



**ACADEMIC REGULATORY FRAMEWORK (ARF)**  
**with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012**

[Version 20: August 2021]





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## **1: SCOPE**

### **1.1 Courses**

These regulations are applicable to all taught courses offered by the Open College of the Arts (OCA), and leading to an undergraduate award of the University for the Creative Arts (UCA).

### **1.2 Date of becoming applicable**

These regulations are applicable from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012 and apply to all students on all relevant award programmes and course units. *Transitional arrangements for students transferring into these regulations are, where relevant, set out in the Transition Policy.*

### **1.3 Terminology**

Appendix A contains a glossary explaining the terms used in this document.



## 2: FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE

### 2.1 Units and credits

Each unit will be assigned a Credit Stage and a Credit Volume. Together these constitute the Credit Value of that unit.

The Credit Stage will reflect the depth of learning involved and the intellectual demand of the unit, and will be assigned with reference to the “*Credit Level Descriptors*” prescribed by Appendix B of the *Higher Education Credit Framework for England: Guidance on Academic Credit Arrangements in Higher Education in England* (QAA, August 2008), and stated below in Table 1:

**Table 1: Generic Credit Level Descriptors (source: HE Credit Framework for England 2008)**

Level (Stage)	Learning accredited at this Level (Stage) will reflect the ability to:
Level (Stage) 1 (HE4)	develop a rigorous approach to the acquisition of a broad knowledge base; employ a range of specialised skills; evaluate information, using it to plan and develop investigative strategies and to determine solutions to a variety of unpredictable problems; and operate in a range of varied and specific contexts, taking responsibility for the nature and quality of outputs.
Level (Stage) 2 (HE5)	generate ideas through the analysis of concepts at an abstract level with a command of specialised skills and the formulation of responses to well-defined and abstract problems; analyse and evaluate information; exercise significant judgement across a broad range of functions; and accept responsibility for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.
Level 3 (Stage) (HE6)	critically review, consolidate and extend a systematic and coherent body of knowledge, utilising specialised skills across an area of study; critically evaluate concepts and evidence from a range of sources; transfer and apply diagnostic and creative skills and exercise significant judgement in a range of situations; and accept accountability for determining and achieving personal and/or group outcomes.

The Credit Volume will reflect the amount of learning expected for the typical student to achieve the learning outcomes of that unit. The Credit Volume is based on an estimate using the idea of *notional hours of learning*, which includes preparation time, independent study, reading, revision, assessment, the undertaking of course work, and all other self-directed learning. One credit represents 10 *notional hours of learning*. Credit Volume therefore defines the unit size.

The sizes of units in use at the OCA are as stated in Table 2 below:

**Table 2: Unit sizes**

Unit Stage	Unit Volume
Stage 1 (HE4)	40 credits
Stage 2 (HE5)	40 or 60 credits
Stage 3 (HE6)	40 or 60 credits

### 2.2 Course structure: Stages

Each course will have one or more Stages.

Where a course has two or more Stages, the end of each Stage represents a progression or



award point. The student must satisfy the progression or award requirements (see Table 3 overleaf) in order to progress to the next Stage or obtain the associated award.

Within each Stage, students must take units of prescribed credit values, as defined in Table 3.

**Table 3: Course structures – Stages and minimum prescribed credit values**

Course	No. of Stages	Stage	Minimum credit value of units to be taken
Cert HE	1	1	120 credits at Stage 1 (HE4)
Dip HE	2	1	120 credits at Stage 1 (HE4)
		2	120 credits at Stage 2 (HE5)
*BA	3	1	120 credits at Stage 1 (HE4)
		2	120 credits at Stage 2 (HE5)
		3	60 credits at Stage 3 (HE6)
BA (Hons)	3	1	120 credits at Stage 1 (HE4)
		2	120 credits at Stage 2 (HE5)
		3	120 credits at Stage 3 (HE6)

The \*BA is available only as an Exit Award for students who enrol for the BA (Hons) but are unable to complete the full award.

Where students are exiting with credit values higher than those required for one award, but below the minimum for the higher award, they qualify for the lower award. Thus, for example, a student exiting with 180 credits at Stage 1 (HE4) would qualify for the Cert HE.

### 2.3 Maximum period of registration for full Degree

The maximum period of registration for completion of a full Degree is 12 continuous years from the date of enrolment for the first unit.

Students who exhaust the relevant maximum period of registration without achieving the final award will have their registration terminated. Such students may be eligible for an Exit Award (see previous section).

An extension to the maximum period of registration may only be granted in exceptional circumstances and where the reason for the extension has been approved formally by the Director of Academic Services of the validating body, UCA.

### 2.4 Maximum period allowed for completion of Stages and individual units

The maximum period allowed for completion of each Stage (and its associated award) is 3 years, other than where an extension has been granted under the Extensions and Deferrals policy, as set out in the Student Regulations. The timeframe for each stage commences upon enrolment to the first unit at that stage but cannot exceed the 12 years overall.

The maximum period allowed for completion of each unit is 12 months for a 40 credit unit (irrespective of stage) 18 months for a 60 credit unit (irrespective of stage), other than where an extension has been granted under either the Reasonable Adjustments policy or Extensions & Deferrals policy, as set out in the Student Regulations. The only exception to this is where students are required by OCA and the relevant pathway to study 2 x 40 credit Stage 3 units at the same time. In this instance students would be allowed 24 months to complete both units.

Students are expected to complete units and Stages in good time, not relying in every instance on the maximum allowed. Even where extensions are awarded for an individual unit or full Stage, these do not qualify for any increase to the maximum period of registration for completion



of a full Degree, which remains as 12 years from the date of enrolment for the first unit. Significant flexibility is already built into the teaching and learning model to accommodate extensions granted under the Deferrals and Extensions Policy.

## 2.5 Extensions and Deferrals

Occasionally students may encounter circumstances that disrupt their ability to study and need to apply for an extension or deferral to help get back on track. An extension adds more time to unit and/or stage timeframes after a period of disruption. A deferral provides a study break or pause to unit and/or stage timeframes. Applications and supporting evidence are submitted in line with the Extension and Deferral policy. Decisions will be made by the Extensions and Deferrals Panel. Details of timeframes are covered in the policy. Please refer to the Extensions and Deferrals Policy for further details on eligibility and how to apply. The policy is located on the [www.oca.ac.uk](http://www.oca.ac.uk) – ‘About’ Us, ‘Our Policies. Or available on request from OCA’ Learner Support Team at [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk)

## 2.6 Interruptions

An interruption is an extended period of absence *between units and/or stages* within an award programme.

Students can interrupt their studies for brief periods (see below) between any units, provided they do not exceed the maximum period of registration for the award as a whole (see Section 2.3). Reasons for interruptions could include a desire to take some planned time out between periods of study or personal circumstances preventing students from immediately re-enrolling and continuing with their studies (e.g. illness). Students continuing with their studies following assessment of a previous unit, will have up to the date of the next assessment event (i.e. up to 4 months) in which to re-enrol. During this period of between 1 to 4 months, students will still be deemed to be ‘on programme’, even though they will not be enrolled on a specific unit.

Students who have not re-enrolled by the date of the next assessment event will be deemed to have ‘interrupted’ their studies.

Such students will still be able to re-enrol and continue with their course, provided they do so within twelve months from receipt of the notification of the outcome of the assessment of their previous unit (see next section) and provided also that they do not exceed the maximum period of registration. It will be clear some years before the time limit has expired which students are at risk of having their registration terminated: OCA will always make reference to the registration deadline when communicating with students in connection with interruptions.

Students interrupting their studies between stages can do so for a period of up to 12 months from the date of completion of the final unit of the previous stage.

The maximum period of interruption between units and/or stages is 12 months.

## 2.7 Withdrawals

Students may withdraw from the course at any time by completing a withdrawal form and returning this to OCA Head Office.

Students who have failed to complete a core / first unit for their course in the required time will also be notified they will be withdrawn from their course by OCA. The pending withdrawal notification can be suspended if applicable for students who are submitting a Deferrals and Extensions Application. (refer to OCA’s Withdrawal and Non-Completion of units policy)



These students will be identified on a routine basis and contacted by OCA to advise they have been identified for withdrawal. The student will be given a minimum 30-day notice period in which they can appeal this withdrawal. Any appeals must be supported by :

- a schedule from the student as to how they will complete the outstanding units within the required timeframes. The schedule must be agreed by a member of the Learner Support Team.
- A Deferrals and Extensions application with evidence to support their appeal. In this instance the withdrawal will be suspended pending review of the appeal by the Deferrals and Extensions Panel.

Should students be unable to provide an approved study schedule or complete a Deferrals and Extensions Application within 30 days notice of the withdrawal period, then the withdrawal will be processed. Retrospective applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances where it can be evidenced that an application could not be made prior to the unit/stage end date.

Students who fail to actively engage with their studies during the unit enrolment will also be withdrawn to ensure OCA meets its statutory requirements – refer to OCA's Active Study Policy.

Those students who haven't formally withdrawn - but have nevertheless failed to re-enrol by the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> month after receipt of the notification of the outcome of the assessment of their previous unit - will also be deemed to have 'withdrawn'. In addition to any informal contact over the intervening period, all students in this position will be advised in writing during the 9<sup>th</sup> month that they only have 3 months left in which to re-enrol.

A student who exceeds the maximum period of interruption will have their registration terminated. Such students may be eligible for an Exit Award (see Section 2.2. above).

Once students are recorded as 'withdrawn', they cannot be re-instated. However, it is possible that they may qualify for Accreditation of Prior Learning (see Section 6) for units already successfully completed, if they seek to re-engage at a future time (minimum of 12 months after withdrawal. This would be at the discretion of the OCA Head of Quality & Academic Support as part of the admissions process and would take into consideration such factors as currency of learning. Students admitted via this process would be counted as a new student and the maximum period of registration adjusted in proportion to the amount of APL applied.

Students who have been recorded as withdrawn but had not completed any credits and are not eligible for APL exemption will be required to wait a period of 12 months from the notice of withdrawal before re-enrolling (unless the re-enrolment is approved at a sooner time as a result of a successful Reasonable Adjustments Application or the student is enrolling to a different course). Upon re-enrolment the student will be counted as a new student and the maximum period of registration will be given.

## **2.8 Transfers between units**

From time to time students may request to transfer from one unit to another (e.g. when realising the scope of the unit was not as they had imagined). Such applications will be considered by OCA on an individual basis (any implications for fees are governed by the OCA's Conditions of Enrolment). However, students will not be permitted to transfer to a unit that is not part of the approved pathway for their award programme, or at a different Stage unless the student is withdrawing from their degree course and transferring to an OCA Foundations unit or the student is also transferring to a different course. Any such transfers will not lead to any extension in the maximum period of enrolment (see Section 2.3. above). In order to be eligible for a transfer between units, student must also meet the following criteria:

- Have a minimum of 6 months of the unit time allowance remaining



- Have completed no more than 2 assignments of the existing unit

## **2.9 Modes of study**

The mode of study is *open and flexible*. Study takes place at home and tutors communicate with the student by virtual learning environment, email, post and phone.

## **2.10 Course structure: student choice**

The Programme Specification for each course lists, by Stage, all units which are available to students on that course, and the order in which these units can be taken. This may include both *core* units (units which *must* be taken by all students on that course) and, where applicable, *elective* units (units which *may* be selected).

Students must select their next unit from the pathway as defined and in the order, if applicable, specified by OCA in the current Programme Specification. There is no discretion to adapt the defined pathways for individual students unless this is as a result of a successful Reasonable Adjustment application agreed by OCA's Reasonable Adjustments Panel and approved by validating body UCA. If students seek to enrol on subsequent units which are incompatible with their stated choice of award, the OCA will point this out and indicate the choices open to them.





## 3: ASSESSMENT

### 3.1 Assessment structure

Each unit comprises one or more summative assessment components. These are clearly described in the unit descriptor and outline what students need to submit for assessment. Where a unit has more than one assessment component, the unit descriptor will state the relative weighting of each component. Assessment components may only be varied in accordance with the quality procedures for unit modification.

To receive summative feedback and assessment marks, students will submit the assessment components associated with their unit, and in line with OCA Assessment policy and procedures. Students are only eligible for submitting for assessment if they have completed the unit. This is defined by undertaking all of the unit activities and receiving appropriate formative feedback in advance of the unit end date.

Summative assessment takes place at a distance or at an assessment event through group marking overseen by Programme Leaders. Quality assurance is provided through moderation of marks, internal verification of the assessment process, parity checks to ensure marks are consistent across OCA, plagiarism checks, and scrutiny by External Examiners.

Assessment criteria focus on the extent to which knowledge of relevant concepts, practices, theories, and contexts are demonstrated, the level of understanding demonstrated through the testing and application of knowledge, and the degree to which knowledge and understanding are demonstrated through the application of technical, communication, personal, transferable, and graduate skills..

The headline assessment criteria for all OCA Course Units are as follows.

#### *Knowledge*

- Identify, define, and describe appropriate principles, concepts and subject knowledge. (Subject knowledge)
- Demonstrate the use of technologies, methods, practices and processes related to the subject. (Practical knowledge)
- Identify, define, and describe contemporary and historical practices, theories, and debates. (Contextual knowledge)
- Acknowledge emerging practices and wider contexts, that shape subject knowledge and boundaries. (Subject boundaries)

#### *Understanding*

- Select, question, test, interpret and synthesize relevant knowledge to inform intentions, ideas, and outcomes. (Research)
- Apply critical thinking to develop an informed personal position. (Critical thinking)
- Apply curiosity, creativity, and intellectual enquiry to initiate, test, and articulate ideas and outcomes in inventive and individual ways. (Creativity)



## Application

- Select, test and use materials, media and techniques to realise and present ideas and solutions. (Practical skills)
- Apply appropriate technical skills and processes to develop and produce outcomes. (Technical skills)
- Employ communication skills to effectively present ideas, intentions, and outcomes. (Communication skills)
- Use personal and transferable skills to effectively sustain independent learning and reflect on progress (Personal and transferable skills)
- Apply transferable and graduate skills in establishing appropriate professional practices and standards. (Graduate skills)

The more detailed assessment criteria are included in the Programme Specification for each Degree. Students are assessed against the current assessment criteria.

Each unit has a specific set of requirements for summative assessment which vary in accordance with each unit. In general, unit stage assessment requirements includes a portfolio of work that has specific indicative tasks for example:

- Essay
- Critical review
- Reflective commentary.

All units have guidelines associated with them, which contain the requirements for submission, as well as additional notes to guide the student. The current guidelines are always available on the OCA student website. If any of the guidelines are updated, students will be notified by OCA.

### **3.2 Marking**

All units assessed result in a percentage mark. The unit pass mark is 40.

The student's work is awarded a mark against each assessment criterion. The assessment result is determined by the total mark against the assessment criteria. The percentage weighting to each assessment criterion is specified at unit descriptor stage. and in the assessment criteria.

All marks are provisional until ratified by the External Examiner and Board of Examiners.

Where a student passes a unit they are awarded the Credit Volume assigned to that unit. The award of partial credit for a unit is not permitted.

A unit that has been passed, and for which credit has been awarded, may not be repeated in order to improve a mark or gain additional credit.

### **3.3 Timing of assessment events and Boards of Examiners**

Assessments for undergraduate courses usually take place three times a year.

These events normally take place in March, July and November.



The deadline dates for receipt of undergraduate Assessment Application Forms and the subsequent submissions are as follows:

- March event - applications must be received by 7th January
- July event - applications must be received by 30<sup>th</sup> April,
- November event - applications must be received by 31<sup>st</sup> August,

. Information on submission deadlines is available in the assessment guidance information accessible to students.

Three Boards of Examiners take place each year, one after each assessment event.

Students are invited to apply for formal assessment when they have completed the penultimate assignment of their current unit. *All* the assignments completed by students as part of their course work are formative; however, the same pieces of work (as revised) form the core of the work submitted for the summative assessment event (see Section 3.1).

Students are directed towards the next available assessment event following submission of their final assignment – but have an option to defer to the subsequent event (a further 4 months thence). If students do need to defer to the subsequent event, students must email the OCA assessment team to request this.

If a student does not submit their work for assessment for the second event after completion of course work – and has not been awarded deferred assessment (see next section) – they lose the right to obtain the credits for that unit.

### **3.4: Deferred assessment**

In exceptional circumstances only, students may request to defer their assessment beyond the *second* assessment event. Any requests for deferment must be made within the terms of the OCA's Extensions and Deferrals policy, as set out in the Student Regulations. If deferred assessment is awarded, it has an absolute deadline of the third assessment event following completion.

Deferred assessment would *not* lead to any automatic extension in the total registration period (see 2.3).

### **3.5 Failure and re-assessment**

Students who fail to submit all required elements for the assessment submission (including failure to submit digitally where stipulated) will receive a mark of 0 at the exam board but will be eligible to submit for re-assessment.

Re-assessment gives a student an opportunity to retrieve a failed unit. A student who fails a unit may be permitted up to two further attempts at the unit. The maximum mark for any re-assessed unit will be 40% with the exception where the outcome of a formal academic appeal / complaint awards a non-capped resit. .

The re-assessment must take place within 12 months of the original assessment date. Re-assessment would *not* lead to any automatic extension in the total registration period (see 2.3).

Permission to re-submit work after a failed assessment is only granted with the approval of the Board of Examiners. This would normally be granted where there was a reasonable chance that the student would reach the required standard; however, in extreme cases where there was no likelihood of the standard being reached, a second attempt would not be granted.

A third attempt will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. This is at the discretion of the UCA's Board of Examiners.



Any student wishing to appeal as a result of being turned down for re-assessment *may* be entitled to follow the Appeals procedure, as described in 3.6, but *only when* a failure in the administrative process can be demonstrated.

A student who exhausts the re-assessment opportunities for a core unit may not progress further on the award programme and therefore will be withdrawn from the course. The student would only be able to continue studying with OCA as a personal development learner.

A student who exhausts the re-assessment opportunities for an elective unit, may continue their studies by undertaking a replacement elective unit if available and if the student still has the remaining stage time-frame to undertake a replacement unit. If there is no alternative elective unit and/or the student does not have the required remaining Stage timeframe then the student would be withdrawn from the course and only be able to continue studying with OCA as a personal development learner.

Where the mark awarded is lower than the mark awarded at a previous attempt, the earlier, higher mark will stand.

### **3.6 Academic Appeals**

A student may appeal against an assessment outcome and would have recourse to the UCA Academic Appeal Regulations should they wish to lodge an appeal. All appeals must be submitted within 10 working days of the publication of confirmed results and the deadline for receipt of an academic appeal is 5.00 pm on the 10<sup>th</sup> working day from the date of publication of the decision being appealed against. Exceptionally for students permitted to study with no internet access (eg prisoners), the appeal period begins on the day the result letter is dispatched to the student.

A disagreement regarding academic judgement at assessment *does not* constitute grounds for appeal.

### **3.7: Discontinuation of units**

OCA may withdraw units or replace them. The normal period of notice for withdrawing a unit is three months.

Students on any units that are withdrawn may still complete their study and submit their work for assessment, subject to the usual time constraints, as set out throughout this document. Please see OCA's Terms and Conditions for full details.

### **3.8: Self-plagiarism**

A student may not submit for assessment any piece of work which was not made during the course of study of the unit with OCA, or that has previously been assessed, except where specifically required to resubmit that piece of work as part of a re-assessment.

### **3.9: Plagiarism and malpractice**

Plagiarism and malpractice are taken very seriously by the OCA.

Plagiarism occurs when a student presents someone else's work, in whole or in part, as their own. This is specifically ruled out and will give rise to serious consequences.

Malpractice occurs when a student attempts to mislead or deceive assessors concerning the work submitted for assessment. This includes colluding with others (including other students) in the preparation, editing or submission of work. Malpractice is also specifically ruled out and will give rise to serious consequences.



Students are required to complete an Affirmation as part of the Assessment Application Form as evidence that their assessment submission is their own work.

The processes to be adopted where plagiarism or malpractice are suspected – and the penalties that will be applied as and when such offences are proven – are set out in the Plagiarism and Malpractice in Course work and Assessments Policy in the OCA's Student Regulations, Policies and Procedures. In any cases where the recommended penalty is failure of an assessment or termination of the unit, the decision must be referred to the UCA's Board of Examiners.



## 4: PROGRESSION

### 4.1 Progression

Undergraduate Degrees have three stages: (Stages 1, 2 and 3 or HE4, 5 and 6); Diplomas of Higher Education have two stages (Stage 1 and 2 or HE4 and 5) as described in Section 2.2 above. A student must pass *all* the relevant units at each Stage in order to progress to the next Stage.

A student may enrol – and start work – on a unit at the next Stage up before receiving notification of the outcome from the final lower Stage unit, *provided they accept that this is at their own risk*.

For students progressing from Stage 2 to Stage 3, they will be expected to participate in a discussion with the subject Programme Leader ahead of enrolling at Stage 3. The discussion will enable students to understand the challenges faced at Stage 3 study with the OCA.

If the outcome from the assessment of the lower Stage unit is a 'fail', work on the higher Stage unit must be suspended immediately. The student must then undertake the necessary work to resubmit for assessment for the lower Stage unit. If they are successful with the re-assessment, they may resume their studies at the higher Stage.

If the student is *not* successful with the re-assessment, they will not be able to continue with their award studies – although they may qualify for an Exit Award at that point. However, if students in this situation do wish to complete the higher stage module, they may do so as a personal development learner – but on the understanding that they will not be able to submit their work for assessment, and will no longer be registered with the UCA for the award.



## 5: AWARDS AND CLASSIFICATIONS

### 5.1 Credit value requirements for award

The awards offered by OCA are as follows, with the minimum and maximum credit tariffs:

**Table 5: HE credit value requirements**

Award	FHEQ qual Stage	Minimum total credits	Range of unit credit Stages	Highest Stage required	Lowest Stage permitted	Minimum Credits required at each Stage to be eligible for an award
BA (Hons)	6	360	4, 5, 6	6	4	120 credits at Stage 1 (HE4) 120 credits at Stage 2 (HE5) 120 credits at Stage 3 (HE6)
BA*	6	300	4, 5, 6	6	4	120 credits at Stage 1 (HE4) 120 credits at Stage 2 (HE5) 60 credits at Stage 3 (HE6)
Dip HE	5	240	4, 5	5	4	120 credits at Stage 1 (HE4) 120 credits at Stage 2 (HE5)
Cert HE	4	120	4	4	4	120 credits at Stage 1 (HE4)

\*This award is available as an Exit Award only

### 5.2 Classification of awards

The table below sets out the classification scheme that applies to each award.

**Table 6: HE classification schemes**

Award	Classification scheme adopted	Classifications available
BA (Hons)	Honours Degree scheme	1 <sup>st</sup> /2:i /2:ii /3rd
BA*	Pass/fail scheme	Pass/fail
Dip HE	Pass/fail scheme	Pass/fail
Cert HE	Pass/fail scheme	Pass/fail

\*This award is available as an Exit Award only

### 5.3: Honours Degree scheme

Where a student has met all of the requirements for an award, the award classification is calculated as follows.

A weighted average of the percentage marks given for the Stage 3 (HE6) units (rounded to the nearest whole number) will provide the Degree classification, based on the table below:

**Table 7: HE classifications**

Average score	Classification
70 or above	1 <sup>st</sup> class Honours (1 <sup>st</sup> )
60 - 69	2 <sup>nd</sup> class Honours (2:i)
50 - 59	2 <sup>nd</sup> class Honours (2:ii)
40 - 49	3 <sup>rd</sup> class Honours (3 <sup>rd</sup> )



#### **5.4 Pass /fail scheme**

Where a student has met all of the requirements for award, the candidate will be awarded a Pass.

#### **5.5 Borderline candidates and discretion**

The arithmetical outcome of the award calculation is final, and the concept of a 'borderline candidate' is not recognised by this scheme. Accordingly Boards of Examiners will not have discretion to vary the award or award classification derived in accordance with the above award calculation schemes.

#### **5.6 Exit Awards**

Where a student:

- i. fails to achieve sufficient credits to gain the award for which they are registered; and
- ii. has exhausted all reassessment attempts or for good cause, as adjudged by the Board of Examiners, has terminated their studies early; and
- iii. has achieved sufficient credits to gain a lower stage award

the student will be recommended by the Board of Examiners for that lower award, provided that the award is offered by the University as specified in the Programme Specification.

#### **5.7 Posthumous awards**

A student who dies before completing the full requirements for an award may be eligible for a posthumous award, provided that the student has completed and achieved two-thirds of the credits required for that award. A posthumous award may be conferred at the discretion of the Board of Examiners.

#### **5.8 Double counting**

Once a Degree has been conferred, there will be no further opportunity for assessment or to attempt to improve the classification of that award. No credit which has contributed to a Degree award may be used to contribute towards a further award. However, students who obtain a CertHE or DipHE may use that credit within an application to register for a higher award; in this case the student's prior award will be considered under the APCL regulations below to determine whether (and how much) of that credit should be considered to contribute towards the higher Stage award.





## 6: TRANSFER OF CREDIT

### 6.1 APCL

Accreditation of Prior *Certificated* Learning (APCL) is the process whereby a student's academic credit previously acquired is recognised for the purpose of admission, progression and award. Any credit to be transferred under this scheme must be agreed by the Chair of the Curriculum and Quality Committee at OCA.

The maximum credit that may be recognised under this mechanism will not be more than two-thirds of the credit required for the award.

The classification of any award will be based only on marks awarded by UCA for units accredited by them, and not on marks awarded by previous institutions.

Students awarded APCL credit must enrol on the relevant OCA course within 3 months of being notified of the APCL credit exemption

### 6.2 APEL

Accreditation of Prior *Experiential* Learning is the process whereby a student's previously acquired learning, whether certificated or not (but not including recognised academic credit), is recognised, through the awarding of credit, for the purposes of progression and award.

A student seeking recognition under this mechanism must apply prior to admission to the course of study. Any credit awarded under this scheme will be awarded at the discretion of the OCA's Chair of Curriculum and Quality on the recommendation of the Programme Leader from the relevant subject area. OCA Quality team must clearly record the volume and stage(s) of all such APEL credit awarded.

The maximum credit that may be awarded under this mechanism in recognition of APEL will be not more than half of the credits required for the award. Accordingly a student awarded such APEL credit will not be eligible for an Exit Award where their APEL credit comprises more than half of the credit required for that Exit Award.

Where credit is awarded under this mechanism, it will be clearly recorded as 'APEL credit' and will *not* be awarded a mark. Such APEL credit shall not be used to calculate any score or award classification.

In accordance with the regulations on double counting (see Section 5.8), previously acquired learning which has contributed to a recognised award may not be granted credit under this mechanism.

Students awarded APEL credit must enrol on the relevant OCA course within 3 months of being notified of the APEL credit exemption



## **7: EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

### **7.1 Overview**

External examiners are appointed by UCA for each Degree. External examiners form the final step in the quality assurance of assessment, reviewing group / team marking of assessed work. External examiners should sample student work from each assessment event at OCA to oversee and quality assure the standards of assessment.

### **7.2 Appointment of external examiners**

External examiners shall be external to OCA and UCA, must be of sufficient authority in the discipline being examined and should be familiar with the standards and procedures of University level education in the United Kingdom.

External examiners are normally appointed for a period of four years, which may be extended for one year. On completion of their period of appointment, an external examiner will not normally be eligible for re-appointment until a further five years have elapsed.

At least one external examiner must be appointed for each Degree programme. However, the same external examiner may be appointed for more than one programme of study.

Procedures governing the role of external examiners will be detailed in UCA's Quality Assurance Handbook.

### **7.3 Release of results**

Confirmed Results, including unit marks, re-assessment, progression and award decisions, may only be formally released to students once ratified by the Board of Examiners. Any results released to students prior to this will be clearly marked as provisional.

Students with a tuition fee debt to the College may not be considered by a Board of Examiners, and therefore they may have no results to be released [see OCA Student Regulations]

### **7.4 Advice on further study to students**

In addition to marks being provided to students following assessment, the College provides guidance for future study in the form of written advice on the results letter.

The advice provided does not refer to the assessment mark, but looks forward to the student's next unit of study.



### GLOSSARY

- APCL:** Accreditation of Prior *Certificated* Learning (APCL) is the process whereby a student's academic credit previously acquired at another institution is recognised for the purpose of admission, progression and award (see Section 6.1).
- APEL:** Accreditation of Prior *Experiential* Learning is the process whereby a student's previously acquired learning, whether certificated or not (but not including recognised academic credit), is recognised, through the awarding of credit, for the purposes of progression and award (see Section 6.2).
- Assessment Event:** The period during which the formal process of summative assessment takes place.
- Award:** The academic qualification conferred by the UCA upon a student following successful completion of the course.
- Conditions of Enrolment (a term exclusive to the OCA):** A formal document issued by the OCA to all students, including personal development learners as well as undergraduates, setting out the more commercial basis of the contract between the student and the OCA (e.g. policy on refunds).
- Course:** A validated combination of units, onto which a student is registered, the successful completion of which leads to an award.
- Completion (a term exclusive to the OCA):** The stage at which all the assignments in a given unit have been completed – and feedback provided by the tutor - but *before* the work is submitted for assessment.
- Core unit:** Units which must be taken by all students on that course (see Section 2.10).
- Credit/ Credit Volume:** A numerical value denoting the amount of learning expected for the typical student to achieve the learning outcomes of that unit. 1 credit represents 10 notional learning hours (see Section 2.1).
- Credit Stage:** A numerical value reflecting the depth of learning involved and the intellectual demand required to meet the learning outcomes of that unit.
- Credit Value:** The combination of the Credit Volume and the Credit Stage. The credit value therefore relates to the complexity of the learning outcomes and the notional time judged necessary to achieve them.
- Deferral:** An extended period of absence within units within a Degree Programme (see Section 2.5)
- Elective unit:** Units which *may* be selected but are not classified as core (see above and Section 2.10).
- External examiner:** Appointed by UCA for each Degree to complete the quality assurance of assessment, reviewing group / team marking of assessed work.



- Fail:** A result indicating that the credits have not been awarded due to one or more learning outcomes not having been met.
- Interruption:** An extended period of absence *between units* within a Degree programme (see Section 2.6).
- Learning Outcome:** That which has been learned or a student is able to do as a result of completing the learning process.
- Malpractice:** An attempt to mislead or deceive the examiners concerning the work submitted for assessment, including colluding with others (including other students) in the preparation, editing or submission of work (see Section 3.9).
- Moderation:** The process through which assessments conducted by internal examiners are reviewed by external examiners (see Section 7.4).
- Plagiarism:** Presentation by a student of someone else's work, in whole or in part, as their own for assessment (see Section 3.9).
- Progression:** Movement from one Stage to the next Stage of a course. Progression is subject to successfully obtaining the required number of credits at the required Stage I (see Section 4.1).
- Re-assessment:** An opportunity to retrieve failure by resubmission of work.
- Self Plagiarism:** Submission of material produced by the student *prior to enrolment on the current unit* as though it had been produced as an output from study on the current unit (see Section 3.9).
- Stage:** The period of study leading to a formal point of progression or award. In OCA usage, Stage 1 is equivalent to HE4; and Stages 2 and 3 are equivalent to HE5 and 6 respectively.
- Unit:** Units are the building blocks of courses. A unit is a discrete, self contained element of study, which has defined learning outcomes and for which credit is awarded for meeting those learning outcomes.
- Withdrawal:** The point at which a student either notifies their decision to withdraw from a course, or when a student is withdrawn by the OCA, (see Section 2.7).