

# Open College of the Arts (OCA)

## Reasonable Adjustments Policy

### 1. The purpose of the policy

- 1.1 The Open College of the Arts (OCA) is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all students wishing to study courses with us. Students with disabilities and long-term health conditions often choose to study with OCA due to the nature of our courses and the support we can offer. This policy sets out OCA's approach to inclusive curriculum design to ensure all students can access learning, and the additional support available to all students with a disability or long-term health condition.
- 1.2 The Equality Act 2010 requires reasonable adjustments to be made where students with disabilities or long-term health conditions personally experience substantial disadvantage in comparison with other students. For the purpose of this policy the definition of disability is that which is stated in the Equality Act 2010, namely that a person has a disability if they have "a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."
- 1.3 'Substantial' in the Act refers to something which is more than minor or trivial and long term (has lasted or is likely to last for at least a year). This includes conditions which are controlled by medication, which might be variable in effect, or which might recur.

### 2. Who does the policy apply to?

- 2.1 This policy applies to all OCA students. The policy should not be used in circumstances where other policies may be more appropriate e.g. where a student may need an extension or deferral as a result of unforeseen circumstances, this would sit within the Extensions and Deferrals policy.

### 3. Linked and other relevant policies and legislation

- 3.1 This policies forms part of OCA's Terms and Conditions, and forms part of the OCA Student Regulations. This policy should be read in conjunction with OCA's Extensions and Deferrals Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, and Wellbeing Policy.
- 3.2 This policy references the Equality Act 2010, and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

### 4. General principles

- 4.1 There is an anticipatory duty for Higher Education Institutions to provide reasonable adjustments for students. OCA works to embed reasonable adjustments into the curriculum design and delivery as a whole, providing an inclusive learning environment that benefits all students. OCA does understand that there may still be individual reasonable adjustments required to ensure students with disabilities are not disadvantaged. All reasonable adjustments depend on each student's circumstances within the course being taken.
- 4.2 OCA will consider a number of factors when deciding whether an individual adjustment is reasonable. Factors may include, but are not limited to:

- 4.2.1 The perceived effectiveness of the adjustment,
- 4.2.2 The time or resources required to implement the adjustment,
- 4.2.3 The student's previous experience of the adjustment and whether the need could be met through an existing inclusive approach or anticipatory adjustment.

4.3 OCA is not obliged to offer the student their preferred adjustment, particularly if an inclusive approach or alternative reasonable adjustment is available which would provide appropriate support for the student.

4.4 Reasonable adjustments will not change the learning outcomes of a course unit which must be met, but can adjust the route to those learning outcomes.

## **5. Reasonable Adjustments**

5.1 Students should notify the OCA of their disability or long-term health condition prior to enrolment, or as soon as possible after enrolment, but are able to declare a disability at any point during their studies.

5.2 OCA will encourage and assist all students who may be eligible for Disabled Students' Allowances (DSAs) to apply for DSAs at the earliest opportunity.

5.3 A student does not need to be in receipt of DSAs to be supported at OCA. However, where OCA determines that it is likely a prospective or current student is eligible to receive DSAs, there is the expectation that the student will take all reasonable steps to access this support.

5.4 Where eligibility is likely and the student chooses not to apply for DSAs, or fails to complete the application process, OCA may decline to put in place adjustments that should be funded from these allowances.

5.5 OCA will request information from the applicant or student to support any request for reasonable adjustments. This may be a Study Needs Assessment report, or evidence of diagnosis from a GP, educational psychologist or other third party professional to ensure appropriate recommendations for adjustments can be made.

5.6 The following reasonable adjustments can be agreed and put in place by the Learner Support Team:

- Printed course materials in differing font and font size, or on coloured paper,
- Electronic course materials available for use with assistive technology,
- Additional time for assignments subject to the overall study timeframes. This may be:-
  - Up to 3 months per unit for Foundations, Undergraduate and Personal Development study;
  - Up to 2 weeks per course for Short Courses;
  - Up to 2 weeks per component for Postgraduate study.
- Adjustments to the format of assignment tasks e.g. undertaking a presentation instead of an essay or group work,
- Adjustments to exercises and projects requiring access to primary sources,
- Adjustments to the format of tutorials or feedback,
- Transcripts of required audio tasks (e.g. MA Fine Art lecture),

- Recordings of lectures / seminars (e.g. MA Fine Art).

5.7 Other reasonable adjustments may be recommended and agreed by OCA's Curriculum and Quality Committee as appropriate.

## **6. Curriculum and Quality**

6.1 OCA's mission is to be at the forefront of student-led creative arts education through open, enhanced, and supported distance learning, for an evolving society.

6.2 In line with this, accessibility is a key consideration before and throughout the course design process. This means making sure our learning design is adaptable to fit different study intensities, circumstances or contexts, and ensuring that we are not building barriers through our choices of activities or platforms.

6.3 Where accessibility issues do arise for individual students, OCA will consider appropriate reasonable adjustments, and review whether this should lead to further anticipatory changes

## **7. Support for the policy**

7.1 Students should contact the Learner Support Team at [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk) or 01226 978618 to discuss reasonable adjustments at the earliest opportunity.

7.2 In the event that a student feels requested reasonable adjustments have not been put in place, this should be raised initially with the Learner Support Team. If the issue cannot be resolved, the student should complete a formal complaints form, available from the OCA website, and forward it to the Head of Student Services.

## **8. Control of the policy**

8.1 This policy was authored by Lia Harness, Senior Learner Support Adviser, and Craig Dewis, Head of Student Services in consultation with OCA Staff and given approval through OCA Oversight Management Group in May 2020.

### **Reviewing the policy**

9.1 OCA will work closely with OCASA to gather student feedback on the outline of the policy, its intentions, the administration of the policy, and a review of all these points in practice. These will then be fed into the next review point for the policy.

9.2 The next review date is June 2022. If you would like to raise any issues around this policy then you should contact either the Learner Support team directly at [learnersupport@oca.ac.uk](mailto:learnersupport@oca.ac.uk), or if you are a student, you might also wish to raise these with the appropriate OCASA representative.