business Park  
Wilthorpe Road  
Barnsley S75 1JN  
0800 731 2116

[studentadvice@oca.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@oca.ac.uk)  
[oca-student.com](http://oca-student.com)  
[weareoca.com](http://weareoca.com)  
[oca.ac.uk](http://oca.ac.uk)

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All the creative work in this Student Handbook is by students  
and tutors of OCA.

Cover images from top left: Barbara Morrison Wise,  
Stephanie D'Hubert, Martin Hoare, David Price

## Student regulations

In 2018-19, we are sending out a paper version of the OCA Student Regulations as they have undergone substantial revision since the last edition was published in 2011. The regulations are also published online. Visit [www.oca.ac.uk](http://www.oca.ac.uk) and you will find a link to them in the lower right-hand corner of the home screen.

At the beginning of each academic year, we email students listing the changes that have been made to existing policies and noting any new policies that have been introduced during the course of the previous academic year.

[www.oca.ac.uk](http://www.oca.ac.uk)

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## About the OCA Student Handbook

OCA's student handbook aims to answer any initial questions students have about studying with us, whether you are new to OCA, have already completed several courses, or are on track to finish your degree. What is it like being a student and studying with the OCA? What support can I draw on, from OCA, tutors and the OCA student community? How are courses structured? For students studying for a qualification, what about levels, credits and assessment? How does OCA maintain academic standards?

## Student handbook at a glance

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## OCA online

Our key web addresses and links rounded up in a single place. You will find all of them in this handbook at the end of the relevant page.

- [www.weareoca.com](http://www.weareoca.com) - the OCA blog, #weareOCA, for debate on current issues in the creative arts
- [www.weareoca.com/category/study-visits](http://www.weareoca.com/category/study-visits) - forthcoming study visits (all study visits are open to all students) and how to book your place
- [www.oca.ac.uk/our-tutors](http://www.oca.ac.uk/our-tutors) - profiles of all our tutors, including their approach to teaching and their own creative practice
- [www.oca-student.com/course-mates/student-locations](http://www.oca-student.com/course-mates/student-locations) - find out if there are other OCA students living near you
- <https://opencollegearts.typeform.com/to/h5ykjo> - 'Making the most of the OCA community - A step-by-step guide' was compiled by OCA graphic design tutor Beth Dawson and offers 28 questions and suggestions for studying with OCA
- [www.ocasa.org.uk](http://www.ocasa.org.uk) - the website of the OCA student association, including contact details for subject representatives
- [www.oca.ac.uk/about-oca/oca-galleries](http://www.oca.ac.uk/about-oca/oca-galleries) - student work under the spotlight
- <http://discuss.oca-student.com> discussion forums where you can discuss aspects of the creative arts and creative arts practice with other students and tutors

- <https://groups.google.com> - whatever course you are doing, there is a forum where you can meet other students doing the same course as you

Find us on social media



**Facebook** [Openartscollege](#)



**Twitter** [@opencollegarts](#)



**YouTube** [Open College of the Arts](#)



**Pinterest** [pinterest.com/opencollegarts](https://pinterest.com/opencollegarts)



**Vimeo** [Open College of the Arts](#)



**Instagram** [@opencollegarts](#)

# Welcome from OCA Principal Will Woods

It is a great pleasure to welcome you to the start of a new academic year as I begin my first full year as Principal.

At OCA, we pride ourselves on inclusivity. Over the next three years we will implement our new academic strategy, which places significant emphasis on access. This is what access means for us:



Will Woods, OCA  
Principal

- Opening up higher education to everyone who wants to study, at a time and pace which suits them, not bound by the conventions of a traditional university.
- Continuously developing our curriculum and model of teaching and learning to embrace innovations which improve the learner experience.
- Sharing our long-established specialist knowledge of creative arts through our extensive network of experienced tutors, keeping the 1-2-1 tutoring model at the heart of what we do.
- Reinvesting any surplus to continue to keep the cost of study as low as we can.

- Preparing students for sustaining their creative practice and continuing professional development once they graduate.
- Championing diverse, local, national and international community networks of creative arts students, practitioners, educators and enthusiasts for creative collaboration.

OCA's commitment to open access means we aim to provide a route to higher education for everyone who wants to study creative arts subjects at pre-degree, degree or postgraduate level, regardless of previous qualifications. We particularly welcome students who are the first in their family to study at degree level and we support flexible study - 75% of our students are already in work when they enrol with us.

Our flexible learning model puts you in charge of your own learning, giving you autonomy over where, when and how you study. You have to be self-motivated and self-disciplined, studying on your own, drawing on the support of other students as you work through your course, and responding actively to the detailed feedback on assignments given by your tutor.

Our values of openness and flexibility are reflected in the way in which our courses and awards are designed, structured and taught. We are establishing accreditation of our Foundation-level studies, introducing new short courses and offering a further set of undergraduate and

postgraduate awards in the coming years to provide greater opportunities for studying at a level and an intensity that suits you.

Students differ in the amount of time they have available for study. We want the structure and delivery of our undergraduate degrees to reflect those differences, acknowledging that for many students the journey takes around nine years, while others may be in a position to study full time. We have therefore begun to explore how we could vary the intensity at which students follow a degree programme and to consider specialist tutors and study planning to support students in managing their studies.

Through the new academic strategy, we aim to improve how we manage and support students at OCA. Please be part of that through contributing to online discussions, focus groups and our annual student survey, so that together we can continue to improve the experience for everyone who studies with OCA.

I wish you every success in your studies and in the development of your creative practice over the next 12 months.

**Will Woods**, Principal

Get in touch: [willwoods@oca.ac.uk](mailto:willwoods@oca.ac.uk)

Twitter [@willwoods](https://twitter.com/willwoods)

# Welcome from the OCASA President Teresa Lanham

OCASA is here to provide a voice for everyone studying with OCA. The circumstances under which OCA students are studying and the broad range of life experience they bring to higher education is what most distinguishes the OCA community from that of a campus-based university. We believe this diversity is a significant asset and that we all bring benefits to one another through our shared experience of studying the creative arts. Now we are part of UCA, OCA students have additional benefits such as access to online journals and electronic library books for undergraduate and postgraduate students in the UK.

The structure of OCASA is designed to ensure representation for all students. There is a representative for each subject, elected by students. Their names and contact details are on page 27-28 of this handbook and on the OCASA website [www.ocasa.org.uk](http://www.ocasa.org.uk). The student representatives all understand what it is like to study remotely and they are an additional source of advice if you would like to discuss questions with someone other than your tutor or the Student Support Team.

OCA is a virtual organisation and we have limited opportunities to meet one another face-to-face, however, OCA has numerous online discussion forums and social

media sites on Facebook dedicated to most subject areas in which OCA offers courses. OCASA also funds study visits and student-led activities such as regional study groups, artist talks, multi-disciplined art workshops and exhibitions. Many students find these events an invaluable way of meeting other students and

forming on-going friendships that help sustain progress in both their coursework and creative practice. Funding criteria can be found on the OCASA website under the OCASA Funding Pot tab. You will find student-related news items, notes from funded activities and minutes of our formal meetings on the OCASA website.



Teresa Lanham, OCASA  
President

I hope you will take the time to visit us there and get involved as a student representative or suggest an idea for OCASA-funded student activities in the future. I wish you the very best during your time with OCA.

**Teresa Lanham**, OCASA President

*Note: Teresa Lanham will be standing down as President in April 2019 after three enjoyable years in the role.*

The Open College of the Arts Student Association (OCASA) is a students' union within the meaning of the Education Act 1994. The Association is devoted to the educational interests of its Members. The aims and objectives of OCASA are to advance and support the education of its members and students of OCA as a whole, and to represent the interests of its members and act as a channel of communication for students in dealing with OCA and any other relevant bodies. OCASA is overseen by a Supervisory Committee appointed by the Trustees of OCA. Its day-to-day activities are managed and organised by the President and Executive Committee.



# Part one

## Being an OCA student



Stephanie Belbin  
Illustration 2 student

## The student community

The OCA student community is characterised by its diversity. Here are the stories of just three people finding their creative voice with OCA: a geographical information systems specialist for the Yorkshire Dales National Park who sculpts in his converted garage studio; a Herefordshire writer working in her fifties on her first novel; and an IT specialist planning his first public photography exhibition in Swansea.

### Mark Butler, Creative Arts Level 2

By day, Mark Butler spends his time working with geographical information systems at the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Science has been at the heart of his education and career since he studied at Birmingham University for a BSc in chemical engineering and an MSc in water resources technology. He went on to gain a qualification in geographical information science.

Mark's decision to study the creative arts didn't come out of the blue. He has been a landscape photographer since 2002. In 2013, he jointly authored *Working the View*, a project funded by Arts Council England through which 40 people share the personal significance of their favourite Yorkshire Dales National Park views.

Although Mark has always been drawn to sculpture, he began his creative arts degree with drawing and went on to



Mark Butler  
Sculpture 2 student

printmaking. He sculpts from a converted garage, describing himself as 'hooked on bronze and rusty steel'. His work places the natural world - pollen grains, nerve cells - under the microscope and he has already started to exhibit and sell his sculptures.

Now studying at level 2, Mark is focussing on combining drawing with sculpture as his creative practice develops, an endeavour helped by a six-month sabbatical begun in Spring 2018. As well as completing the sculpture course, he will be starting work on an environmentally themed collaboration with two other creative practitioners. Mark says: 'OCA has given me the opportunity to study for a creative arts degree that I wouldn't have been able to do in any other way, at the same time paving the way to the next stage of my career.'

## Marie England, **Creative Writing, Level 3**

Marie England started writing five years ago when she did a six-week creative writing course at the technical college in Hereford close to where she lives. Keen to continue, she chose OCA because she could start studying straight away, without having to wait for the start of a new academic year. Marie is now studying her final level 3 course and hopes to graduate in 2019 or 2020 with her first higher education qualification. Despite having chosen the level 2 Life Writing course unit a little reluctantly, she has found that the writing she completed for it has influenced her fiction, enabling her to create colour and give her prose a poetic feel.

Born and brought up in Manchester, Marie went at the age of four to a boarding school in Liverpool for blind children as she lost her sight at the age of two and a half. When she was 11, Marie came third in a *Daily Express* children's writing competition. Her winning piece told the story of a girl who travels back in time and sees her mother as she was when a young girl herself. She is impressed by the way OCA has adapted to her needs as a blind person, for example by arranging for her tutors – Nina Milton, Vicky Mackenzie and Barbara Henderson – to give feedback on her assignments that she can read on a screen reader.

Marie is thrilled to find herself a published writer in her fifties. Her non-fiction piece *Beyond the cherry tree*, written as part of the level 2 Life Writing course, was published in Bournemouth University's *Fresher* non-fiction anthology after winning an award in the 2017 Fresher Writing Prize.

Once she's graduated, Marie will be concentrating on finishing the novel she has begun since becoming an OCA student. Then she will be looking for a publisher. The novel tells the story of adopted twin girls. One of them goes missing in 1986. The other returns as an adult to the rural community in Herefordshire where they were brought up, on a quest to discover the secret of her sister's disappearance. It's a novel of finding the truth and the complexities of relationships and secrets.

Marie says: 'Without OCA, I really don't think I would have carried on writing. What works best for me as an OCA student is being able to study at my own pace. The lack of contact with other students isn't always easy, but that hasn't held me back. It's been quite a journey from winning a *Daily Express* competition all those years ago!'

## Beyond the Cherry Blossom Tree

My mother keeps a photograph; this photograph is also on St Vincent's School for the Blind archive website. In the picture I stand with nine other children; we are all smiling. I am seven years old and it is the day of my First Holy Communion. The day we swallowed for the first time that dry wafer which, the nuns assured us, was the body of Christ. We accepted this, as we were learning to accept our lives. Behind me there is a cherry blossom tree. It is May so the vibrant flowers are open and their sweet perfume fills the air. Within weeks the flowers will have fallen, but for now the tree is a pretty background for the picture; its natural beauty fronting the heavy doors to the institution.

The gravel crackled like fire beneath our feet, as we walked up the driveway. I held onto my mother's hand, uncertainty wriggling like worms in my stomach. The air felt greased with a tangible odour I did not recognise; like soured milk. I had the desire to spit. So I did.

Marie England, Creative Writing student, Exerpt from  
*Beyond the Cherry Blossom Tree*

## Matthew Roberts, **Photography, level 1**

Matthew Roberts left school in Swansea uninspired by the creative arts after studying for an art A level. He ended up with a job in IT and took hundreds of photographs of what he describes as 'stereotypical sunsets' over the Gower Peninsula in his free time. Seven years later, Mark's still working in technology, but his initial interest in photography has taken him in a direction he couldn't have anticipated when he left school. Feeling himself in a rut as a photographer, he found OCA through a Google search.

When he began studying, he spent time finding photography that inspired him, starting with the sea-side images of Martin Parr. Names now familiar to him were unknown then – street photographers Nick Turpin, Matt Stuart and Vivian Maier; *Cardiff After Dark* author Maciej Dakowicz; the documentor of 20th century America, Robert Frank; the landscape photographer Fay Godwin. At work, he has a four days on, three days off shift pattern, giving him time to invest in his course. His own creative process begins with an idea and continues with brainstorming. Then there is a random shoot and finally a disciplined edit.

Two years ago, Matthew knew nothing about distance learning. Now, he's confronted the hurdle of how to motivate himself, creating his own study structures using lists and deadlines. His next priority is preparing for an exhibition at Swansea Museum in early 2019. He has systematically

reviewed 10,000 of his street images, removing 9,000 of them to produce a long list. Once he's cut out a further 500, he will decide on a theme for the exhibition. 'A lot more thought goes into my work since I started studying with OCA,' says Matthew. 'I'm not just taking pretty pictures now; there's more of me in my work.'



## Find out more

Visit OCA's student galleries:

[www.oca.ac.uk/about-oca/oca-galleries/](http://www.oca.ac.uk/about-oca/oca-galleries/)

## More about OCA students

### Age

- 77% are aged between 30 and 60
- 14% are over 60

### Qualifications

- 2% had no qualifications when they enrolled
- 10% are not qualified above GCSE level
- 30% haven't studied beyond A level

### Where OCA students live

- 83% UK
- 8% mainland Europe
- 7% rest of the world

Over 6% of OCA students define themselves as BME (black and minority ethnic).

A number of OCA students are serving custodial sentences. 20% of OCA students define themselves as suffering from a physical, mental or learning disability. This compares with 12% of students studying full or part-time for a first degree in mainstream universities. *Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency, Participation of UK domiciled students in higher education who are in receipt of Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA): all undergraduates 2016/17*

## OCASA, the OCA Student Association

OCASA is the Open College of the Arts Student Association and the voice of the OCA student body. Every student automatically becomes a member as soon as they enrol. The Association represents the vibrant and diverse body of students studying Foundations, undergraduate and postgraduate courses with the OCA. It was set up in 2011 and aims to:

- advance and support the education of its members and OCA students as a whole
- represent the interests of its members and act as a channel of communication for students in dealing with the OCA and any other relevant bodies

OCASA also has a role in encouraging students to make contact with one another. For example, it can allocate funds for student-led activities such as regional study groups, study visits, artist talks and workshops that are open to all students.

## Representatives 2018-19

<b>Undergraduate</b>		
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Creative Arts	Emma Maitland	creativearts @ocasa.org.uk
Creative Writing	Justin McReynolds	writing @ocasa.org.uk
Fine Art & Art History	Bernadette Raho Jeavons	fineart @ocasa.org.uk
Music	Kevin Allen	music @ocasa.org.uk
Photography	Andrew Fitzgibbon	photography @ocasa.org.uk
Textiles	Victoria Chamberlain	textiles @ocasa.org.uk
Visual Communications	Currently Vacant	viscomms @ocasa.org.uk
<b>MA Fine Art</b>		
<b>Cohort</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact</b>
MA Studies 2016	Rachel McManus	mastudies @ocasa.org.uk
MA Studies 2017	Jessie Voermans	mastudies @ocasa.org.uk

Other		
Role	Name	Contact
Communications	Holly Woodward	communications@ocasa.org.uk
Treasurer	Currently Vacant	finance@ocasa.org.uk

The OCASA President welcomes approaches from students who would be interested in taking on the student representative role for the two positions currently vacant. Please contact the OCASA President Teresa Lanham [president@ocasa.org.uk](mailto:president@ocasa.org.uk). OCASA representatives meet via video conferencing with, typically, one meeting a year at OCA's Michael Young Arts Centre in Barnsley.

OCA's interactive map enables you to find out which OCA students live near you [www.oca-student.com/course-mates/student-locations](http://www.oca-student.com/course-mates/student-locations)



**Find out more**

[www.ocasa.org.uk](http://www.ocasa.org.uk)

## Partnership statement

The partnership statement was developed by OCA and OCASA in 2012. It summarises what each will undertake to enable the relationship between the college and students to be fully collaborative and productive.

### Students

As a student at the Open College of the Arts, I will:

- Pursue my studies with enthusiasm and passion, working to the best of my abilities and engaging fully with the scope and range of activities associated with OCA distance learning
- Take responsibility for managing my own learning journey, allocating sufficient time to pursue my studies and submitting work within agreed timescales wherever possible
- Seek out and engage with opportunities available outside my studies that enrich my knowledge, skills and experience; aspire to broaden my horizons and explore creativity to the full
- Communicate respectfully and responsibly with other students and OCA staff
- Participate actively in community activities such as student forums, study visits, workshops and

critiques; be willing to share my work within the OCA community

- Respond positively to constructive feedback from tutors; engage thoughtfully and enthusiastically in critical discussion with other students
- Ensure that I fully understand and work within the OCA's defined learning framework; communicate any issues and concerns that I experience promptly and respectfully through appropriate channels
- Apply principles of honesty and integrity to my studies, and in all my dealings with OCA and its staff

## **Tutors and Head Office Staff**

As tutors and head office staff at the Open College of the Arts, we will:

- Develop well-structured, well-researched and relevant learning pathways that guide students to attain their potential, broaden their horizons and achieve appropriate qualifications
- Devise stimulating course materials and online resources based on effective distance-learning methods and technologies; keep up-to-date with new developments in learning, teaching and assessment
- Provide timely, well-grounded, constructive and

challenging individual feedback on each student's work, from a tutor who is experienced at HE level, a practitioner in the relevant field, and well-versed in distance learning

- Support each student with considered and informed advice and guidance on issues related to their orientation to HE, learning pathway, and progression choices
- Facilitate the development of a lively, supportive and challenging college community through online forums, optional study visits and student-initiated projects
- Develop and sustain an ethos that reflects the critical stakeholder status of our students; actively seek students' views on the learning experience with OCA; value that feedback and act on it where appropriate
- Provide accessible and inclusive learning and teaching that respects and benefits from cultural diversity and is responsive to students with special needs
- Apply principles of honesty and integrity to all our dealings with students and our OCA colleagues

In consultation with OCASA, OCA is developing a Student Charter, which will replace the Partnership Statement. Once approved, the Student Charter will be published online at [www.ocasa.org.uk](http://www.ocasa.org.uk).

## Supporting one another

There are many benefits to studying a creative arts subject with the flexibility offered by OCA: reading and thinking when it suits you, setting your own timetables and deadlines for writing assignments and preparing your work for assessment, perhaps having a studio space where you can develop your creative practice. OCA offers a variety of ways for students to support one another and share ideas.

### The OCA student website

Through the OCA student website, you can:

- contribute to a discussion forum already running on the site
- upload images of your own work for other students to comment on
- start a discussion forum on a topic that would be of interest to other students
- comment on the work of other students
- alert students to useful resources both within OCA and externally
- flag up forthcoming exhibitions that students may wish to attend independently
- find out about discounts you may be eligible for

## The OCASA website

Through the OCASA website [www.ocasa.org.uk](http://www.ocasa.org.uk), you can:

- find out who your student representative is
- apply for funding for a study day or workshop you would like to organise
- read reports from regional groups about events they have hosted

## The OCA blog, [#weareOCA](#)

Our blog, [#weareOCA](#), is a space for engaging in discussion, reading articles, looking at student work, and finding out about study visits and other OCA events.

## Regional groups

You may want to think about joining one of OCA's numerous student-led regional groups. Regional groups are virtual or face-to-face meetings of students based in the same area of the country, initiated and organised by students. Some groups are long established and have regular meetups, led by an OCA tutor. Students can use the Geographic Groups forum, which you will find on <https://discuss.oca-student.com/>, to make contact with existing groups or start your own. You can apply for funding for regional group events through OCASA, the OCA Student Association, at [www.ocasa.org.uk](http://www.ocasa.org.uk).



## Find out more

Visit: <https://discuss.oca-student.com/> for student discussion groups

Visit: <https://groups.google.com/a/oqa.ac.uk/forum> to find groups for the individual course units you are taking

Visit: [www.ocasa.org.uk](http://www.ocasa.org.uk) to find out who your subject representative is and how to apply for funding if you want to organise a workshop or study day

Visit: <https://weareoca.com> to read our blog, #weareoca, and find out about forthcoming study visits

Visit: [www.oqa-student.com/comms](http://www.oqa-student.com/comms) to arrange a Google Meet

Visit: <http://www.oqa-student.com/oqa-student-site-guide/course-mates> to see where other students live and add your own name and location

## The Office for Students

The Office for Students is an independent public body which was established by the Higher Education and Research Act 2017. It regulates English higher education providers on behalf of all students and reports to the UK Parliament through the Department for Education (DfE). All higher Education providers in England are required to produce an Access and Participation Plan by academic year 2019/20 for the Office for Students. The plans will set out how providers will improve equality of opportunity for under-represented groups to access, succeed in and progress in higher education.

OCA's Access and Participation Plan will include:

- an assessment of our current performance in widening access to and participation in higher education
- our ambition and strategy for reaching under-represented groups through our access and participation work
- how we will evidence whether our approach to widening access is being successful
- the costs of delivering our widening access strategy
- how we will inform students about our access and participation plan

## Telling us what you think - the student voice

OCA's mission statement is 'To be at the forefront of student-led creative arts education through innovative open, enhanced and supported distance learning, for an evolving society.' Your opinion matters, and is critical in developing who OCA are, what we do, and what we offer.

We are always open to listen to your thoughts about any aspect of OCA and encourage you to get in touch with us. This could be as simple as discussing things with your tutor or some of the support staff at HQ.

## Ways students can engage with OCA

- Follow us on social media; we have a presence on all the major social media channels.
- Contact your OCASA representative; they can raise things on your behalf.
- Talk to us at OCA HQ; we have dedicated teams to support you.
  - [studentadvice@oca.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@oca.ac.uk)
  - [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk)
  - [coursesupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:coursesupport@oca.ac.uk)
- The Student Consultative Committee; speak to OCASA to find out more.
- Use the online discussion forums; you may find others thinking the same as you or able to offer different perspectives.

We regularly survey students as part of our Annual Academic Monitoring process. The survey responses are very important for ensuring the academic integrity and quality of our courses. You can contribute directly through:

- unit evaluation survey – students are surveyed once per unit, once each year.
- level survey – this survey focuses on your experience at each academic level. You can therefore expect to be surveyed three times over course of your undergraduate studies at OCA.

## The OCA team and how we can help

This Student Handbook and the OCA website and student site [www.oca-student.com](http://www.oca-student.com) will provide answers to many of the questions you have about your course, being part of the OCA student community, fees, levels and credits, assignments and assessment. If you don't find what you need there, you can also contact a member of the OCA team at the Michael Young Arts Centre.

If you can't find out what you need to know about your course from your course materials or through the student forums, you can request email or telephone support for any subject-specific questions about projects, assignments and other aspects of your course.

Email [coursesupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:coursesupport@oca.ac.uk) or call 0800 731 2116.



### Find out more

**The OCA team**, between pages 92 and 102 of this handbook, tells you who does what on the OCA team.

# Part two

## About your course



Rachel Ashby  
Printmaking 1 student

# About your course

## Foundation

### Course length:

12 months at approximately 8 hours each week

**Number of credits:** None

All OCA undergraduate and postgraduate courses are accredited and qualify for HE credits under the Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme (CATS), used by many universities in the UK to monitor, record and reward passage through a modular degree course and to facilitate movement between courses and institutions.

## Undergraduate BA(Hons)

### Course length:

Level 1 (higher education level 4) 1,200 learning hours

Level 2 (higher education level 5) 1,200 learning hours

Level 3 (higher education level 6) 1,200 learning hours

The amount of time these levels take, will depend on how many learning hours you can commit. Students working around 8 learning hours per week might typically complete in 36 months, or 14 hours per week for 24 months, or 28 hours for 12 months per level.

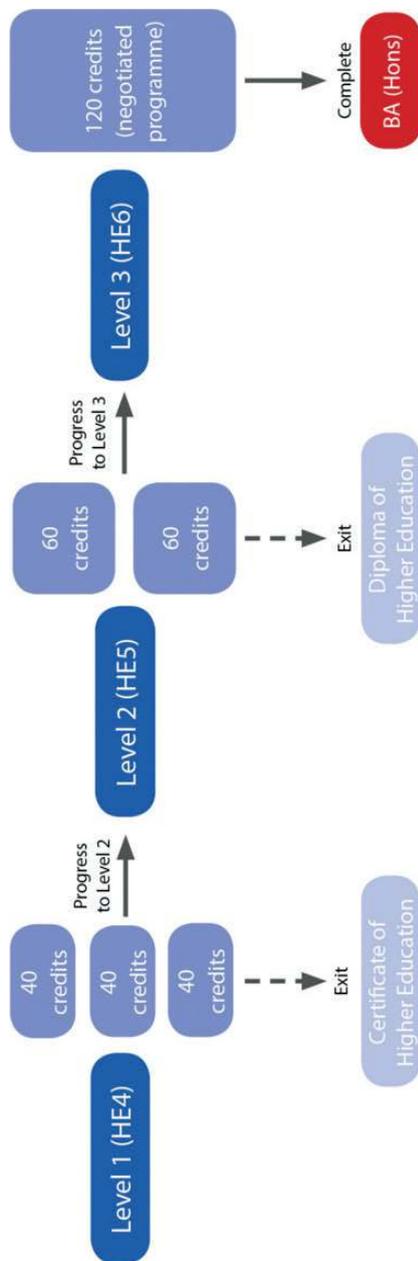
**Number of credits:**

Level 1 (higher education level 4) 3 course units @ 40 credits  
= 120 credits

Level 2 (higher education level 5) 2 course units @ 60 credits  
= 120 credits

Level 3 (higher education level 6) all undergraduate degree pathways except Creative Writing: 3 course units @ 40 credits  
= 120 credits; Creative Writing only: 2 course units @ 60 credits = 120 credits

If you are planning to follow a full degree pathway, you will need to build up 360 credits. The requirement from OCA's validating higher education institution, the University for the Creative Arts, is that study for an undergraduate degree be completed within a maximum period of 12 years.



OCA undergraduate degrees: levels and credits

Students who plan to study the full degree pathway may be able to use the skills and knowledge they have already to gain entry to an OCA course at level 2 or 3 under the APELs (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) or APCL (Accreditation of Prior Certified Learning) scheme. Contact the Student Services team on [studentadvice@oca.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@oca.ac.uk) if you want to discuss whether you may be eligible for either scheme.

## **Postgraduate**

Level 4 (higher education level 7)

### **Course length:**

Three years on a cohort basis

**Number of credits:** 180



# Part three

## Studying with OCA



Jill Hodgkins  
Textiles 3 student

## Ten top tips for creative arts students

1. Dive straight into your studies when you enrol; research shows that the quicker you submit your first assignment, the more likely you are to complete your studies.
2. Talk to your fellow students as they've got lots of great ideas from their own experience of studying with OCA.
3. Studying a creative arts subject shouldn't all be about sitting at your desk. Try and build in visits to galleries, exhibitions, concerts, theatres, cinemas and literary festivals to enhance your learning.
4. Set aside time to study based on what fits in with your lifestyle, your other commitments – and your body clock!
5. Carry a small notebook or sketchbook with you wherever you go for jotting down new thoughts and ideas, drawing & sketching, and making a note of book and journal titles.
6. Plan ahead with a timetable that includes time for reading and reflection, writing your learning log, researching and writing assignments, and, if you are working towards a degree, preparing your work for assessment.

7. Avoid the temptation to study for too long in one burst. Two hours when your mind is alert are more productive than eight when you are tired.
8. Try and be active in the OCA online community, visiting student discussion groups, joining Google Groups, looking at the work of other students and making comments on the discussions you find there.
9. Learn by looking at and critiquing the work of other students. You will find plenty of examples in the student galleries on [www.oca.ac.uk](http://www.oca.ac.uk) and on the discussion forums on the student site.
10. If you live near a university, join the library as a guest member. The cost is low – usually no more than £50 a year – and you will be able to borrow books, access journals and have somewhere else to study. If you are not close to a university, then make the most of OCA's online resources.

## ***An Introduction to Studying in HE***

This short OCA course will give you a picture of how to think and how to manage your studies before you get started in earnest, helping you approach your journey into HE with confidence and optimism. The course is free and takes five to ten hours to complete.

Here are some of the topics it covers:

- Managing your studies
- Managing your digital environment
- Approaches to learning
- Collecting information
- Research and note-taking
- Developing your learning log
- Using blogs

## Digital transformation programme

OCA has begun a five-year digital transformation programme through which we aim to improve the online learning experience of students. The programme is looking at the ways technology can best support students throughout their learning journey and use technological innovation to simplify key processes such as submitting assignments for tutor and formal assessment.

### A new Virtual Learning Environment

The first change students will see is the introduction of a new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to replace the current student site [www.oca-student.com](http://www.oca-student.com). The new VLE is provisionally named OCA Learn and has a target launch date of January 2019. As well as improving the experience of students, it will also support digitally-enhanced processes and services for tutors and course authors.

As we develop the VLE, we will also be:

- working on ways to improve the accessibility of course materials and associated resources
- looking at additional approaches to the distribution of course content so that there are more ways for students to engage with their course and with other students.

Students who enrol after we have launched OCA Learn will have access only to the new VLE. [www.oca-student.com](http://www.oca-student.com) will remain available for students who begin their studies on that platform.

## Your tutor

All OCA students, whether they are studying at Foundation, undergraduate or postgraduate level, have a tutor to support them in their studies. OCA tutors are experienced at teaching at higher education levels, have a teaching qualification or are working towards one, and all are creative practitioners themselves. At Foundations and undergraduate levels 1 and 2, OCA allocates a tutor to each student. At undergraduate level 3, tutor allocation will be agreed in conjunction with the Programme Leader following the outcome of the progression discussion.

## What you can expect from your tutor

The role of your tutor is to:

- provide written or video feedback on the course assignments of individual students which is timely, well-grounded, constructive and challenging. The feedback given is formative, so students at undergraduate and postgraduate level can use it to make improvements to their work if they are submitting it for formal assessment;
- students studying at undergraduate level should also share their learning log/blog with their tutor as directed, especially if they are planning to put their work forward for assessment, as logs form part of the assessment process.

The core entitlement to tutor support at undergraduate level, as detailed in OCA's Student Regulations, Conditions of Enrolment, includes an allowance for students to receive individual feedback from their tutor for each of the assignments set for the course unit. In a typical course unit, this will be five or six assignments.

## **Video feedback**

Video feedback is available via Google Meet to students who would like to engage with their tutor 'face-to-face' online. Google Meet is free to use for students and tutors. Video feedback is an alternative to receiving written feedback, although you will also get a brief written summary of the main points covered. Throughout a course unit, a combination of video and written feedback can be negotiated with your tutor, depending on what works best for you. For example, if you require detailed annotations of creative writing or musical composition, written feedback will be more appropriate.

## **Exercises, projects and assignments**

Exercises, research tasks, and projects set out in the course materials help you work towards your next assignment. For most courses, your tutor will want to see your assignment plus a selection of supporting work, which may be drawn from the exercises and projects. The requirements for each course unit differ slightly, so read the assignment submission instructions carefully.

If you are studying at undergraduate level you are permitted under OCA's Student Regulations to submit only one assignment at a time. You may not submit the subsequent assignment until you have received feedback from the previous assignment and acted upon it where appropriate.

Note: if you submit an assignment to your tutor beyond the timescale permitted for each course (see Student Regulations, Conditions of Enrolment), your tutor will return the assignment to you without it having been reviewed and given formative feedback.

## **What you can expect from tutor feedback**

**You can expect your tutor feedback to be:**

**Timely:** the normal turnaround time is two weeks if you submit your work by the agreed deadline. (If you submit earlier or later than agreed, it may take up to 4 weeks.)

**Full and comprehensive:** tutorials address all aspects of the course, including your practical work, your research and your written reflection and analysis. Written feedback is normally between 750–1,000 words. Video feedback lasts about 20 minutes. Your tutor will follow up with a shorter written summary of the main points discussed during the video feedback.

**Clear and concise:** feedback is organised under clear headings, which reference the assessment criteria.

**Individually tailored:** feedback meets you where you are now in your studies and supports you to develop your skills and your particular areas of interest and lines of enquiry. It makes suggestions for further reading/viewing/listening which match your interests.

**Encouraging and supportive:** feedback highlights what works well and helps to identify how you can improve your work.

**Challenging:** it also provides constructive criticism and meaningful challenges for you to take onboard as you develop your work. This will help you incorporate suggestions as you work towards the next assignment.

Learning to grow creatively requires challenging feedback, and for you to use these comments constructively. It's good practice to reflect on any feedback, highlighting what it means to you, and identifying what you plan to do next. This will help you in your learning, and your tutor in their understanding of how best to support you. Use your learning log to capture these reflections and refer to 'your tutor' rather than naming them directly, especially online.

**Expand your horizons:** expect and welcome the opportunity to see the world differently as a result of your engagement with the course, your tutor and your fellow students.

## What your tutor will not do

Comment on every single piece you submit: tutors may choose to comment on selected pieces to illustrate points which can be applied generally.

Tell you exactly what to do or how to do it: this is study at higher education level, and the role of the tutor is to help you to develop your practice rather than gain expertise in individual techniques. There is a wealth of 'how to' information on the internet, plus practical advice and support to be gained from our Course Support Advisors, the OCA student website and your fellow students.



### Find out more

Watch our five-minute OCA video on our tutors by going to the student site and searching for 'Role of the Tutor'

<https://vimeo.com/180282269>

## **Additional academic support**

Tutors can provide some guidance outside of their main task of writing formative feedback, but please keep these requests within reasonable bounds. (In cases where students and OCA do not agree on the level of requests for additional support being made, the interpretation of what is reasonable rests with OCA.)

You may also want to talk to your fellow students via our forums.

### **Academic Development Officers**

In addition to the support provided by your tutor, you may request telephone or email support at any time from OCA's Academic Development Officers. These may be questions about projects, assignments and other aspects of your course.

Email: [coursesupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:coursesupport@oca.ac.uk)

Telephone: 0800 731 2116

## Meet our tutors

OCA has over 100 tutors, based throughout the UK. Here's more about three of them.



### Find out more

Meet all our tutors at <http://www.oca.ac.uk/our-tutors/>

## Patti Crozier, Interior Design Programme Leader

Patti Crozier combines tutoring at OCA with her practice as a commercial interior designer. As well as creating and leading her own projects, she also works collaboratively with artists, furniture designers, textile designers, graphic designers, ceramicists and other practitioners. Patti has taught interior design in a number of institutions, bringing to each of them an ambitious and progressive approach to interior design practice and education. Questioning the consumption and disposability of interior design lies at the heart of her teaching and practice. Process and practice as a form of learning and development of interior design is inherent in her approach, which she promotes as a tutor through

practical exploration of media and model making. Patti's postgraduate studies focused on the psychology of how and why people use space and how companies and organisations can manipulate space to improve revenue. Recent participatory work includes *Knowing from the Inside: Anthropology, Art, Architecture & Design* (University of Aberdeen), a pilot project in Bauhaus, Dessau, Germany supported by Bauhaus Dessau Foundation and KfI. She is part of a small international group of cross-discipline designers using a variety of techniques and influences to inform their work.



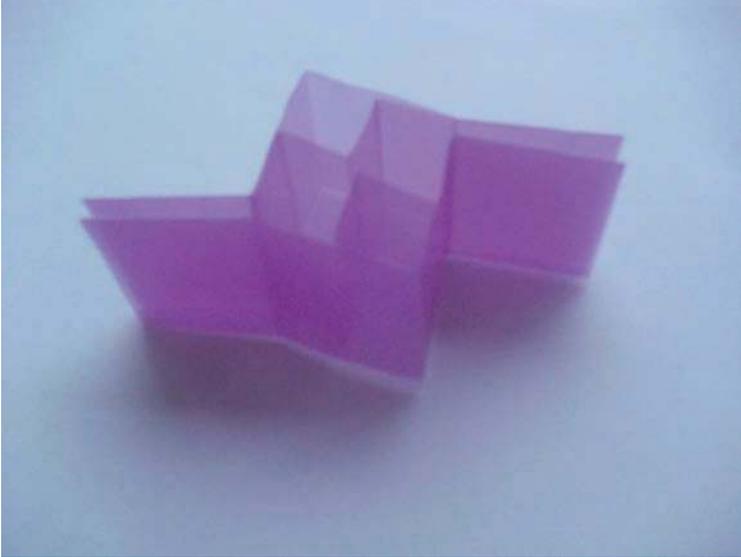
Patti Crozier, Interior Design Programme Leader

## Les Bicknell, MA Fine Art tutor

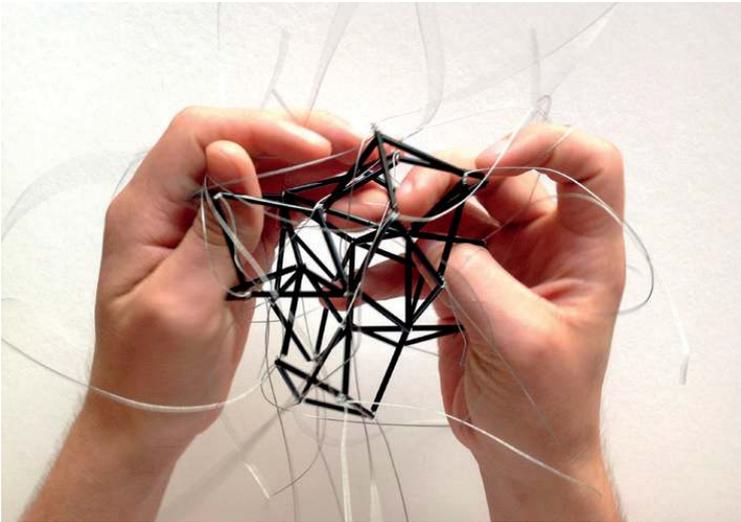
A desire to collaborate underpins Les's work, evidenced in an extensive history of socially engaged residencies in a wide range of contexts. Teaching formally within art colleges has informed his practice and continues to connect him with current creative thinking. His practice has an extensive history of making, one strand of which explores the concept of bookness. The hybrid nature of the book form has led him to undertake an extensive range of commissions and exhibitions. He is interested in making work that communicates with people whilst leaving space for the viewer, enabling them to stop and reflect. The work he is involved in with communities, pupils and students has its roots in attempting to make the world a better place through creativity and is underpinned by a belief in art as a tool for change, as a way of engaging with this world, of seeing its beauty and opportunities, and supporting the individual to develop their own understanding. Les's work can be found in public and private international collections.

He documents his practice at:

<http://lesbicknell.blogspot.com/>



Les Bicknell, *de-reform 1*



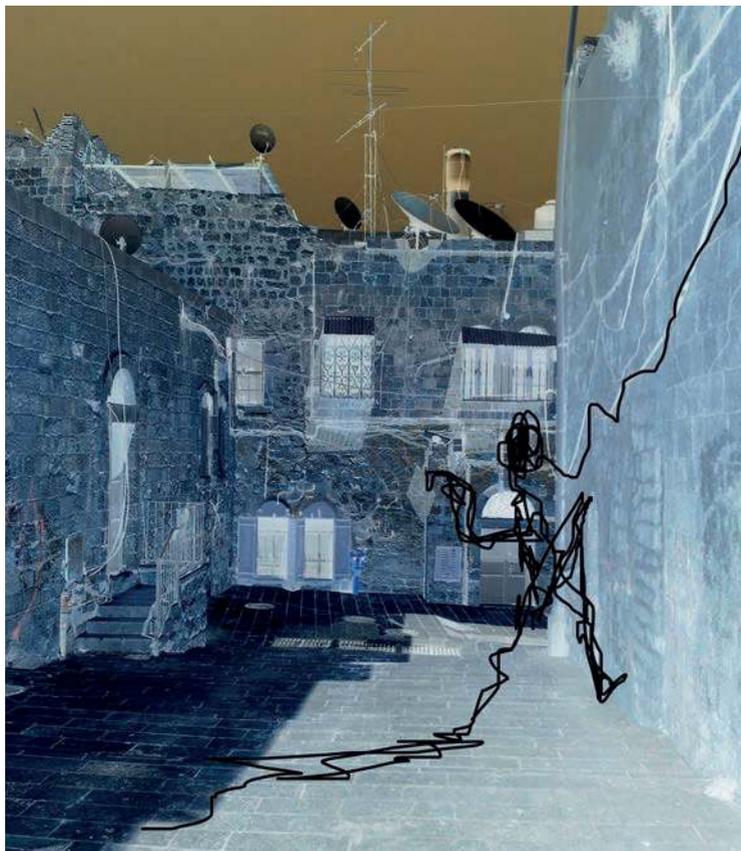
Les Bicknell, *de-reform 3*

## Diana Ali, Drawing, Painting and Creative Arts

Diana's practice involves fictional writing, drawing, installation, a play on language and text, and direct animation. She works nationally and internationally, exploring lines of cultural divides and bringing fragments of different cultures in a single space. Diana has exhibited in the UK at the TINAG festival, London and the Site Gallery, Sheffield. Her international exhibitions include The Library Artspace in Victoria, Australia, The Crafts Fair in San Francisco, The Roaming Biennial in Tehran and the Other Asia's exhibition ReDo Pakistan in Karachi, Pakistan. She has curated mass exhibitions including *Up & Coming* at the CUC in Liverpool, an event showcasing 60 emerging national and international artists, *Subversive Correspondence*, London and Bristol and *Dialogues: A Fake Romance?*, Swansea. Internationally, she has curated in countries with cultural divides: *A State of Un-Play* at Atelier 35 in Romania and *Engagement and Entrapment* in Israel/Palestine, Cyprus and South Korea. She is due to curate 'Loss & Nudity' in California.

She is currently working with promoting the arts and the importance of creative thinking and making in different sectors outside of art. She has given presentations and worked at the Institute of Mental Health, Nottingham University; Southwark Cathedral for their Black History Month; and Derbyshire & Nottinghamshire medieval archeology and is involved in a book about art and business, *Unlocking the Puzzles of Peak Engagement and Performance*

(PEP®) by Elmira Bakhshalian and Dr Martin Reddington.  
Diana has an MA in Master in Contemporary Fine Art and a  
Fellowship in Higher Education (HFEA).



Diana Ali, Direct animation work based on entrapment in  
Israel and Palestine

## Sending assignments to your tutor

The materials for each course unit state clearly what you need to send to your tutor for each assignment. For all undergraduate degree subjects except textiles, your tutor needs to see a selection of your work from the section of the course unit you have just completed. This includes sketchbooks and notebooks if you have them. We ask you to let your tutor have just one sketchbook or notebook for each section of the course unit you complete each time you send an assignment. You should also include the relevant section of your learning log (as a hard copy or by email) or your blog, if you keep one (including the url for the section relating to your assignment). Except for textiles students, you should not send your tutor all the work you have done as in most cases at least some of it will not be relevant to the section of the course for which you have completed the assignment.

If you are studying a visual arts subject, you do not need to mount your work when you send it to your tutor. We encourage you to send your work in an A1 portfolio. If your work needs a larger portfolio, we will accept an A0 portfolio. It's important that you find a way of packaging your work so that it is flat, protected with card backing, if you don't have a portfolio. We ask all students to keep their work to a weight limit of five (5) kilograms or less, including the weight of the portfolio (if there is one) and other work accompanying the assignment such as sketchbooks and notebooks.

The weight limit is important as we invoice you for the additional postage costs incurred in sending your work back to you for packages over five (5) kilograms in weight.

It's important to agree deadlines for completing assignments and sending them to your tutor. You will help tutors make best use of their time reviewing your work if you pay attention to packing it in a way that means tutors can unpack it easily, at the same time as making sure it is safe when it is in transit. Remember to write your surname or student number on the outside of the parcel so your tutor knows it's yours when it is delivered.



### **Find out more**

[www.oca-student.com/resource-type/guide-submitting-assignments](http://www.oca-student.com/resource-type/guide-submitting-assignments)

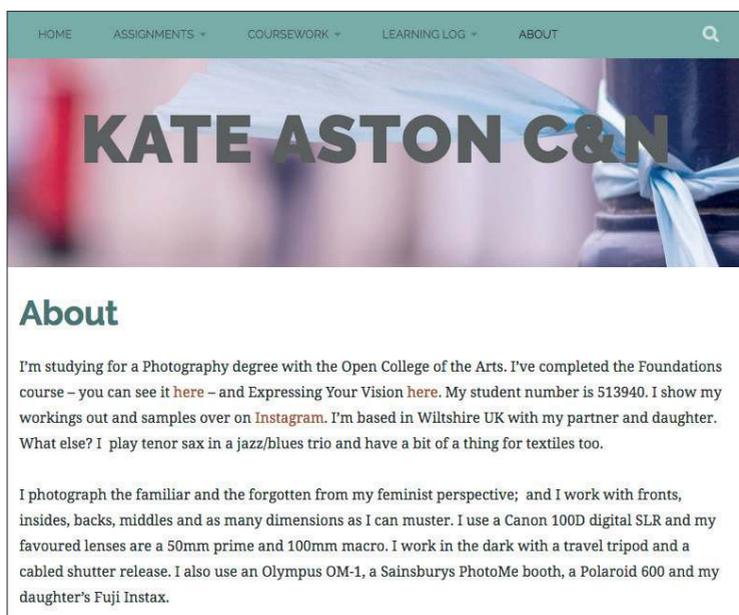
## **Learning logs**

OCA expects all students to keep a learning log. A learning log is a record of your learning experiences and your reflections on all aspects of your study. It will help you plan, develop and reflect. Students following a degree pathway at undergraduate and postgraduate level submit their learning

log as a component of the formal submission of their work for assessment. For creative writing students, the learning log takes the form of a reflective commentary.

Whether you keep your learning log online, in the form of a blog, or in a notebook, it's important to add to it regularly. Two or three times a week is a good rule of thumb. You are more likely to produce meaningful and insightful entries if you reflect upon events and activities when they are still fresh in your mind.

Look at this example of a blog by Photography student Kate Aston to help you start thinking about your own learning log:



The image shows a screenshot of a student blog page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for HOME, ASSIGNMENTS, COURSEWORK, LEARNING LOG, and ABOUT, along with a search icon. Below the navigation bar is a large header image featuring a blue ribbon tied around a dark object, with the text "KATE ASTON C&N" overlaid in large, bold, dark letters. Underneath the header is a section titled "About" in a teal color. The text in the "About" section reads: "I'm studying for a Photography degree with the Open College of the Arts. I've completed the Foundations course – you can see it [here](#) – and Expressing Your Vision [here](#). My student number is 513940. I show my workings out and samples over on [Instagram](#). I'm based in Wiltshire UK with my partner and daughter. What else? I play tenor sax in a jazz/blues trio and have a bit of a thing for textiles too." Below this is another paragraph: "I photograph the familiar and the forgotten from my feminist perspective; and I work with fronts, insides, backs, middles and as many dimensions as I can muster. I use a Canon 100D digital SLR and my favoured lenses are a 50mm prime and 100mm macro. I work in the dark with a travel tripod and a cabled shutter release. I also use an Olympus OM-1, a Sainsburys PhotoMe booth, a Polaroid 600 and my daughter's Fuji Instax."



## Find out more

Download the OCA study guide Keeping an Online Learning Blog [www.oca-student.com/study-guides/keeping-online-learning-log](http://www.oca-student.com/study-guides/keeping-online-learning-log)

# Assessment

## Foundations

Foundations courses are not assessed.

## Undergraduate

The purpose of assessment is to give students a final grade for their work. Students studying at undergraduate level may have decided before they enrolled that they wanted to follow a degree pathway. Other OCA students begin studying and then make the decision to follow a degree pathway and put their work forward for assessment. Only students enrolled on a degree pathway can have their work assessed. Students who are undertaking an individual course unit as a way of developing their creative practice do not have their work assessed. If you are uncertain about whether to put your work forward for assessment, you should discuss this with your tutor.

There are three assessments in each academic year, in November, March and July. Students are required to submit their work two months before the assessment month. If you are intending to submit your work for assessment, it's important that you plan ahead. OCA's Student Regulations, Undergraduate Academic Regulatory Framework, 2.4 allow you to have your work assessed on the first or second assessment event following the date on which you complete

your course and submit your final assignment. If you miss the second assessment event, for example because you haven't prepared your work in time, you will not be able to submit it for assessment.

Example: If you complete your course in February, you must submit your work for assessment at either the July or November assessment event. As students have to submit their work between four and six weeks before the assessment event, it would be too late to apply for the March assessment event.

Marks for level 1 and level 2 courses do not count towards the final degree class but are useful in giving students an indication of the level at which they are working. Marks given at level 3 determine the class of undergraduate degree awarded (see below).

## **Undergraduate marks and degree classifications**

<b>Marks 100</b>	<b>Degree classification awarded</b>
70-100	work of 1st class honours standard
60-69	work of upper second (2:1) standard
50-59	work of lower second (2:2) standard
40-49	work of 3rd class standard

All work submitted for assessment is looked at by at least two internal assessors, and reviewed through a quality process of parity marking across course units and courses. The internal assessors are experienced OCA tutors and Programme Leaders who are knowledgeable about OCA course units, teaching and learning, and about assessment processes in higher education. Grades are provisional until reviewed by External Examiners, and ratified at Exam Board events.

The purpose of assessment is to provide summative feedback on your achievements through grades and written comments that highlight how you can continue to develop your work. This enables students to gain an understanding of how they are performing and make adjustments if necessary in the way they work and their approaches to study as they progress through the degree pathway.

Tutors, through their formative feedback narrative, will help give you an idea of how well you are doing and how to improve but will not provide an actual grade. That's the role of the assessors.

## Undergraduate assessment – how it works

	When	What happens
1	Student submits penultimate assignment to tutor	OCA sends student reminder to complete application form for assessment
2	Four to six weeks before assessment event	Student submits work for assessment to OCA at the Michael Young Arts Centre
3	November, March and July	Student portfolio reviewed by two internal (OCA) assessors, who agree the marks to be allocated
4	November, March and July	External (UCA) assessors review marks given by internal (OCA) assessors
5	Within 2 weeks of the formal undergraduate exam board, which is held at the very end of the assessment month	OCA returns work to student

<b>6</b>	Within 2 weeks of the formal undergraduate exam board, which is held at the very end of the assessment month	Percentage mark published on OCA student site using student number only
<b>7</b>	Within 8 weeks of the undergraduate exam board	Student receives letter confirming percentage mark and with assessors' comments
<b>8</b>	<b>June 2019</b>	For students, receiving an award - CertHE, DipHE, BA and BA (Hons) - UCA graduation ceremony in London

## External examiners

External examiners for OCA's undergraduate and postgraduate courses are experienced assessors in their own field and hold (or have recently held) senior academic posts in relevant departments in UK universities. They are appointed by UCA and serve for a finite period (typically for four years).

The roles of the external examiners are:

- to assist in the maintenance of the standard of awards, and to advise UCA if OCA standards fall below national standards;
- to seek to ensure that the assessment system is fair and is operated equitably;
- to adjudicate in cases of conflict or disagreement between internal assessors;
- to attend meetings of relevant Boards of Examiners;
- to submit a written report to UCA at the end of each academic year;
- to attend UCA and OCA for as much time as is reasonably required for the duties of the post to be properly discharged.

## **Sending your work for assessment**

The best student work shows thoughtfulness and enthusiasm for learning, evidenced through enquiry, observation, research, trying things out and reflection. Each course unit will clearly state what you need to send for assessment. There is an element of choice about which work you submit. You can use this to demonstrate your understanding of and discernment about what you are studying. You will also find subject-specific Guidelines for Submission on the student website.

When you are selecting what to submit for assessment, it is important that you think carefully about both the academic and artistic aspects of your work. Assessors are looking for examples of your work which show your thinking and how you have drawn on your learning and reflection in your creative work, including other relevant material such as log books and sketchbooks. If you have any queries about specific courses and pieces of work for assessment, your tutor may be an additional source of advice.

It is important that you signpost your work by labelling everything clearly. You want assessors to be able to find their way easily around your work, and have a sense of you guiding them through your learning journey.

We ask you to keep to a weight limit of twenty (20) kilograms or less, including the weight of the portfolio (if there is one) and other work accompanying your assessment submission such as sketchbooks and notebooks. The weight limit is important as we invoice students for the additional postage costs incurred in sending their work back to them for packages over twenty (20) kilograms in weight.



### **Find out more**

Download subject-specific guidelines for submitting work for assessment from [www.oqa-student.com](http://www.oqa-student.com)

## Assessment timetable 2018-19

	Dates for submitting work to OCA	Results and assessor comments sent to student's OCA email address
<b>November 2018 assessment event</b> <i>Application deadline</i> 31 August 2018	15-30 September 2018	No later than 14 December 2018
<b>March 2019 assessment event</b> <i>Application deadline</i> 7 January 2019	15-31 January 2019	No later than 12 April 2019
<b>July 2019 assessment event</b> <i>Application deadline</i> 30 April 2019	15-31 May 2019	No later than 9 August 2019

## Postgraduate – MA, Fine Art

OCA's MA Fine Art is assessed under the Common Credit Framework. Most institutions that provide higher education programmes of study in England use credit, including the Open College of the Arts and the University for the Creative Arts. Credit is awarded once a student has successfully completed a module in recognition of the amount and depth of learning the student has achieved. Credits are then accumulated towards the total credit required for a programme of study and a qualification.

Each student completes a final project. All units on the OCA MA, Fine Art also contain some kind of written assessment. The usual maximum word length for a written submission in any one unit is 2,000 words plus practical outcomes. The final project requires 2,500 to 3,000 words alongside the practical outcome, plus a professional practice plan of 2,000 words. The criteria for assessment are drawn from the generic set of assessment criteria that govern practice regulated by the University Postgraduate Regulatory Framework.

The final project is assessed on three criteria:

- demonstration of advanced scholarship in the student's art practice and contextual work
- demonstration of a sophisticated understanding of complex concepts through written and professional studio practice and presentation

- demonstration of the development of self-sufficiency and a clear vision and strategy to enable sustained professional practice beyond the course

<b>Distinction</b>	70% average in the last 120 credits of the award and an average of 70% in the final 60 credits of the award at the first attempt
<b>Merit</b>	60% average across the whole award at the first attempt
<b>Full credit</b>	40% or above
<b>Pass mark for all units and work submitted</b>	40%
<b>Fail (no credit)</b>	0-39%



### **Find out more**

Detailed information about assessment for OCA's MA, Fine Art is in the MA Student Handbook, May 2018, pages 19-21



# Part four

## Governance and quality assurance



Hilary Lawler  
Illustration 1 student

## Validating university

All OCA undergraduate and postgraduate degrees are validated by the University for the Creative Arts (UCA).

UCA is one of Europe's largest specialist universities of art, design, architecture, media and communication and the only specialist university in the UK with a similar curriculum focus to the OCA. Its alumni include fashion designers Karen Millen and Zandra Rhodes; Oscar winners Daniel Greaves and Suzie Templeton; and fine artists Tracey Emin and Humphrey Ocean. UCA is one of the 100+ institutions in the UK permitted to award degrees.

Find out more: visit the University for the Creative Arts at [www.uca.ac.uk](http://www.uca.ac.uk)

# Quality assurance

Internal and external systems are in place to continuously monitor and improve the experience of students, including for course provision, teaching, student support and assessment.

Within OCA, we draw on:

- the reports of external examiners
- data on student retention and assessment
- formal and informal feedback from students including student forums, the Student Consultative Committee, unit evaluation surveys and level completion surveys
- the views of our academics – programme leaders, unit leaders and tutors
- the Academic Annual Monitoring Process, which includes course action plans (a reflective, live document, which draws upon meaningful data to assess the risks, issues and achievements of individual programmes)

All quality assurance matters are reviewed by:

- the University for the Creative Arts Academic Quality Committee (AQC)
- the OCA/UCA Curriculum Quality Committee (CQC)
- Open College of Arts Student Association (OCASA)

The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) is the independent body entrusted by the government for monitoring and advising on standards and quality in UK

higher education. The QAA acts in the public interest for the benefit of students and supports higher education providers in providing the best possible student learning experience. OCA's most recent QAA review took place in February 2016. The review team's judgements on OCA were that it has confidence:

- in OCA's management of its responsibilities for the standards of the awards it offers on behalf of its awarding body and organisation;
- that OCA is fulfilling its responsibilities for managing and enhancing the quality of the intended learning opportunities it provides for students;
- that reliance can be placed on the information that OCA produces for its intended audiences about the learning opportunities it offers.



### **Find out more**

Read the February 2016 QAA report on OCA at  
<http://www.qaa.ac.uk>

# Fees, student finance and OCA terms & conditions

## Student finance

If the undergraduate degree you are studying for with OCA is your first experience of higher education and you are resident in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, you may be eligible for student finance to help fund your studies. Find out more at [www.gov.uk/studentfinancesteps](http://www.gov.uk/studentfinancesteps), [www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/](http://www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/) and [www.studentfinanceni.co.uk/](http://www.studentfinanceni.co.uk/).

## Refunding fees

If your course materials do not meet your requirements you are entitled to request a full refund, provided that you return your course materials to us complete and in the condition in which they were received, within 14 days and/or relinquish access to digital content. We will also consider a partial refund if you contact us within 30 days of receiving your course materials. Under these circumstances, the amount to be refunded will be calculated on the difference between the full fee and the deposit payable for the course unit. No refund is payable after 30 days have elapsed from receipt of course materials.



### Find out more

See Student Regulations, Refund Policy

## **If you need more time for your undergraduate course**

Serious illness or other unforeseen circumstances may mean that some students are not able to complete their studies within the maximum timescales permitted under OCA's student regulations. In such circumstances, students should refer to the Mitigating Circumstances policy in the Student Regulations.

We recommend that students contact Learner Support on [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk) for support and guidance at the time the circumstances occur. Supporting evidence will be required as per the policy.

## Prevent duty

In 2011, the Government published Prevent as part of its wider counter-terrorism strategy. A key element of the strategy is to encourage institutions, including universities, to address risks of radicalisation. Since 2015, these duties have been a statutory requirement for universities.

You can read the policies on online etiquette, including accessing of material relating to terrorism or extremism, in the OCA Student Regulations, Policies and Procedures. If you believe your online activity in support of your studies with OCA will involve accessing websites or involving yourself in online discussions that may be flagged up by OCA's alert systems, we ask that you complete a research declaration form.



### Find out more

Read OCA's online etiquette policy, including accessing of material relating to terrorism or extremism, in the Student Regulations, Policies and Procedures

Download the OCA research declaration form:

<http://www.oca-student.com/resource-type/forms/research-declaration-form>

# Data protection and confidentiality

OCA has a statutory duty to manage data securely and to respect student confidentiality in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

As an HE provider, OCA retains data for the purposes of meeting its statutory obligations to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC), the Office for Students (OfS), and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). OCA retains individual records only for as long as required to meet these obligations, and in line with its data retention schedule.

OCA is registered with The Information Commissioners' Office and is entered on the Data Registry (reference Z7451677). Stephanie Gillott (Head of Quality and Academic Support) is the nominated Data Controller.

## Data processing partners

In order to provide its services to students, tutors and staff, OCA, shares data with third party processing partners. Current data processing partners include: e-merchant provider Worldpay; UCA's online library provider Open Athens; USA-hosted e-communications service Mailchimp; online storage and database hosting supplier Amazon Web Services; Google, which provides the G-suite for Education of cloud-based tools; and SMS service provider Twilio. OCA

tutors operate on a contractual basis and are therefore classed as a processing partner. Data is also shared with UCA as OCA's parent university, which holds it under the UCA Data Protection Policy.

## **Policies and processes**

All OCA employees sign a Confidentiality and Non-disclosure Policy agreement which sets out the need for confidentiality and what happens in the event of a breach. OCA employees are required to submit a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) form for review and authorisation before any new data processing activities taking place.

OCA's Email and Communications Policy sets out the responsibilities of all OCA email account holders, including students, for ensuring the privacy and security of data shared using email. OCA has data security processes for obtaining, storing and disposing of confidential or sensitive data.

## Student rights

GDPR gives you the right of access to the personal information OCA holds about you. OCA must respond to a valid subject access request within 30 calendar days of receiving it. OCA does not charge a search fee for providing this information except when requests are unfounded, excessive or repetitive.

Data is retained by OCA for the full duration of students' studies, plus six calendar years, unless a student exercises a Right to Erasure within this time.



### Find out more

See Student Regulations, Policies and Procedures

## NUS card

All students enrolled with OCA are encouraged to register for an NUS card. The card entitles you to discounts on thousands of products and services, including books, apps, train and coach travel, restaurants and takeaways, clothing, entertainment and leisure activities.



### Find out more

Find out more, including how to register:

<http://www.nus.org.uk/en/nus-extra/>

# Part five

## The OCA team



OCA student Mark Butler  
Sculpture 2

## The OCA team

OCA is made up of part and full-time staff based at our head office, part-time programme leaders who work at a distance, our contracted tutors, and supported by colleagues based at UCA.

If you don't find the information you're looking for in this student handbook or by visiting OCA online, you can email or phone a member of the OCA team at the Michael Young Arts Centre.



## Catherine Wood & Emma George

### Student Support Advisers

Catherine and Emma can help with:

- taking enrolments for new students and existing students progressing to the next unit
- processing course unit/degree withdrawal applications
- referral to the appropriate OCA contact for queries not covered elsewhere in this section of the Student Handbook

Contact Catherine and Emma on [studentadvice@oca.ac.uk](mailto:studentadvice@oca.ac.uk). Catherine also supports the assessment team with assessment queries. For assessment queries, please email [assessment@oca.ac.uk](mailto:assessment@oca.ac.uk).



## **Gemma Young & Lia Harness**

### **Learner Support Team**

Lia and Gemma can help with:

- pastoral support
- applications to the OCA Learner Support Scheme
- advice and guidance on the mitigating circumstances process for undergraduate extensions
- disability support and information

Contact them on  
[learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk).



## Stephanie Gillott

### Head of Quality and Academic Support

Steph can help with:

- queries regarding exit awards/transcripts
- degree timeframes

Contact Steph on

[stephgillott@oca.ac.uk](mailto:stephgillott@oca.ac.uk).



## **Joanne Mulvihill-Allen & Edward Smith**

### **Academic Development Officers**

Joanne and Edward can help with:

- learning from students on how to improve the learning and teaching environment and student experience
- student suggestions for improving existing resources
- commissioning new resources to improve the student experience
- student queries and discussions on the subject forums on the OCA student site, Pinterest, Facebook and Instagram

- giving feedback to students completing visual arts Foundations courses about options for degree-level study through portfolio review
- questions specific to the course content and subject areas of photography and graphic design (Edward) and fine art and illustration (Joanne)
- accreditation of prior learning (APL)

Contact Joanne and Edward on

[coursesupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:coursesupport@oca.ac.uk).

If you are interested in having your work featured on the OCA blog #weareOCA, please email Joanne on

[blog@oca.ac.uk](mailto:blog@oca.ac.uk).



## Kirsten Peace & Kellie Watson

### Finance

The Finance team can help with:

- taking payments and sending payment links
- updating payment details
- arranging instalment facilities
- withdrawal refunds
- all payment queries

Getting the best from the Finance Team:

- please make every effort to pay for your course by the dates agreed. We would rather not have to chase you up – and we think

you'd prefer not to hear from us! Prompt payment also helps us be efficient which, in turn, helps us keep our fee levels reasonable.

- if your payment details change, let us know by calling us.

The Finance team can be contacted directly on 01226 777590 Monday - Friday between 9am - 4pm or by email on [accounts@oca.ac.uk](mailto:accounts@oca.ac.uk).

For queries about the details of your enrolment, including course choice, students should contact the Student Services team on [enquiries@oca.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@oca.ac.uk).



## Leanne Putt

### Technology Enhanced Learning Designer

Leanne can help with:

- improving the design of the learning
- keeping the course materials refreshed and topical
- creating customised

course materials once Learner Support has agreed them

- maintaining the library of student profiles and images to use for marketing OCA courses

Contact Leanne on [help@oca.ac.uk](mailto:help@oca.ac.uk).



## Alice Morris

### TEL Media Developer

Alice can help with:

- your OCA account - eg resetting your password
- Google services and apps questions - Gmail, Drive, Meet
- student website queries
- MA Fine Art LMS

(learning management system) questions

Contact Alice on [help@oca.ac.uk](mailto:help@oca.ac.uk).



## Scott D'Arcy

### TEL Developer

Scott can help with:

- your OCA account - eg resetting your password
  - Google services and apps questions - Gmail, Drive, Meet
  - student website queries
  - Wordpress Blog help,
- General IT queries

Contact Scott on [help@oca.ac.uk](mailto:help@oca.ac.uk).

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