



Open
College
of the Arts



UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

BA (HONS) ILLUSTRATION

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	OCA – Open College of the Arts		
Final Award Title and Type	BA (Hons)		
Course Title	Illustration		
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	2022/23 – 2026/27		
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>Stage 1 courses are open access so no prior qualifications are required. In order to progress to Stage 2, students must have gained 120 credits at Stage 1, 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><i>Specific requirements</i></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.

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

Disabled students

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

Maximum period of registration

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

UCAS entry profile:

n/a

Overall methods of assessment ³	Written exams:	Practical exams:	Coursework:
Stage 1	0.0%	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%	82.5%	0.0%
	210 hours	990 hours	0 hours
Stage 2	15.0%	85.0%	0.0%
	180 hours	1020 hours	0 hours
Stage 3	12.5%	87.5%	0.0%
	150 hours	1050 hours	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: QAA Art & Design 2019]			
Framework for Higher Education Qualifications (FHEQ)			

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

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					
IL41IIN Illustration 1.1: Introducing Illustration OILL4153	4	40	Core	N/A	1
IL42VHS Illustration 1.2: Visual Histories OILL4154	4	40	Core	N/A	2
IL43MAC Illustration 1.3: Materials & Contexts OILL4155	4	40	Core	N/A	3
Stage 2					
IL51VLS Illustration 2.1: Visual Languages OILL5142	5	40	Core	N/A	4
IL52GPS Illustration 2.2: Global Perspectives OILL5143	5	40	Core	N/A	5
IL53SDP Illustration 2.3: Self-Directed Project OILL5144	5	40	Core	N/A	6
Stage 3					
IL61PAR Illustration 3.1: Practice and Research OILL6153	6	40	Core	N/A	7
IL62EPS Illustration 3.2: External Projects OILL6154	6	40	Core	N/A	8
IL63MPT Illustration 3.3: Major Project OILL6155	6	40	Core	N/A	9

Section B - Course Overview

Course Philosophy

Illustration is a practice-based course that encompasses a wide variety of illustrative, drawn and image-making frameworks for students to examine and experiment with as part of their creative journey. The course offers students a variety of relevant visual contexts and through regular tutor support builds these into the learning structure, with a view towards both specialist understanding of illustration and a broader engagement with the visual arts. The course engages students with ideas in the wider world and applies this to a creative practice with illustration at its core.

Students begin the course by gaining a historical and material understanding of the discipline, and develops this through an expanded examination of contemporary methods and techniques of illustration in an increasingly globalised cultural context. The three stages of study provide a framework for pacing the content, affording students regular points of contact with their tutor to guide their learning and assist in their personal creative interests.

The illustration degree is designed for students who wish to fulfil their ambitions for a diverse practical and critical engagement with visual making and thinking and understand how their unique creative voice situates itself within both contemporary illustration practice and the wider cultural world.

The course philosophy is informed by OCA's charitable commitment to provide a flexible and open learning experience that supports a broad range of student expectation and needs. The OCA attracts a diverse range of students, who are at various stages of their lives and careers and motivated by professional and/or personal aspirations. The course offers an accessible entry point to art and design education for this range of students through part-time and distance learning. Additional support and resources are in place to ensure you will be at an appropriate level of study to succeed.

Course Structure

The BA (Hons) Illustration course offers an accessible, flexible, and well-supported course of study through which you can develop your creative voice within a specialist understanding of the discipline.

The course is designed to give you the widest possible span of creative investigation while retaining a strong core structure to underpin your skills and exploration of illustration. As you progress through the stages, you will develop and refine your study choices as the span of coursework content broadens and deepens.

Stage 1:

Stage 1 supports your creative development by examining how to generate and visualise ideas, use research to reflect upon your own work and inform creative approaches. At the end of the first stage, you will have begun to apply these skills to identify your own personal voice and to develop the content and meaning of your illustrative work.

- Unit 1: *Introducing Illustration* will develop your understanding of the basic visual language of illustration, creative strategies and way of documenting your working process. You will explore mark-making and drawing, composition, visual hierarchies and colour theory, and undertake visual research and idea development through a number of engaging exercises.
- Advancing into Unit 2: *Visual Histories*, you will develop an appreciation of the historical and contemporary contexts of illustration contexts (e.g. Victorian, American 20th century, technical, instructional and children's illustration) and survey contemporary areas of practice (e.g. digital drawing, editorial and commercial illustration, graphic novels, animation and concept art).
- The final unit of stage 1, *Materials and Contexts*, considers how to produce artwork for a range of physical formats and visual outcomes (e.g. posters, leaflets, magazine and newspaper illustration, book covers, comics and fanzines).

Stage 2:

Stage 2 supports you to develop your practical skills, contextual and creative understanding of illustration, and enables you to start to locate your practice in a professional context by undertaking client led projects and define your own creative voice and visual language within your work.

- Unit 1: *Visual Languages*, supports your understanding of how illustration methods and techniques can be applied to contemporary areas of practice such as editorial (e.g. print & web publishing contexts such as newspaper, magazine and book illustration) and commercial, scientific and technical contexts (e.g. product packaging, fashion, medical, educational, archaeological and botanical).
- Advancing into Unit 2: *Global Perspectives*, you will develop an understanding of current representational and interpretative image-making practice both domestically (e.g. in the use of metaphor, symbolism, abstraction, satire and pastiche, diagrammatic and informational illustration) and internationally (e.g. Japanese 'manga', Native American 'Formlines', 'Afrofuturism', Asian, Indian and European image-making). You will also consider current personal and social visual concerns (e.g. representation of LGBTQI+ communities and issues around race, sexuality, identity, diversity and neurodiversity) and expanded and specialist visual contexts (e.g. self-publishing, activism, street art and non-paper applications)
- The final unit of stage 1, *Self-directed Project* supports you to apply your understanding and skills in either a client led or personal project to create an original body of work.

Stage 3:

Stage 3 supports you to build on your stage 2 studies and synthesize your creative practice and research interests across self-directed bodies of work and critical thinking assignments. The units provide a framework that enables you to foster an increasingly autonomous and professional approach to your studies.

- Unit 1: *Practice and Research* will introduce you to this Stage of study by supporting you to initiate and articulate your emerging creative practice, develop relevant skills and research methods, and refine your fluency in critical thinking. The unit requires the production of a body of work comprising a series of projects or larger piece of work outlining what you are interested in making together with a supporting critical thinking element in the form of an essay or presentation
- Advancing into Unit 2: *External Projects* requires a self-directed project together with a supporting critical thinking element in the form of a case study, business plan, evaluation, written essay or visual presentation.
- The final unit of stage 3, *Major Project* requires the completion of a body of work together with a supporting critical thinking element reflecting on and evaluating your body of work in the form of a written essay or visual presentation.

Section C - Course Aims

1. To widen access to education in the study and application of illustration at undergraduate level through open and flexible learning
2. To ensure students gain the technical skills in illustration, drawing and image-making to form a solid foundation for further development
3. To develop students' creative and visual vocabulary through the exploration of a range of material and conceptual approaches grounded in an investigation into historical and contemporary illustration practices
4. To open up a range of opportunities expanding across disciplines for students to develop their own personal illustration practice through individually driven research and experimentation
5. To develop students' critical understanding of the diverse and shifting social, historical, cultural and environmental contexts globally in which expanded illustration and image-making practices emerge from and with which they are in constant dialogue
6. To provide a learning environment through practice, research and rigorous experimentation in which the student has the intellectual and artistic potential to challenge and change their view of the world and its structures

7. To foster high level ethical and professional standards
8. To develop autonomous learners with the intellectual, practical and conceptual skills to push the boundaries of contemporary illustration practice and to transfer their diverse learning into future employment, further research, collaborative practices or life-long learning

Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

Knowledge

- LO1 Demonstrate proficiency in a comprehensive range of creative illustration practices and techniques
- LO2 Manage the learning process resourcefully and independently and make appropriate use of primary sources and academic texts
- LO3 Demonstrate by means of written work and oral presentations a critical understanding of the principles of illustration practice and knowledge of emerging aspects of the discipline and those at the forefront of debate
- LO4 Evaluate your own work and that of others critically and objectively

Understanding

- LO5 Develop an understanding of a personal visual language through an ability to discern the aspects of illustration methodologies that most appeal to you and govern your choices for the development of a body of work
- LO6 Through taking a critical approach to your work you will build skills to define your practical work as well as discern your successes and failures
- LO7 Understand the relationship your work has to the material and contextual development of illustration history and practice
- LO8 Understand the relationship your work has to a wider contemporary global visual culture

Application

- LO9 Demonstrate a breadth of inventiveness, ideas generation and techniques in the production of creative work
- LO10 Produce a body of work to a high professional and aesthetic standard
- LO11 Apply your personal visual language to a range of tasks as an illustration practitioner
- LO12 Engage in appropriate professional practices such as responding to briefs, communicating with clients and audiences, self-presentation and negotiation skills

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