

UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

BA (HONS) MUSIC

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21]

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

Section A – Material Course Information

Validating Body	University for the Creative Arts ¹		
Teaching Body	OCA – OPEN COLLEGE FOR THE ARTS		
Final Award Title and Type	BA (Hons)		
Course Title	Music		
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 ✓
Period of Validation	2016/17 to 2020/21		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable		
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable		
<p>Entry criteria and requirements²</p> <p>For entry at Level 4, ABRSM Grade 5 Theory or completion of the OCA's Music Foundation Course are recommended. 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>In addition to prior qualifications and learning accreditation, OCA specifies three general requirements for students to be admitted to its degree programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● English language competency; ● access to a desktop computer or laptop with internet access; ● the ability to easily manage a range of basic functions through ICT (information and communications technology) <p>Full details on each of these requirements can be found in the OCA Student Regulations in the section Admission Requirements.</p> <p>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. In addition there is a Data Protection and Confidentiality Policy appended to the Student Regulations. OCA takes these issues seriously. Data protection rules form 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.</p> <p>Students will be required, as part of this programme of study, to develop further IT skills in specific applications, such as Sibelius.</p> <p>*This requirement may be waived, on rare occasions, by the Head of Learner Support if negotiated</p>			

¹ Regulated by the Office for Students

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

prior to the start of the course. Typically exemptions are given to students with specific disabilities or to those studying in prison.

Specific requirements

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

Disabled students

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

Maximum Period of Registration

The maximum period of registration for the course is 12 years.

UCAS entry profile:

n/a

Overall methods of assessment ³	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Stage 1	0%	0%	100%
Stage 2	0%	0%	100%
Stage 3	0%	0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours ⁴	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Stage 1	12.5%	87.5%	0%
Stage 2	150 hours	1050 hours	0 hours
	8.3%	91.7%	0%
Stage 3	100 hours	1100 hours	0 hours
	5.0%	95.0%	0%
	60 hours	1140 hours	0 hours
General level of staff delivering the course ⁵	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		

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

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

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

	field.
Language of Study	English
Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement: QAA Music (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) Music from the academic year 2019/20 onwards:

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?
Year/Stage 1				
MU4CPM - Music 1: Composing Music (OMUS4107)	4	40	Core	
MU4SYT - Music 1: Stylistic Techniques (OMUS4140)	4	40	Core	
MU4PTP - Music 1: From the Present to the Past (OMUS4108)	4	40	Elective	Yes
CA4CAT - Visual Studies 1: Creative Arts Today (OMUS4103)	4	40	Elective	No
Year/Stage 2				
MU5MWC - Music 2: Moving on with Composition (OMUS5106)	5	60	Elective	Yes
MU5ORA - Music 2: Orchestration & Arrangement (OMUS5136)	5	60	Elective	Yes
MU5IAR - Music 2: Instruments & Repertoire (OMUS5137)	5	60	Elective	No
MU5MUH - Music 2: History and Context (OMUS5138)	5	60	Elective	No

Year/Stage 3				
Mu6MAP - Music 3: Major Project (OMUS6141)	6	40	Core	
MU6CXS - Music 3: Contextual Studies (OMUS6142)	6	40	Core	
MU6SYP - Music 3: Sustaining Your Practice (OMUS6143)	6	40	Core	

Appendix 2 – Table of Units for students registering on the BA (Hons) Music from the academic year 2018/19 onwards:

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?
Year/Stage 1				
MU4CPM - Music 1: Composing Music (OMUS4107)	4	40	Core	
MU4SYT - Music 1: Stylistic Techniques (OMUS4140)	4	40	Core	
MU4PTP - Music 1: From the Present to the Past (OMUS4108)	4	40	Elective	Yes
CA4CAT - Visual Studies 1: Creative Arts Today (OMUS4103)	4	40	Elective	No
AH4UVC - Visual Studies 1: Understanding Visual Culture (OMUS4118)	4	40	Elective	No
Year/Stage 2				
MU5MWC - Music 2: Moving on with Composition (OMUS5106)	5	60	Elective	Yes
MU5ORA - Music 2: Orchestration & Arrangement (OMUS5136)	5	60	Elective	Yes
MU5IAR - Music 2: Instruments & Repertoire (OMUS5137)	5	60	Elective	No
MU5MUH - Music 2: History and Context (OMUS5138)	5	60	Elective	No
Year/Stage 3				
Mu6MAP - Music 3: Major Project (OMUS6141)	6	40	Core	
MU6CXS - Music 3: Contextual Studies (OMUS6142)	6	40	Core	
MU6SYP - Music 3: Sustaining your Practice (OMUS6143)	6	40	Core	

Appendix 3 – Table of Units for students registering on the BA (Hons) Music from the academic year 2016/17 to 2017/18:

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?
Year/Stage 1				
MU4CPM - Music 1: Composing Music	4	40	Core	
MU4SYT - Music 1: Stylistic Techniques	4	40	Core	
MU4PTP - Music 1: From the Present to the Past	4	40	Elective	Yes
AH4WSA - History of Art 1: Understanding Western Art	4	40	Elective	No
CA4CAT - Visual Studies 1: Creative Arts Today	4	40	Elective	No
AH4UVC - Visual Studies 1: Understanding Visual Culture	4	40	Elective	No
Year/Stage 2				
MU5MWC - Music 2: Moving on with Composition	5	60	Elective	Yes
MU5ORA - Music 2: Orchestration & Arrangement	5	60	Elective	Yes
MU5IAR - Music 2: Instruments & Repertoire	5	60	Elective	No
MU5MUH - Music 2: History and Context	5	60	Elective	No
Year/Stage 3				
MU6MAP - Music 3: Major Project	6	40	Core	
MU6CXS - Music 3: Contextual Studies	6	40	Core	
MU6SYP - Music 3: Sustaining your Practice	6	40	Core	

Section B - Course Overview

The OCA's Music Degree provides a unique opportunity for students to fulfil their creative potential through the study of Composition and Contexts. Centred upon practical work, this degree provides students with the skills required for a career in music, including composition, orchestration and arrangement and the practical implementation of historical knowledge. Practical modules are supported by musicological units which encourage a broadening of knowledge through research, and demonstrate the important relationship between theory and practice. All students will gain an

overview of the music history, an understanding of harmony, analysis and form, and experience in compositional techniques through the core modules at Level Four. Through a range of electives at Level Five, students can opt to follow one of three major degree pathways, composition, orchestration or music history, which will manifest in the Level Six major project through a portfolio of practical work based on the student's chosen specialism. In this way, students will have the opportunity to tailor the content of their programme of study in relation to their personal aims or professional requirements

Throughout this degree, students are encouraged to explore a range of methods of communication for their practice-based research to specialist and non-specialist audiences, including through academic essays, the creation of multimedia and web-based presentations, programme notes, event organisation, lecture recitals and performance.

Key Stages

Level Four Units: Developing Key Skills and Concepts

Level Four units introduce key concepts and the contextual framework for the study of music. These units combine practical and theoretical exercises and assignments to develop awareness in styles of Western art music throughout its history, in addition to a practical knowledge of notation, harmony, analysis and the building blocks of compositional techniques. The study focuses on equipping students with the strategies, skills and confidence to move on to the increasingly independent work expected at Level Five. Students will learn to study independently, set goals, manage their own workload and meet deadlines. They will learn to present theoretical concepts and practical ideas in appropriate formats, and to identify, describe, research and critically evaluate aspects of music through listening, score reading and their own compositional work. Critical self-reflective skills will be developed through the production of a listening and learning log, placing the student's work into the context of other practitioners and preparing the student for the discipline required at higher levels.

Level Five Units: Intermediate Stage

At Level Five, students are encouraged to develop as independent practitioners by building on the skills already gained at Level Four in the selection of two integrated specialist areas. Each unit enables students to explore a particular area of music in greater depth, leading towards the development of a specialism at Level Six.

Through working closely with their tutor, students at this level may choose the direction and content of elements of their coursework and develop the research skills necessary for the completion of assignments. They are encouraged to develop working practices which will enable them to evolve an individual style in their creative work, informed by contextual research. They will be expected to develop technical proficiency, with imaginative approaches to creative work.

Level Six Units: Becoming an independent Practitioner

Level Six aims to expand the horizons of the students through embracing the combination of practical, theoretical and conceptual issues which are central to the study of music. They will be encouraged to demonstrate a breadth of inventiveness, ideas generation and techniques in the creation of their practical work, leading to the creation of a major project based on either composition, orchestration or a practical application of historical research through the creation of a scholarly modern performing edition of a manuscript. Students will gain an understanding of the professional skills required for a career in their chosen musical pathway, including an understanding of the vocational context within which the discipline sits and in particular personal initiative, responsibility and decision making in challenging contexts.

A dissertation supports the work undertaken for the major project, creating a body of work on an own choice aspect of music that has significant topical importance for the student. They should, at this level, make appropriate use of primary sources and scholarly reviews, including those at the forefront of debate. Students will be expected to have an awareness of the work of the leading scholars in their chosen field, and must demonstrate an underpinning understanding of the relevant theory and concepts that are inherent within and surrounding their practical work. The topic of the dissertation should be carefully considered in consultation with the tutor. Through their project, students will be

asked to demonstrate their ability to communicate information and justify their work convincingly.

Section C - Course Aims

1. To widen access to education in music composition and contexts at undergraduate level through Open and Flexible Learning
2. Ensure students gain the technical skills in composition and related practical areas to form a solid foundation for further development
3. To provide an intellectually stimulating programme of study based on high quality study material and tutor support
4. To develop students' creative capacities and their ability in interpretation and application
5. To develop students' critical understanding of the theoretical and conceptual issues central to musical practice and the social, historical and cultural context in which it takes place
6. To provide an environment in which the student has the possibility of changing their view of the world and their interaction with it both artistically and intellectually
7. To foster high-level ethical and professional standards and an awareness of the possibilities offered by existing and new developments in music to expand their application areas
8. To develop autonomous learners capable of applying intellectual and practical skills in music appropriate to employment, further study or life-long learning

Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

Knowledge

- LO1. Demonstrate a knowledge of repertoire and its associated compositional styles and techniques across the history of Western art music.
- LO2. Produce written music using appropriate software and notation conventions, read scores and listen critically to recordings
- LO3. Critically evaluate their own work and the work of others

Understanding

- LO4. Understand the changing role of music in society and the cultural and historical contexts in which repertoire is written
- LO5. Understand the link between theory and practice in relation to musical study
- LO6. Understand musical processes, forms and methods of harmonic construction

Application

- LO7. Demonstrate inventiveness, creative ideas, development of a personal musical language and application of technique in practical work
- LO8. Communicate about aspects of musical culture, contexts, concepts and research to specialist and non-specialist audiences through appropriate means
- LO9. Create practical work to a professional standard which is supported by relevant research and academic investigation
- LO10. Engage in appropriate professional practices such as marketing, fundraising, self-presentation and negotiation skills

Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and Teaching Strategy

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

By 'widening access' we mean:

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

By 'supported' we mean:

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

By 'Open and Flexible Learning' we mean:

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

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

- paper-based and/or digital learning materials for each unit
- one-to-one written and/or verbal formative feedback and support from a named tutor
- support materials (such as guides on aspects of study and course handbooks)
- access to dialogue with peers via the OCA student website / Google Hangout critiques
- learner support for any difficulties with the practicalities of studying via email or telephone
- digital library resources

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

- study visits to exhibitions, workshops and other events in different parts of the country
- current creative art and design reviews, articles and discussion via the WeAreOCA blog
- student led initiatives such as study visits and seminars, supported by the student body, OCASA
- a range of social media resources that provide additional OCA content or signpost students to existing online material (via Flickr, Pinterest, Vimeo, YouTube)

PDP

Personal and professional development is linked to all levels of the course through the learning log which is integral to each unit and helps 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 creative progress, reflect on tutor feedback and to identify areas for development. In dialogue with tutors through formative feedback, students are encouraged to identify strengths and learning needs and establish learning goals that might improve perceived weaknesses and enhance strengths. The learning log is considered as part of the assessment process and contributes towards final marks.

Independent learning

Through the OCA open learning model of project and research-based activities students learn to study independently with tutor support, and learn to work with others by interacting with them, providing

and receiving support and exchanging ideas via the OCA forum.

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

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

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

Online learning and course materials

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

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

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

Digital library resources include:

- UCA's online resources including access to Open Athens
- VADS, V&A Museum online resources for visual arts
- Bridgeman Education image library
- Scanned copies of essays and chapters from essential and recommended reading lists across all units (permitted under CLA Higher Education Licence)
- OCA study guides
- OCA videos

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.

All students will need access to Sibelius software (around £80 for the most basic version), and other general costs would be expected to be under £100 per course, except for orchestration where the texts are more expensive and £250 should be allowed.

Students are encouraged to use library services wherever possible to reduce costs.

Listening and Learning log

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

The exact content of the log depends on the unit. Typically they are used to record ideas, responses to music heard, notes, influences, discoveries, thoughts, research findings and observations prompted by the projects, assignments and broader research. Their public status allows opinions to be expressed by fellow students, or the general public if desired, on the work being produced. Being accessible to other students, they offer a wide range of interpretations of unit projects to be seen, read and commented upon by others, allowing learning to take place through social activity centered around a programme of study.

Work-related learning

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

Employability

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

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

Study visits

There are a number of optional Study Visits led by OCA tutors throughout the year, for example:
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Planned future study visits include:

- Handel House Museum, London, November 2015
- Composing for voice Study Day, Spring 2016
- Gamelan Workshop, South Bank Centre, Summer 2016

Assessment Strategy

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

There are no examinations. Assessment is through the examination of personal development planning and continual reflection in learning logs or blogs, practical projects, critical reviews and essays. The student uses OCA guidelines to prepare a body of work and learning/listening log(s) (or blog) to send to OCA for assessment. This submission includes the summative assignments of each section of the unit. Assessment tasks are linked to the objectives of each unit. As the student progresses through the unit the assessment increasingly encourages autonomous learning and self-evaluation. Tutors provide feedback during the unit, with constructive criticism, and assessment takes place once the student has completed a unit in full.

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

Assessment criteria

Students' work is assessed against the appropriate criteria for the chosen discipline(s), which are set out below:

Composing Music [Level 4 and 5]	Weighting
Technical presentation Clarity of scores and orderly presentation; good command of appropriate software; accuracy of notation; understanding and application of graphic publishing conventions.	Level 4 30%
	Level 5 25%
Compositional skills Evidence of craftsmanship in manipulating material; structural cohesion; exploration of ideas; appropriate and correct use of performance resources.	Level 4 30%
	Level 5 30%
Creativity Exploration and inventiveness toward developing an individual voice; original ideas and experimental adventurousness.	Level 4 20%
	Level 5 25%
Stylistic awareness Evidence of listening and reading, research, critical thinking and reflection; development of responses to exploratory enquiry and analysis.	Level 4 20%
	Level 5 20%
Orchestration [Level 5 only]	Weighting
Technical presentation	Level 5 25%

Clarity of scores and orderly presentation; good command of appropriate software; accuracy of notation; understanding and application of graphic publishing conventions; communication of musical ideas in the written score	
Practical skills Evidence of technical skills in manipulating material in fulfilment of a given brief; appropriate and correct use of performance resources.	Level 5 30%
Creativity Exploration and inventiveness giving evidence of the development of an individual voice; original ideas and experimental adventurousness	Level 5 25%
Stylistic awareness Evidence of listening and reading, research, critical thinking and reflection; development of responses to exploratory enquiry and analysis.	Level 5 20%
Theoretical Music units	Weighting
Subject based knowledge and understanding Broad and comparative understanding of subject content, knowledge of the appropriate historical, intellectual, cultural or institutional contexts.	Level 4 25% Level 5 20%
Research and critical evaluation skills The ability to design and carry out a research project, locate and evaluate evidence from a wide range of primary and secondary sources (aural or textual). Evidence of analysis, critical thinking, synthesis, interpretation in relation to relevant issues and enquiries.	Level 4 25% Level 5 25%
Stylistic awareness Evidence of listening and reading, research, critical thinking and reflection; perceptiveness of personal response to music (evidenced in listening logs)	Level 4 30% Level 5 30%
Communication The ability to communicate ideas and knowledge in written and spoken form, including presentation skills	Level 4 20% Level 5 25%

Section F - Enhancing the Quality of Learning and Teaching

The course is subject to the University's rigorous quality assurance procedures which involve subject specialist and internal peer review of the course at periodic intervals, normally of 5 years. This process ensures that the course engages with the applicable national Subject Benchmarks and references the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications.

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

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

Enhancing staff development

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

Improving the effectiveness of student learning

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

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

Learning log

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

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

Many students choose to keep logs as online blogs. Their public status allows opinions to be expressed by fellow students, or the general public if desired, on the work being produced. Being accessible to other students, they offer a wide range of interpretations of unit projects to be seen, read and commented upon by others, allowing learning to take place through social activity centred around a programme of study.