



Open
College
of the Arts



UNIVERSITY FOR THE CREATIVE ARTS

PROGRAMME SPECIFICATION FOR:

BA (HONS) MUSIC

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 they take 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	Music		
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 requirements²

For entry at Stage 4, ABRSM (or equivalent) Grade 5 in Music Theory or a Practical Music Subject, equivalent practical experience (as assessed by the Programme Leader) or completion of the OCA's Music Foundation Course are recommended. In order to progress to Stage 2, students must have gained 120 credits at Stage 1, through study or by Accreditation of Prior Learning.

In addition to prior qualifications and learning accreditation, OCA specifies three general requirements for students to be admitted to its degree programmes:

- 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)

Full details on each of these requirements can be found in the OCA Student Regulations in the Admissions Policy

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 Terms and Conditions. In addition to the information located in our student documentation OCA is developing short videos to explain netiquette and online security.

An unaccredited OCA Foundation Certificate is available for students who need to develop their technical and visual awareness skills before embarking on degree study.

Students will be required, as part of this programme of study, to develop further IT skills in specific applications, such as Sibelius or Dorico.

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.

**This requirement may be 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.*

Specific requirements

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% 210 hours	82.5% 990 hours	0 hours			
Stage 2	15.0% 180 hours	85.0% 1020 hours	0 hours			
Stage 3	12.5% 150 hours	87.5% 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 Music (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					
MU41EMC Music 1.1 Exploring Music OMUS4153	4	40	Core	N/A	1
MU42ECS Music 1.2 Exploring Contexts OMUS4154	4	40	Core	N/A	2
MU43ESS Music 1.3 Exploring Style and Structure OMUS4155	4	40	Core	N/A	3
Stage 2					
MU51DSS Music 2.1 Developing Specialisms OMUS5142	5	40	Core	N/A	4
MU52EES Music 2.2 Experimental Encounters OMUS5143	5	40	Core	N/A	5
MU53EPE Music 2.3: Expanding Practice OMUS5144	5	40	Core	N/A	6
Stage 3					
MU61PAR Music 3.1 Practice and Research OMUS6153	6	40	Core	N/A	7
MU62EPS Music 3.2 External Projects OMUS6154	6	40	Core	N/A	8
MU63MPT Music 3.3 Major Project OMUS6155	6	40	Core	N/A	9

Section B - Course Overview

The OCA Music degree enables you to develop and define your creative musical voice, through the development of practical, creative and academic skills. You will learn to communicate your ideas and knowledge through sound in a range of different ways, including composing, performing and arranging the music of others. Your individual musical interests will inform your choice of specialist pathways, and your practical work will be underpinned by an intellectual understanding of the subject and its connections with wider areas of interest.

The course encourages you to develop your technical skills, take creative risks, form opinions and self-reflect, gaining inspiration and support from tutors and peers.

The course's flexible and accessible approach, supported by one-to-one and group tuition, offers you a unique opportunity to refine your individual skills, work in collaboration with others and begin to build professional networks. The pathway structure allows you to choose your main areas of focus and create a personal programme of study which suits your interests and needs.

Over the period of study, and through a choice of the specialist pathways, you will:

- gain creative, practical and academic skills;
- explore the relationships between theory and practice;
- develop specialist knowledge with an opportunity to apply your understanding to an independent, self-directed project;
- work towards an advanced capability in your chosen specialist pathway (Composition, Musicology, Orchestration/Arrangement or Performance).

The programme builds practical, intellectual and personal skills, resilience, confidence and ambition through an increasingly autonomous approach, supported by constructive feedback from tutors with a developed professional practice. The course is designed to cater for a wide range of students, at different stages of their lives and careers and with different personal aspirations and ambitions; we recognise that the notion of success looks different for each student, depending on individual needs and goals.

The Music degree enables you to reach your individual potential and will help you to identify and develop the skills you need to follow your chosen musical path post-graduation. This may include relevant practical, interpersonal and business skills, familiarity with appropriate technologies, the practical implementation of historical and academic knowledge, critical thinking, research skills, contextual and stylistic awareness and a knowledge and understanding of a broad range of repertoire. You will be encouraged to explore a broad range of concepts and contexts, including works by historically underrepresented composers. The degree provides a space for you to explore your own areas of interest, define your own artistic development and to bring the diverse, creative voices of you and your peers to the fore.

Stage 1: Explorations

Stage 1 enables you to develop core skills, through an introduction to composition, performance and orchestration and a grounding in academic music, including history, stylistic techniques, harmony, analysis and form. You will build on your existing knowledge and musical experiences by engaging with a wide range of repertoire, including by living composers and those from underrepresented groups. You will explore some of the wider contexts of music such as the relationship with society, the changing role of the composer and performer, and what it means to be a musician in the 21st century. You will make connections between the music of the present and the past, gain an understanding of the styles that have developed over time, and will be encouraged to look both inside and outside of the traditional canon to draw inspiration and to establish your own musical ideas, preferences and tastes.

Stage 2: Developments

In Stage 2, you will focus on the development of your creative and academic practice, choosing specific areas of focus from your work in Stage 1 based on your interests and strengths. At the beginning of the Stage, you will choose two pathways from a choice of composition, musicology, performance and orchestration/arrangement; at Unit 2.3 one of these will become your Principal Study for a more focused exploration, while the other becomes your Second Study, enabling a continued development of skills in this area at a less intensive rate. It is expected that your Principal Study will become your chosen discipline for Stage 3 study, but your Second Study provides a viable alternative if required.

In the centre of Stage 2, Unit 2.2 provides a unique opportunity for you to extend your personal practice into collaboration, working alongside peers (from the music department and beyond) in order to explore a more experimental approach to your work and to gain experience of the more social aspects of music-making. Here, you will focus on the development of your creative practice, exploring, developing and reflecting on new ideas and innovative approaches. This is underpinned by an exploration of collaborative case studies, methods and theories to help inform an academic understanding of collaborative practices.

Throughout Stage 2, all students will continue to explore a diverse range of music in both written and recorded form, informing your choice of pathway and expanding your knowledge and understanding of repertoire. You will also continue to develop the research skills relevant to your discipline.

Pathway details for Stage 2:

Musicology Pathway: This is the academic study of music and can cover a broad range of areas, including analysis, music history, aesthetics, organology (the study of musical instruments), the relationships between music and society, biography and an exploration of different musical cultures. You will choose from a selection of research areas, developing independent research skills and techniques to build up a portfolio of work across the Stage.

Composition Pathway: You will learn to develop your musical language, creativity, techniques and skills in order to communicate ideas in sonic form. You will learn to produce materials suitable for the use of professional performers and develop skills in the use of industry-standard notation software. You will extend your creative practice, exploring a range of new ideas and influences, working towards the development of a distinctive and individual compositional voice.

Orchestration/Arrangement: This pathway develops a knowledge of instruments and their capabilities, as well as how they can be combined in different ensembles to create a range of textures and timbres. You will gain confidence in distributing material between instruments, exploring standard ensembles (such as the string quartet, wind quintet and chamber orchestra) as well as more flexible ensembles such as instrumental choirs, chamber groups, voices and mixed instrumental groups. In addition to skills in orchestration, you will gain experience in the art of arranging, including combining original creative ideas with a range of existing material. The pathway encourages you to reflect upon your aesthetic choices in the manipulation of material and provides the skills needed to fluently and capably handle music in a range of styles.

Performance Pathway: This pathway is for performers on any instrument/voice who already have some proficiency on their instruments and are looking to refine their skills and experience on the concert platform or the digital concert hall. You will gain experience of performance through online performance classes, and will explore a wide range of repertoire suitable to your experience and skills. Your knowledge and understanding of the stylistic approaches of different eras will be developed and enhanced, leading to a considered and intellectually rigorous approach to interpretation. You will learn the essential additional skills that performers require in the contemporary era, including basic home-

recording techniques. You will gain greater musical independence and develop skills in performance practice, presentation, technical accomplishment and programme planning, under the mentorship of a one-to-one tutor.

Stage 3: Independent Practice

The final Stage of the degree equips you with the knowledge, understanding and skills required for continuing personal development and professional musical practice. The units in Stage 3 provide a framework for you to generate and carry out projects based on the personal vision and ambition you have gained throughout Stage 1 and Stage 2. The aim is to strengthen your individual musical practice and inform your creative development through rigorous practical and intellectual enquiry, resulting in a distinctive body of work. The projects will focus on a range of themes, locating and developing a personal creative voice, developing professional relationships and networks, and establishing a sustainable musical practice.

Section C - Course Aims

1. To widen access to education in music at undergraduate level through Open and Flexible Learning
2. To ensure students gain appropriate technical skills in their chosen pathway to form a solid foundation for further development.
3. To provide an intellectually stimulating programme of study based on high quality study materials which provides students with a safe space to develop their creative and academic practice, learn from their mistakes, interact with peers and tutors, and draw inspiration from a wide range of practitioners, including those from historically underrepresented groups.
4. To foster creative and intellectual development through critical understanding of the theoretical and conceptual issues central to music practice and the social, historical and cultural context in which it takes place.
5. To foster high-level ethical and professional standards and awareness of the possibilities offered by existing and new developments in music to expand students' areas of application.
6. To develop independent learners capable of applying intellectual and practical skills in music appropriate to employment, further study or life-long learning.
7. To provide an environment which challenges students to think about their own and others' musical and intellectual outputs, extending their understanding of creative practice and thereby opening up the possibility of changing their own creative practice.

Section D - Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course students are able to:

Knowledge

LO1 Demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of a body of music and of the repertoires, texts, resources and concepts associated with it.

LO2 Produce written music using appropriate software and notation conventions, read scores and listen critically to music.

LO3 Demonstrate knowledge of musical contexts, including the relationship of music with historical, cultural and social concepts.

LO4 Demonstrate a knowledge of collaboration approaches in relation to their discipline

Understanding

LO5 Understand the changing role of music in society and the cultural and historical contexts in which repertoire is written

LO6 Understand the link between theory and practice in relation to musical study

LO7 Understand musical processes, forms and methods of construction

LO8 Critically and objectively reflect on and evaluate their own work and that of others.

Application

LO9 Demonstrate inventiveness, creative ideas, development of a personal musical language and application of technique in practical work

LO10 Communicate about aspects of musical culture, contexts, concepts and research to specialist and non-specialist audiences through appropriate means

LO11 Work independently to practical work to a graduate standard which is supported by relevant research and academic investigation

LO12 Engage in appropriate professional practices such as marketing, fundraising, self-presentation and negotiation skills

LO13 Demonstrate intellectual and musical curiosity and the potential for artistic and creative development

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