



Open
College
of the Arts



UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

MA FINE ART

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/23

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	Open College of the Arts										
Final Award Title and Type	Master of Arts										
Course Title	Fine Art										
Course Location and Length	Campus: OCA/Open and Flexible Learning	Length: 2 years ²									
Mode of Study	Full-time		Part-time								
Period of Validation	2020/21 – 2024/25										
Name of Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body	Not Applicable										
Type of Accreditation	Not Applicable										
Accreditation due for renewal	Not Applicable										
<p>Entry criteria and requirements³</p> <p>All applicants to the MA Fine Art will be required to complete the OCA Master's application form, submit a written statement and a recent portfolio of artwork in order to be considered for the course.</p> <p>The written statement will detail reasons for wishing to join the course and the portfolio of artwork will have been produced during the two years prior to application.</p> <p>Then, OCA will normally accept students onto the course who can apply and claim for 50 points, made up from any of the following:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="256 1525 1369 1854"> <tr> <td>A degree in any subject</td> <td>40 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>A degree in the visual arts</td> <td>50 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Evidenced experience of working in any relevant creative industry or context. For example, as a practicing Fine Artist</td> <td>50 points</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Higher National Diploma/Foundation degree or equivalent in Art</td> <td>30 points*</td> </tr> </table>				A degree in any subject	40 points	A degree in the visual arts	50 points	Evidenced experience of working in any relevant creative industry or context. For example, as a practicing Fine Artist	50 points	Higher National Diploma/Foundation degree or equivalent in Art	30 points*
A degree in any subject	40 points										
A degree in the visual arts	50 points										
Evidenced experience of working in any relevant creative industry or context. For example, as a practicing Fine Artist	50 points										
Higher National Diploma/Foundation degree or equivalent in Art	30 points*										

¹ Regulated by the Higher Education Funding Council for England

² Entry points in October, February and June

³ This should be the standard University Criteria unless otherwise approved by the Academic Board and include UCAS entry profile for undergraduate courses.

Higher National Certificate or equivalent in Art	20 points*
A-Level Art or equivalent	10 points*
Other experience or learning, whether certified or not, will be considered on an individual basis.	

Equivalency to the qualifications stated, include international qualifications provided these are accompanied by a UK NARIC equivalency certificate, and/or un-certificated training or work experience to an equivalent level. In all cases acceptance is at the discretion of Open College of the Arts.

English Language Competency:

All students need to have an appropriate standard of English to complete their chosen course of study, which will include a substantial written element. International or EU students will need to provide evidence of their ability. Full details on each of these requirements can be found in the OCA Student Regulations in the section Admission Requirements.

IT Competence

Prospective MA students are required to complete a self assessment IT test compiled by OCA and sign a statement to demonstrate that they understand the level of IT ability that is required of them. The level required is described as follows:

This programme is conducted centrally online. It is therefore essential that you are adept at communicating and using online tools. Are you a fluent IT User and familiar with using the web, and web-based tools such as Skype and /or Google Hangout, blog interfaces etc with confidence, as well as uploading and downloading documents, images and video files.

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.

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 services available. Prospective students with a disability will be encouraged to discuss their requirements with the Learner Support Team.

Overall methods of assessment ⁴	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Course	0.0%	0.0%	100%
Overall Learning & Teaching hours ⁵	Scheduled:	Independent:	Placement:
Course	10.3%	89.7%	0.0%
	186 hours	1614 hours	0 hours

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

⁵ As generated by the most popular unit descriptors and calculated for the overall course stage data.

General level of staff delivering the course ⁶	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"> QAA Master's Degree Characteristic Statements 	
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)	

The course structure

The structure of all OCA undergraduate awards awarded by the University complies with the [Common Credit Framework](#).

The Common Credit 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
MA Fine Art					
FA7RAP - MA Fine Art 1.1 Research and Practice (OFIR7001)	7	60	Core	N/A	1
FA7CPS - MA Fine Art 1.2 Contextual Perspectives (OFIR7002)	7	60	Core	N/A	2
FA7RES - MA Fine Art 1.3 Resolution (OFIR7003)	7	60	Core	N/A	3

⁶ Include general information about the experience or status of the staff involved in delivering the course, for example Professor, Course Leader, Senior Lecturer

Section B - Course Overview

This degree programme offers graduates the opportunity to scrutinize and advance their fine art existing practice, working towards their career aspirations through an innovative and exciting programme with art production at its core. The curriculum is centred around dialogic exchange with dynamic and supportive individual and group work to enable students to deepen their own chosen concepts and ways of working. Unique as the only cohort based online degree of its kind in Europe, the programme supports students through a curriculum that is built on critical enquiry, risk taking and innovation. The production of studio work and material investigation takes place alongside responsive written, aural and/or verbal presentation which contextualises studio concepts. Professional practice is embedded throughout the two-year programme, and students test their ideas through public presentation in their location, giving them the skills, ambition and confidence to establish a contemporary professional practice of the student's choice. Led by highly skilled educators who are also practising artists, students are guided through a programme of seminars, lectures, tutorials and studio days to develop a resilient, enquiring and self-motivated approach that enables them to debate and contribute to the field of fine art.

The course is delivered by online distance learning, and offers a unique opportunity (the only MA Fine Art course in Europe combining wholly distance delivery with the subject) for students who would not be able to attend a course on campus to enable them to develop high level skills in the field. Whilst studying from home, students have access to excellent training, material, support and feedback from subject experts. The course welcomes applications from students from a wide range of visual arts backgrounds who wish to extend and redefine the theoretical and practical base of their understanding of fine art at an advanced level. Through the geographically diverse locations within a cohort, students are able to share knowledge of international cultural contexts and opportunities and there is a history of OCA's MA students arranging a touring exhibition across countries of student residence.

Unit 1:

1.1. Research and Practice

This unit supports students to develop independent study skills and to examine a range of independent research methods appropriate to their practice. Working in their chosen medium and area of interest, students interrogate their practices through a series of practical approaches within a carefully constructed critical framework that identifies relevant theoretical positions and enables students to develop personal research methodologies.

Unit 2:

1.2. Contextual Perspectives

This unit is predominantly practice based. Students build upon methods, processes and learning initiated in Research and Practice, moving towards more independent study. Contextual Perspectives invites students to test ideas, developing propositions for reasoned enquiry based on methodologies developed in Unit 1.1, framing studio production with a critically defined set of conceptual and theoretical concerns. Students study the breadth of contemporary fine art practice including, but not limited to, writing as making, socially engaged practice, public art and time based work

Unit 3:

1.3. Resolution

To complete the programme, students produce a substantial body of practical work and accompanying contextual material for public presentation. A programme of critiques, seminars, tutorials and lectures support the students technical, conceptual, methodological and theoretical development over an extended period of study. The unit material will support critical awareness to enable students to arrive at a discerned and ambitious conclusion. Students leave the programme with a breadth of intellectual, practical and transferable skills, prepared to continue their practice for personal development and/or professional practice.

Section C - Course Aims

1. Widen access to Fine Art education at postgraduate level through an open, enhanced, and supported distance learning experience;
2. To encourage and equip you with a rich seam of discipline relevant knowledge, appropriate skills and future directed capabilities to operate as an effective practitioner;
3. To foster thoughtful, ethical, sustainable, flexible practitioners informed by rigorous research;
4. To provide opportunities to learn collaboratively, that engages in constructive and critical dialogue and connects you with a community of artists and researchers;
5. To promote inclusive and intercultural approaches to artwork and research practice;
6. To promote inquiry, experimentation and research informed approaches to the development, resolution and dissemination of artwork;
7. To promote informed and focussed independent learning, placing the student at the centre of the learning experience;
8. To develop your critical understanding of the theoretical and conceptual issues central to art and the social, historical and cultural context in which it is practiced;
9. To increase confidence in the development of individual practices, individual research and collective debate;
10. To develop autonomy of intellectual and practical skills in a chosen area of art practice appropriate to employment, further study, or life-long learning;
11. To enable you to develop a clear vision and a strategy for sustained professional practice beyond the course

Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

Knowledge

- LO1 Identify, define, and describe current and relevant principles, concepts and subject knowledge to a high level.
- LO2 Demonstrate an advanced awareness of the use of fine art skills, technologies, methods, practices and processes related to your artistic practice.
- LO3 Identify, define, and describe contemporary and historical practices, theories, and debates to help inform your artistic practice.
- LO4 Navigate and critique emerging practices and wider contexts, to shape your knowledge of fine art and its subject boundaries.

Understanding

- LO5 Select, question, test, interpret and synthesize relevant and specialist knowledge to inform your intentions, ideas, and outcomes.
- LO6 Apply highly fluent critical thinking to develop an informed personal position through critique, group work, and critical thinking tasks.

LO7 Apply curiosity, creativity, and intellectual enquiry to initiate, test, and articulate ideas and outcomes in professional and innovative ways.

Application

LO8 Select, test and use relevant materials, media and techniques to resolve and present innovative ideas and solutions through an exhibition.

LO9 Apply specialist technical skills and processes to develop and produce professional outcomes.

LO10 Employ highly fluent communication skills to effectively present ideas, intentions, and outcomes through your work, collaborative projects, and other outcomes.

LO11 Use advanced personal and transferable skills to effectively sustain independent learning and reflect on progress as an independent artist.

LO12 Apply transferable and graduate skills in sustaining appropriate professional practices and standards through undertaking ethical research, group work, and in your relationships with the creative industries.

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.

Postgraduate students will need to work independently and to develop distance learning research and study skills. A course induction process helps you to establish working relationships between tutors and students and to establish cohort groups. Throughout the course you will have access to student forums, and Student Support study planning and pastoral support. Through independent research you will select, test, and interpret relevant and specialist literature and research methods to help inform your own creative approach. Research will be undertaken alongside a consideration of any ethical issues, supported through project proposals, and if appropriate, through discussion with tutors and OCA staff.

In addition to OCA's core teaching, OCA's Student Association (OCASA)⁷ provides opportunities for you to physically engage with cross-curriculum Study Events, asynchronous Virtual Study Events, or to become involved in wider student discussions.

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.

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.

⁷ OCASA Website: <http://www.ocasa.org.uk/>

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
- Annual Internal Course Review.