



Open
College
of the Arts



UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

BA (HONS) PHOTOGRAPHY

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION [ACADEMIC YEAR 2021/22]

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 of the Arts		
Final Award Title and Type	BA (Hons)		
Course Title	Photography		
Course Location and Length	Campus: OCA/Open and Flexible Learning	Length: Maximum time allowed to complete the programme is 12 years	
Mode of Study	Full-time		Part-time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Period of Validation	2021/22 – 2025/26		
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable		
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable		
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable		
Entry criteria and requirements ²			
<p>Level 4 courses are open access so no prior qualifications are required. In order to progress to Level 5, students must have gained 120 credits at Level 4, through study or by Accreditation of Prior Learning.</p> <p>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>An unaccredited OCA Foundation Certificate is available for students who need to develop their technical and visual awareness skills before embarking on degree study.</p> <p><i>*This requirement may waived, on rare occasions, by the Head of Learner Support if negotiated prior to the start of the course. Typically, exemptions are only given to students with specific disabilities or to those studying in prison.</i></p> <p>Specific requirements</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Disabled students</p> <p>Applications from students with disabilities are considered using the same criteria and principles as all other applicants. All students with a disability are encouraged to indicate this on their application form in order that advice can be offered on the facilities and services available. Prospective students with a disability will be encouraged to discuss their requirements with the Head of Learner Support.</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.

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%	0.0%	100%
Stage 2	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Stage 3	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours ⁴	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Stage 1	17.5% 210 hours	82.5% 990 hours	0.0% 0 hours
Stage 2	15.0% 180 hours	85.0% 1020 hours	0.0% 0 hours
Stage 3	12.5% 150 hours	87.5% 1050 hours	0.0% 0 hours
General level of staff delivering the course ⁵	OCA requires Tutors and Programme Leaders (PLs) to have knowledge of their subject area, proven communication skills, experience of delivering learning and teaching, and a first degree or postgraduate or equivalent, and/or substantial professional experience to support their roles. Tutors and PLs are encouraged to obtain professional recognition by the Higher Education Academy at an appropriate level. All Tutors engage with an induction process, an annual 'Tutor Team Meeting' and 1-2-1s, and are provided with guidance on Formative Feedback, Group Work, and Summative Assessment		
Language of Study	English		
Subject/Qualification Benchmark Statement:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Art and Design (2017)		
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;

Unit codes and titles	Level	Credit value	Elective/ Core	Most popular student choice of optional elective units or elective options in core units?	Order of units
Stage 1					
PH4APH - Photography 1.1: Approaching Photography (OPHO4165)	4	40	Core	N/A	1

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, Programme Director, Senior Lecturer

PH4PPC - Photography 1.2: Practice and Process (OPHO4166)	4	40	Core	N/A	2
PH4NAC - Photography 1.3: Narrative and Context (OPHO4167)	4	40	Core	N/A	3
Stage 2					
PH5CGG - Photography 2.1: Challenging Genres (OPHO5158)	5	40	Core	N/A	4
PH5EAR - Photography 2.2: Ethics and Representation (OPHO5159)	5	40	Core	N/A	5
PH5DVC - Photography 2.3 - Digital Image and Visual Culture (OPHO5160)	5	40	Core	N/A	6
Stage 3					
PH6PAR - Photography 3.1: Practice and Research (OPHO6166)	6	40	Core	N/A	7
PH6CAA - Photography 3.2: Context and Audience (OPHO6167)	6	40	Core	N/A	8
PH6MPT - Photography 3.3: Major Project (OPHO6168)	6	40	Core	N/A	9

Section B - Course Overview

This degree programme gives students a unique opportunity to study photography away from a university campus with specifically designed course materials for distance learning. Wherever the learner is in their photographic practice this degree aims to equip them with skills, confidence, motivation and ambition through a learning design programme that starts from first principles through to the contemporary professional practice of the student's choice. Students engage with shifting boundaries of photographic practice, emerging practices and wider contexts shaping subject knowledge and boundaries.

This distance learning and andragogical focus embeds resourcefulness and external engagement, to build individual knowledge, understanding and skills exploring the power and language of image making and photography in global contexts.

This online offer contributes to the core concepts, methods and understanding the course delivers, fostering curiosity and experimentation and creative risk taking and nurturing a dynamic community of practice. This open access offer enables anyone – regardless of educational experience or ability – to begin their journey and deepen understanding of photography.

The course has 3 units at each of the 3 stages. Choices within units support students to negotiate areas of photographic practice in dialogue with specialist tutors and peers, to experiment and take risks.

Stage 1 develops students' technical, creative and analytical skills with 3 x 40 credit units enabling choices to suit diverse student backgrounds and needs. Support is via one to one tutorials, peer group work and course resources. The first unit **'Approaching Photography'** introduces the course ethos, photographic practices and academic skills, and the 2 pathways enable entry and alignment of students via different routes: **'Expressing Your Vision'** for the beginner, with emphasis on technical camera skills and personal vision, or **'Reapproaching Photography'** for more technically proficient candidates with focus on contextual awareness in relation to existing practice. The next unit, **'Practice and Process'** allows students practice to develop further, through considering subject boundaries of contemporary photography, moving image, visual culture & communications. The final unit at Stage 1, **'Photographic Narrative'** helps students create and develop imagery by looking at photography applied in context across genres and prepares them for progression to Stage 2.

Stage 2, supports students to begin to develop their personal voice and again has 3 x 40 credit units. **'Challenging Genres'** explores and deconstructs photographic practices, histories and ideas and genre conventions and contexts. **'Ethics and Representation'** develops understanding and critically explores the ethics of photographic representation in individual and global contexts. **'Digital Image and Visual Culture'** explores digital images and visual culture; consumption, dissemination, and contexts, making and exploring photography and found imagery. The increased emphasis on theoretical and critical studies in parallel with practical work at stage 2 prepares students for progression to Stage 3.

Stage 3 consists primarily of a negotiated programme. The 3 x 40 credit unit structure provides a framework for students to develop a substantial and sustained body of work. Three informal learner routes through stage 3, 'dissertation', 'external project', and 'holistic practice' support students' to negotiate individual paths. The first unit,

'Practice and Research', identifies and synthesizes practice and research across a self-directed body of work and thinking. Students scope out and develop a practice-research plan emerging from their portfolio, which prepares them for the 2nd unit, **'Context and Audience'**. This is a framework for outward facing projects to contextualise, test, develop and present critical and creative engagements of individual work and ideas. Appropriate methodologies are agreed with tutor (e.g. dissertation, external project, case study). The final unit, **'Major Project'** demonstrates learning over previous units and levels through a self-directed project and reflective presentation informed by a broad spectrum of photographic practice.

The distance learning ethos demands a level of self-reliance and a strong commitment to self-reflection which, supported by the 1:1 and peer group relationships between the tutors and students at every level, produces reflective, creative and ethically aware practitioners capable of sustaining their creative work beyond the degree and into the wider creative ecology.

Section C - Course Aims

1. To encourage an individual, creative and intellectually curious approach to photographic practice.
2. To increase students' confidence within their photographic practice, their ability to take risks, to think creatively and critically.
3. To provide a holistic learning environment that stimulates individual curiosity, creativity and intellectual enquiry.
4. To develop a critical understanding of contemporary and historical practices, theories, and debates relevant to photography and its wider cultural and global contexts.
5. To foster an awareness of appropriate professional practices, ethics and standards relevant to contemporary global image making contexts.
6. To engage with the shifting boundaries of photographic practice through an exploration of emerging practices and wider contexts that shape subject knowledge and boundaries.

Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

Knowledge

- LO1 Demonstrate knowledge of and critical engagement with relevant historic and contemporary practices, theories, techniques, of photographic practices and wider global contexts.
- LO2 Develop awareness of the holistic and informed relationships between practice, theory and shifting subject boundaries within contemporary image making.

Understanding

- LO3 Articulate reflective and personal engagement with relevant historic and contemporary debates and issues in photography and other art practices.
- LO4 Test and select appropriate creative experiments and research methodologies, to produce individual work that is critically informed.

Application

- LO5 Apply technical, practical and analytical skills that experiment with ideas and outcomes in inventive and individual ways.
- LO6 Apply relevant professional, ethical standards within your work appropriate to the wider cultural implications of image making within a global context.

Section E - Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Learning and Teaching Strategy

The Open College of the Arts (OCA) strategic vision is “to be at the forefront of student-led creative arts education through open, enhanced, & supported distance learning, for an evolving society”. OCA is a non-profit educational charity, whose purpose is to widen participation in arts education through open flexible distance and online learning. OCA uses a learning design process to consider the content, activities, and support needed to deliver course aims. This flexible approach recognises and supports a diverse range of student experiences, ambitions, and needs. In line with OCA’s core values, it also considers how to encourage more open, empowering, engaging, social, sustainable and evolving approaches to learning, teaching, and assessment.

As distance learners, students will need to work independently and to develop appropriate research and study skills. An induction programme and ‘Getting Started’ introductions are in place to support students to do this, and to help establish relationships with peers and tutors. Ongoing study skills support is available through #weareoca, OCA’s blog content, and other cross-curriculum study skills resources.

OCA’s virtual learning environment, OCA Learn, provides a platform for content, activities, and support for each unit. A dedicated Degree Space is in place to foster course wide dialogue and peer support through forum activities and shared resources. OCA has a responsibility to ensure all learning environments, content, and communication are as accessible as possible for individuals who have sensory, cognitive, neurological, physical, or other disabilities, and to provide an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges the diversity of our students’ experiences. OCA’s Student Engagement Strategy places a key focus on accessibility, with provision for designing learning materials with enhanced operability for mobile devices, which conform to all appropriate accessibility standards.

Course content is delivered through a range of learning materials, including written, video, and interactive media. These materials provide introductions and framing of subject related content, technical guidance, case studies, and other appropriate information. Materials are primarily accessed through OCA Learn, as well as #weareoca, which provides opportunities for current tutor and student-led content and debate.

Accompanying activities, such as exercises, research tasks, and assignments, encourage students to work independently and flexibly by selecting, testing, and interpreting relevant research, and applying understanding of critical thinking and creativity. Through these activities, students will begin to identify, develop and manage their own projects and document their progress through a learning log, or similar format. Learning logs are provided through OCA Spaces.

Students are expected to have a basic grasp of any software required for their course and to learn more complex usage as necessary as they progress. OCA provides students with G Drive online storage which includes word processing, presentation, drawing, and mind mapping tools. While OCA does not provide a help desk service to students for software, learning activities provide structured context for software learning at staged points throughout the course, and forums provide opportunities for peer support.

Learning is supported by tutors who provide timely, well-grounded and constructive formative feedback that aims to stretch and challenge learners at staged points within the unit. In parallel, tutor and student-led learning takes place through online group work. Group work offers opportunities to discuss and shape ideas, and share and support approaches to learning within video, webinar, study events, and/or forum activities and support. Critically reflecting on work through self-evaluation provides a valuable way for students to observe and learn from peers, to develop increasingly professional personal and graduate skills, and to develop a deepening recognition of subject boundaries. Students are encouraged to do this through their learning log, reflective assessment presentations, and by reflecting on formative feedback.

Student Services provide study planning and pastoral support for any student who requests it. This is available personally via telephone, online, or within student forums, or more generally through additional resources, signposted through OCA Learn and/or #weareoca.

Students will engage with a range of academic literature throughout the course, supported through library access and seminars. Essential and recommended reading lists have been selected for their academic currency, and from authors and practitioners across a range of viewpoints, ethnicities, identities, and cultures. All reading lists can be accessed through the digital library services and eBooks. Additional online texts and journals are also available via UCA’s online library. Students are supported through OCA’s Link Librarian via OCA Learn and #weareoca content and debate.

As students progress, their research will become more self-directed. Independent research and projects will be undertaken alongside a consideration of any ethical issues. Guidance, resources, and support for any external and/or collaborative projects are available through the Enterprise Hub and in discussion with tutors.

In addition to OCA's core support, OCA's Student Association (OCASA) provides opportunities for students to physically engage with cross-curriculum Study Events, asynchronous Virtual Study Events, or to become involved in wider student discussions or other events.

Assessment Strategy

OCA's assessment strategy is based on an assessment for learning model which emphasises assessment *for* learning rather than assessment *of* learning. Therefore, assessment is seen as an integrated and meaningful part of the learning journey. Assessment outcomes encourage learners to critically reflect on their progress and to articulate ideas and outcomes effectively through appropriate presentation formats.

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. To help articulate these, assessment criteria are presented at each level through a set of range statements.

Summative assessment can take place online or at a physical assessment event. Students will submit work in line with course assessment guidelines, and will be assessed through group marking overseen by the Programme Leader. Quality assurance is provided through moderation of marks, internal verification of the assessment process, parity checks to ensure grades are consistent across OCA, plagiarism checks, and scrutiny by External Examiners. Students will be provided with summative marks and feedback at the end of each unit.

Costs of additional materials/resources

Software and digital equipment

As part of some units, students are required to use specialist applications. Students are responsible for sourcing and, where necessary, purchasing any additional software specified. Where possible, open or freeware equivalents will be discussed alongside industry standard options. Students are eligible for any student discounts on computer equipment and software.

Materials and resources

Students are responsible for sourcing and purchasing the materials, resources, and any additional equipment used in the production of their work. These costs will differ from student to student, depending on each student's area of focus.

Transportation of work

Students are responsible for any postage costs of work to/from tutors or OCA for formative feedback and/or assessment. OCA will charge students for any excess postage payable on work submitted for formal assessment which exceeds the maximum permitted weight. Alternatively, students can submit work digitally for free.

Learner Support Scheme

In line with OCA's Access and Participation Plan, the College continues to invest in schemes to improve engagement into creative arts from those from low socio-economic backgrounds through a bursary fund.

For further details on your specific course costs, please visit www.oca.ac.uk

Section F - Employability

OCA recognises that its current student body holds a broad range of employment and enterprise aspirations. Many students have established careers, see their studies as a change in direction, and for an increasing number of younger students, as a first step into a creative career. As distance learners, OCA students are located across the UK and internationally and consequently have differing levels of resources and opportunity. In order to provide meaningful and consistent educational experiences and outcomes for all of these students, OCA encourages students to interpret the concept of 'enterprise' in ways that are personally relevant to their particular aspirations, social contexts, and locations.

As a charity, OCA supports a curriculum that has a positive impact upon people's lives and society as a whole, and encourages engagement with enterprise that has a clear societal impact. This means undertaking external projects

that can have a wider social benefit, and developing practices that are socially aware and environmentally sustainable.

To encourage this, learning materials and activities provides a framework for students to begin to define, establish and sustain their practices at a variety of scales and ambitions, and encourage students to think about freelance, employment, social enterprises, or entrepreneurship outcomes. A focus on research and ethics helps to frame these activities within wider social contexts. Students are also encouraged to undertake collaborative projects with other students, and to work on competition briefs or other external opportunities.

A key benefit of distance learning is in allowing self-sustaining ways of developing a creative practice to build over time, and by balancing study/work/life commitments. Students can establish studio spaces and build resources throughout their studies, to feel prepared and equipped at the end of their course. Therefore, enterprise related themes are embedded through the course to encourage this sustainable approach.

An Enterprise Hub will provide a central online resource to support self-directed student activities. The Hub will provide guidance and resources on key enterprise themes, such as establishing and undertaking external projects/work-related learning, working collaboratively, establishing business or enterprise opportunities such as external exhibitions, business plans, or social enterprises, and connecting to appropriate professional networks.

OCA will use the Enterprise Hub to help establish relationships with other organisations, businesses, and funding opportunities. These in turn will provide the potential for business incubators, mentoring options, internship opportunities and enable access to seed-funding for students.

Section G - 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